

The church magazine of
st **Catharine's**
Gloucester

December 2025 & January 2026

**Have you heard!
He's coming!**

**Who's coming!?
To Gloucester??**

**Better than that!
To the whole world..**

**Oh, go on, tell me
more!!!**

Read on!

Living connections with Jesus:

we go, give, gather and grow for God's glory

As **living connections with Jesus**, we are seeking to be:



- Confident of who we are in Jesus, and knowing where and to whom God is sending us (**Go**)
- Generous with the gifts God has given us (**Give**)
- The family of God, a community of hope and love that is welcoming and hospitable (**Gather**)
- A disciple-making church helping each other grow in our faith, trust and love of God (**Grow**)

Cover: from Poppyfields by Luxmiralis

Our regular service pattern is:

Every Sunday 10.30am in church building and on zoom with coffee from 10am as 'St. Catharine's Connects'.

- **First Sunday** 9am Sung Communion service (and no communion at 10.30am)
- **Third Sunday** 9am 'Space to listen' - Reflective prayerful space to listen to God together

Monday 8.45am Morning Prayer

Thursday 10am Said Communion with hymns on 3rd Thursday of month

Pause for Prayer (P4P) Monday to Saturday 12noon in church zoom room.

The weekly Notice Sheet gives more details of services and other events, and can be found on our website under 'News' or by hard copy from the church building.

The Guest



This church year, as you may remember, we have an underlying theme for our life together which is 'hospitality of spirit'. Later in the magazine I have written a brief update on this, and during Advent the focus of our gatherings links in with different reflections around the guest. Throughout the Bible, in stories of everyday life, we see people preparing for and welcoming guests or being received as guests. In Luke's gospel, where a lot of action is set around meals, we are challenged to see how Jesus moves in and out of being guest and host in different situations, even though he describes himself as having no place of his own (Luke 9.58). During this Advent season I am pondering what it means for us to be welcomed by God, and to welcome God and each other into our lives.

As we recall the first Christmas, 2025 years ago, the readings that we will reflect on include the calling of John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. There are all sorts of things that we do to prepare for guests, and you might be planning some of them now if you are inviting guests this Christmas. John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus' coming by calling them to examine their lives and turn to God. A bit like us getting our house in order! The arrival of Jesus is both expected – the Old Testament is filled with prophecies about him – but his arrival is also unexpected. God waited for Mary's yes. When God knocks at the door of our lives, it is up to us to invite God in, God does not barge in. And when we welcome God in, it is an extraordinary thing that God puts himself at our mercy. Jesus came as a vulnerable baby, dependent on his parents. And still today when Jesus comes into our lives, he does not order us about but gently invites us to live in a different way. If we then choose to live a different way, our life will never be the same again. Just like Joseph, as we welcome God and make room in our lives, then a 'holy

disturbance' arises, our lives get reoriented with God at the centre. After all the years I have been a Christian, it still feels amazing to me, that God would give us such a choice about responding to God's knock at the door of our lives, and also to the loving welcome offered to each of us. I hope this Advent and Christmas time you might choose to respond to God in a way that puts God more firmly at the centre of your life as we move into 2026.

During this season there are also plenty of opportunities to invite people to events at church, and to come along yourself. Do pick up a Christmas services postcard and give them away to your neighbours and people you meet. There are all sorts of different events happening, and hopefully something for everyone! We will start with our Christmas carol sing-a-long on Saturday 6th December which will be a great event to invite people to. We will have the top 10 carols to sing, the name of our lion will be announced, and mince pie eating will begin 😊 In week commencing 8th December we will welcome Kingsholm Primary School and our local caring communities to several different services. And as we continue to share the gifts we have been given with the community around us, we will be packing Christmas hampers for families in need during our 10.30am service on Sunday 14th December. The Blue Christmas service on Sunday 21st December at 5pm will be a quieter reflective space. Then on Christmas Eve we will have an interactive crib service at 10am and a traditional midnight communion starting at 11.30pm. Christmas Day morning we will have a simple communion service, and then people are invited to bring food to share with others if you would like to stay on for lunch, so that everyone has someone to have lunch with on that special day.

As we move into 2026, we will be having time to pray together, a new course exploring Christianity, vicarage socials, and hopefully St Catharine's Got Talent! So do keep a look out for more information. Much, as always, in our church life to be thankful for and to pray for. May God bless you in this Advent and Christmas season.

Every blessing Jo

MUSINGS ON LATEST PCC MEETING

Another full meeting took place on the 18th November, with many topics to discuss, make decisions on, and these are a few bullet points from that meeting.

Youth/Children's Work, a comprehensive report had been circulated by Lindsey on how things were going, which is really well! PCC greatly encouraged by the hard work and commitment of Lindsey and team, and the encouraging numbers of children and young people engaging with all the different groups in church and at school. Discussion took place on the need for more volunteers to assist the dedicated small team that undertake the work week in and week out. One member of the PCC had offered her garden for a firework party at the last minute and reported how much she had enjoyed it; 13 young people took part much fun was had.

If you have even a slight inclination to working with one of the age groups, either children or youth, please do contact and speak to Lindsey, you will be welcomed with open arms and support given. Do ask if you can visit a group to see what happens.

Report received from **School Foundation Governor**, and all encouraged by continued strengthening of links with church. New Head starts in January.

Harry reported that work was well underway to **update the website** and move to a new web host that will make the site easier to update. New photos and wording are being included. After the launch of website, work will then begin to look at St. Catharine's other social media sites.

Lion with no name! Jo is enthused by how many names she is faced with, to select and to finally name the lion. Discussion took place

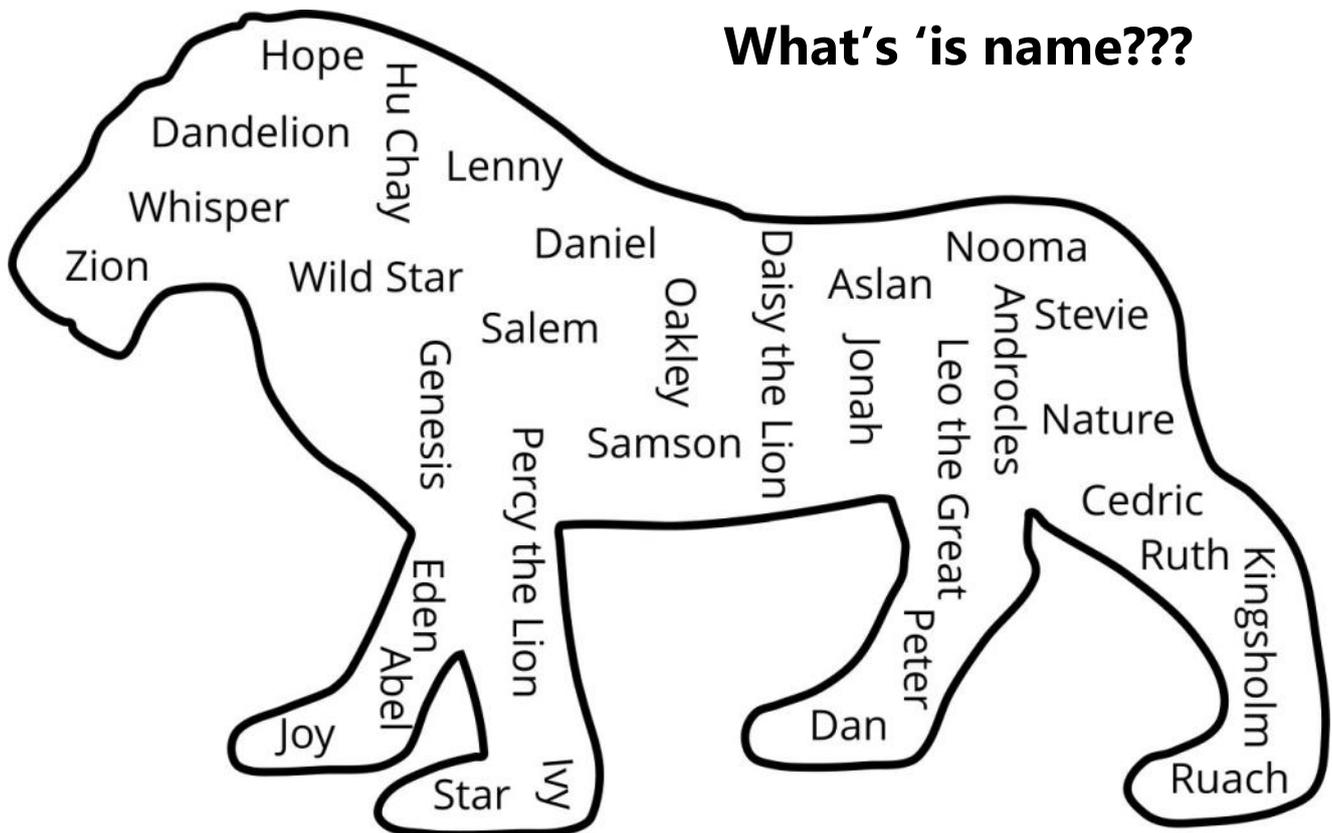
on his placement outside in the church grounds by the blue sign on the corner. Suitable securing and insurance has been confirmed. Jo was delighted to report the donations for the lion well exceeded the auction price paid towards the Big Space Cancer Appeal at the hospital, and excess will go towards the cost of Christmas hampers.

Gift Day was a success, as yet the final total is to be announced as gift aid to be claimed and some money still coming in. Huge thanks given for the generosity of the congregation.

Budget for 2026 was finalised and approved.

Church House (the new name for Hillfield House) will finally start to operate on the 1st December, when staff will begin to move in, the final total of staff on the premises is guessed to be around 40-50 people and discussion took place on how we as a church can welcome them and continue to make them feel welcome.

Linda





“

GIFT DAY AND DAY OF PRAYER

We have now just about received all the donations for both our Gift and Prayer Day and our impressive lion (whatever his name ends up being!) so we thought you may like to know the final position. First the lion. Total donations to date are £7,969 which with gift aid equates to slightly over £9,600 so we have more than met the amount we needed to raise to cover the £8,000 cost of our bid for the lion in aid of the new cancer facility at the hospital. As far as the Gift and Prayer Day goes, we raised £16,149 which when gift aid is added will total very nearly £20,000 which is considerably greater than our target. This will make an absolutely huge difference in our ability to support mission and the other work we feel God is calling us to do as a Church family. Both David and I have been amazed and humbled on many occasions in the past 6 years we have been joint treasurers at the generosity and, in some cases, sacrificial giving of many of our membership at St. Catharine's. This is one of those occasions. Thank you all so much.”

Ed



**From the lion creator:
Helen Naylor**

Thank you so much for getting in touch, it is lovely to hear where my lion has ended up and the story behind you putting together your bid. I am so pleased to hear that he is going to part of what sounds like a very welcoming and kind community and he's not going to be hidden away in a private garden somewhere. He will very much enjoy being a part of your community, I'm sure!

I have taken part in a few Wild in Art trails and I absolutely love being a part of them. It's brilliant to be able to use my art to support such great causes. This appeal was particularly close to my heart as my younger sister has recently survived a battle with cancer and the support she received from the NHS throughout her treatment from start to finish was amazing! So, I was absolutely thrilled when my design inspired by the journey we have all been through with her was chosen for the trail. I wanted him to be a positive representation of the strength and resilience that I hope we all have deep down inside us for times like this.

I visit Cheltenham usually about once a year so next time I am down I will have to try and venture out and find your church to say hello to my old friend!

Thanks again for giving him such a lovely forever home!

Best wishes,

Helen

www.pocketwren.co.uk

What's been happening at Deanery Synod?

One of the great things about being a member of the Deanery Synod is that you get the opportunity to visit some of the wonderful churches in Gloucester. This month we met at St. James, Tredworth, and were welcomed by their new vicar, Revd. Steve Saville. St. James was consecrated in 1841 in response to the growing number of people in the area. It's well worth a visit if you get the opportunity.

One of the other great things about Synod is that you meet some interesting people. And this time was no exception as we got to meet Lydia Knight, our new Gloucester Deanery Operations Lead. Lydia, who will be working with all Deanery churches on our implementing our Strategic Plan, started the meeting with a discussion about the issues facing our churches. This is an exciting new development and I'm sure that we will see Lydia at St. Catharine's before too long. Remember that you can get involved with this work as we are still looking for lay members of the DOT (Deanery Oversight Team).

The main business of the meeting concentrated on three main areas. Firstly, our normal review of previous minutes, finances, Deanery calendar, and people news.

Secondly, there was a Youth Ministry update given by Helen Champion which highlighted some of the great work happening with our young people. Events coming up are the Big Bash, praying for schools, and very interestingly, a Thriving Church initiative (aimed at the under 35's). For more information on any of this go to the Youth and Children's Newsletter on the Gloucester Diocese website.

Finally, we received feedback from the last Diocesan Synod. This focussed on a presentation by the West Midlands Justice Initiative which has been looking at the various reports on racism in the church.

For more information about Deanery Synod please talk to Jo, Stephen, or Andy. God bless.



Becky and Nicky Drake came to teach and record the new school song with a group of about 30 children.

Everyone Matters by Becky Drake

It's been a real joy to be invited to write a school song for Kingsholm Primary School this term! It's so special being able to create a bespoke song that captures the heart and soul of a school community. The goal is to leave the school with a song that will encourage and inspire them, reflect who they are or what they value, and be a song that will last for as long as possible - ideally sung from generation to generation! The added bonus of writing for a church school, is that I can also share God's heart for the children through the song - which is something I always pray about as I'm writing.

The process began with a visit to the school, where I asked the children a series of questions about their school: "What do you like best about your school? What makes it unique? How would you describe it in 1 word?" and so on. A few things stood out. Firstly, they love how big their school is and how many different spaces they can go to - from the big school halls, the library and classrooms through to the Forest school and outside play areas. Kingsholm is a big school! Secondly, they are very proud of the fact that they all have their own tablet in class! It's a small feature in one sense but virtually every year group talked about it, so it's clearly important to them. And then several children talked about school

being like 'home' - a lovely concept. I was able to go away and weave together all of these ideas into the verses of the new song. Having spoken with the children, conversations with Revd. Jo and staff highlighted some of the values and hopes for the school. The school has 3 key values: Be kind, Be respectful and Be your best - all of which felt significant and have ended up featuring in the chorus. However, the main heart of the song and the title 'Everyone Matters' came from Jo's vision document. I left Kingsholm with a strong sense that these children needed to declare over themselves that their lives matter. I also remember Jo saying how her desire is for them to know that God is for them, so as the song nears the end, a quieter verse reminds the children that when they leave they are never alone, and God is on their side, guiding them. Perhaps there's nothing more important for them to learn and remember.

St. Catharine's Church have truly given a gift to this school. I can't stress enough the power that music can have. We know that while many things from school days will be forgotten, music remains in our memories until old age! School songs are rarely forgotten. So, my prayer is that the words of this song will live on in the children's minds and hearts for the rest of their lives and God will use the words to speak to them and remind them of his presence when they leave Kingsholm. I also pray that 'Everyone Matters' will bring identity and a greater sense of unity across the school. Let's continue to pray that it releases joy in the room as it's sung, and speaks truth to every heart. Thank you for entrusting this project to me!

Note from Jo: We have been recording the final version of the song with the Kingsholm children and watch out for the official release in January!

Lucy adds: The children quickly caught onto the tune and words and seemed to really enjoy learning it. The children noticed the behaviour policy (the 3 B's) in the chorus. I don't remember any other comments from the children - it was quite a full-on, intense hour with few gaps for responses!



Introduction to our church school's new Headteacher.



Mr Tony Larner starts as Headteacher at Kingsholm C of E Primary and Nursery school at the beginning of the New Year.

We greatly appreciate the hard work and commitment of the Senior Leadership team, led by Mrs Hanson as Acting Headteacher, through the challenges of the past year.

Please continue to pray for the school community (staff, pupils, families and volunteers) as they enter this new phase.

As we move toward the season of Thanksgiving (American), Hannukah (Jewish), Advent & Christmas (Christian), may we remember that we are all children of our heavenly Father, we share a common humanity like the thousands of leaves on same human tree, and we're all made of the same earthly stuff – yet precious in the eyes of God.

Dan Button

Dan heads up Gateway Theological School

They have several new courses starting up in the new year... but all are still awaiting confirmation of dates and times:

Explorations in Faith and Theology

Good Call: Ethics for Churches in the 21st C

Foundations of our Faith

info@gtstheology.org

st Catharine's
Gloucester

MENS

CHRISTMAS SOCIETY

3
DEC

7.30-
9PM



- IN THE CHURCH -

Games
Mince Pies
Bring your own Drinks



DECEMBER

- Mon 1 Advent Course 1
Tue 2 Bereavement Café (NB change of date)
Wed 3 Visit to Church House
Men's Christmas Social
Sat 6 Christmas Carol Sing-along (and Lion naming)
Mon 8 Advent Course 2
Thu 11 Carols for Caring Communities
Mon 15 Advent Course 3
Thu 18 Mothers' Union Christmas service
Sun 21 Blue Christmas
Mon 22 Advent Course 4

Wed 24 Interactive Crib Service

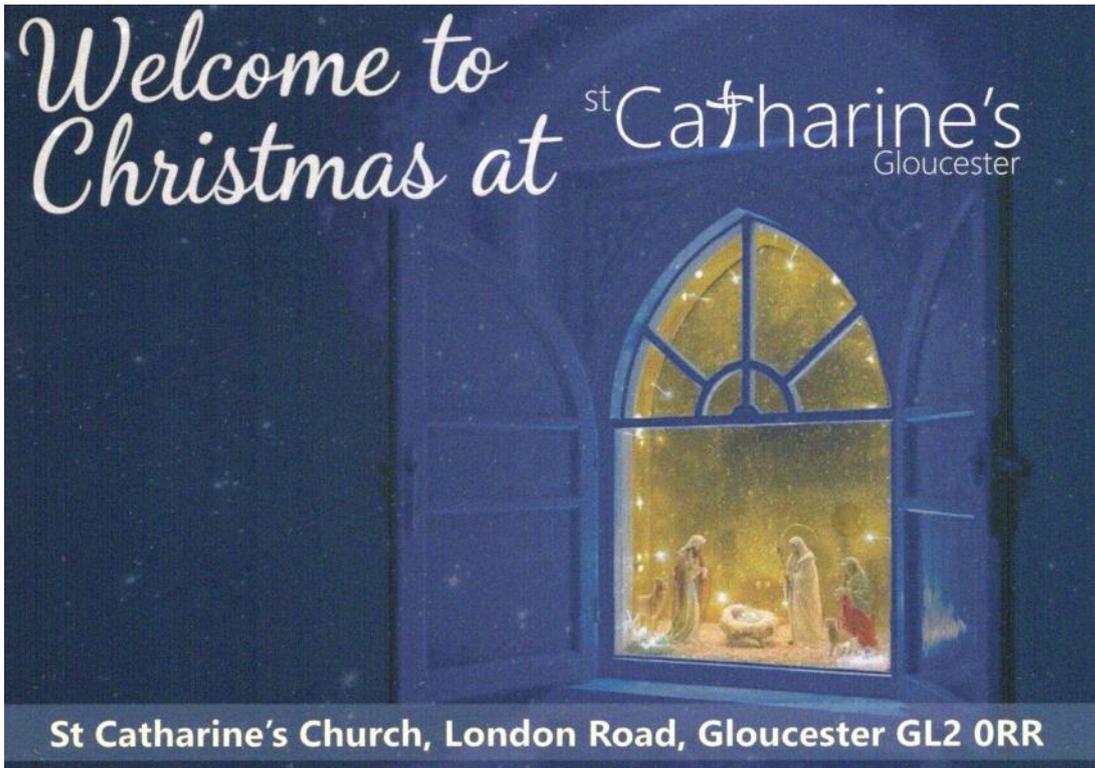
Midnight Service

Thu 25 Christmas Day communion

Sun 28 Simple Communion service

JANUARY

- Thu 1 No Thursday Eucharist
Sat 3-Sun 4 24 hours of Prayer
Sun 4 Christingle/Epiphany
Recycling of cards-Sun 11
Mon 5 321 (see page 27)
Sun 11 Church Lunch
Mon 12 321
Tue 13 Bereavement Cafe
Sat 17 Vicarage Social
Mon 19 321
Wed 21 ECOchurch meeting
Mon 26 321
Sat 31 Vicarage Social



The first Christmas was full of unexpected guests! No room at the inn for Mary and Joseph. Angels surprising the shepherds. Shepherds discovering a baby. Kings on camels arriving with gifts. Nothing seemed to go as planned. And amidst it all we find Jesus, a baby who was both expected and unexpected.

If you want to find out more about that first Christmas, and the amazing news that God welcomes everyone, here are some of the ways you can experience that welcome for yourself at St Catharine's Church this Christmas:

- 6th December 6.30pm - Christmas Carol Sing-a-long:** Come & sing some carols, meet a lion, and enjoy a mince pie and hot drink.
- 21st December 5pm - Blue Christmas:** Quiet service for anyone looking for a different space this Christmas - quiet reflection, prayer and gentle music.
- 24th December 10am - Interactive Crib Service:** Experience the first Christmas told through fun, crafts & carols. Come as a nativity character, or as you!
- 24th December 11.30pm - Midnight Communion:** Traditional service.
- 25th December 10am - Christmas Day Service:** Celebrating Jesus' birth.
- 4th January 10.30am - Epiphany with Christingle:** Oranges provided!

www.stcatharine.org.uk 01452-302483   stcatsglos

This is our St Catharine's postcard.

If you are quick enough there may be some left for you to deliver to your street, neighbours or friends! Please indicate on the map if you are covering a street so there is no duplication.

Advent course-The Guest

Our journey through Advent gives an opportunity to prepare to meet Jesus afresh. What does it mean for you to open the door to the knock of Jesus who has promised to be God-with-us? And what might happen next? **Our Advent course running in the chapel on Monday 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd from 7-8pm** gives a way of opening our hearts & minds to God during Advent. You might also want to use these notes to help you reflect over the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Advent 1

Be Ready!: Romans 13.11-14 & Matthew 24.36-44

Our readings should startle us. Wake up! Keep watch! They remind us we are living in God's timing, that space between Jesus' life, death and resurrection and the promise that he will return to judge the living and the dead. As we 'wait' God has work for us to do if we are willing to join in with God's mission in the world. This work involves prayer, self-reflection and action. How am I putting off/ stopping the works of darkness? How actively am I living in a way that shows I am clothed with Jesus?

How do you want to help yourself be ready to respond to Jesus' call?

Advent 2

Preparation and welcome: Romans 15.4-13 & Matthew 3.1-12

Reflecting on John the Baptist continues our theme of preparing ourselves for Jesus. We are reminded that Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit: God choosing to come and live in us. God has welcomed us and made it possible for us to live in such a

way that God is at home with us. The power of God can give us steadfast hope, joy and peace whatever we are facing, and enable us to welcome others so that our lives together might glorify God.

How has God welcomed you? How might you welcome others?

Advent 3

Notice: James 5.7-10 & Matthew 11.2-11

As we look around our world, the signs of God's kingdom seem hard to see. Our readings call for a patient noticing of how God is at work in the people and the world around us. We might want a tidal wave of God's power to sweep through our world and sweep doubt away. What does it mean for you to allow God to be God? Blessed are we if we take no offense and the steady drip of God's mercy and grace that brings forth a fruitful crop at the right time.

Can you ask God for the gift of noticing where and how God is at work?

Advent 4

Holy disturbance: Psalm 80.1-8 & Matthew 1.18-25

The unexpected news that Mary was pregnant with Jesus was a significant disruption to Joseph's life. As Joseph listened to God, he overcame his fears and reconfigured his life to centre it around Jesus. Our readings remind us that Jesus is the long-promised Saviour of all who will turn to him, and Shepherd of those who want to be led by him.

Even when we are faithfully living as followers of Jesus, there are always areas that need stirring up. Where do you need some holy disturbance?

Hospitality of Spirit

St Catharine's sending out:

As living connections with Jesus

We go into the world

To give God's hope, light and love

To gather others for God's glory

And to grow more like Jesus. Amen

Jo says: In September in my pastoral letter I wrote about having a focus this year on 'hospitality of spirit'. This is part of our overall church vision of being living connections with Jesus, and the hope is that across this year we will be fostering a culture of deeper investment in one another's lives. To get the ball rolling on this we spent time in September and October looking at Seven Sacred Spaces and how we might live our lives with an awareness of God and of how we meet God in each other. We have also been more intentionally sharing stories from our lives during our gathered worship, and making spaces to get to know one another such as church lunches, coffee times, connect groups, going deeper, men's gatherings, barn dance, being part of church teams, even cleaning the church together is a good place to chat!

The phrase "hospitality of spirit" reminds us that hospitality is an attitude, not just an action. If we are fostering a culture of deep investment in one another, we will need to become more hospitable with one another. While "hospitality" often conjures up images of opening our *homes* and sharing our *food*, "hospitality of spirit" makes it clear we are talking about opening our *hearts* and sharing our *lives*.

Hospitality of spirit is the call on St Catharine's as a body, and on each member individually, to a greater openness, vulnerability and investment in friend and stranger alike.

Our welcome team gathering, and sermon focus on 'stranger to friend' in November, gave us more spaces to reflect on this. As we move into December, do be thinking about who you could invite to Christmas services, and in early January, we will be spending time as a church praying together, and there will be an opportunity to invite people to a new course exploring the Christian faith. Also in January, the vicarage socials are a great opportunity to meet friends old and new, do put the 17th or 24th January from 5pm in your diary!

Here are a few other suggestions for ways to explore hospitality of spirit in the months ahead: introduce yourself to someone you don't know in church, invite someone to do an everyday activity with you (put up Christmas decorations, shopping, cooking, gardening, cleaning), listen to someone without offering your opinion, when you wake up in the morning ask God to lead you to someone to speak to, try a different sort of worship gathering to one you normally go to.

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THANKS To Those Who Cook, Set Up, Clean, Arrange, Sew, Write, Print, Play, do Magic Techie stuff, teach etc etc etc

St Catharine's Church Lunch

Church Lunch is held once a month on the second Sunday, this is a wonderful time for fellowship, getting to know new people, catching up with friends, if you live alone it's lovely to sit and eat with others, and of course receive a good meal. There are many times in the bible when Jesus sat and ate with his friends.

I thought I would tell you how church lunch works – Rini and I work out what we are going to eat, this depends on the season, if it's a special occasion or whether there is food in the freezer to be used up, like after the summer holidays. Next I send out the menu to a group of cooks (*if you are interested in joining this group please speak to me*) - you can be reimbursed for the food, you provide or as some do, give it as part of their giving to the church. We do not expect you to provide each month, just when it fits in with you.

As drink and all the other food included in making up the meal is costing more and more these days, we are asking for a donation of a £1 each, this goes towards the next meal, if you can put more in that would be wonderful, because it covers those who cannot afford anything.

There is a box in the cupboard with many dishes, plates and small bowls that have not been collected after a lunch, if you think you are missing something please let me know, the box is getting rather full.

A BIG thank you to all who have helped in any way make the lunches this year such wonderful occasions.

Next Church Lunch January 11th 2026

Blessings Rachel B



Wednesday Church crafters made hearts to be used at some Christmas services,



The Remembrance Day flowers

Arranged by our Flower Arrangers, who help beautify our worship throughout the year.

Path makers:

Primarily Bruce M and Martin-thank you so much for the beautiful flat path.

Gardeners:

Jackie G and her crew for Garden of Remembrance, the new borders and other areas of planting-thanks.

Church Clean – 1st November '25

Another successful church clean took place on a Saturday morning with around 20 people coming to assist high and low. Lots of polishing and the big long ladder erected to clean high above the stained glass windows, creating much dust to Hoover up but giving the satisfaction of the area being clean of cobwebs, etc.

Several stayed on for the reward of a pizza lunch, thank you Jo. Although it isn't the most inviting of tasks to volunteer for, the morning passes well as coffee/tea/cake and biscuits are on offer to give a break and hence a chance to chat to people you perhaps don't see/know or not often.

The next planned Church Clean in 2026 will be **28th February 9.30-12**, if time allows do come and join in, remember many hands make light work and achieves extra to the excellent regular weekly cleaning, that takes place.

Linda



The voice of prayer is never silent

Each week from Monday to Saturday there is a God-given opportunity to come together online via Zoom at midday for approximately 30minutes as we **'Pause for Prayer' (P4P)** and reflect. In these challenging times it is an encouraging space to lift our voices in prayer as we bring before our Father God our concerns, our prayers for each other, and

those who have requested prayer. All are welcome to join.

In the Lady Chapel there is a book for intercessions. If you wish to add your concerns for prayer, they will be used at P4P



Having covered Gloucester streets by more than 100%, the challenge is reset to do it all over again! Will you help pray for our City?



Prayers for Peace & Justice

These take place in the Cathedral, and on line, at midday every 1st Tuesday in the month i.e. December 2nd, January 6th

Request joining details from reception@gloucestercathedral.org.uk

Spirit of Compassion:
sow justice in our hearts
that the poor might find in us
a friend;
sow peace in our spirits,
that the angry might find in us
a sea of hope;
sow generosity in our hands,
that the hungry might find in us
their daily bread.

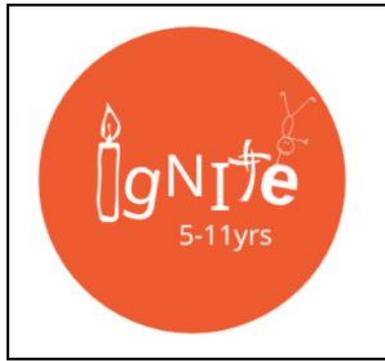
Thom M Shuman, from [Acorns and Archangels](#)



The Diocese of Gloucester is in partnership with the Diocese of Western Tanganyika aka DWT. This came from the Gloucester contact:

'In the past couple of weeks there has been unrest in Tanzania following the Presidential elections. We have endeavoured to keep in touch with our friends and colleagues there, but there was a national internet shutdown for many days. We are now back in communication, and have had emails from Bishop Emmanuel and the college. It seems to have been a very disturbing time in the larger cities, but our area of DWT has remained peaceful. We heard however that people were hungry for a week or more as it was too dangerous to go to the market. The college students are all safe, but everyone clearly shocked by the level of unrest in what is usually a peaceful nation. '

Please hold them in your prayers.



Dear Igniters,

During the past year we have heard about God sending his Son to Earth to live amongst us, what happened to Saul on the road to Damascus, how you can feed 5,000 people with limited resources, the Lord's Prayer, reading the Bible, Jesus saying "I am", and much much more. Thank you for being there with us.

During December we will talk about Advent and remember our special party on Sunday 14th December (thanks to Tesco and Morrisons for helping out).

And in the new year..... You'll have to wait and see but with your help it will be bigger, better, brighter (and other things beginning with B).

Have a great Christmas, God bless and love from Chris, Jackie, and Andy

What Did You See....Do you remember this wonderful song written by the children at Kingsholm Primary School a couple of years ago?

What Did You See Little Donkey?

What Did You See Little Donkey?

I was joyfully carrying my dearest friend,

I thought that the journey would never end.

When all of a sudden a baby was born

I turned to see Mary so tired and worn.

It beginning to look a lot like.... musings from Youth and Children's worker

As I write this I am looking at 3 very odd looking Father Christmas- ish' sausages, which I painstakingly sewed from some Christmas socks. 'Why the sausages, and what on earth are those for'? I hear you cry!



They are for this year's Big Bash on the 12th December which is an ecumenical youth event, where we see about 150 young people from Gloucester join together, to have fun, bring a friend and find out about Jesus. This year the theme is Christmas Fayre, St Catharine's will be having a Splat the Santa stall, I am hoping and praying the sausages hold up during their impending splatting.

There is such a lot of joy, fun and laughter planned with our children and young people this year.

Children from Kingsholm School will be visiting us, and Jo and I are visiting school to see the Early Years children. All of the children will make a Christingle and find out about its meaning. In total that will be about 630 children who hear that Jesus loves them so much. We are leading worship for KS2 on the 2nd December and the Open the Book team will be also telling the Christmas story to the younger children in KS1 on the 16th. Please pray for all those on the team as they endeavour to tell the children about the greatest Christmas present, Jesus.

The hamper team have been busy purchasing items for the Kingsholm Primary School Christmas hampers, we will be providing 100 hampers this year, which will be packed on the 14th December during the service. A big thank you to all those who have helped purchase items or written messages of hope in the Christmas cards which the families will receive. There is still time to donate money to

the cost of providing the hampers, please make payments to St Catharines Gloucester. Sort code 60-09-02, Account number 01011685, Reference Hampers.

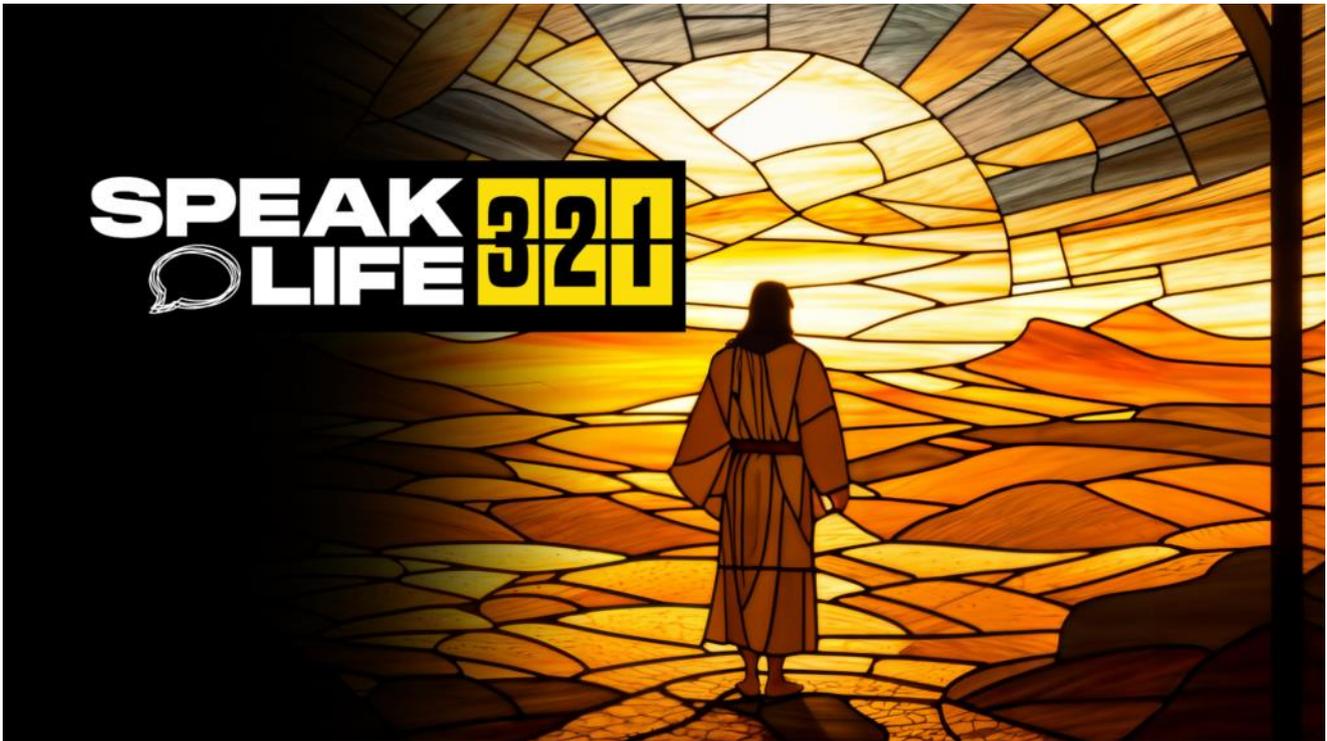
The children who attend the church have been given an Advent calendar at the beginning of December. The calendar doesn't have any chocolate, but pictures of the Christmas story to remind the children of why we have Christmas. Please pray that as each door is opened it gives the children an opportunity to think about Jesus's birth and his amazing gift to us.

This is only a little glimpse of everything happening with our Children and Young people this Christmas, but please pray for those who work with our children and young people and the messages of hope they bring, and for the children that they understand the real reason for all the fun and excitement.

Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year, Lindsey

I thought I saw some angels yesterday.
You wouldn't pay them much attention,
unless you were looking in a certain way.
Usually they look quite ordinary,
though they have a way of turning up
just when they're most required –
lending a hand, encouraging you on,
surprising you, and bringing messages
that set you off in quite a new direction.
But yesterday they were all excited,
'Come on, we've got good news for you,
come and see.'
I thought I saw some angels yesterday.

From Sightings by Kathy Galloway



Across 4 Monday evenings (5th, 12th, 19th and 26th January from 7-8.30pm) in the new year, we will be running a new course called 3-2-1 which is **an introduction to the Christian faith**. Drawing on John's Gospel, during the 4 weeks we will be looking at who Jesus is, God as Holy Trinity, what is wrong with the world, and what it means to be a Christian. Please do think about who you could invite to come. More information about the course can be found on this website: <https://321.speaklife.org.uk/course/321>. Do speak to Jo or Harry if you want to ask any questions about what it involves.

Also coming up in the new year....

From Saturday 3rd January 5pm to Sunday 4th January 5pm we will be having **24 hours of prayer** in church in one hour slots for people to pray together either in person or in our church zoom room. We will be praying for our world, for our church, for people to come to know Jesus, and for receiving gifts and offering our gifts to God in the year ahead. There will be prayer stations in church, and a prayer leaflet for those praying at home/online. Look out for more information and for sign-up sheets as we go through December.

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

The November MU meeting has always been a much anticipated craft meeting, never knowing what idea is going to be placed before us to create. A very good showing of member numbers turned up, and we came in to face, on tables, a twig stuck onto a base with a star on top!

Before the activity could get underway Pat opened the meeting, with Diane saying prayers, and Marilyn requesting those who had not sent in their reasons for the carol they have chosen for our next Christmas meeting to do so., This next meeting will be carols and readings, the service of which Marilyn is organising for the **18th December.**

Pat welcomed Rosie, who has lead us over a number of years in our craft, she has amazing ideas and again another new one. First winding the wire of tiny lights around the twig and then given a wide choice of Christmas materials/ribbons we set too with scissors to cut narrow strips to then knot round the twig finishing with a bell and label. Am hoping that photos give a better idea of the design than explanation!

At various points in the few hours the air was silent, with high concentration going on and finally a finished item, which made everyone smile.



Pat presented Rosie with a thank you gift from us all and she in turn then went on to explain an idea for next year's craft activity she has in mind, so another artistic session to look forward to in '26!

Meeting then carried on with raffle and delicious cake and tea before we all departed with our latest makes, though have to say walking through the streets with a constant sound of a bell wasn't how I had envisaged my walk home, but with such a delicate item no way was it going in a bag to carry!!

Linda



Over 100 Santa socks were made and an abundance of Smartie tubes brought in to our meeting, which in turn will go in the Christmas Hampers.

A very BIG thank you to everyone.

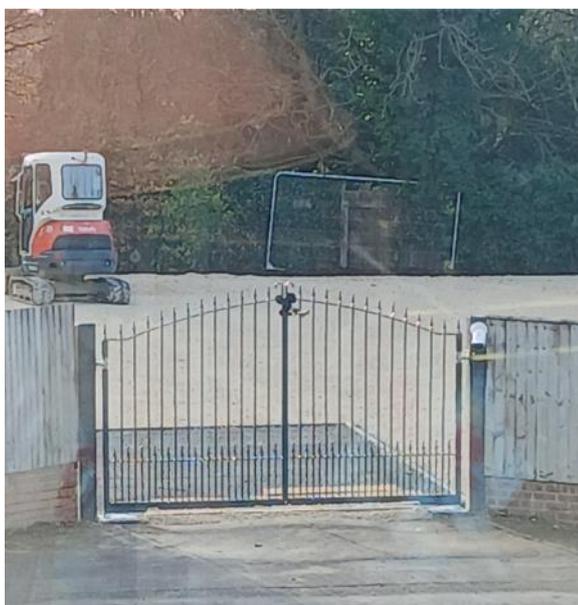
Next meeting:

18th December : Carols and Readings. Every one is welcome

A WINDOW WITH A VIEW.....FINAL CHAPTER

I wrote my first report for the July/August church magazine. A lot has happened at Hillfield House since then.

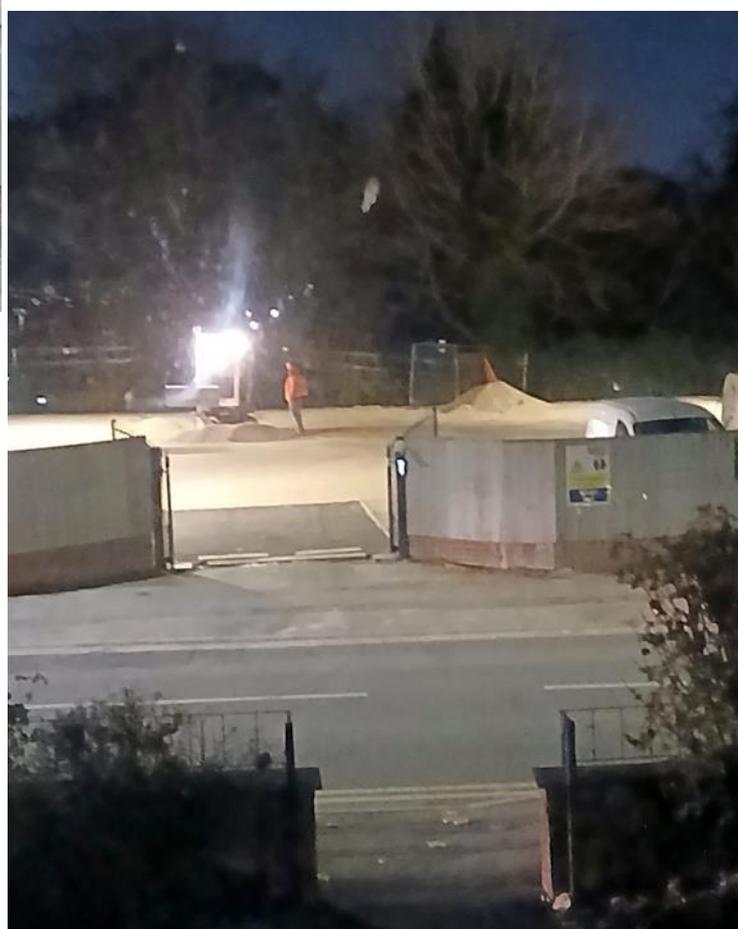
The scaffolding was taken down two weeks ago. There has been a lot of activity going on inside the house. I can see the workmen busy painting the inside of the windows, every room seems to have someone either painting the walls or doing the ceiling, a real hive of activity. Outside the carpark is finished, the workmen can now use it instead of parking on the road, and NOT getting parking tickets!!



Lights have been erected in the carpark.

New wrought iron gates have been installed at the entrance.

On Thursday 20th November at 6pm when all the vehicles had gone, I was surprised to see flashing



lights coming from the car park. It was workmen putting down the last of the sand/gravel.

Work is still being carried out at the front of the house. A ramp is being installed. Looks as if it is now all finished.

That's it! Hillfield House/Church House is now ready for its new occupants. We hope the Diocese staff will be happy in their new offices here in Denmark Rd. Let's hope we see a Christmas tree in the tower !!!!

Pat

STOP PRESS: the parish is invited in to view, on Wednesday 3rd December, the day after the Diocesan staff are due to move in- from 5.30-6.00 a quick look see!

Thanks Pat, for being our 'on the spot' reporter.

st Catharine's
Gloucester

Second Tuesday of the month at St Catharine's from 2.00 to 3.00pm

BEREAVEMENT CAFÉ

A welcoming place for anyone who has been affected by the loss of a loved one, recently or in the past – all are welcome.

Drop in for a cuppa and a chat



*For further information please telephone St.Catharine's Church
Office 01452 302438*



Daniel turns 100

Daniel (or Danny!) Jesudason was born in Tiruchirapallai, South India in January 1926 to a family of devout Christians.

He grew up in a happy and loving outdoors environment and had many adventures with his 11 siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins, including picnic trips to the lake, hunting and swimming. Family celebrations such as Christmas and weddings were fun as they would entertain each other with games, singing, acting and eating homemade snacks! Prayer and Bible study was also central to family life.

Daniel left home to train to be a mechanical engineer and he had a successful career in Burmah Shell, the British petrochemical company.

He was introduced to Rani by his uncle, Rev. Peace David, who was Rani's vicar and in 1955 Daniel and Rani married. They had a grand wedding with 500 guests and the guest of honour was the Governor of Madras. They settled in Chennai (previously Madras), where they had their five children, Marion, Leslie, Carolyn, James and Freda (Mercy).

In 1967 Daniel had the opportunity to fulfil his dreams of travelling and came to the UK on an employment voucher.

After a short spell in London, he got a job in an engineering firm in Gloucester. Daniel became an active member of St. Catharine's

church and joined the church choir. He made good friends with church members Glen and June Gaston and Janet and John Perrin, who, together with Revd. Hugh Potts, helped Daniel and Rani settle in Gloucester when the rest of the family joined him in 1969. Both Daniel and Rani have always loved being part of the St. Catharine's community and they would bring a taste of India to the church fete, when they ran an Indian food stall and raised money for church funds. Danny served on the PCC and was a regular collector for Christian Aid.

Daniel's enthusiasm for singing has continued and he has been a long-serving member of the Churchdown Male Voice Choir as well as other local choirs and he has sung in the UK and overseas. After retirement he remained active and regularly played golf and went ballroom dancing with Rani. He has even been waterskiing, horse riding and climbed Mount Vesuvius!

Nowadays, Daniel's interests are closer to home, where he follows sport, enjoys reading and has started learning photography! Wanting to share his family history with future generations, he recently compiled a family book.

Daniel has passed on his adventurous spirit and love of travel to his children and grandchildren, but his greatest legacy is his ongoing faith and trust in God, which has carried him throughout his years.

