



Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor

# Pews News

December 2025

<https://stjb.hubb.church/>

## From Catherine, our Vicar

In this exciting, busy Advent and Christmas season, my prayer is that amongst the joy and festivities, you have the space to ponder anew what it all means, and to know afresh the joy and peace of God's presence and his love, brought to us in the unlikely shape of his dear Son, our Saviour, as a baby born to a poor mother and placed in a feeding trough – a baby who grew to manhood and lived and died for us, then rose to new life to set us free and to offer us new life with him. What a gift to celebrate, from such inauspicious beginnings!

### A Giving Time

Advent is a twinkling time  
of stars and candles  
of bright Christmas lights in city streets.  
Advent is a time of light,  
to celebrate the light  
that Jesus brought.



Christmas is a giving time  
of presents and cards,  
of mince pie parties and shared Christmas lunch.  
Christmas is a time of gifts  
to celebrate the gift  
that Jesus brought.



This twinkling, giving time  
is full of promise, expectation, hope  
as we celebrate the big surprise:  
God's greatest gift – The Christ.  
But do we look for new surprises?  
Do we look for God  
Amongst our gifts and Christmas lights?



*Virginia Becher*

*Wishing you all a peaceful Advent season and a joyful Christmas,  
with love from Catherine (and Steve)*



# St John the Baptist Church – December 2025

Sun	7 Dec	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Catherine
		10.30	<b>Messy Christingle [1]</b>	Speaker – Catherine
Sun	14 Dec	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Stephen
		10.30	Morning Worship	Speaker – Stephen
		10.30	Children’s Church	
Sun	21 Dec	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Pat
		10.30	Family Communion	Speaker – Pat
		10.30	Children’s Church	
		16.00	<b>Carols at KB House [2]</b>	Speaker – Catherine
Wed	24 Dec	16.00	<b>Crib Service</b>	Speaker – Catherine
		23.30	<b>Midnight Communion</b>	Speaker – Catherine
Thu	25 Dec	10.30	<b>Christmas Day Family Communion</b>	Speaker – Catherine
Sun	28 Dec	9.00	Holy Communion	Speaker – Catherine

Note: There is no 10.30 Service on 28 Dec.

## Regular Events

Wednesdays	20.00	Wednesday Fellowship Group
Thursdays	9.00	KBS Café at the Village Hall

## Special Events

Sat	6 Dec	10.00	<b>Father Christmas Trail [3]</b>
		12.00	<b>Carol Singing</b> at KB Co-op, and then Rimes Close
Thu	11 Dec	10.30	Christmas Carols (School Choir) at the <b>KBS Café</b> – see below for details
Fri	12 Dec	19.00	<b>Film Club</b>
Wed	17 Dec	19.00	<b>Carol Singing</b> at Petypher House, and then in The Wagon & Horses
Thu	18 Dec	10.30	Christmas Carols (Ladies Choir) at the <b>KBS Café</b> – see below for details

### [1] Messy Christingle Service

This will take place in the Village Hall. There will be activities for everyone. We hope the 10.30 Congregation will engage with this service; however if it really isn’t your cup of tea, you will be very welcome at the 9.00 Service in Church.

### [2] Carols at Kingston Bagpuize House

Wrap up warmly to enjoy our magical late afternoon Carol Service on the lawn of Kingston Bagpuize House, by kind permission of Ginny Grant. Bring a chair to sit on and a rug to keep warm. Music will be provided by the Wantage Silver Band. The event will be followed with refreshments provided by the House.

### [3] Father Christmas Trail

Look for the details of Father Christmas’s journey in the KBS News or see below.

# Father Christmas Trail

*Father Christmas writes:*



On **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December** I'll be resting my reindeer while I drive around KBS with my helpers, inviting you to bring me gifts of **dried and tinned food\*** for local families who will need to rely on Food Banks this Christmas. Also, I would love new unwrapped **toys and gifts for teenagers** for The Salvation Army Children at Christmas Appeal.

You will be able to find me at

10.00-10.45	Outside Petypher House, before I ride around Orchard Gate, and then to Kingston Park
10.45-11.00	The Kitchen Depot
11.15-11.25	Latton Close, One Stop/Munch
11.25-12.20	Ridgeway View, The Paddocks/Northmoor, John Blandy Estate
12.20-12.30	The Village Hall
12.30-13.00	3 Rimes Close

Come and join me at the end of the Trail (Rimes Close) for some mulled wine, a mince pie or two and carol singing.



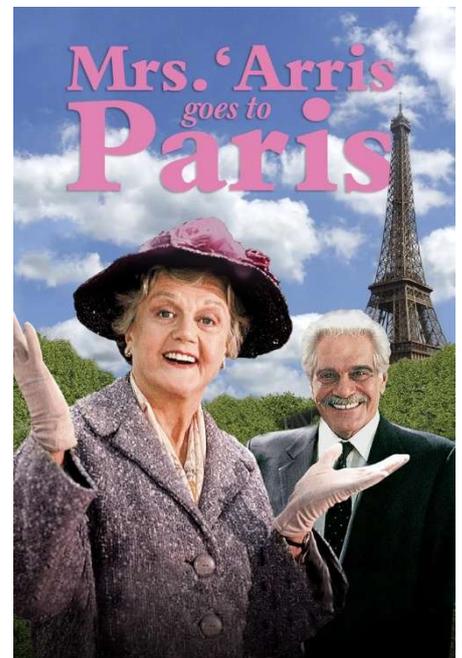
\* Tinned ham, peas, carrots, potatoes, cranberry sauce, gravy granules, sage & onion stuffing, Christmas pudding, mince pies, custard, tinned fruit, Christmas cake, chocolate, shortbread, nuts, crisps, chutneys, pickles, crackers, boxes of chocolate/sweet biscuit.

## Film and Music Night

Our next Film Night will be on **Friday 12th December** in the Church Room when we will be showing **Mrs 'Arris Goes To Paris**. Those who have seen it recommend that we see the original version, starring Angela Lansbury, Dame Diana Rigg and Omar Sharif, rather than the updated version!

It is about a housemaid (Angela Lansbury) who spends her days cleaning for wealthy families. She knows her place but that doesn't stop her speaking her mind, or dreaming of luxuries. She admires a beautiful Dior gown in her employer's wardrobe and she becomes determined to buy one of her own. She finally saves up enough money to go to Paris to the House of Dior but learns that buying an original couture creation is harder than simply having the cash. Join us to find out what happens.

This is a free evening organised by members of St John the Baptist Church and tea, coffee, chocolates and popcorn will be provided from 7pm with the film beginning at 7.15pm. We have limited capacity in the room, so we do ask you to let either Peter Beer or Margo Evans know if you will be joining us. We would hate to have to turn anyone away on the night.



Many thanks – Peter Beer 01865 820805 or Margo Evans 01865 820900 or [margoevans@mac.com](mailto:margoevans@mac.com)

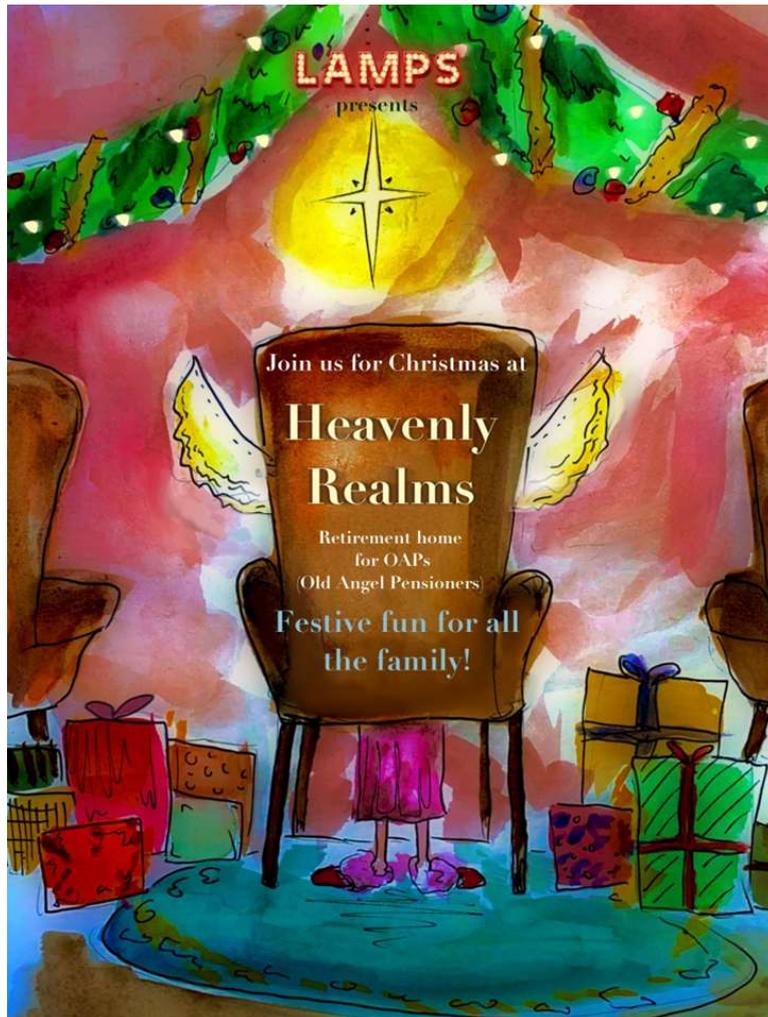
# Heavenly Realms

Christian drama group, the LAMPS Collective, are returning with their brand new Christmas Show.

**Saturday 20th December** – 3.00pm and 7.00pm – Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon.

Join the OAPs (Old Angel Pensioners) of retirement home “Heavenly Realms” as they get ready to celebrate Christmas and share memories of the very first one. Hold on to your halo and enjoy a *holy* new take on the Nativity story! Festive fun for all the family from age 8 to 800. Come along and invite your friends!

Tickets £10 adult, £5 Child/young person (8-18). Link on our website, under News – see red banner on home page.



*Stephen Haywood writes:*

We have been to several LAMPS productions. They are absolutely brilliant. Strongly encourage everyone to go.

## KBS Café

**Thursday 11th December:** Children from John Blandy school are coming to the KBS Café at **about 10.30am** to sing Christmas Carols. Church Christmas raffle tickets will be on sale.

**Thursday 18th December:** We will be singing a few Carols, there will be a small raffle, Christmas cake and mince pies.

The KBS Café will be closed on

- **Thursday 25th December**
- **Thursday 1st January**

Reopening on **Thursday 8th January.**

# Thank Yous

We have completed our final mow of 2025 ... hooray !

Thank you to all of you who have helped with **Mowing** this year:

- Red Team: Emily Furse, