Shelswell News

The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches

Cottisford
Fringford
Hardwick
Mixbury
Stoke Lyne

SHELSWELL † PARISHES

Finmere
Godington
Hethe
Newton Purcell
Stratton Audley



Image by Bálint Kobán via pexels.com

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

November 2026 **£1**

SHELSWELL BENEFICE MISSION STATEMENT

The Shelswell Family of Churches aims to bring people closer to God and to show the love of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to everyone.

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THE PARISHES ARE PART OF THE DEANERY OF BICESTER AND ISLIP AND THE DORCHESTER EPISCOPAL AREA OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

HOLY TRINITY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HETHE,
Mass: 4pm Saturday.
Weekday Mass: 9.30am Monday
Priest: Father Craig Davies , Henley House, 12 The Causeway, Bicester, OX26 6AW.
Telephone: 01869 253277
Website: http://www.holytrinityhethe.co.uk/

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Deadlines for the **December** edition of Shelswell News
To Magazine Correspondents**:** **Midday on Friday 13th November**
Correspondents to Editor**:** **Midday on Sunday 15th November at editor@shelswellparishes.info**

All articles must be submitted in WORD or LIBRE OFFICE in a format that can be COPIED AND PASTED PLEASE - Many thanks for your cooperation.

www.shelswellparishes.info

SHELSWELL NEWS ARCHIVE to look up previous issues of the Shelswell News please contact the Benefice office.

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Remember, remember, the fifth of November,
gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason
why gunpowder treason
should ever be forgot.



November 5th Fireworks
(Claire Maxim)

There's a lot of remembering in November. We start the month by remembering All [of the] Saints on 1st November, then we remember all those who have died at All Souls (this year the benefice service is on 1st November, as it gets relocated to the nearest Sunday).

Next is Bonfire Night, or Guy Fawkes Night if you prefer, when we remember an attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament. And then, through Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday we remember the people who have died in wars, thinking particularly of members of the armed forces.

That first half of November can feel very dark, not just physically as the winter light gently dims, but also emotionally for those who remember, perhaps with sadness.

To remember is to call to mind, to sort through our memories, and bring them to the front of our minds. That's exactly what we do at All Souls, as we remember with joy and sorrow those people who influenced our lives before they died. It's also what we might do on Bonfire Night as we recall the story of Guy Fawkes. It's what happens on Remembrance Sunday too.

The opposite of to remember is to forget. And we all know we can learn from history, from the people we meet, and from the stories that are handed down to us. We shouldn't forget. But I would like to consider another word which is the opposite of remember.

Dismember. To remove limbs; to cut to pieces; to disjoin, divide or partition. It all sounds deeply unpleasant – and so it is. War injuries can be horrific; political acts of terrorism can be horrific; being separated by death from those we love can feel horrible. But this violent word "dismember" can lead us to a different way of thinking about "remember" – re-member.

To re-member is to heal, to make whole, to remove division. To re-member is a deeply Christ-like act. If we a truly people who re-member, then we work to heal those who are wounded. We take seriously divisions in our families, among our friends and with our neighbours, and we work to find our points in common. We will never agree with everyone all of the time, and yet we can work together for the common good. We can work together in praise of God, and in thankfulness for all that we are given.

Jesus Christ healed people, and we are the body of Christ. We can join in that work of healing divisions – if we choose to remember well.

This comes with my love and prayers for us all

Claire Maxim (Rector)

BIBLE READINGS

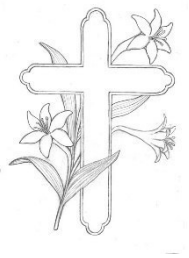


Sunday 1st November	All Saints Day	Revelation 7 v9-17 1 John 3 v1-3 Matthew 5 v1-12
Sunday 8th November	3rd Sunday before Advent/ Remembrance Sunday	Amos 5 v18-24 1 Thessalonians 4 v13-end Matthew 25 v1-13

Other readings may be used for Remembrance Services

Sunday 15th November	2nd Sunday before Advent	Zephaniah 1 v7 and 12-end 1 Thessalonians 5 v1-11 Matthew 25 v14-30
Sunday 22nd November	Christ the King	Ezekiel 34 v11-16 and 20-24 Ephesians 1 v15-end Matthew 25 v31-end
Sunday 29th November	Advent Sunday	Isaiah 64 v1-9 1 Corinthians 1 v3-9 Mark 13 v24-end

SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE DEPARTED



Each year, near to All Saints' Day, we hold a special service to commemorate all those who have died, particularly those for whom we have taken funerals in the benefice over the last couple of years. This year the service will be on:

Sunday 1st November at 4pm in Fringford Church

We will shortly be issuing personal invitations to all the families we have met in the course of taking funerals in the past two years, but we would like, through the magazine, to take the opportunity to invite any others who have lost loved ones, however long ago, or who would like to attend for any other reason. It is a quiet reflective service, and will include the opportunity to light a candle to remember a loved one. Many people have said that they find the service helpful, and we hope that this year's service will again prove useful.

If you would like a loved one remembered by name in the service then please let any member of Ministry Team know.



MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION
AND SOUP LUNCH



Thursday 5th November

12:00 midday

St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne

If you need a lift, please contact Becky at the Benefice office, details inside front cover



"Start the Journey"

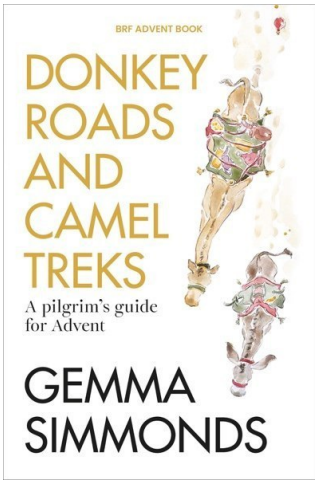
ADVENT FAMILY EVENT

Saturday 28th November 2026
3pm – 5pm

Stratton Audley Church
Christmas Crafts
Story & Tea

There is no charge for this session
Ages 3 - 11 but everyone is welcome

SHELSWELL ADVENT BOOK GROUP



You are invited to join the Shelswell Advent Book Group via zoom on Wednesdays 7-8pm ,2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd December.

We'll be discussing "Donkey Rides and Camel Treks" by Gemma Simmonds, who is a very entertaining and down to earth theologian and nun.

Bring your opinions and your own hot chocolate / tea / tipple of choice. RSVP to Claire via Rector@shelswellparishes.info

If you'd prefer an in person book group, please let Claire Maxim or Penny Wood know, and we will be in touch to establish a suitable time.

Out of the Blue!

Oxford University's internationally acclaimed A Cappella sensation!

In aid of Helen and Douglas House and St Peter's Church

Back by Public demand!



Begin your festive fun with **Out of the Blue**

St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne

28th November 2026

Doors open 6pm

Drinks from 6pm Performance 7pm–8pm

Mick's Hooky ale, wine and Clive's homemade pies will be available to purchase before the show and throughout the evening

Don't miss out, tickets at £10 each, are limited to 90 and will sell out quickly.

Order NOW to avoid disappointment.

janey@oxford-educational.co.uk 07810 120457 or WhatsApp.

Bring friends, grab a drink, and enjoy a fantastic night out!

The Shelswell Group of Parishes

You are invited to the
Shelswell 'not' By The Sea

Christmas Party

3-5pm at Newton Purcell Hall

on Wednesday 16th December 2026

With festive food and drink, activities and carols

Lifts can be arranged. RSVP Penny Wood 01869 277310
penelope.wood@btopenworld.com

You are very welcome to bring a friend

CONNECT TO WORK



Could you or someone you know benefit from extra support to find work?

If you know someone whose health condition, disability, caring responsibilities or other life challenges are making employment feel out of reach, Connect to Work could help.

The programme is run by Enterprise Oxfordshire, a company that is owned by Oxfordshire County Council. It offers free, personalised one-to-one support tailored to your individual circumstances. Participants can build confidence, overcome barriers and take steps towards employment at a pace that works for them.

You can find details at enterpriseoxfordshire.com/connecttowork/

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS FROM SOUTH SUDAN

On 15th October Brian and Liz Welters and Penny Wood attended a Christian Aid Roadshow in Coventry about South Sudan. The evening started with two songs from the Coventry and Warwickshire Gospel Choir, then we heard from three excellent speakers.

The speakers shared insights into the positive differences local partners are making to the challenges faced by communities in South Sudan: the political crisis; the economic crisis; climate shocks; and the grave humanitarian needs.

Over 10 million people, nearly 82% of the poulation, are in need of humanitarian assistance.



FAITH COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Rev'd Tut Mai Nguoth, Deputy Executive Director of the Presyterian Relief and Development Agency in South Sudan, spoke about his experience of working alongside communities affected by poverty and crisis. He emphasised the importance of churches in creating change, the role of faith communities in supporting people facing injustice and how collective action can bring hope.

SOCIAL CHANGE LED BY LOCAL PEOPLE

Angelina Nyajima Simon Jial is the founder and Director of Hope Restoration South Sudan, which works with women and girls affected by gender-based violence. She talked about the realities facing girls and women, the importance of change being led by people at the local level, and how churches can stand alongside communities working for justice and hope.

CHURCHES IN SOUTH SUDAN WORKING FOR PEACE AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

James Wani, Christian Aid's Programme and Partnership Lead in South Sudan, spoke about the importance of churches in creating change and bringing hope. His work connects peacebuilding, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods, with a strong focus on locally led change.

We discovered James Wani knows Bishop Zachariah of Wulu Diocese and will pass on our greetings!

The need for peace is high on the agenda - there is no education without peace, no development without peace. The role of **education** in peace-building was stressed. James Wani's message was summed up by the need for Big Heads, Big Hearts, Big Hands, echoing the Christian Aid slogan, Give - Act - Pray

It was heartening to hear how, against the background of so many challenges, work with communities is bringing hope in South Sudan. The title of one the songs by the Gospel Choir was, 'Never Give Up'.

*The collection at the recent Benefice harvest service amounted to **£364.15***
which was shared between Katharine House Hospice and Wulu.

May we never give up and continue to pray for the Girls' Primary School in Wulu, contribute towards the Teachers' Incentive Scheme and act.

If you are able to write to your MP about the ongoing crisis in South Sudan, please contact Liz, Brian or Penny by email for a letter based on Christian Aid's template. lizwelters@yahoo.co.uk brianwelters@yahoo.com penelope.wood@btopenworld.com

..o..O. ROUND THE BENEFICE IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER .O..o..

FOOD FOR THOUGHT SPECIAL SERVICE FOR PETS ON 20TH SEPTEMBER

The breakfast tables were set out at St Peters, Stoke Lyne with the various choices of croissants, cereals, toast and accompaniments. When we made our selection, we made our way to the tables set out for the service. All the pets were welcomed with little doggy treats from Jan. Five dogs attended and all were well-behaved.

After breakfast Ali conducted a very interesting service. The talk was from Genesis chapter 1, verses 20-25 read out by members of the congregation about how God created animals of all description across the world. After this there was a discussion about what it meant to us to have a pet, or how it could help others. There is something very special about the relationship between people and animals.

Having your dog greet you after you have been out is special especially if you live on your own. Most cats love to sit on your lap to be stroked. Animals can bring companionship when we are lonely. Also, assistance dogs are worth their weight in gold in the help they give to different people who need help. This is only a fraction of what was discussed about animals.



Attendees at the Food for Thought Pet Service (Ali Miller)

During the service we sang three hymns, all had an animal or a bird in them. Ali started with the prayers, assisted by other members of the congregation. While the prayers were being said 5 of the congregation sat on the floor stroking the dogs and Jan helped with her doggy treats.

Ali thanked all for coming to the service and also thanked the dogs.

Thank you to all who helped in any way by bringing food, helping to set up tables etc. Thank you Ali for leading the service.

Rena Andrews

MIDWEEK COMMUNION, 1st OCTOBER, ST PETERS, STOKE LYNE

Most of us get there early to help set up the tables and chairs ready for lunch after Communion, also to get the pans on to heat. We all made our way to the chairs set out for the Communion service.

The Revd Liz Welters welcomed all to the service. Rena read this month's Gospel reading taken from Luke chapter 10 verses 1 to 12, known as "Jesus sends out the seventy-two" which details how He sent them out ahead of Him two by two to every town and place where He was about to go.

Liz then administered Communion assisted by our new Rector Dr Claire Maxim. Prayers were said for peace across the world, our King and Government, and the Shelswell Benefice, people who have been bereaved or ill, or people known to us who are suffering.

We then moved over to the tables set for lunch where there was a choice of two soups, with bread rolls, followed by a choice of three puddings.

Thank you Liz for managing to keep this service going, also to those who provided the food.

The next Midweek Communion will be 5th November at St Peter's Church. Please come along and give it a try. Lifts can be arranged.

Rena Andrews

"SHELSWELL-BY-THE-SEA", 12th AND 13th OCTOBER

This took place at "The Old School" Newton Purcell, recently renovated with kitchen facilities and toilets to make a comfortable village hall which is an excellent venue for small parties.

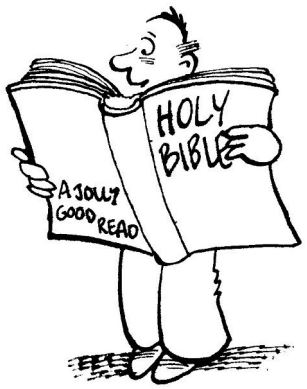
When we arrived tables were set out with various items, of things you can do or make, newspapers and magazines to keep up with what is going on in the world, a jigsaw puzzle and dominoes - take your choice. Some ladies had brought along their own things to work on, like beautiful colouring pages which would look lovely framed, knitting and crocheting.

We were greeted with tea or coffee with cake and biscuits or fruit juice. These two days are good for people to socialise and chat with other villagers. While the food was cooking, Liz (the Revd. Liz Welters) gave us an autumn quiz to stir our brains. After the quiz she gave her thought for the day.

We then moved to the tables set for lunch where there was a choice of chicken or beef casserole with either a jacket potato with vegetables or rice followed by a choice of desserts with cream or custard. We were offered Shloer, apple juice or orange juice to drink. It is so nice chatting over lunch and speaking on various subjects.

Our new Rector, Dr Claire Maxim, gave a talk on St Wilfrid who was born in Northumberland in 633 and died in 709. Having just come from Northumberland, Claire gave a very interesting and humorous story on his life. We were then having tea and cake again.

Day 2 was similar to Day 1, with different casseroles and puddings. After the lunch Liz brought out a book on sayings, and we had to guess where they originated from. Strangely enough a lot of them came from the Bible.



We then had a "Marion" quiz (devised by the late Marion Crowther who used to be a regular attendee) with boys names and girls names. Thank you Penny (Licenced Lay Minister Penny Wood) for organising this event, and everyone who provided food and lifts: Penny, Liz, Claire, June and everyone involved in giving us two nice days.

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE ON
WEDNESDAY 6TH DECEMBER.
PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY
AND GET YOUR GLAD RAGS OUT!

Rena Andrews

REGISTRY

Funeral
Susan Gahan (née Wise)
5th August 1944 - 16th August 2026
St Michael and All Angels, Fringford



The funeral of Susan Gahan took place at St Michael & All Angels, Fringford on Monday 7 September 2026. It was attended by many family members, friends and neighbours. Susan was a 'Fringfordian' through and through; born here, and lived here all her life. She wrote her obituary together with her daughter Melanie, and it very much recorded Fringford life and all the people she cared for, and who cared for her. Some extracts from that obituary are given below. [The full text can be obtained from Melanie whose email is: minniemelgreen@gmail.com *A video recording is also available.]*

Susan [Sue/Susie], the daughter of Elise and Dick Wise, was born on 5th August 1944 along with her twin sister Anne. Their brother Richard was born four years later in May. The family lived at Laurels Farm, Fringford, with Dick's brother Jack who also worked on the farm.

Dick Wise was a keen musician, who formed his own band (Dick Wise's Orchestra) where he played the drums, and performed in various venues in the district, and favoured Glenn Miller type music. Susan had fond memories of her childhood at Laurels Farm and also in her later years when her brother Richard took over the running of the farm.

When Susan was around five years old the family moved to 5 The Manor, Fringford, next door to the village post office run by Mrs Powell. Susan, Anne and Richard soon became good friends with Mr and Mrs Powell's daughter Gillian, and with Mr and Mrs Horwood's children, Win and John who also lived at the Manor. This friendship blossomed, they shared lots of good times together and continued to do so for many years. Sadly, soon after moving to 5 The Manor, Susan's parents spilt up, but her mother Elise and the children continued to live there. Lots of good times with friends and family were had, especially when her Auntie Grace, Uncle Reg, cousin Marg and family came to stay.

Susan attended the local village school (which is now a private house). During her years there Mr Standen was the Head Master. He was very strict, but his wife was much kinder and Susan had fond memories of Mrs Standen reading to all the children, in particular the book Toad of Toad Hall. The toilets for the school children were located outside, and Susan always remembered how cold it felt in school even though there were coal fires to keep the pupils warm. Local ladies Gladys Hicks, Ruth Powell and Mrs Young were the dinner ladies and cooked the lunches.

In those days, children in the countryside had quite a lot of freedom, being able to play freely and safely in their surroundings. Susan remembers having picnics and playing in the stream under Hethe bridge where she once lost a shoe, which was never to be found. (Those from Fringford know this bridge as Hethe Bridge, those from Hethe, always refer to it as Fringford Bridge – it's a standing joke between both villages).

At the age of 11, in 1955, Susan went to Highfield Secondary Modern School, Bicester (now Bicester School). She enjoyed her time there making good friends: Ann Walsh, Graham Blake (Brother-in-law – sadly deceased), Ronnie Lapper and many more. Although Susan and Anne were twins, they had very different personalities / characters. Anne was very sporty, loved netball and tennis, whereas Susan was

unable to join in those kinds of activities, but she was happy just to watch other children having a good time.

During Susan's teenage years and into her 20s she would attend local dances, where she and her brother Richard would Jive dance together. It was at this time that Susan developed her love for Cliff Richard and rock and roll music. As she got older Susan used to visit The Butchers Arms where her mother Elise worked as a bar maid for the local landlady Peggy Hutton. A good night was always had by all, usually finding the party continuing back at 5 The Manor.

In August 1970 Susan married a local Fringford lad Pat Gahan. They moved to 15 St Michael's Close. Her daughter Melanie was born on 13th January 1971. When Susan and Pat spilt up in 1976, Susan went back to 5 The Manor with Melanie, and lived with her mother Elise for a number of years. In 1984, Susan and Melanie moved to 18 Wise Crescent (the crescent was named after her Grandfather) where Susan has lived ever since. Next door lived her nephew Royston and his family, and watching Royston and Tash's children, Lucy and Oliver, grow brought great pleasure to Susan. Their individual, loving, caring personalities always made her smile and brightened up her day.

Royston and Melanie have always been very close. He has always been there for her, through the good times and the challenging ones. They would usually make a joke about things, to lift Susan's spirits or to tease her, like always mentioning a certain stand-up comedian with a colourful tongue, knowing full well Susan would tell them both off. There was one particular time, on a winter's night during a power cut, that Susan, Royston and Melanie played cards in the limited candle light as there was very little else to do, but when the lights came back it appeared that a little cheating had been going on in order for a win to be achieved! However, we all laughed about it, and never forgot.

When Susan left school, she went to work for her Uncle Jack and Auntie Mavis, in the local village shop until she became pregnant with Melanie. When Melanie was 5 years old, and attending the local village primary school, Susan returned to work at the local village shop until it was sold to another couple (Bill and Sue Jones). Susan then took on the role of Home Help for a local lady (Mrs Perrin) who lived in The Manor. Susan did this for a number of years until sadly Mrs Perrin passed away. Susan then returned to being a full-time mum for Melanie.

Susan loved living in Fringford, it was where her family home was. In the early years everyone knew each other and would always help each other out when needed. The different families, different characters, the fetes, the intervillage sports day, the pub, parties and village events always brought the village community together. During any village gathering that involved music, especially when Status Quo was playing, Susan always found herself on the dance floor with Chrissie Hunt, giving it her all, "headbanging" to the music. She loved helping out at the Children's Christmas party and the Pensioners Christmas lunch. The discos that were run by Martin Day (who was a neighbour in Wise Crescent) were well attended.

Sadly, as the years passed, things change, people moved on and Susan, with age, felt the community spirit slowly disappeared. Susan always referred and talked about the good old days and the original Fringfordians with passion and love in her heart. Susan saw lots of changes through the years, within the village, but always loved to talk about Fringford antics and the characters involved. The family life was the way of life for Susan and many others in Fringford and surrounding villages, and very important.

In 1996, at the age of 52, Susan was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. She went through an operation followed by weeks of radiotherapy and medication, but with the support, love and strength from her family and friends she fought it and won. However, as the years passed, Susan's health deteriorated, suffering with severe arthritis, and other complex medical conditions. She had to have a back operation and also a hip replacement. Unfortunately, her mobility became greatly reduced, necessitating the use of a walking frame, and adaptations being made to the home. Now Susan needed additional support / care,

and Melanie returned home to live with her mum and provide the extra support / care needed. Melanie has remained her registered main carer ever since, whilst retaining a full-time job. As time passed, and sadly due to the result of a fall, Susan lost all mobility, and became a wheelchair user. As Susan's care needs changed, a care package was implemented and throughout the years various local Care Companies were involved in Susan's care, whilst her daughter still remained very much involved and became Susan's voice. Susan met some lovely carers throughout the years, who touched Susan's heart massively, and to whom both Susan and Melanie will be forever grateful.

In her obituary Susan went on to mention, with heartfelt thanks, the many people – relatives, friends, neighbours, care companies, medical professionals etc – whose help over the years had contributed so much to her life. But above all, she thanked her daughter Melanie – Mel - the most important person in her life (well, apart from Cliff Richard), for all her love, care and support. She worked so hard dedicating all her time to ensure Susan's life was as good as it could be.



CLUB NEWS

SHELSWELL WI

Our visitor for October was Gillian Cane with 'A Girl's Life in the Army,' once again Gillian (a repeat speaker) didn't disappoint and we were thoroughly entertained.

It was a lovely autumn day for our October walk from Bure Park to Aldershot Farm followed by refreshments. Thank you to Lesley who organises our monthly walks.

At the end of October we are looking forward to visiting Bucknell WI for a group meeting, we will let you know how we get on in next months newsletter.

In November we welcome a local resident Christina McCulloch. Christina will be speaking to us about her charity work in Ukraine.

December sees us in the village hall celebrating the festive season. We will be eating together and enjoying some festive fun.

If you would like to come and join us please contact Sandra at sandrambickmore@gmail.com. Everyone is welcome. We enjoy a variety of speakers and activities during the year. We take part in group events, National events, holidays in person and online classes to name but a few. It's never too late to make new friends or learn a new skill.

We meet in Fringford village hall on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30pm.

SHELSWELL READING GROUP

The Shelswell Reading group is a great opportunity to read a variety of books, from best sellers to classics and everything in between. If you are not sure about joining, why not come along for a meeting to meet the group and see what we are about. No need to have read the book for that month - just come along and meet all of us and listen in. If you are interested, please let Jane Birnage know - janebirnage@icloud.com 07770 220605

Our next meetings are:

- Wednesday 21st October (Manor Grange, Cottisford)
- Tuesday 17th November (3 Kennel Cottages, Cottisford)
- Monday 14th December (Venue TBC)

Our next book is '**Fairy Tale' by Stephen King**

There was lots to talk about at our September with two books to be reviewed**!** **Yesteryear by Caro Claire Burke** started with promise for some of us, with the hope it may provide insight into influencers, trad wives, the influence of the internet, and a good story… but universally, we were disappointed.

Words used were random, inconsistent, silly, irritating, not memorable, 'made me angry', 'worst book ever read' and that we felt 'duped'. We all wondered why it was so successful, other than the film rights were bought almost before the book was finished. We missed the satire and most of us missed the humour, both of which are widely reported to be themes of the book. Funnily enough however, the book did prompt lots of discussion – mainly about the missed opportunities that the book had to really make it a compelling read…

Honour by Elif Shafak was however much better received by everyone, although not everyone had finished it. The overall view that it was a very well written book with many themes and stories. In fact, we felt that Elif had so many stories, many of which could have stood in their own right, that the book was hard to keep track of at times.

However, we all felt that the book came together well, with themes of love, revenge, forgiveness, family, belonging and of course, the background of 'honour killing'. It was recommended that we listen to interviews with the author, who is imaginative and full of stories herself.

Each part of the book brought light on different themes – prison, growing up as an immigrant in London, need to belong to a tribe, midwife life in Turkey, etc. All the characters were flawed in some way, but nearly all were understandable and sympathetic. The book started a little slowly, as we got used to the characters and different time frames, but the pace picked up half way though and the twist at the end surprised most of us.. Overall a good book, maybe not quite as good as her others, but once again, provided lots of discussion for our group.

Other books discussed:

Life Out of Order – Audrey Niffenegger (Follow up to Time Travellers Wife)
Inside Story – Martin Amis
Rivers of the Sky - Elif Shafak
The Boy with the Top Knot – Sathnam Sanghera
London Falling - Patrick Radden Keef
Agrippa - Robert Harris



SHELSWELL POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

The theme for our October meeting was CLOTHES - a topic you may remember from three years ago, but which threw up many new examples.

Khalil Gibran (1883-1931) has many negative things to say in his poem ***On Clothes*** about clothing, which he regarded as less natural and honest than nudity. His sentiments are echoed by Akaa Mahadevi (1130-90), an Indian poet, in ***On Her Decision to Stop Wearing Clothes.*** Both of these poets worry about the false messages conveyed by clothing, but for Jenny Joseph (1932-2018) in ***Warning*** they will be symbols of the glorious freedom of an eccentric old age.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674) in a short, powerful poem marvels at the beauty of his lover's clothing, using the startlingly innovative word 'liquefaction' to describe the movement of a dress, in ***Upon Julia's Clothes.*** Elizabeth Moody (1737-1813), on the other hand, in her poem ***To Fashion,*** imagines a Goddess of Fashion and pays tributes to her power over humans, which can be positive and negative at the same time. She hopes that Wisdom will prevail in those who follow fashion. The poem, with some tinkering, could easily be about Artificial Intelligence in our own times!

Poverty is illustrated in the poems ***A Dressed Man and a Naked Man*** by George Orwell (1903-51), which is set in a tramps' hostel, and ***The Song of the Shirt*** by Thomas Hood (1799-1845). In the latter poem a poor seamstress bemoans her state. Hood wrote the poem to bring to public notice the exploitation of such women and it eventually resulted in helping secure better pay and conditions. In ***Dressmaker*** by Eireann Lorsung (1986-2008), a woman talks about the world of the senses which making clothes stimulates and which is lost when the dressmaker retires.

Clothes that no longer please the wearer are ***The Red Dress*** by Dorothy Parker (1893-1967) and ***The Plaid Dress*** by Edna St Vincent Millay (1892-1950). For Parker the dress symbolises the foolish romanticism of youth and Millay, even though the plaid is on an underdress, hates its garish tastelessness.

In ***Red Slippers*** by Amy Lowell (1874-1925), a display of red shoes in a shop window is a colourful contrast to the ' flaws of gray, windy sleet' of a winter's day in the city. She appreciates their variety and impact, but is saddened by the fact that hurrying passers-by are more taken with a gimmicky display in another shop window.

A leather biker's jacket in the poem ***Black Jackets*** by Thom Gunn (1929-2004) becomes symbolic of the wearer's life, with the slogan 'Born to lose' on its surface. In the anonymous poem ***The Embrace of Thread*** , an old coat represents the lives of those who have worn it , and in ***Whispers of Worn Denim,*** similarly anonymous, the garment tells its own story of a life lived. In ***Ode to my Socks*** by Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), the poet contemplates a gift from a friend which symbolises their relationship. The socks are things of beauty and great comfort, and doubly precious because of who knitted them.

The final poem, ***Father's Old Blue Cardigan,*** by Anne Carson, brings the reader up short with its story of her realisation that her father had dementia. Yet there is a feeling of hope and continuity, because she, although living a life different from his, now wears the cardigan.

Our next meeting will be on either the first or second Tuesday in November. If you would like to join us, contact me on 01869 811994 or at judith.harvey@live.co.uk

REPORTS FROM THE PARISHES

Cottisford and Juniper Hill

St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: Charles Jackson, Cottisford House, Cottisford — Tel 01280 848247
TREASURER: David Barnes — Tel 07856822030

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner — Tel: 01869 277366
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sandra Bickmore, Thatch End, Juniper Hill — sandrambickmore@gmail.com

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 1st November 9.15 am Holy Communion (CW)
Remembrance Sunday 8th November 10.45 am Remembrance Service
Sunday 15th November 10.45 am Holy Communion (BCP)

COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The next get together being organised by the Social Committee is the annual bonfire. This will take place on Saturday 7 November 5.30pm -7.30pm. As usual we as well as the bonfire we will be serving sausages in rolls and a choice of hot soups. Everyone is welcome to our Bonfire event.

Also during November and December we are arranging a Coffee Morning and a Pop Up Pub dates to follow.

We are also looking forward to 2027 with the popular Snowdrop Sunday in February, once again watch out for the date.

We are always looking for new ideas and helpers to join our small but very friendly Social Committee which organises the events in Cottisford and Juniper Hill. If you are interested please contact either Jane Birnage or Sandra Bickmore.

Finmere

St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Michelle Myers, 4 White Houses, Mere Road, Finmere — Tel: 07927 393657
TREASURER: Peter Goss, 6 Stable Close Finmere — Tel: 07941 322 840
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Katherine Grimston, The Old Rectory, Finmere — Tel: 01280 848364
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Paul Nash Email: paan63@yahoo.co.uk — Tel 01280 848268

Church Services

Sunday 1st November 10.45 am 'Connect' Informal Worship at Finmere Village Hall
Remembrance Sunday 8th November 9.15 am Remembrance Service
Sunday 15th November 9.15 am Holy Communion

Finmere Village Hall



The village hall is available for hire.
Facilities include AV system with a new projector and larger screen, plus sound system. Fitted kitchen, Meeting room, Patio doors onto the children's play area, storage spaces for regular users and WiFi . For hall booking enquiries, please visit www.myfinmere.com/villagehall



Allotments



With the growing season largely over, it's time for …. Chutney season. Where is the WI when you need them? Anyone got any good recipies?

We have a surplus of plums and figs in the freezer and a fridge full of apples and pears. So I guess it is apple and pear chutney and fig and plum jam. Also a reasonable collection of chillies that can be used to give both the chutney and jam that extra kick 😊. Whilst thinking of chillies, it is also time to bring them indoors before the temparature drops any further. I only realised a year ago that chilli plants are not necessarily annual and if placed on an indoor window sill for the winter, will happily restart in the spring. But I have digressed – back to chutneys and the first task of sterilizing the kilner jars …. well, those that haven't still got last year's chutney in them 😊

Interested in an allotment - with all allotments now taken, our waiting list is now open again, please visit ww.myfinmere.com/poorsplot and select the enquiry link.



Please come along and support Finmere's

Tuesday Teas

If you are at home in the day, please pop into the Village Hall, 2nd Tuesday of the month

Tuesday 10th November

2 - 4 pm

Everyone welcome – no charge

We would love to grow the numbers so please bring a friend!

If you need transport, please contact Jo (07974 740312) or Katherine (07770 804025)

If anyone would like to help out, we need help serving refreshments, setting out tables, providing lifts and BAKING CAKES! Your baking costs can be reimbursed - No need to volunteer every month, just help when you can...



Some Finmere related links:

Finmere facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/groups/finmereandlittletingewick/
Shelswell Parishes website at – www.shelswellparishes.info/finmere
Finmere Parish Council website at – www.finmerepc.org
Village hall news at – www.myfinmere.com
Finmere Poor's Plot – www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot
Old Finmere history website – www.myfinmere.com/history
Finmere on Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finmereipedia
Finmere Primary School - www.finmere.oxon.sch.uk

Fringford

St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Max Todd 5, The Manor, Fringford Tel 07936 760684
TREASURER: Christina McCullagh, 5 Crosslands, Fringford Tel 07867 515207
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Penny Wood ,as below
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Penny Wood, 8 Crosslands, Fringford Tel 01869 277310
VILLAGE HALL CORRESPONDENT: Christine Underwood Tel 01869 278949
WEBSITE www.fringford.info

ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SERVICES & EVENTS

- Sunday 1 November – 10.45am Morning Service
  - 4.00pm Commemoration of The Departed
- Sunday 8 November – 10.45am Remembrance Sunday Service. [The Act of Remembrance will take place outside the church at the War Memorial, aiming to keep the Silence at 11.00am.]
- Sunday 15 November – 10.45am Holy Communion
- Sunday 29 November – 10.45am Benefice Service of Holy Communion for Advent,
  - Service of Light – in Stratton Audley Church

To find out the times and places of other services on Sundays, please check the back cover of the *Shelswell News*, the Benefice website www.shelswellparishes.info, the noticeboard at the church, or ring the Benefice office (07928 990569). You will always be welcome in our other parishes.

EVENTS

LOOKING AHEAD – OPEN GARDENS
The PCC plan to run Open Gardens next year on 15 and 16 May. If you would be willing to open your garden, please let Penny Wood know [penelope.wood@btopenworld.com or ring 01869-277310].

MISCELLANEOUS

Greetings Cards
Packs of greeting cards (6 cards for £3) available for purchase. They feature 6 photographs of the church both in and outside. Ring Christina McCullagh on **07867 515207**.

Fringford Church 100 Club
Numbers cost £3 a month (£36 annually) Payment by BACS, cheque or cash. Draw each month for 50% of the income divided amongst 3 winners: at the moment 1st prize £71, 2nd £42, 3rd £28. You can still sign up to the 100 Club. Contact Christina McCullagh to register - **07867 515207.** The draw takes place monthly at the Village Coffee Morning.

Little Lambs Babies & Toddler Group
Every Wednesday during term time in Stratton Audley Church. Times are: from 10.00am to 11.30am. Not **usually** during holidays and half term. Just come along. If you need information in the meantime, email admin@shelswellparishes.info

FRINGFORD VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING
Village Coffee Mornings usually take place on the third Monday of each month. In November we will meet on Monday 16th. Drop by for a coffee/tea and a chat any time between 10.30 am and 12 noon, in the Chinnery Room at the Village Hall. Contact Penny on 277310 if you want more information.

CHURCHYARD CLEANUPS IN 2026

I am pleased to report that the churchyard team have made significant improvements to our churchyard over the year with monthly clean-ups that started in February and have run on a roughly monthly a basis since then. Each event runs for a couple of hours from on a Saturday morning from 10-12:00 with teas and cakes served halfway through. The dates for each cleanup are typically at the beginning of each month and are published on the village WhatsApp group



The wonderful hot weather and dry summer prevented the grass from continually growing which in previous years has taken up much of our time so enabling the team to concentrate on other areas. This has involved removing ground ivy and other vegetation around the periphery of the churchyard and unveiling a long-lost grave that had succumbed to the undergrowth, (the Fenemore family; pictured right) with other graves tidied up so allowing the inscriptions to be more easily read.

There are some far flung locations mentioned on the graves including Buenos Aires (Thomas Simons) underneath the Yew trees to the right-hand side of the churchyard.

It is amazing what a difference a core of dedicated people can make in turning up. We fully understand that people also have other commitments and cannot necessarily make every event.

Everyone who attends has different gardening skill sets which are put to great effect where many hands make light work of what is required. We are a friendly bunch who always welcome new people to assist in maintaining and improving the overall appearance of the churchyard for everyone in the village to enjoy.

Adrian Thwaites

COME & JOIN US AT 'SEWCIAL'



We enjoy any type of craft and a natter
getting together to relax and enjoy each other's company.
Some of us knit, crochet, embroider, quilt, sew or create craft albums.

Please come and join us for tea and chat too, crafts not essential.

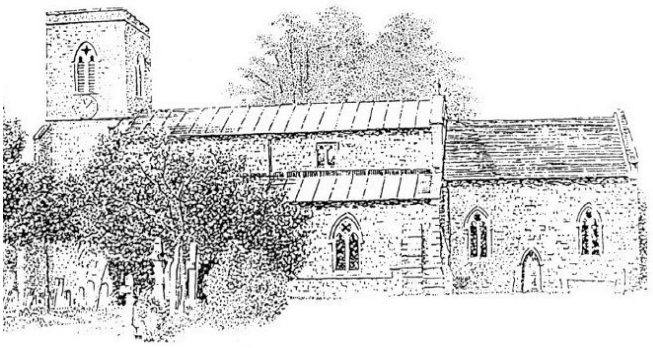
We get together once a month,
either on a Wednesday evening at 7 – 9pm
or Sunday afternoon at 3 – 5pm
We meet in the Chinnery Room/Main hall at Fringford Village Hall.
Our next sessions for 2026 are:

Wednesday November 18th Sunday December 13th

Sunday January 17th 2027

Everyone welcome
No need to book – just come and join us!
If you would like information, please email Irene ireneethomas@btinternet.com

RESTORATION OF FRINGFORD CHURCH



We have a very ancient church in Fringford, dating from the 12th century and thought to have been built on an old Anglo-Saxon site. It provides a daily physical reminder that our village has been around for many hundreds of years. As with all old buildings that form part of our heritage, it takes work and money to improve it for the present and to repair and preserve it for the future.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility for this task. We are a committee of local villagers, including Penny Wood, our own Licensed Lay Minister, and Claire Maxim, the new Rector. Much of the day-to-day organisation of works falls to the Church Warden Max Todd, who also lives in the village.

There was a question posed recently on the village WhatsApp, asking about the scaffolding which has been erected to carry out further works, and we realised that a lot of our continuing work preserving the church is behind the scenes, and not widely known or understood in the village. We would like to tell you a little about this.

Every five years there is a Quinquennial inspection of the church, a stipulation of the Church of England, which leads to a report on all the structural issues and degradation which need to be addressed. The Inspector divides this into Urgent, Do within 18 months and Do before the next inspection. There are many internal and external structural problems with masonry, leaks, crumbling plaster and old, leaded windows. These make up the majority of the work. We also recently replaced the uneven stone path with a smooth, resin path compliant with disabled access requirements.

In addition to this extensive list of maintenance work which we are continually carrying out, there are those things which we would like to do to improve or develop our historically listed church. We need to plan for the day when our old oil-fired boiler no longer functions. We need to move to a more environmentally-friendly heating system based on renewable electricity and no longer burning a fossil fuel. This is a major investment which we are planning to do in stages. We would also like at some stage to be able to install a lavatory and small kitchen facilities if funds and planning allow.

Every now and again something arises which demands our attention and money, and which takes us away from planned activities. A few years ago, there was a significant theft of lead from the church roof, which was very costly to replace. The money we had been saving to install a toilet and kitchen in an instant disappeared.

So where does the money come from to undertake all this important and expensive restoration work? We are grateful to those villagers who support our Open Gardens, our 100 Club and our other money raising activities for the Restoration Fund, but our biggest debt of gratitude is to those within and outside the Church who organise and run the annual Beer Festival. Although the festival allows many other local charities to set up stalls and raise their own money, it continues to provide, as it has done for many years, our main source of income. Without it, we would not be able to keep the Church open and preserve this vital part of our heritage.

Joan Alderdice, on behalf of the Fringford PCC.

Regular Activities held in Fringford Village Hall

To find out more or book a place, please contact the hirer direct.

Weekly Activities	Monthly Activities
FS Dance Wednesday (term time) After school classes BALLET • TAP • MODERN • STREET leah.fsd@gmail.com or 07885827592	**Village Coffee Morning** All ages welcome Third Monday in the month - Chinnery Room Drop in anytime between 10.30 am and noon Penny Wood 01869 277310
Parish Council Meeting All villagers welcome Third Monday in the month 7.45pm Contact 01844 237766 or fringford.parishclerk@gmail.com	**New!** **Table Tennis 4 All** All welcome Monday evening 7 – 8.30pm Contact Tony Marshall tony.marshall18@gmail.com 07966522667
Just Puppies Puppy Training Tuesday evening, Sunday afternoon – various classes Contact Kerri 07720 891489 www.justpuppies.training	**Fringford Yoga** Wednesday morning 9.30am – 11am Carolyn White 07763 817078
Shelswell WI First Thursday of the month 7.30pm Contact Sandra Bickmore 07961 828571	**Fringford Sewcial** Sew and Chat! All welcome Monthly Wednesday from 7pm Or Sunday from 3pm Contact Irene at ireneethomas@btinternet.com
Pilates Thursday at 10.00am natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com or 07545 525820	**Village Hall Team Meeting** Please contact for dates Open meetings – all welcome fringford.hall@gmail.com or 07936 879175

To book the hall for your own event, please go to www.fringford.info/village hall, how to book
Here you will find all the information you will need to book on-line.
For any other queries please phone or text 07936 879175
or email: fringford.hall@gmail.com

Hardwick
St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: Vacant
TREASURER: David Barnes Tel 07856822030
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner Tel: 01869 277366
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Maddi Bindon, 8 Hardwick Tel 07769774144

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 22nd November 4 pm Evensong with the Shelswell Group Choir

Pilgrim Pathways

Why not walk the Hethe to Hardwick to Cottisford to Hethe "Pilgrim Pathway". This 4-mile circular route takes in the C of E churches of each of these villages as well as Holy Trinity, Hethe's RC church. You can start and end your walk at any point on the route, which takes in some glorious North Oxfordshire countryside. Pick up a free brochure outlining the route from any of the churches or contact David Barnes (07856822030), who can send you one.

Hardwick Church guidebook

The guidebook for Hardwick church and the parish of Hardwick with Tusmore is available to collect from the church or contact David Barnes (07856822030), who can send one to you. This 44-page booklet has over 20 colour photos and provides a fascinating insight into the features and history of Hardwick church, the village and the Tusmore Estate. We ask that you make a minimum donation of £5 to church funds.



Hethe

St Edmund and St George

CHURCHWARDEN: Flora Skinner, Fox Hollow, 2 Hardwick Road, Hethe Tel 01869 277366
TREASURER: Mike Green, Greenhill Cottage, Main Street, Hethe Tel 01869 278166
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner as above
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Mike Green as above Tel 01869 278166
WEBSITE: www.hethe.org

If you have any news or a village event to publicise, please send the details to me, where possible with a photo, and if suitable I will add them to next month's news and include them on the village web site.

ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH



"All churches need friends,
and they are out there ready to be made."

Church Services and Events

The church is open all day for everyone to look around our historic place of worship and take time for quiet prayer and contemplation. The varied selection of books is easy to access, so please take a look and help yourself to any which you wish to read.

The five yearly inspection has been completed by our Church Architect and at the time of writing this article we were considering the results.



This year there will be a streetside Remembrance Service by the war memorial starting at 9.15am on 8th November, followed by the Act of Remembrance and wreath laying. Please remove any vehicles from in front of the War Memorial before the service.



Note that this year's Christmas Carol Service is to be held in the church on Sunday 20th December, starting at 6.00pm. This is an ecumenical service to which all are welcome - refreshments will be available. The Christmas Day Service will start at 9.15am.

Other services are listed on the back page and remember that you will always be welcome at services in any of the other churches in the benefice, or if you are away from the village, you can find a nearby service through the web site https://www.achurchnearyou.com.

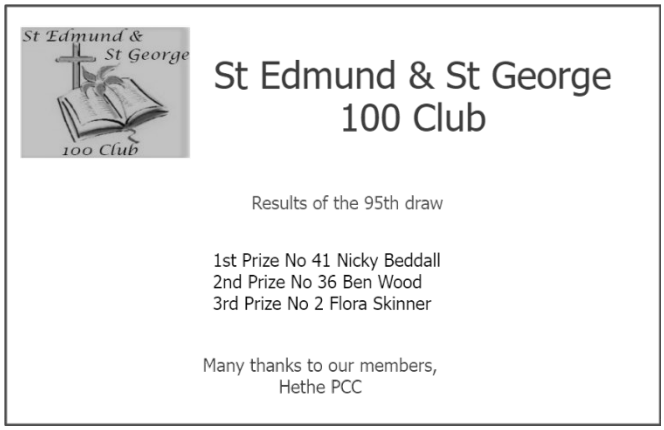
Many thanks to Jenny Cullen for thoroughly cleaning the church. Linda and Andrew Cotton will be cleaning and providing flowers this month and Sandra and Mike Green in December.

This month we remember the death of St Edmund on 20th November 869.



Our church is dedicated to St Edmund and St George, the original and current patron saints of England. St Edmund (also known as Edmund the Martyr or Edmund of East Anglia) was the Anglo-Saxon King of East Anglia from about 855 until his death at the hands of the invading Vikings. By tradition he met his death after he refused the invaders demand that he renounce Christ.

St Edmund is the patron of Kings, pandemics, the Roman Catholic diocese of East Anglia, Douai Abbey, wolves, torture victims, and protection from the plague!



100 Club

Welcome to the new members of the 100 Club and congratulations to the winners in the latest draw. If you would like to join, or request additional numbers, please contact Helen Pritchard.

A new opportunity - turn your daily shopping into everyday magic for our church with easyfundraising

You shop; brands donate to us. It will cost you nothing.

1. Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk or scan the QR Code:
2. Sign up and search for St Edmund & St George Church Hethe
3. Your favourite brands donate to us whenever you shop with them
4. Now includes some in store purchases

Scan this QR Code if you wish to contribute to the cost of running and maintaining the church by a regular or one-off payment. Alternatively, there are copies of the Parish Giving Scheme Gift Form in the church or go to the Parish Giving web site at https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/hethe-st-edmund-st-george-bicester/.

Next PCC meeting Wednesday 27th January 2027.

Hethe and District Darby & Joan Club

Meeting at Hethe Village Hall on the third Tuesday of the month, 2-4pm
and
holding a Bingo Night at Hethe Village Hall every third Saturday of the month, 7.30pm

Membership £15 p.a.
New members welcome.

Contact: Sheila Heydon 07455 185201

HETHE COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Hethe Community Coffee Morning
in the Village Hall

Monday 9th November from 10.00am to 12.00pm

Friends, neighbours, dog walkers, pram pushers:
an opportunity to meet during the daytime – there's great cake too!



Parish Council. The next meeting of the council will take place on Tuesday 19th January 2027, starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. The minutes from their meeting in July are on the web site.

Pop-up Pub. Friday 6th November in the Village Hall, from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your own drinks of choice, snacks, and games!

Local Bus Service



Monday to Saturday - pick up at Hethe War Memorial at 07.39, 10.54, 1342 and 15.42. Last bus departs Bicester at 17.50 to arrive in Hethe at 18.12. Note that this service does not operate on Bank Holidays.

For **Village Hall bookings**, please contact Flora, the Village Hall Booking Secretary, on 01869 277366 fjskinner@hotmail.co.uk.

The Hardwick Road Allotments. The contact for the allotments is Yvonne Thomas, 3 Wilson Way, Caversfield, OX27 8FB, tel 243536 or 07773065890. The agents are Carter Jonas for the Oxford Diocese.

Keep up to date with what is happening in the village through:

Our village web site (courtesy of the Parish Council): https://www.hethe.org/

Facebook Pages:

Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments

The Next Door App - https://nextdoor.co.uk/

The Chapel in Main Street is 150 years old, having been built in 1876.

> "W Mansfield gave part of the ground for building the chapel and a generous donation of £20 towards the building fund. Several corner stones were laid, the first by Mrs Jones of Hethe, who is in her 87th year, and other ladies. A substantial tea was provided in the barn adjoining."

In the 1860's and 1870's there were between 30 and 40 Wesleyans using the chapel. In 1955 it had eight members. It was later converted into a private house.



The following is extracted from The Story of Hethe by John M Sergeant MA, published in 1975:

> "The earliest record of Free Church worship is 1794, in which year the Bishop of Oxford licenced the house of Mr Heydon, a shoe-maker, for non-conformist meetings. Hethe has long been famous for its craftsmen, as the remains of no less than three tailors' shops in the village today bear witness.
>
> The Heydon family were originally Presbyterians, but we soon find them joining forces with the Methodists. Other houses were licenced in 1810 and 1816. The first Methodist Chapel was built in 1854, and the present Chapel in 1876."

Mixbury

All Saints

CHURCHWARDENS: Martin Ayres, Northwell Farm, Finmere — Tel 07899 792552
Alec Howard, Middlestead, Mixbury — Tel 01280 848295
TREASURER: David Mitchell. 2 Town Farm, Mixbury — Tel 01280 847769
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Anna Howard — Tel 01280 848295
MAGAZINE CORRESPNDENT: Sue Goodman — Tel 01280 848002
pasgoodman551@gmail.com

If you have any news articles for the Parish Magazine please do not forget to let your Magazine Correspondent know in good time – deadline dates are normally found on the inside cover of the Shelswell News. Sue Goodman; email: pasgoodman551@gmail.com or telephone: 01280 848002.

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 8th November 10.50 am Remembrance Service

MIXBURY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

Thank you to everyone for doing church flowers. It's much appreciated. If anyone wishes to be added or removed from the list, please get in touch with Eryl on 07840 464541.

November Fi Bairstow
December Carol service and Christmas - everyone
Reserve Sam Lockwood

Thank you to everyone for doing church flowers. It's much appreciated.
If anyone wishes to be added or removed from the list, please get in touch with Eryl on 07840 464541.



MIXBURY CHURCH CLEANING ROTA 2026

As ever, a big thank you to the team of cleaning volunteers who keep the church clean and tidy.
We are still looking for someone new to step up and take on the admin for this necessary and important role.
This message goes out to the wider Mixbury community and not just those who currently give of their time.
It would be particularly appropriate if someone new to the village and / or from the younger generation were to volunteer.
Anyone prepared to take on this role, please let the Churchwarden know.

If anyone else would like to help with cleaning, we would be very grateful for extra volunteers. This would help to lighten the load on otherwise busy people. The job only requires a couple of hours simple cleaning in your allotted month, and if you can find a partner or join a group of two to make groups of three, it can be a pleasant way to involve yourself in the village and familiarise yourself with our beautiful church.

NOVEMBER Alison Bailey, Pam Burrill and Jules Channon
DECEMBER Gail Bellingham, Mel Soar & Sue Bosher

MIXBURY POP UP PUB NIGHTS

The Mixbury Pop Up Pub has been a tradition in the village for many years now and is a lovely way to socialise and make friends. The hosts provide the venue, glasses and a few nibbles and the guests arrive with their own drinks.If you are interested in hosting a pub night please contact Tanya –

BOOK EXCHANGE

Looking for something to read during the summer – there is a large collection of second hand books in the church for villagers to borrow and replace with any book they may have read.

SOUP KITCHEN AND HARVEST SERVICE
11TH OCTOBER 2026

The church was beautifully decorated in time for our Harvest Festival Service, led by Revd Claire Maxim. This was a joyful service, giving thanks for and celebrating the fruits of the harvest.

We then moved on to the Shelter, where we had a very impressive choice of homemade soups and bread. This was a good opportunity for villagers to meet our new rector, and vice versa!

The collection and donations for the soup amounted to £235 and this will be sent to RABI, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute who support the physical and mental well being of the farming community.

A big thank you to the team of ladies who decorated the church so beautifully, the team of ladies and gentlemen who made soup and bread, and of course, to everyone who came along.

BONFIRE NIGHT
1st November 2026, Castle Field

One of our great village traditions, the Mixbury Bonfire Night, will be held on Sunday 1st of November in Castle Field.

If you are planning an autumn garden tidy-up, the gates to the field will be unlocked on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th of October, and again on Saturday 31st of October. Please leave any burnable waste in the designated/fenced area on East side of the field.

The timings on the day will be:

10.00am - build the bonfire (volunteers are always very welcome!)
5.00pm - gates open, and a lovely selection of food and drink will be available (card and cash)
5.30pm - light the bonfire
6.00pm - fireworks display (please make sure all your pets are inside and are safe and sound on the night)

The display is funded through donations, so please look out for a donation envelope coming through your letterbox. We will be doing a collection in the village on Sunday 11th October, between 4.00 and 5.00pm. Alternatively, please feel free to drop off any donations to Fuchsia Cottage (roughly opposite the postbox) or donate via PayPal by following this link: https://www.paypal.com/pool/9te4Z5gsER?sr=ue

If you would like to get involved, we would be very grateful for some additional help :-) We are looking for volunteers to help with the food and bar, a couple of stewards to keep everyone safely behind the fence, and a team to help clear the field of any debris the day after the display. Please drop me an email at jaberrie@gmail.com if you are keen to help.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on the 1st November! Thanks *Jon Berrie*

POEMS OF THE MONTH
NOVEMBER
By Thomas Hood

No sun — no moon!
No morn — no noon —
No dawn — no dusk — no proper time of day.

No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member —
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! —
November!



Thomas Hood (1799 - 1845) was a poet, publisher, editor, and humorist. The son of a bookseller, he was born in London and lived there for most of his life, with stints in Scotland and Belgium. Well known for his puns and comic verse, Thomas also composed poems that drew attention to the social evils of his day.

If anyone would like to put their favourite poem forward please email: Sue at pasgoodman551@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2026

Newton Purcell

St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Ann von Maltzahn, Home Farm Shelswell Park	Tel 01280 848680
CHURCHWARDEN: Stuart Hinton	Tel: 07593 784143
TREASURER: Fai Li	Tel: 07725 009838
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner	Tel: 01869 277366
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Ann von Maltzahn	Tel 01280 848680

Services:-
Please note there will be NO service on Sunday 1st November
Sunday 8th November - Remembrance Sunday - 9.15 a.m.

Bonus Ball Lotto:-
Recent lucky winners have been David Francis, Stuart Hinton and Annabelle von Maltzahn.

Harvest Festival & Lunch:-
Despite a difficult farming year we celebrated this years harvest with a wonderful service lead by Father Alex who reminded us of all the amazing gifts sent to us from Heaven.
Our thanks to all who helped to provide yet another feast and all who came to enjoy what was a very happy occasion.

Carols by Candlelight:-
We look forward to welcoming all who would like to join us for this years 'Carols by Candlelight' which will once again include a Secret Santa. All gifts for this will be gratefully received. Always a very popular event and a great start to the run up to Christmas.

To help us with catering please contact either of the Churchwardens in advance to reserve your seats. Ann von Maltzahn 01280 848680 or ann_maltzahn@yahoo.com or Stuart Hinton on 07593 784143

Stoke Lyne

St Peter's

CHURCHWARDEN: Christopher Poole	Tel 01869 346020 CTP@oxford-educational.co.uk
CHURCHWARDEN: James Holden-White	kholdenwhite@aol.com
TREASURER: Janey Poole	Tel 07810 120457 janey@oxford-educational.co.uk
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Emma Brown	emmabrown911@gmail.com
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Rena Andrews	Tel: 01869 346653 renaandrews820@gmail.com
PARISH ROOM BOOKINGS : Kelly and James Holden-White	Tel 01869 345211 kholdenwhite@aol.com

Submissions for the Magazine: If anyone has any items for the magazine please email them to magazine correspondent Rena (renaandrews820@gmail.com) copied to her assistant Brenda (brendahazel104@gmail.com) . The deadline is the second or third Friday of the month depending on the way the days fall – see inside the front cover of each issue.

St Peter's Church Stoke Lyne Services

See back page for details. Please also see the general section at the front of the magazine for reports on the previous and details of the forthcoming "Food for Thought" and "Midweek Communion and Soup Lunch" services which usually take place each month at St Peter's Church on the third Sunday (Food for Thought) and the first Thursday (Midweek Communion and Soup Lunch).

THE PHOENIX SINGERS

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

With Readings

St. Michael's and
All Angels Church,
Newton Purcell

Monday December 14th
7.30pm

Tickets £10
Payable on the door

Doors open at 7.15pm

Refreshments will be
Served



Musical Director: Peter McMullin

Stoke Lyne Flower Duty for October

Rena Andrews

Stoke Lyne 100 Club – October Results

1st	Prize	Membership No 60	Craig Mitchell
2nd	Prize	Membership No 57	Mick the Hat
3rd	Prize	Membership No 38	Rena Andrews

Thank you to all members for your continued support.

Janey Poole
Treasurer
St Peter's Church PCC



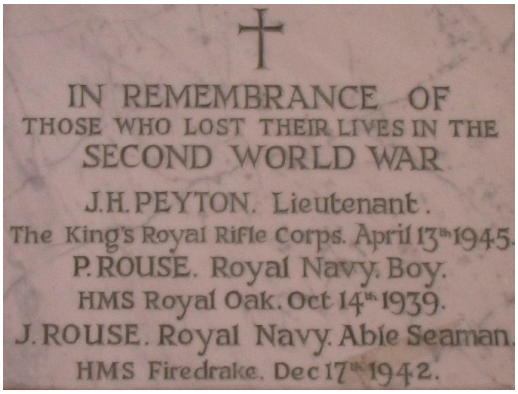
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. We will remember them"

Join us on **November 8th**
at **St Peter's Church** at **10.45am**
for our **Remembrance service**
All the family welcome for this special remembrance service

November "Look at": A new name to add to Stoke Lyne's "Fallen"

As November is the month of remembrance for the "fallen" I thought it appropriate to select a WW1 story for my "Look at". Details of the individuals named on the two memorial plaques within the church can be found in a folder placed nearby. They are also available to be downloaded and read at: https://stokelynestories.webador.co.uk/ww1-and-ww2





However my "Look at" is not about one of these men, but another individual connected with Stoke Lyne whose details I came across earlier this year. He was one of Sir Algernon's servants at Swift's House, a "hall boy" called Cyril Turney, aged 18.

I wasn't quite sure of what being a "hall boy" would entail but Wikipedia was able to provide the answer. Such a boy was usually a young teenager and the name came from the fact that he usually slept in the servants' hall. He "*would have been expected to work up to 16 hours per day, seven days per week. His duties were often among the most disagreeable in the house, such as emptying chamber pots for the higher-ranking servants. In the absence of a boot boy, he also cleaned the boots not just of the family members but also those of the butler and those of the visitors. The hall boy also waited on more senior servants when they took their meals in the servants hall. He slept on a fold-down bed in the hallway connecting the servants' quarters. The hall boy was the lowest-ranked male servant, but he could rise to a higher position in the household, eventually becoming a valet or butler.*"

The Bicester Herald of 28th May 1915 told his story:

"THE WAR!
BICESTER'S ROLL OF HONOUR
PTE. C. J. TURNEY KILLED IN ACTION.

News was received on Saturday last of the death of Pte. Cyril James Turney, the only son of Mr Lewis Turney, late Sergeant of the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own), now postman and recruiting sergeant for Bicester and district.

Capt. A.B. Lawson writes to Sergt. Turney:- "I very much regret to have to tell you that your son, Pte. Turney, 11th Hussars, was killed in action on Thursday, May 13th, near Ypres. He was carrying ammunition up to the front line, and was hit on the way up; he was killed almost at once, and suffered no pain. I hope you will accept my sincerest sympathy for you in the loss you have sustained, and that it may be some consolation for you to know that he died for his country. I can assure you that I shall miss him very much from my squadron. He was buried close to where he fell. If possible I will send you any papers which may have been found on him.

The fallen soldier joined the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) in October, 1913. Previous to his enlistment he was employed at Swift's House under Sir Algernon Peyton, Bart., as hall boy, for a period of 21 months. Being well recommended, as of good character, he was accepted as an under-age recruit on the conditions laid down in the amended recruiting regulations. Pte. Turney was posted to the Irish Cavalry Depot, Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and whilst there he obtained two Army school certificates of education – a third class on October 30, 1913, and a second class on December 3rd, 1913. He had intended trying for a first-class certificate, when he was dismissed drill as a trained soldier. He then joined his regiment at Aldershot in February, 1914. The regiment left with the Expeditionary Force about the middle of August, and Pte. Turney went with a draft in September, having volunteered as the youngest soldier to join them in France. The utmost sympathy is felt with his relatives in their loss"

He is commemorated on Panel 5 of the Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium. See: https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/1627171/cyril-james-turney/ The photo below of the Menin Gate was taken by my husband back in July 1992.



Cyril is also commemorated in Bicester on the WW1 plaque within St Edburg's church porch. See: https://memorials.iwm.org.uk/name/1702772. *(cont. overleaf)*

Cyril's father, Lewis, was a Boer War veteran and "The Bicester Historian", the magazine of the Bicester Local History Society, reported in detail on his diaries covering that period in a series of articles. The final instalment in Issue 093 of April-June 2023 covered Lewis's later life and what happened to Cyril. It can be downloaded at: https://www.blhs.org.uk/uploads/Newsletters/BH_093.pdf

Brenda Hazel

****

Stoke Lyne information:

Stoke Lyne Village Facebook group:	https://www.facebook.com/groups/StokeLyneVillage
Village Email & WhatsApp Group:	Contact: philelliot2002@yahoo.co.uk
Stoke Lyne Diggers (Allotments):	Contact: pippa.elliot@yahoo.co.uk
Stoke Lyne Parish Council:	https://stokelyne.org/
Stoke Lyne Stories:	https://stokelynestories.webador.co.uk/
Victoria County History:	https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp312-323

****

Stratton Audley and Godington

St Mary and St Edburga; Holy Trinity

CHURCHWARDEN: Sarah Noujaim, 15 Cavendish Place, Stratton Audley — Tel 07941 273145
CHURCHWARDEN: Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington — Tel 01869 278778
TREASURER: Fai Li — Tel 07725 009838
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Maxine Ling
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley)
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sylvia List (Godington) — editor@shelswellparishes.infofo

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 8th November 10.45 am
Remembrance Service at Stratton Audley

Sunday 22nd November 9.15 am
Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Sunday 29th November 10.45 am
(First Sunday in Advent) Benefice Service of Holy Communion for Advent - Service of Light

There are no services at Godington this month, but the church is open every day for private prayer .



'Little Lambs'
Baby and Toddler Group

Stratton Audley Church

Wednesdays 10am – 11.30am
(Term Time)

Come & join us! Play, music and stories.
Tea, coffee and snacks for adults and children
Meet new families from the local area.

If you'd like more details or to be added to our regular email circulation then please email admin@shelswellparishes.info

The Last Word

"The gospel is good news. But Jesus never said it was easy news." – *Charles Colson*

BERNHARD LICHTENBERG, died 5 November 1943

Born in Prussian Silesia, near Wroclaw on 3rd December 1875, young Bernhard Lichtenberg studied theology in Innsbruck and Breslau and was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1899.



Bernhard Lichtenberg (museum-lichtenberg.de)

During the first World War, he served as a military chaplain and by 1932, aged 57, he was appointed as a Canon of St Hedwig's Cathedral in the centre of Berlin.

On 30th January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power as Chancellor of Germany. Within two months, the first concentration camp to intern political prisoners had been opened at Dachau. By July 1933, only six months after the Nazis assumed power, 'whispered jokes' were recorded, such as the well known *"Lieber Gott mach mich stumm, daß ich nicht nach Dachau kumm"* ("Dear God, please make me mute so that I won't be sent to Dachau" (for saying the wrong thing)).

In this atmosphere of fear and arrest and internment of anyone opposing the ruling party, Bernhard Lichenberg was unable to remain silent. He criticised the government publicly. He urged his congregation to watch a film of the anti-war novel "All Quiet on the Western Front" and petitioned Hermann Göring personally about abuses at the Esterwegen concentration camp. Soon, he was suffering regime persecution, such as police raids to search his house. It did not deter him.

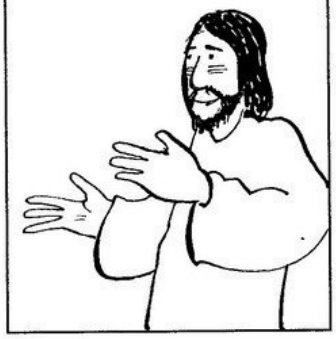
Lichtenberg carried on protesting to Nazi officials about the arrest and killing of sick or mentally ill people as well as of Jews. As Cathedral Provost from 1938, he ran the Cathedral's action to assist Jews and Catholics of Jewish descent. In his sermons, he regularly prayed publicly for the victims of Nazis. In 1941, he and other prominent church leaders protested against the Nazis' euthanasia programme in the strongest terms. This was a rare victory, as the government backed down from arresting prominent and popular church leaders.

However, in October 1941, the turbulent priest was arrested and sentenced to two years in jail. Upon his release in 1943, the Nazis decided that 68 year old Lichtenberg was unlikely to change his ways, and he was therefore sent to Dachau. On the journey south, Lichtenberg caught pneumonia and died in hospital in Hof, northern Bavaria. He is buried in the crypt of St Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, the scene of many of his attempts to keep the light of Christianity shining during dark times.

Bernhard Lichtenberg was canonised by Pope John Paul II in 1996 and has also been honoured by the Jewish organisation Yad Vashem.

The gardener and the Vine

JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

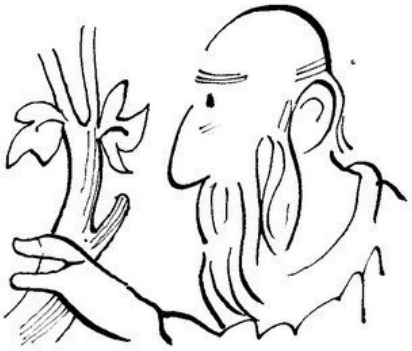




ONCE HE TOLD HIS FRIENDS ALL ABOUT A GARDENER.

THE GARDENER'S JOB WAS TO CARE FOR THE VINES





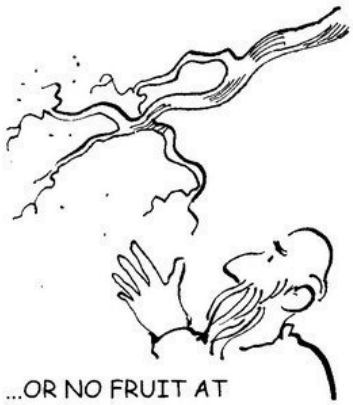
HE WOULD LOOK AT EACH BRANCH CAREFULLY..

... AND IF IT WAS PRODUCING GOOD FRUIT, HE WOULD CARE FOR IT AND NOURISH IT.

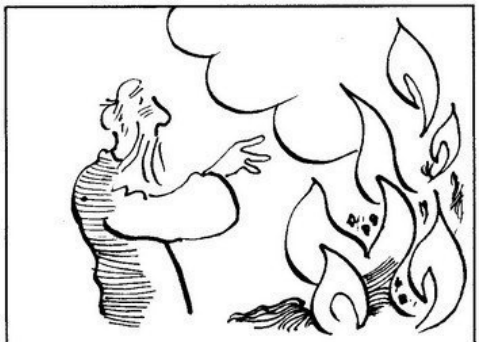


IF IT WAS PRODUCING BAD FRUIT...





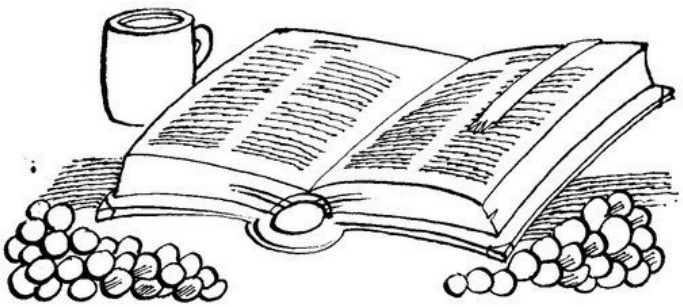
...OR NO FRUIT AT ALL...



...THEN THE GARDENER WOULD CHOP IT OFF, AND BURN IT IN THE FIRE!!

JESUS WANTED HIS FRIENDS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS - THAT'S LIKE THE VINE BEARING GOOD FRUIT.





YOU CAN READ THIS SPECIAL PARABLE IN JOHN'S GOSPEL, CHAPTER 15.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2026

This year the national service for Remembrance will be held on 8th November, and include the annual march past involving up to 10,000 veterans and eligible participants. It will be followed by formal two-minute silence on Wednesday, 11th November.

This year Remembrance marks several significant milestones:

- The 110th anniversary of the 1916 Battles of the Somme and Jutland, as well as the introduction of wartime conscription.
- The 70th anniversary since the Suez Crisis of 1956.
- The 25th anniversary since UK armed forces first entered Afghanistan, following the 2001 deployments.

Details of Remembrance Services in the Benefice can be found in the Service plan on the back cover, or in each village section.



WHERE HAVE ALL THE VICARS GONE?

Risk of Parson-el shortage

There are certainly some worrying statistics out there. Such as:

- There are 8,368 retired priests holding permission to officiate
- But only 6,682 clergy in paid (stipendiary) positions
- 2,440 clergy are self-supporting, holding unpaid roles.

Nearly half of the current 6,682 paid priests are aged over 55. They all retire at 70. But numbers of new entrants in training dropped from 591 in 2020 to 442 by 2025.
Where is this all headed? Worse case, by 2033, there could be only 5,400 full-time priests. That is 40 per cent of what the number was in 2000.

These sobering predictions come in a recent report by the broad church, grassroots campaign group savetheparish.com, which argues that the decline has left the C of E at real risk of no longer being "a Christian presence in every community."

The decline in new entrants may reflect generational trends, with fewer millennials likely to become vicars, but an increase in interest among Generation Z, who are now approaching their late twenties. However, Church leaders must attract people who feel called to the clergy by making it clear that their work will be valued.

Save the Parish is calling on the C of E to "commit to a model that will support a young person in stipendiary ministry for their lifetime." It does not want a reduction in full-time paid clerical positions to save money, and it wants to lift the retirement age of 70, where this is desired.

The report says that the Church should measure ministers' success on the "numbers of lives touched, funeral by funeral, cup of tea by cup of tea."

FEWER HOT DOGS

The only good news there can possibly be about dog theft is that it is going down, and finally this is true.

After a horrific spike in thefts during the COVID-19, when due to 2020 lockdowns it seemed that everyone wanted a puppy, things have now settled down. According to pet insurance data and police figures, recorded thefts have dropped by more than 20%.

The new Pet Abduction Act of 2024 made pet theft a specific criminal offence, although criminals still target popular breeds like French Bulldogs, Dachshunds, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers.

To help keep your dog safe, make sure your garden is securely locked, never leave your dog alone outside a shop or in your car, and ensure your microchip details are up to date. Finally, take some clear photographs of your dog, from different angles, and record any unusual or distinguishing features they may have.

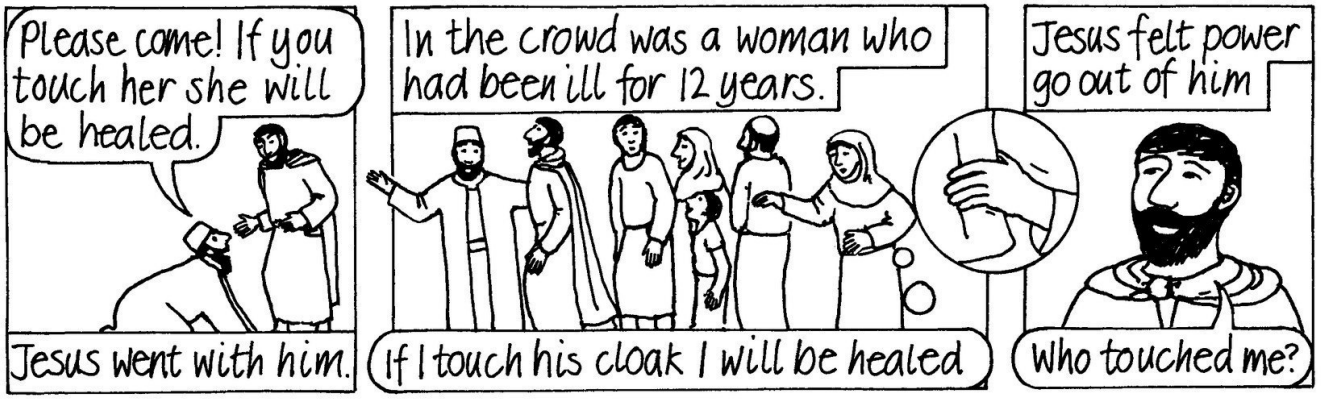


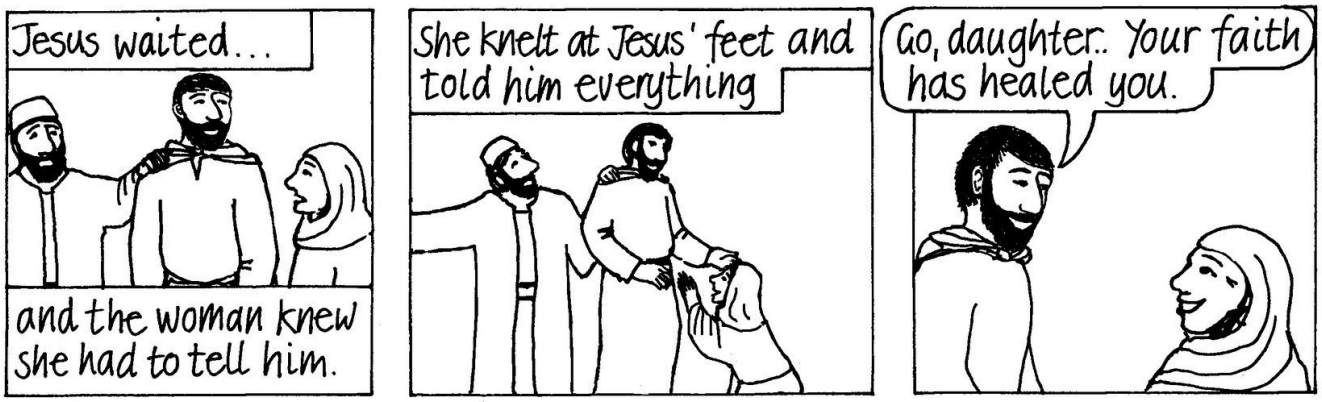
Bible Bite

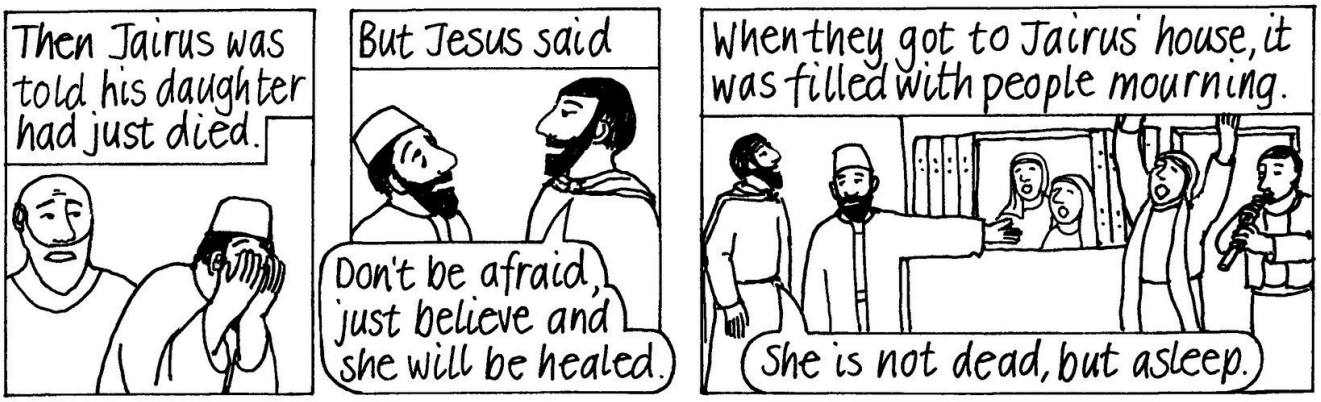
A short story from the Bible

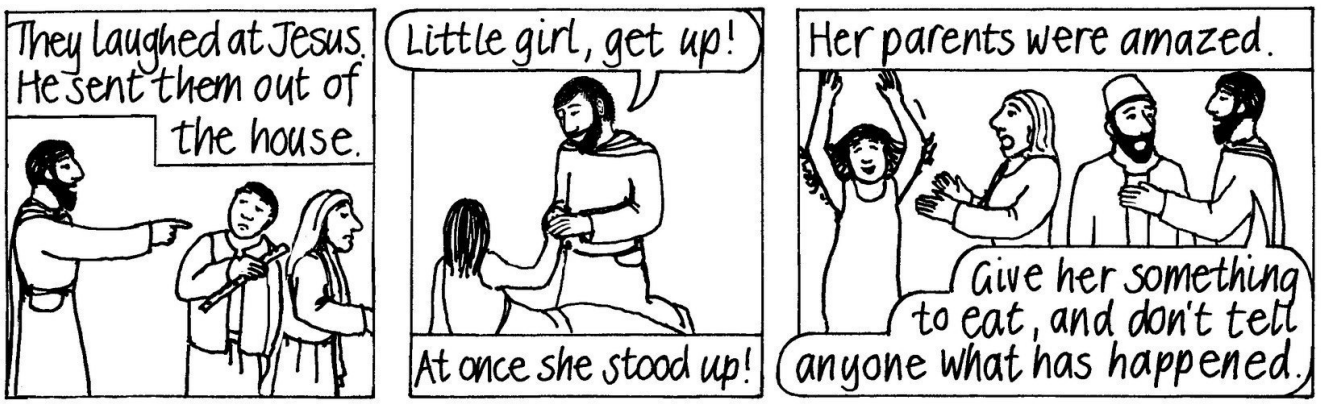
It can be read in the Bible in Lk 8:40-56, Mt 9:18-26, Mk 5:21-43

Jairus, a town leader, had a 12 year old daughter who was ill and about to die. He came to Jesus and knelt at his feet...

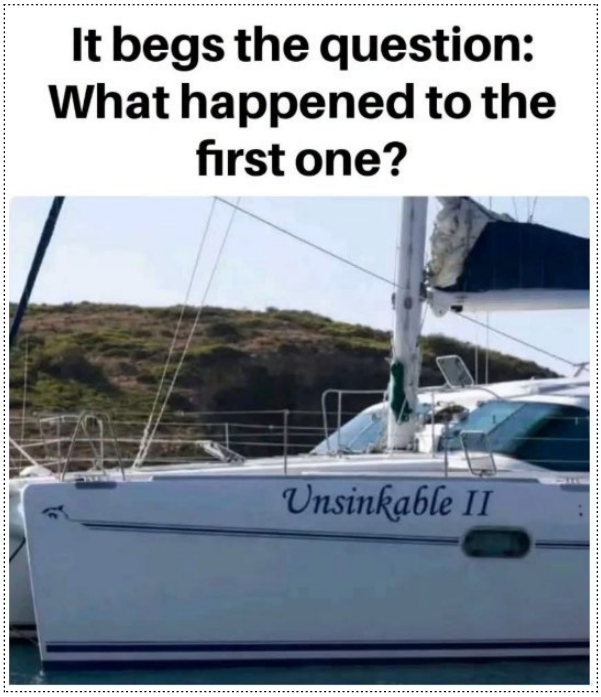








POINTS TO PONDER...





HAVE YOU TRIED THE SINGING BIBLE YET?

THE SINGING.BIBLE™
Experience God's Word

This is listening to the Bible, but NOT as you've known it. A new website offering 38,048 individual recordings of chapters of the Bible being sung in 16 different genres, has become a smash hit worldwide.

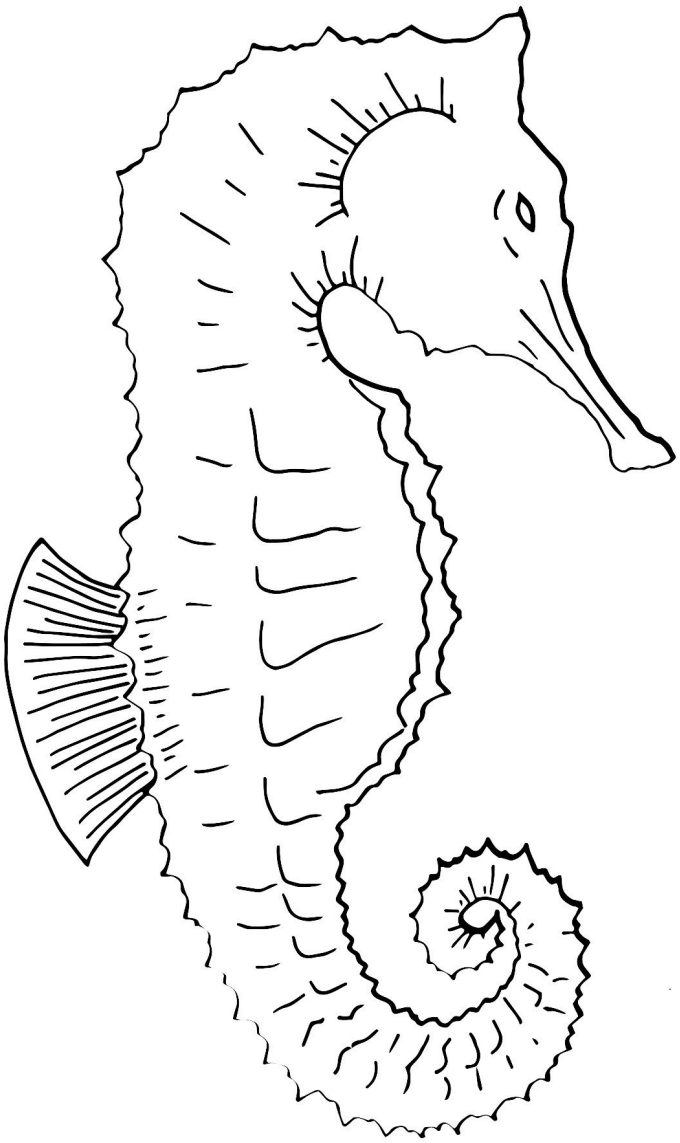
In only the first two weeks of its existence, it has seen one million song plays from its 3,600 hours of produced scripture music. All in all, The Singing Bible offers the equivalent of five months of continuous listening, without repeating a chapter. It is free to use and does not need to be downloaded.

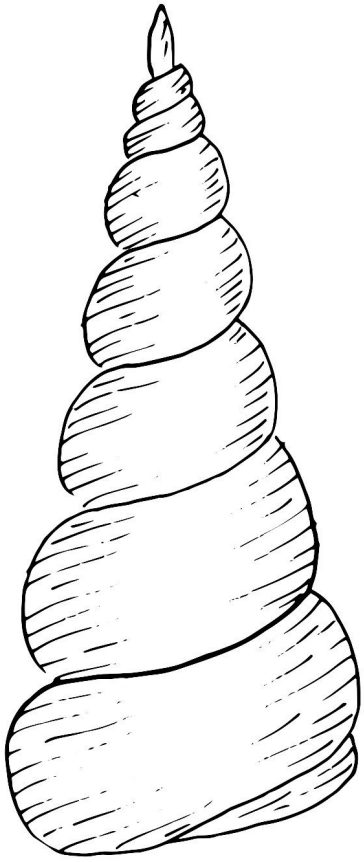
Listeners in 194 countries are enjoying the Bible in mix of musical styles, including country, hip-hop, hard rock, opera, sea shanty, barbershop quartet, Latin and reggae. The music has been described as "human-led and AI-assisted".

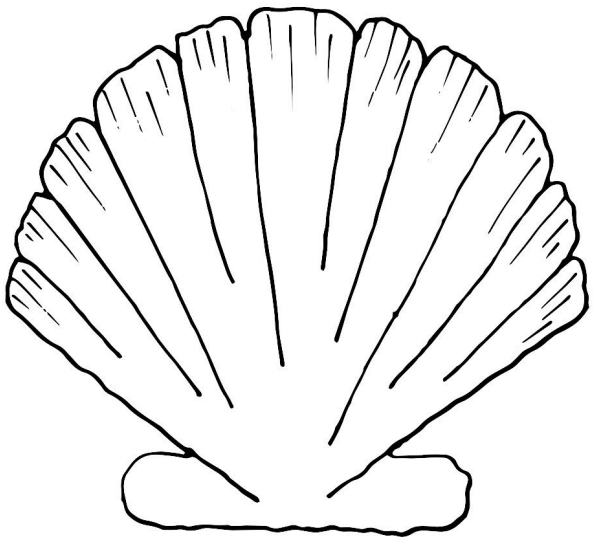
The scripture is in an edition of the Berean Standard Bible. While the music plays, the full text of each chapter is displayed on screen. Thus, you can hear Jonah chapter 1 in sea-shanty style, while St John's Gospel is given in a thundering hard-rock style.

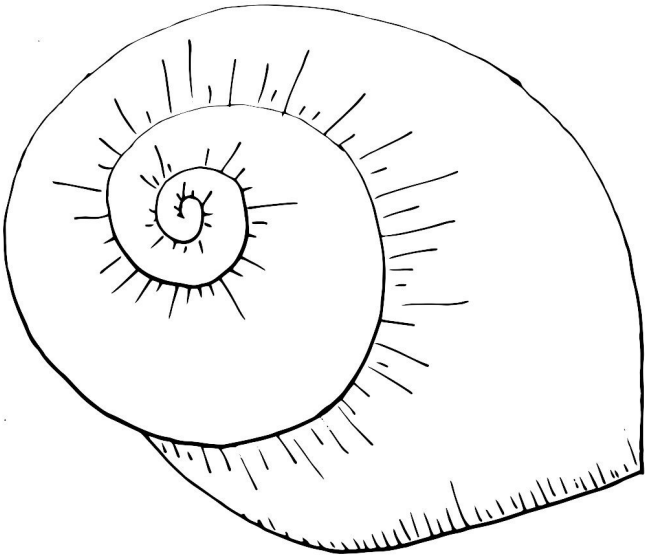
Try it at **thesinging.bible/home** . There are pre-made listening plans for different themes, and also a handy list of 23 ways to use thesinging.bible under the menu option "For Churches" at the bottom of the home page. Have fun!

COLOURING IN by Viktoriya Lissachenko via unsplash.com

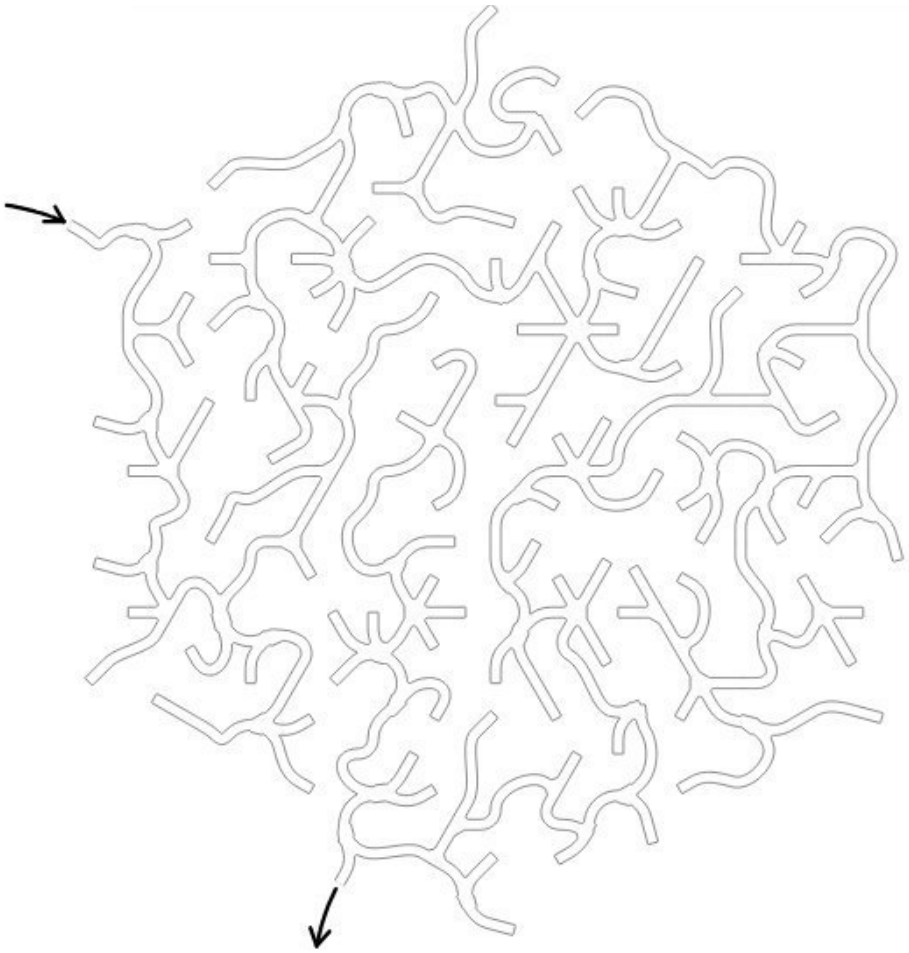








MAZE by krazydad



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Real trees in stock from 27th November



Enjoy delicious homemade cakes and bakes, tasty savoury treats and beautifully crafted barista coffee in our cosy rustic café. Sit back, relax and enjoy the festive atmosphere, then take some time to browse our beautiful christmas ranges in the shop, with plenty of inspiration for your home and thoughtful gifts for loved ones

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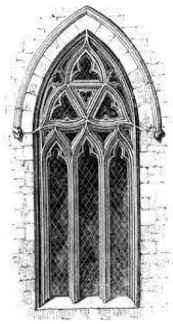
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SHELSWELL GROUP SERVICES: NOVEMBER 2026

CW: 'Common Worship' modern language service BCP: 'Book of Common Prayer' traditional language service

DATE	1st November All Saints	Thursday 5th November (12 noon) Midweek Holy Communion and Soup Lunch STOKE LYNE	8th November Remembrance Sunday	15th November 2nd Sunday before Advent	22nd November Christ the King	29th November Advent Sunday
ALTAR	White		Red	Red	Red	Purple
8.00 am					**Holy Communion (BCP)** **HETHE** AM	
9.15 am	**Holy Communion with hymns (CW)** **COTTISFORD** CM		**9.15am** **Remembrance Service** **FINMERE** CM **Remembrance Service** **HETHE** PW **Remembrance Service** **NEWTON PURCELL** AM **10.45am** **Remembrance Service** **COTTISFORD** LW **Remembrance Service** **FRINGFORD** PW **Remembrance Service** **STOKE LYNE** AM **Remembrance Service** **STRATTON AUDLEY** PSS **10.50am** **Remembrance Service** **MIXBURY** LW **4pm** **Holy Communion (BCP)** **FINMERE** CM	**9.15am** **Holy Communion with hymns (CW)** **FINMERE** AM **10am** **'Food for Thought'** **STOKE LYNE** Lay-led **10.45am** **Holy Communion with hymns (BCP)** **COTTISFORD** CM **10.45am** **Holy Communion with hymns (CW)** **FRINGFORD** AM	**Holy Communion with hymns (CW)** **STRATTON AUDLEY** CM **Morning Service** **FINMERE** PW	**10.45am** **Benefice Service of Holy Communion for Advent - Service of Light** **STRATTON AUDLEY** CM
10.45 am	**10.45am** **'Connect' Informal Worship** **FINMERE VILLAGE HALL** AM **10.45am** **Morning Service** **FRINGFORD** PW				**10.45am** **Holy Communion with hymns (CW)** **STOKE LYNE** CM	
6.00 pm	**4pm** **Service of Commemoration of the Departed** **FRINGFORD** PW/LW				**4pm** **Evensong with the Shelswell Group Choir** **HARDWICK** PW	

AM: Revd Alex Mahlava CM: Revd Dr Claire Maxim PSS: Mrs Pauline Stanton-Saringer (LLM) LW: Revd Liz Welters PW: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)