Freda

Have a very special Happy Birthday, Daniel

News from the Eco Church Relaunch Meeting

All Welcome to join us

One November afternoon before Christmas we had the first gathering of St Catharine's Eco Church Relaunch Group! After an opening prayer (see box!) we introduced ourselves and shared our reasons for being there.

After recapping on the important ideas that our earth is being **RENEWED** not replaced, and how we are **A PART OF**

not apart from the rest of creation, we then reminded ourselves of how God wants us to join in His renewing work and the church's "fifth mark of mission". Here it is:

Lord, you renew the face of
the earth and bring
newness to our world:
Restore the waters,
Refresh the air,
Revive the land,
Breathe new life into all
your creation,
and...
Begin with us.
Amen.

TO STRIVE TO SAFEGUARD THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION AND SUSTAIN AND RENEW THE LIFE OF THE EARTH.

There were ten of us present which was encouraging and in pairs we looked at five different themes of developing eco church. These themes are given by A Rocha and helped us to make some plans for action. The areas are:

Worship and teaching

Buildings and Energy

Land and Nature

Global and Community Engagement

Lifestyle (living joyfully and sustainably as followers of Christ)

Looking at the A Rocha website (<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>) and our own previous 2020 Bronze award survey we discovered there have been a few improvements already made. It was very positive and encouraging to see what church is doing already, and to be working together discussing these things, but we were also challenged as to how much harder it is to get the silver award. We chose the things we will try to do in the next 30 days, two months, six months and year. **If you would like to see our action plan and pray for us / get involved practically, do email me and I will be very happy to send it to you** (deniseawang@outlook.com).

We discovered the synergy that comes from working together as we brought different skills and gifts to this, which is *not so much one area* of church life as **a thread that runs through everything we do**, and we very much want to welcome everyone as there is something for everyone. Within our group of ten, many of us tended naturally towards one of the five areas, but we could still do with some younger 'techy' people who would like to put their passion for creation care into action with us. If anyone reading this has children or grandchildren who would like to be an eco-church volunteer, we want them to get involved too. Our next meeting is in school time, but we are happy to meet at another time too to include anyone at work / school, so just let me know. We did have one person join by zoom so we can do the hybrid approach too!

Denise W (our Eco Church Encourager!)

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 21st January 2026 1 - 2.30pm @ church

HIT ANY KEY!

... is up to his neck in things office-shelf and "Bash the [Santa] Rat", but his alter-ego (Richard) has in his garden a lot of fruit bushes that seem to have arrived without his intervention, and some little fig trees that have grown roots as he wanted them to! One redcurrant bush, three red gooseberry bushes, a few green gooseberry bushes and three fig trees. All are available 'bareroot' (i.e. without a pot) and will need tending next year, after which you should see a bit of fruit. Please let me know what you would like: to be fair to everyone I'll accept requests until December 14th. If there are more requests than items at that time I'll select the recipients randomly.



Ed says: Couldn't leave Azzie out, even tho' he didn't have time to write this time!

Richard

Christmas Tree Recycling in partnership with Just Helping Book by midnight on Tues 6 January 2026

Our largest fundraiser, let Longfield Hospice volunteers collect your Christmas tree for recycling, help the environment and help us to raise vital funds for our hospice care.



Collection: 10 Jan-13 Jan

Collecting, for voluntary donations, from GL1, GL2 2xx, GL2 3xx, GL2 4xx and more.

01453 886868

christmas.trees@longfield.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD

- * **CONGRATULATIONS Evie married Alex on 30th November**
- * Listen out for the launch of Kingsholm's new school song
- * A new Head teacher has been appointed to Kingsholm School, Tony Larner, who will be starting in January. Please be praying for him and all at School for a good transition
- * Christmas card recycling this year will be from Sunday 4th January to Sunday 11th January. Leave your cards in the Galilee. Remember, DON'T cut the cards: leave them whole, or they cannot be used to make new cards to support the work of Cobalt in Cheltenham.



We are a non profit making business and charity shop situated in the Atrium at Gloucester Royal Hospital selling Bibles, Christian and secular books, greetings cards, stationery, children's toys and books, Christian supplies etc. **Calendars and diaries for 2026 at amazing prices and a selection of Christmas Cards with Christian theme.**

The shop is open Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 5pm. closed weekends and Bank holidays. I volunteer Monday and Tuesday mornings and am happy to take orders.

Jane B



Gloucester FoodBank are celebrating being in existence for 20 years

They have a fairly new, very enthusiastic Director in Vicky Ranford and she has issued an appropriately named Baked Bean Bulletin, highlighting the ever present need for food, donations and volunteers. They

have a website for more information but the list below are the current needs. Perhaps an item added to your weekly groceries? Or could you become a local collection point for your road?

Donations of the following would be welcome:

Baked beans Cooking sauce in jars Long-life milk Sugar

Tinned Custard, Fruit, Ham, Meat, Rice Pudding, Vegetables

Cat food Dog food

Women's deodorant Men's deodorant Hair Conditioner

Razors for shaving Sanitary towels

Gloucester.foodbank.org.uk



Member Editor 2025
Association for Church Editors

**Copydate for February 2026 is
25 January**

Word.doc in 16pt Segoe UI would be brilliant. If you are designing a whole item could you please use an A4 portrait format. This makes an editor's life somewhat easier.

We aim to produce the edition by the following Sunday.

As we are now producing hard copies as well as online, it is really helpful to have items in by the copydate.

Send your pieces to "magazine@stcatharine.org.uk" as soon as they're ready!! Thanks. Richard and Lesley



Vicar: **Revd. Jo Pestell**
Ordained Local Minister: **Revd. Clare Negreira**
Curate: **Revd. Harry Bennett**
Reader: **Marilyn Taylor**
Church Wardens: Bruce Matheson and Elspeth King

Church Office: Ellie Grice
01452-302438 egrice@stcatharine.org.uk

Parish Youth and Children's Worker:
Lindsey Power lpower@stcatharine.org.uk

Parochial Church Council Officers

Safeguarding Officer: Lesley Reed
07484-932596 safeguarding@stcatharine.org.uk

PCC Treasurers: Ed Reed & David Nicholls

Main times the church building is open in the week:

Sunday: Depends on the Sunday, always open by 9.30am
Monday: 9.00 am-11.30am (Morning Prayer 8.45-9.15)
Wednesday: 10.00 am-12 noon (drop-in, inc. free food and English classes)
Thursday: 9.30am-12 noon (service 10-10.45 plus refreshments)

Web: www.stcatharine.org.uk **Social media:** @stcatsglos

Address: London Road, Gloucester GL2 0RR

Phone: 01452-302438

Registered Charity No. 1132760

Jesus is what we have in common

