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December 2025 - January 2026





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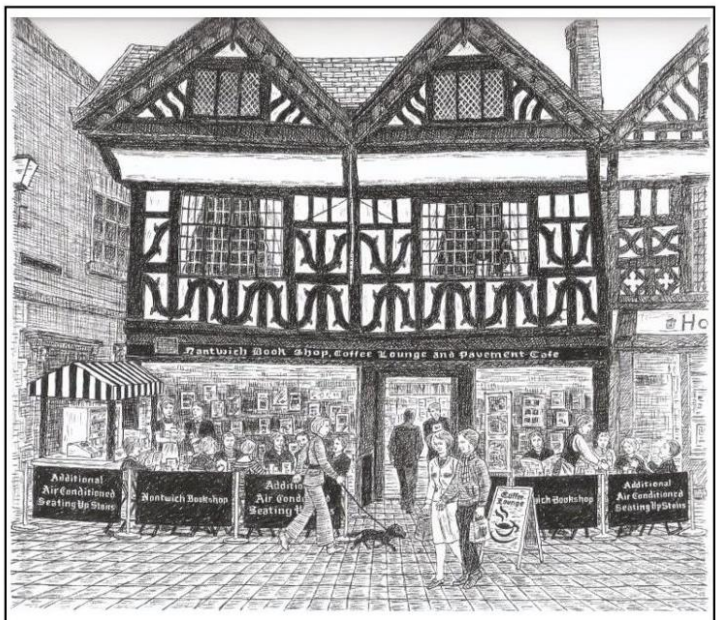
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Front cover: *Confirmation service, 16th November. See p. 18 for further details. Photo: Ceris Esplen.*



From the Rector

It was the end of the last day of school before the holidays. I was walking home alone, aged 9. I could take you to the exact spot where I suddenly felt the magic of it. School is over. Snow is falling. Christmas is coming.

That particular time is etched like a photograph on my memory. It was as if I had been granted a more vivid and intense awareness, and a sense of joy. We can't create such moments because they come upon us. We can only be open to them.

During the Christmas tree festival I watched "A Christmas Carol" at the silent cinema in church on the Saturday evening. My favourite scene was when Scrooge threw open his window, the mood instantly changing with the sound of the church bells, and his cry "What a beautiful morning!" He's taken out of himself to enjoy a bigger world.

There are certain moments I'm looking forward to in our Christmas worship: the solo first verse of "Once in royal David's city"; the first appearance of the donkeys at the All Age Nativity; the tableau on the stage at the end of the crib services; the reference to those "who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light"; the opening verses of St. John's Gospel; the clock striking 12 during Midnight Mass; the last verse of "O come, all ye faithful", first sung at the end of Midnight Mass, "Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning …"; in that verse, David Willcocks' mysterious chord on the organ at "Word", in "Word of the Father …"; receiving and administering Communion. You will have your favourites.

It's good to expect all that, but what about those unanticipated moments of joy? The thousands attending one service or another at St. Mary's over the coming weeks will include regular members of our congregations, many visitors, parishioners who only come at Christmas, people who have never attended St. Mary's before, people who have never attended church before, people who believe, and people who don't believe.

Let us pray that for each person, at some point, there will be a quickening within, a moment of opening up to a new sense of hope, or comfort, or joy. "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven."

Grace and Joy to you at Christmas, and Peace in the New Year

Mark Hart

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There is a Time ...



"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens"

(Ecclesiastes 3: 1)

I cannot be the only one who is surprised how quickly 2025 has passed by? This is the final magazine of the year and by the time the next one is published we shall be firmly in 2026.

Time surely plays tricks on all of us. It passes at the same rate for everyone and yet sometimes, when we are anxious or impatient, it seems to pass more slowly and when we have much to do it seems to pass far too quickly. Sometimes its course is linear – we move from birth to death, from childhood to adulthood, from one generation to another. At other times it is cyclical – day follows night, the seasons come and go, seedtime and harvest.

We live by the regularity and predictability of chronological time and so can book our holidays, fill our diaries, plan our days. However, the familiar order is interrupted sometimes by unplanned events – a sudden piece of good fortune, illness, accident or an encounter which re-shapes our lives. We have to be ready for these moments of change, challenging and disturbing though they sometimes may be.

Our faith and hope as Christians is in the One who is beyond time, who holds not only the past and the present but also the future in his hands, who is Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End. Whether we are living in periods of routine or in periods of change God is always with us.

At this time of year I like the following prayer and I commend it to you.

"O God, by whose command
the order of time runs its course:
Forgive our impatience, perfect our faith
and, while we wait for the fulfilment of your promises,
grant us to have a good hope
because of your word;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Happy New Year (when it comes).

David Taylor

Church News

Nantwich Foodbank

During Advent we are collecting for the Foodbank's Christmas Wish List. They aim to make up hampers for families containing Christmas pudding, mince pies, Christmas cake, chocolate biscuits, tinned ham/salmon, tubes of sweets, chocolate coins, gift for Mum/Dad/Teen/Child. Please can you help? Box in church or office.

Seniors' Lounge

The next meeting will be on **Sunday 14th December**, 3pm in the Parish Hall - company and chat over tea/coffee & cake.

Christmas Fair

Thank you to all who helped with the Christmas Fair on 22nd November, by running the stalls or making donations. A total of £1,330 was raised - an excellent result, given the weather and the limited number of stalls. Thank you also to all who helped with stewarding and staffing the shop throughout the Christmas Tree Festival.

Church Bookshop

Thank you to everyone who has donated and purchased books. As we are now in the busy Christmas season, we are pausing book sales and would appreciate if no further donations are left in church. Thank you again for your support.

Christmas Day Lunch

This annual event is organised by Churches Together in Nantwich - 11.30am-3pm at the Methodist Church. Live in Nantwich or nearby? Alone on Christmas Day? Lifts available. Booking essential: phone Sue Piddock Jones (07933 237538).

Volunteer help for the Christmas Day Lunch is urgently needed: **Beforehand:** Guest Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Driver Coordinator. **On the day:** Kitchen helpers (from 8am), table helpers, pot washers. To volunteer contact: Sue Piddock Jones.

Christmas Stewards

Stewards are required for the All Age Nativity (9.30am), Nine Lessons and Carols (6pm), three Crib Services (2pm, 3.30pm, 5pm) and the Midnight Communion (11.30pm) on Christmas Eve - six people at each. If you can help please add your name to the sheet at the back of church.



Congratulations to Susie & Alex Phillips on the arrival of Emerson Levi Phillips on Tuesday 11th November. It was a couple of weeks before Emerson could come home but he is now thriving. Enjoy your maternity leave, Susie!

Thank you to all who donated shoeboxes, and especially to Sue Hutt who organised the collection again this year. Teams4U collected 245 boxes Plus knitted hats and "fillers" from St. Mary's on Friday, 14th November. These boxes, filled with gifts and essentials, will be distributed to children in need across Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Moldova, and Belarus, bringing smiles and hope to many vulnerable children.



New jobs

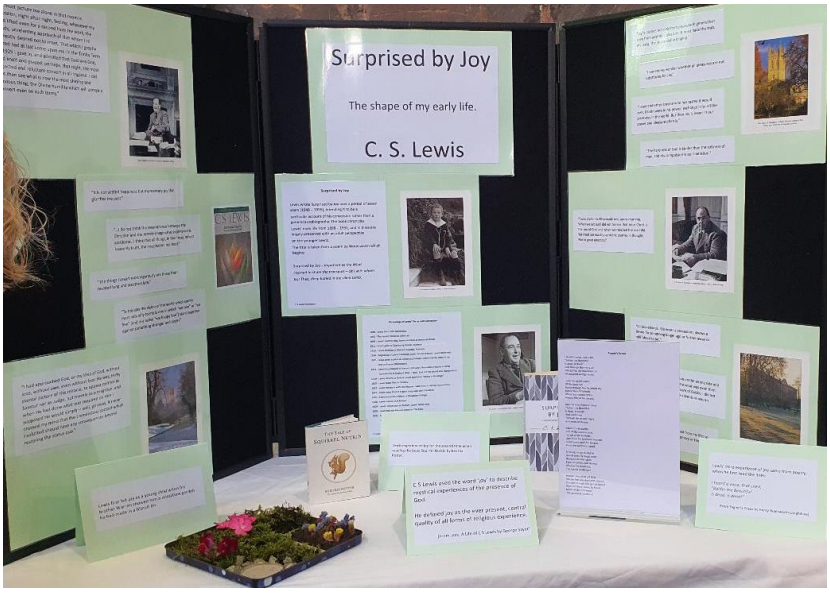
Congratulations to **Rachael Griffiths**, former congregation member and job share youth and children's worker here at St. Mary's, who has been appointed to be Rector of Adbaston, High Offley, Knightley, Norbury, Woodseaves, Gnosall and Moreton. It is a rural benefice, known as the Staffordshire Border Group of Churches, in the Lichfield Diocese. The benefice is made up of six churches in five parishes located west of Stafford and east of Newport.

The Parish Profile states *"Each of the parishes has its own unique character and life but this is a benefice that works well together and has increasingly sought to look outwards in service and witness. There is a healthy mixture of traditional Christian ministry in a rural context combined with a genuine willingness to explore new things."*

Rachael will be licensed on **14th January 2026**.

Congratulations to the **Rev. Rob Icke**, formerly of St. Mary's, Nantwich, and now Incumbent of the Latchford Benefice in the Diocese of Chester, who has been appointed to be Rector of Stone St. Michael & St. Wulfad with Aston St. Saviour in the Diocese of Lichfield. Rob will be collated as Rector on **28th January 2026**.

Through the Wardrobe



Did you enjoy the recent Encounter Explore day on C. S. Lewis? You may be interested in coming along to Encounter evenings. Held on the first and third Sundays of the month at 7.15pm in the Parish Hall. Encounter is the informal café style service at St. Mary's.

Most Encounter evenings focus on a particular theme and feature a wide range of activities including presentations, discussion, creative prayer, music, readings, reflections, poetry, practical activities and crafts. You are welcome to participate as much or as little as you wish.

Topics covered are a mixture of aspects of Christianity and contemporary issues from a Christian perspective. Some examples of recent themes include: Kindness, Hope, Building Bridges, Volunteering, St. Cuthbert and Peace.

The friendly and informal setting with light refreshments makes it a great way to meet other people and make new friends. If you would like to know more please speak to a member of the team: Ernie Charlton, Rector Mark Hart, Alan Thompson, Carole Tilt or contact us via the Parish Office. Everyone is welcome so do come along to Encounter.

Carole Tilt

Prayer of the Month

The Collect for Purity

> Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gail Ramsey has kindly suggested a series where people choose a favourite prayer and write a short comment, and she starts us off this month with the Collect for Purity from the beginning of the Service of Holy Communion.

Gail writes:
"Most of us have private areas in our hearts and minds which are too difficult to share even with those who are closest to us. There may be silly, long-ago things that come back to make us feel guilty or just embarrassed. A tactless remark or an unkind word too long in the past to be put right. They may well be long forgotten by the person they were said by but still there in our minds to haunt us.

This prayer reminds us that our hearts are an open book to God. He knows how sad we feel about these things and understands us. Because when we are truly sorry we know that he has forgiven us. To be fully known, understood and loved by God is another of his everlasting and wonderful gifts."

November Breakfast

The last St. Mary's Breakfast of 2025 was held on 15th November at The Tea Lounge, Nantwich Town FC, when Alison Phillips got us into the Christmas spirit. After breakfast, and some warm up exercises, we sang "Hark! the herald angels sing", "Past three a clock" and "The Twelve Days of Christmas", with interesting commentary along the way.

Alison told of how her early love of music began, and the magic of singing "A Ceremony of Carols" by Benjamin Britten, especially in the procession from her school's needlework room during the opening "Hodie Christus natus est". I arrived feeling a bit weighed down by all the preparations that lay ahead, but left uplifted, inspired, and grateful for all the music we have to enjoy at this time of year, and for those who help us to make it. Thank you to Alison, to Lyndon Hills, accompanist, and to the members of Concordia who came along in support. We left a Christmas gift for the staff of the Tea Lounge who have served us so well throughout the year.



Mark

January Breakfast

The first 2026 breakfast will take place on **Saturday, 17th January** at the Nantwich Football Stadium, starting at 8.30am. Sign up at the back of Church or let the office know by midday on **Wednesday, 14th January**. We are delighted to have St. Mary's verger, Linda Lewis, as our speaker. She will share a very personal story titled "The iceberg effect - from someone who stammers!!"

Breakfast dates for your diary

The 2026 breakfasts will take place as usual, in The Tea Lounge at the Nantwich Football Stadium, at 8.30am on the following Saturdays:

17th January	18th April	19th September
21st February	16th May	17th October
21st March	20th June	28th November

Meet Graham Christopher



To become a Youth and Children's Worker (YCW) at 60+ isn't what I expected, but I'm now settled in and enjoying the role. So what qualifies me for this role?

I grew up in a Christian home in SE London, with an interesting range of experiences. My parents were leaders in an "open brethren" church, and foster carers. I attended a Church of England Grammar School and we regularly entertained missionaries from around the world. As a student, Graham Kendrick would regularly visit for Sunday tea.

I came to work for the YMCA in Crewe in 1984 aged 23, and this is where I met Kerry. We married in June 1986. Next year we celebrate our 40th Wedding Anniversary. We have 2 birth daughters, and a grandson, but we have been fostering for 29 years and have a large extended family of previously fostered children and young people. Kerry is a Social Work manager, and I have held various roles in supported housing and homelessness, including training and teaching.

Until 2016 we were part of a large Baptist church in Crewe, where I was a church leader, involved in teaching young people, leading worship, and many other activities.

We live in Willaston and share our home with 5 teenage boys that we currently foster. So I fit this role around my responsibilities as a foster carer. I completed Foundations for Ministry training after being encouraged to consider joining the Church of England and have been part of St. Mary's since 2019. I've been helping with some of the youth work for the last few years.

My intention is to maintain the youth and children's work that has been developed, just adjusting things if needed. A couple of new events will be added to 2026, a Diocesan Youth Weekend in May and Mothers' Union Drawing Competition in the summer.

Graham Christopher

Encounter Supper

Encounter Supper on 16th November welcomed guest speaker Paul Ramsey and his wife Gail.



Born in 1945 to Ian and Margaret Ramsey, Paul spent his early childhood in Cambridge where his father was Chaplain and Fellow of Christ's College. One of Paul's early memories is of sitting on the draining board eating sugar sandwiches whilst his father cut up bread for communion.

In 1951 they moved to Oxford as his father took up a professorship at the university. As a teenager Paul attended Abingdon School and after A levels in maths, higher maths and physics was attracted to a career in engineering. Following a short spell in Rochester, New York, Paul was accepted to study at Christ's College Cambridge. He gained the necessary practical engineering experience by joining Cairn Line and working on four Atlantic crossings.

In 1966 Paul's father was appointed Bishop of Durham and took up residence at Auckland Castle.

Paul felt that his personal calling was to be a Christian in industry and he joined British Rail in 1967 and completed training in Derby, Crewe and then Leeds where he met Gail at a church club. Their sons were born in 1972 and 1976, but sadly never met their grandfather who died in 1972. Paul's career progressed through a range of posts focused on improved service and safety of trains and included painting two locomotives for the late Queen's Silver Jubilee – it also brought him to Crewe and Nantwich and to St. Mary's.

Paul and Gail have played a significant role in the life of St. Mary's for the last 46 years. After first retiring in 1996 Paul undertook training and was licensed as a Reader and his ministry includes leading services and taking funerals. His vocation as an engineer coupled with his life of faith meant he was ideally suited to project manage the recent restoration work at St. Mary's.

Paul's son and grandson have followed him into the railway industry and he and Gail enjoy visiting family in Northamptonshire and Sweden.

Four legs good, Six legs better

About 30 people turned up for the Beetle Drive and Fish and Chip Supper on Saturday, 8th November in the Parish Hall. Organised by the social committee, the Beetle Drive was called by Geoffrey Pearson. He interspersed the (very competitive) beetle rounds with useful factoids and tests such as how many species of beetle are there in the UK and in the world? Many!





People on tables of four each compete to draw a beetle as quickly as possible, based on throwing dice. Different dice numbers are needed before you can draw the different elements of the beetle: 6 to start with a body, 5 for a head, etc. Winners shout "BEETLE" and the winners and losers on each table move up and down to different tables. Each winner gets a chocolate coin. The overall winner, Elsie, got a box of chocolates.

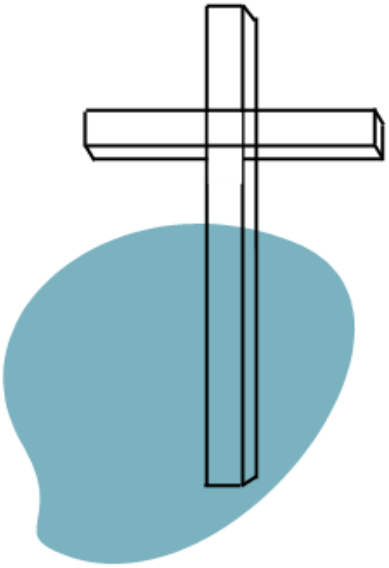


Competition was so fierce that Geoffrey had to instigate a rule that dice must stop spinning before being picked up by the next thrower. Luckily he also checked a "'winner's" drawing before finishing that game and distributing the chocolate coin. Rector Mark was the one who thought a beetle only had four legs … he didn't get away with it!



Annie Coombs

Churches Together in Nantwich



In October members of our six churches gathered at St. Mary's, Acton to mark All Saints-tide. It was a fitting venue and also a fitting moment as within a few days Pope Leo was to name Cardinal St. John Henry Newman a Doctor of the Church. The last Englishman to be thus named was the Venerable Bede. We celebrated with sparklers saints old and new, great and little known, those in stained glass and those in our hearts. The service was a real antidote to all the Hallowe'en hype which features at this time.

In November Churches Together supported Tear Fund's nationwide "Big Quiz". This national event raises money for Tear Fund's emergency and development work across the world. 40 or so quizzers met at Nantwich Methodist Church and £300 was raised. Our thanks go to Katrina Woolley from Market St. Church for organising the quiz and to those who helped her.

Also in November the CTiN Pilgrims travelled to Nantwich Methodist Church in Hospital St. for their morning service. It was an opportunity to meet and welcome the Rev. Obeth Thevanesan, who became the Minister there in September.

For a number of years Churches Together has supported those who have organised Christmas Lunch for people within the community who might be on their own on Christmas Day. Guests are brought to the event by car, enjoy a full Christmas Lunch, play some games and receive a goody bag to take home. Plans are afoot to repeat the event this year.

Volunteers: are always needed as drivers, kitchen helpers and waiters. If you have time to spare on Christmas Day or could help beforehand with administration and organisation please contact Sue whose details are below.

Invitation: Do you live in Nantwich or nearby? Will you be alone on Christmas Day? Booking essential. Lifts available. Phone Sue Piddock Jones (07933 237538).

Christmas Services



Sunday, 14th December

9.30am All Age Nativity with Donkeys
A scratch nativity play with carols. Children may come dressed as a character or use our costume box. Follow the donkeys to the crib. Refreshments and Messy Christmas in the Parish Hall after the service.

Sunday, 21st December

6pm **A Candlelit Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols**
The traditional carols & readings, and glorious music from the choir. Mulled wine & mince pies.

Christmas Eve



2pm **Crib Service**

3.30pm **Crib Service**

5pm **Crib Service**
The festive mood is high as families fill the church singing well-known carols and enjoying a nativity drama with a twist.

11.30pm **Candlelit Midnight Mass**
Silent night! Holy night!
The clock strikes twelve.
The choir soars.
It's Christmas present.



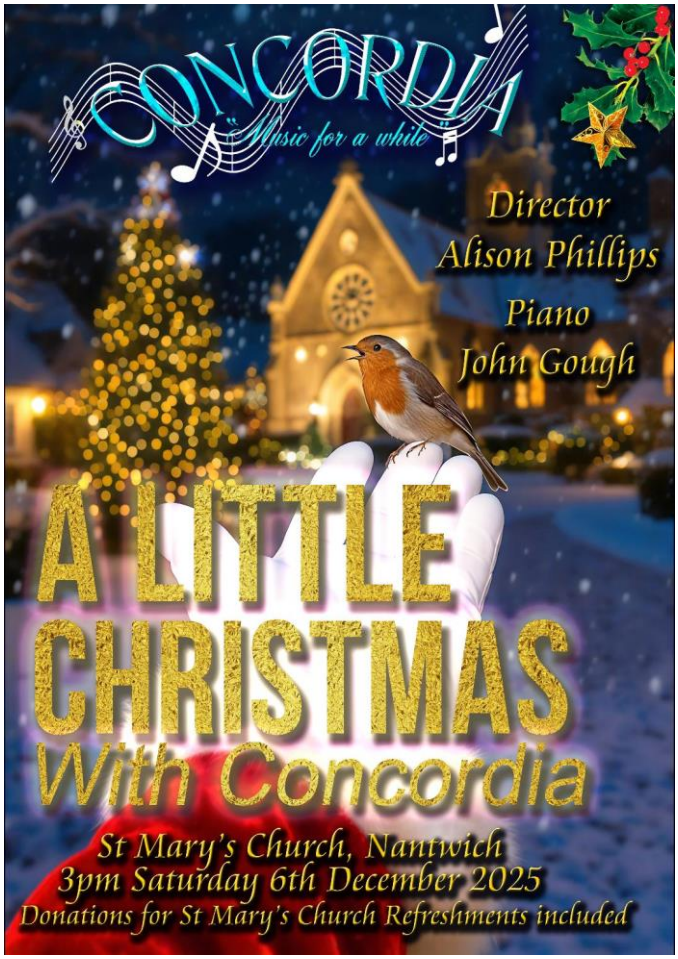
Christmas Day

8am **Holy Communion** (Book of Common Prayer)
Christians awake! Salute the happy morn.

10am **All Age Communion**
Joy to the world! All ages celebrate together. Church with cheer. Choir and carols.

No tickets required. Come in good time!

Forthcoming Events







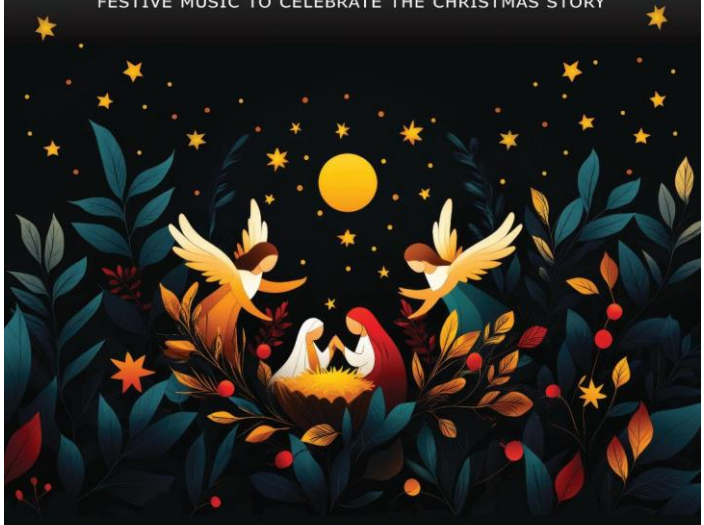




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Christmas By Candlelight

With Lions Youth Brass and Phoenix Voices

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December | 13 | 7:00 pm

St. Mary's Church Nantwich

Tickets £8, available at the St Mary's office or use the QR code to book



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A FAMILY CAROL CONCERT



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St Mary's Church, Nantwich

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Quiz Night

St Mary's Church Parish Hall

Includes Hot Supper
Bring your own drinks - hot drinks and squash will be available

Saturday 31st January 2026 at 6.30pm

Cash/Online payments - Adults £10, Children £5 by Tuesday 27th January

Please let us know how many adult/child tickets you are booking and if you have any dietary requirements e.g. gluten-free. If booking online, this can be done in the Collctiv message section of your booking. Thank you.

1. In cash via the Parish Office 01270 625268
2. Or online via Collctiv via this link at https://pay.collctiv.com/quiz-night-at-st-marys-66861
3. Or scan the QR code below.

NB. You do not need to add a tip (click 'Don't support Collctiv') - we will give them a contribution at the end.



See also "Special Services & Events Calendar" on p. 36.

Confirmation 2025

"God has called you by name and made you his own."

Bishop Sam led a lively and joyful service at St. Mary's on Sunday, 16th November when 21 people were confirmed (20 from St. Mary's Nantwich, and one, Patricia Baker, from St. Mary's Wistaston), four of whom were also baptised, and one person, Laura Sankey, was received into the Church of England. Seven of the candidates were under 18, and all the others were adults, many in their twenties and thirties. Such a range of ages, stories, and nationalities. This is what the Church is like, and people are coming, and finding hope in Christ.

The following were confirmed:

Rhea Atkinson *
Patricia Baker
Katerina Dohnalova
Minnie Esplen
Steven Gallagher
Bobby Gray *
Simon Grossman-Davies
Vihaan Kandru
Charlotte Kavanagh
Holly Lewis
Jonathan Mason
Jack Maloney
William North *
Niamh O'Brien
Christiana Osei-Kuffour
Steven Sankey
Louise Tolan *
Connor Turner
Holly Walford-Wright
Diane Walsh
Lee Wilson

* also baptised



Bishop Sam with three of the confirmation candidates, L to R: William, Christiana, Niamh.

Here are some words shared by some of the candidates about themselves:

Patricia Baker

I am very grateful for this opportunity to affirm my commitment, as an adult, to abide by those promises made for me at my baptism, and I trust that after taking this step today, I can go forward, with God's help, growing in faith, love, wisdom and courage.

Katerina Dohnalova

After my son was born, I began to seek faith and hope in a world that often feels overwhelming. I found that hope at St. Mary's Church on my very first visit, when I was warmly welcomed and I felt a deep, unmistakable feeling inside and curiosity. I still have days when I feel I'm failing, but today I promise to keep going, to trust in God's guidance, and to keep searching for the right path.

Minnie Esplen

My name is Minnie and I'm eleven. I want to be confirmed as I believe in God and want to confirm my Christian faith. Getting confirmed is really important to me and to my family.

Simon Grossman-Davies

St. Mary's Church has been central to many significant moments in my life, so it feels only natural to reaffirm my faith here. Over the years, this church has been a place of both celebration and reflection for me. Standing in the heart of the town I have called home for nearly my entire life, St. Mary's is not only a symbol of the community but also of my faith itself. I look forward to continuing my journey with this church and my faith as part of my future.

Vihaan Kandru

My favourite food is spicy meat, pepperoni pizza and vanilla ice cream with sprinkles in a cone. My favourite drinks are coke, water and blackcurrant juice. My favourite music is pop and rock music. I like doing PE and music at school. I go out for food and fun. My favourite arcade game is Mario Kart Arcade GP DX. When I am confirmed on 16th November my faith will be stronger.

Charlotte Kavanagh

After travelling from Australia to the United Kingdom this year to spend time with family, I felt a growing desire to return to the Church and

deepen my relationship with God. Though faith was part of my childhood, I drifted away over time. In recent years, I've felt called to reconnect, to find comfort and strength in God's presence, and to learn to lean on him through all seasons of life. Through my confirmation, I wish to affirm my faith, to walk closely with God, and to continue growing in his love and guidance.

Holly Lewis

I have always been Christian – it has always been a part of my life. In future I think Holy Communion will help me grow as a Christian, and as a person. Doing things like this makes me feel closer in my faith and to others. I like a lot of things and have hundreds of interests which all make up my personality. Like these, my belief in Christianity builds me as a unique person. I don't pray frequently but I know the Lord is still with me always. I absolutely love singing and music, drama and theatre etc. They make me feel so happy and safe. I have four cats who are all the light of my life and make me so joyful every day. My beliefs also make me feel this way and I love my faith.

Jack Maloney

I was brought up in the Catholic tradition, but in recent months I have found a welcoming and inclusive spiritual home at St. Mary's Church, Nantwich. Drawn by its broad expression of faith and strong sense of community, I have chosen to be confirmed as a personal affirmation of my belief and belonging. This step marks a deepening of my commitment to the Christian faith and to life within the wider Anglican tradition.

Jonathan Mason

There are infinite stars in existence. Over many centuries, civilizations gave names and mythologies to these divine creations. The beauty and majesty of this design is no accident – but divine. Leben mit Gott. (Live with God).

William North

I have always been part of a Christian family, and attended St. Mary's all my life. I have always found great friendship and support here at St. Mary's attending Sunday Clubs and FNL, and taking part in many services. I would like to take the next step and be baptised and confirmed to show my Christian faith.

Niamh O'Brien

I was brought up in the Church of England and have made so many friends and nurtured so many relationships through it. For me, Christianity is an incredible form of community, and I am so grateful to be brought one step further into that community in being confirmed. I pray to be more connected with God, and that he will help me to be strong in my future troubles and successes.

Christiana Osei-Kuffour

I have been a part of the church community for my whole life and have loved being able to be a part of this family who have watched and helped me grow. I hope that confirmation will help further strengthen my relationship with God and bring me closer to him.

Laura Sankey

My name is Laura and I am 33 years old. I was born in Hungary, where I was confirmed, and came to England in 2015. I had my wedding in St. Mary's in May 2024 and with my husband we have found here a kind and welcoming community. We welcomed our wonderful daughter in July 2025, who we are planning to baptise within the Church of England. Also, my husband is now going through the process of Confirmation, and I felt it important for myself to be officially received within the same Church as them.

Steven Sankey

I grew up attending a Christian school, saying prayers and singing hymns each morning, but it wasn't until preparation for my wedding at St. Mary's that I, and my wife Laura, began attending church regularly. And although we do not live in or around Nantwich, I've found St. Mary's Church, and all those who practice within it, to be extremely welcoming and kind. It has been a comfort to return to my faith, and as an avid lover of history to connect to the traditions of my ancestors. For me, confirmation is the next step on my journey.

Louise Tolan

Thank you, my Lord, for forgiveness and a chance to be wonderful to you, Jesus. To my church and all those who guide us here on earth – I'm so grateful, and passionate to learn much more, forever.

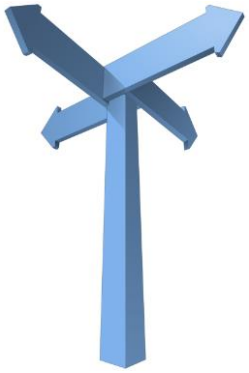
Connor Turner

I look forward to growing in faith at St. Mary's towards Jesus Christ, I pray and wish to hand more and more over every day as long as God allows.

Holly Walford-Wright

My name is Holly and I am making my Holy Communion to further my faith in being a Christian by taking the bread and wine. My faith will help me in the future by remembering this wholesome time, as a perfect guide through thick and thin. I will feel powerful on 16th November. My skills are music, art and sport. I am in my own band and I enjoy singing, guitar, drums, piano and ukulele. Attending and being part of this community will bring me joy and happiness. I am proud to let Christ into my life.

MOVING ON - Exploring Christian Discipleship



Moving On is a 7-session course which considers how we grow in faith as followers of Jesus. The course is designed for:

- those who have completed the START Course
- those who have been recently baptised and confirmed
- anyone who simply wants to consider what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Sessions include DVD interviews and presentations, small group discussions and activities, Bible readings and reflections. The course assumes no previous knowledge of the Christian faith or of church life.

Topics include "Following Jesus", "Church – a family", "Worship", "The Holy Spirit & The Trinity", "Growing in God – the Bible and Prayer", "Cheerful Giving" and "Living God's Way".

Moving On will begin in January and run to the end of March. Dates are yet to be confirmed so watch the church notice sheet and publicity in December/January.

To register an interest please phone or e-mail the Parish Office or contact Canon David by e-mail at canondavid12@uwclub.net

News in Pictures



The Nantwich Singers were delighted to welcome about 85 singers to the church on Saturday, 1st November for this event. Our new Musical Director, Susan Marrs, introduced us to a wide range of exercises, warm-ups, rounds, folksongs and singing tips all designed to improve our vocal technique. Or maybe it was just another excuse to experience how the magic of singing together raises us up, makes us feel good, and gently dissolves the barriers between us. The cake was quite good too.

Hundreds gathered outside the west end of St. Mary's on the evening of Sunday, 2nd November for a short ceremony when the Tree of Light was illuminated in memory of loved ones. This was followed by the All Souls' Memorial Service in church.



Remembrance Sunday

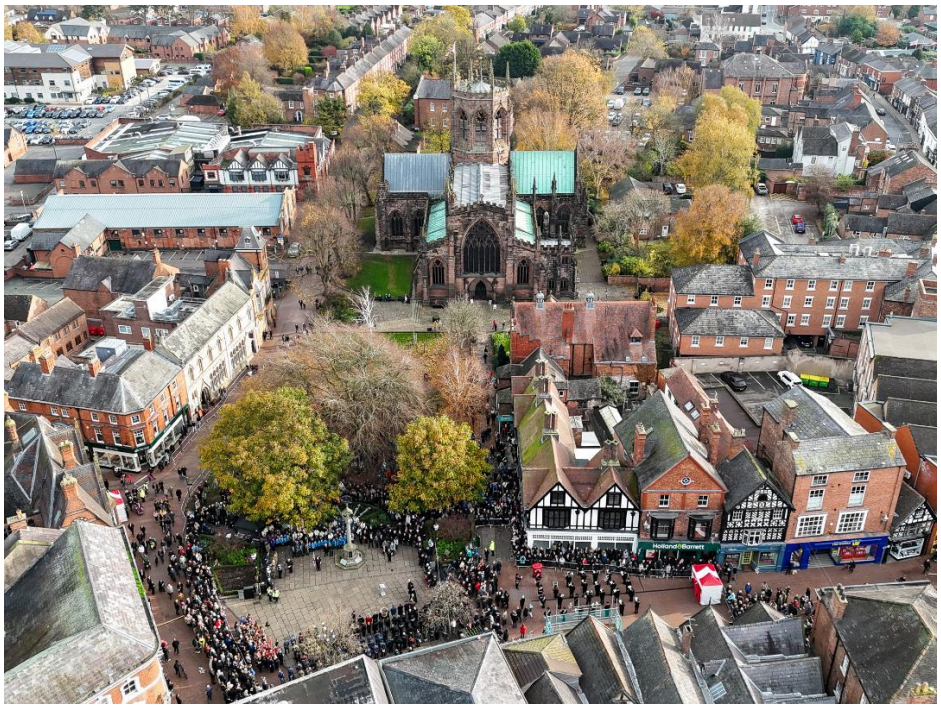


The Band and Drums of the Cheshire Constabulary led the procession from the Civic Hall and played on the Square. We are very fortunate to have them with us each year.

The choir returning to church after leading the singing on the Square.
Photo: Vicki Diane.



While the parade was being formed on the Square the bells were rung half-muffled, and the service began after the clock struck 11.



Photos: Jonathan White



Dozens of wreaths were laid, including one from St. Mary's, laid by Churchwarden Phil Boxhall.

Christmas Tree Festival

For a third year St. Mary's hosted a Christmas tree festival in partnership with St. Luke's Hospice, over the period 20th-23rd November. There were 53 trees, and more people wanting to sponsor trees than we had trees available. Next year we will find space for more!



St. Luke's Memory Baubles



Photos: Jonathan White

Nantwich Town FC Independent Supporters Association



Nantwich Food Festival

Richmond Village, Willaston



Nantwich Bellringers Photo: Nantwich Events Photographers



Large crowds attended throughout the weekend, especially on the Friday evening during the town lights switch-on, and the music and cinema events were much enjoyed. Thank you to our stewards, and all who helped in many ways.



It was a full house for the Egerton Strings on Saturday, 29th November, their 7th concert at St. Mary's, but their first playing classical music. The highlight was Vivaldi's Four Seasons. A wonderful, magical evening and a first-class performance. Their next visit is on 14th February, 2026, Valentine's Day.



A good crowd gathered for the Christingle service on Advent Sunday, and the congregation formed a circle around the nave with the lit candles and the nave lights extinguished.



The Tuesday children's group Sing! sang a lovely piece in the Christingle service - Hope of heaven.



The Advent Candle is lifted high as the Choir of St. Mary's prepares to sing the introit, Matin Responsory "I look from afar" at the beginning of the Advent Carol Service, featuring hymns, readings, and music by Stainer, Rose, Mendelssohn, Shaw, Manz, Ogden, Terry, Goldschmidt, Jarvis, and Barnard. As light in our darkness, As hope in our hearts, Come, Lord Jesus, Come.



CommunityChoir

This began in September 2025 as a way of bringing singers of all abilities together to have fun making music. We meet on the first Monday of each month in church and numbers have grown to between 20 and 30 singers, who are a delight to lead in song. Mark joined us at our last rehearsal where we learned and sang carols followed by mince pies and tea! The next meeting will be on the first Monday in February 2026. All are welcome!

Alison Phillips



The Christmas presents that were collected in church on Advent Sunday were delivered to Heather Newton (left), Salvation Army Christmas present appeal coordinator, by Ann Oliver (right). Thank you to all who donated, and to Ann, and Margaret Kavanagh, for organising the collection.

From the Registers: October 2025

Holy Baptism

We welcome you into the Lord's family

5th	Jack Woolley
5th	Theadora Woolley
19th	Florence Beech

Holy Matrimony

Bless these thy servants

24th	Kieran Smith & Natasha Loasby

Funerals

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

7th	Keith Hodgkison (87)
8th	Patricia Boffey (79)
9th	Olga Gidman (89)
10th	Kerry-Lee Clarke (47)
16th	Richard Bowen (85)
22nd	Barbara Mason (97)

November 2025

Holy Baptism

We welcome you into the Lord's family

2nd	Dion Berresford
16th	Douglas Wray
16th	Rhea Atkinson
16th	Bobby Gray
16th	William North
16th	Louise Tolan

Funerals

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

14th	Joyce Dean (85)

Readings for December

7th December *(2nd Sunday of Advent)*	Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12
14th December *(3rd Sunday of Advent)*	James 5: 7-10 Matthew 11: 2-11
21st December *(4th Sunday of Advent)*	Romans 1: 1-7 Matthew 1: 18-25
24th December *(Christmas Eve - Midnight Communion)*	Hebrews 1: 1-4 John 1: 1-14
25th December *(Christmas Day)*	Titus 2: 11-14 Luke 2: 1-14
28th December *(1st Sunday of Christmas)*	Hebrew 2: 10-18 Matthew 2: 13-23

Readings for January 2026

4th January *(Epiphany)*	Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12
11th January *(Baptism of Christ)*	Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 3: 13-17
18th January *(2nd Sunday of Epiphany)*	1 Corinthians 1: 1-9 John 1: 29-42
25th January *(Conversion of Paul)*	Acts 9: 1-22 Matthew 19: 27-30

Out of the Blue

Anything can hit us out of the blue. It is not expected, it is sudden, it can change our outlook or even our way of life. It may be good news or it may be bad news but whatever it is we have to cope with it.

Towards the end of October my husband Gordon, whom most of you may know, had a sudden transforming stroke. It was in the evening at home and without warning. It came "out of the blue". Since then I have been sustained by the prayers and good wishes of so many friends and family members. I have received offers of help from neighbours, friends and friends of friends. I have received good wishes from people around the world for a quick and complete recovery for Gordon. Even the work colleagues of our children have sent their best wishes. Our sons and daughter and their families have been supported by their employers and allowed to have time to care for both of us.

I am spending most of my time at Leighton Hospital where we meet so much care and kindness. The same is true of Stoke Hospital where Gordon's condition was stabilised. Gordon is now making slow and steady progress.

I hope this personal story will inspire all of us to believe in the goodness and kindness, which fills the world. This is especially true in the seasons of Advent and Christmas when we celebrate the coming of the Christ child, who in fact is with us at all times in our daily lives, whatever happens. It is the Holy Spirit of love which is available to all.

We are receiving care and kindness from people of different faiths and of no particular faith. We thank God for this. Please continue to pray for Gordon and for the love and peace which we all need. We must believe in goodness whatever the media focuses on. We can then enjoy both the celebrations to come and looking forward to the New Year.

Whatever comes out of the blue we can cope with it, good or bad, with the help of the Love which surrounds us.

Look for it with love and we can see care and kindness everywhere.

Dot Roxby

Regular Services & Groups

The church is open for all our usual regular services, and open to visitors Monday-Saturday, 9.30am-4pm. The 9.30am and 10.45am Sunday services continue to be live-streamed on YouTube most weeks. Services and events below are held weekly unless stated otherwise, and this is the normal pattern, which may occasionally change (check the weekly notice sheet).

Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	9.30am	All Age Worship (Communion 1st Sunday)
	10.45am	Holy Communion
	2.30pm	Holy Baptism (1st and 3rd Sundays)
	3.00pm	Seniors' Lounge (2nd Sunday)
	3.00pm	Afternoon Prayer or Holy Communion (Richmond Village)
	3.30pm	Holy Baptism (1st and 3rd Sundays)
	6.00pm	Evensong
	7.15pm	Encounter (1st & 3rd Sundays)
Monday	7.00pm	Community Choir Singing (1st Monday)
	8.00pm	Welcome to Baptism (2nd Monday)
Tuesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	10.00am	Mums & Toddlers in the Parish Hall
	3.45pm	SING!@St.Mary's in the Parish Hall
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	11.00am	Holy Communion
Thursday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	9.30am	Flower Arrangers in Church
	10.00am	Little Fish Toddler Group in Church
	7.00pm	Bellringing practice in the Tower
Friday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	10am-1pm	Place of Welcome in the Parish Hall
	2.00pm	Mothers' Union (3rd Friday) in the Parish Hall
	7.00pm	Choir Practice in Church
	7.30pm	FNL
Saturday	8.30am	Morning Prayer
	8.30am	St. Mary's Breakfast (3rd Saturday)
	10.00am	Concordia Practice in Church



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Contacts

Rector:	Rev. Dr. Mark Hart	
	markhart61@gmail.com	620668
	The Rectory, Nantwich CW5 5RQ	
Assistant Priest:	Rev. Dot Woods	dot@stmarysnantwich.org.uk
Honorary Clergy:	Rev. Tony Long	561113
	Rev. David Marsh	610079
	Rev. Brian Statham	07724 133215
	Rev. Canon David Taylor	618936
Reader Emeritus:	Paul Ramsey	623093
Youth and Children's Worker:		
	Graham Christopher	07795 696234
	graham@stmarysnantwich.org.uk	
Churchwardens:	Phil Boxhall	07368 497427
	Paul O'Brien	07973 743909
Verger:	Linda Lewis	07534 272901
Pastoral Worker:	Mary Harris	
	maryhma@icloud.com	628393 or 07753 840118

Adoption Matters:	Robert & Angela Sivocha	01244 390938
Baptism Coordinator:	Jo McCauley	620745
Bellringers:	Mary Stanwell	628900
	marystanwell@icloud.com	
Christian Stewardship Recorder:	Margaret Winzer	623768
Director of Music & SING!	Alison Phillips	07891 620678
Parish Hall Manager:	Nick Leftley	07899 807831
	nicleftley@aol.com	
	(Bookings via mah4now@yahoo.com)	
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Belinda Coghlan	568945
	safeguarding@stmarysnantwich.org.uk	
PCC Secretary:	Beth Roberts	
	pccsecretary@stmarysnantwich.org.uk	
PCC Treasurer:	Steve Lockett	628203

Parish Office:	Gail Johnson & Miriam Harvey	
(Open 9am-12noon Mon-Fri	Church Walk, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5RG	
and until 3.30pm Wed)	office@stmarysnantwich.org.uk	625268

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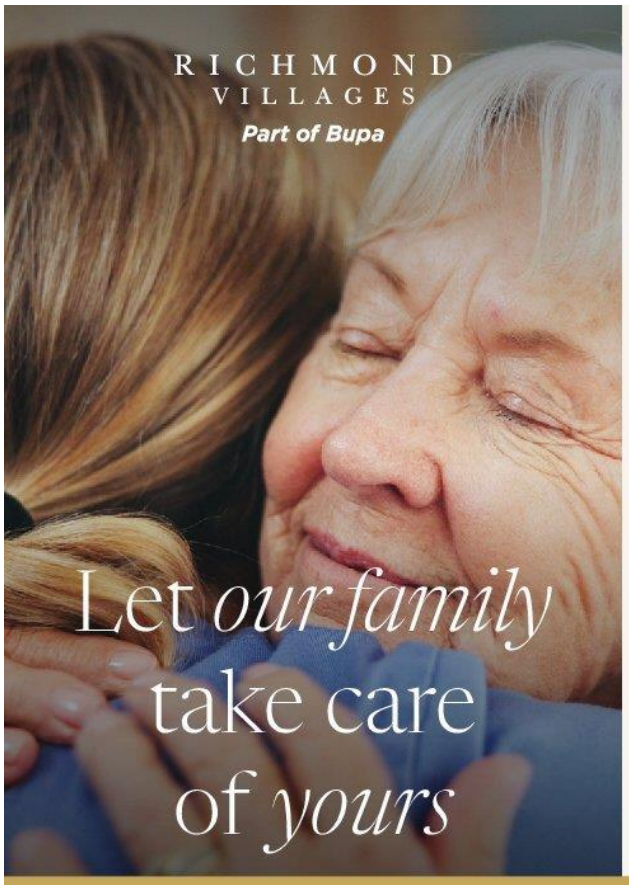
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Special Services & Events Calendar December 2025-February 2026

December	3rd	Sound Bath in church, 7.15pm
	5th	MU Carol Service in the Parish Hall, 2.15pm
	6th	Concordia Concert in church, 3pm
		Young Musicians Christmas Concert in church, 7pm
	7th	Band & Drums Concert (Cheshire Police) in church, 3pm
	8th	Christmas Singfest in church, 2pm
		Slowly Communion, 7.30pm
	9th	The Grove Singers "A Christmas Carol" in church, 7.30pm
	10th	Pear Tree School Christmas Concert in church, 6pm
	12th	Primary Carols in church, 11am
	13th	Lions Youth Brass & Phoenix Voices, 7.30pm
	14th	All Age Nativity with the Donkeys, 9.30am
		Nantwich Singers Christmas Concert in church, 3pm
	15th	Malbank School Carol Concert in church, 7pm
	16th	Brine Leas School Carol Concert in church, 7pm
	17th	Oxley's Charity Carol Service in church, 7pm
	20th	Nantwich Choral Society Concert in church, 7.30pm
	21st	A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, 6pm
Christmas Eve		2pm, 3.30pm, 5pm Crib Services; 11.30pm Midnight Mass
Christmas Day		8am Holy Communion; 10am All Age Communion

2026

January	11th	Airman's Grave Service, 1pm
	14th	Chester Diocese Everyday Faith Event in church, 7pm
	17th	St. Mary's Breakfast at Nantwich Football Club, 8.30am
	24th	Holly Holy Day events
	31st	Quiz Night in the Parish Hall, 6.30pm
	28th	Sound Bath in church, 7.15pm
February	1st	Sung Compline for Candlemas (Concordia), 6pm
	7th	Nantwich Choral Society Come and Sing Day in church
	14th	Candlelight Concert in church, 7.30pm
	18th	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion, 8am, 11am, 7.30pm
	21st	St. Mary's Breakfast at Nantwich Football Club, 8.30am
	24th	Afternoon Lent Course begins in church, 2pm
	25th	Evening Lent Course begins in church, 7.30pm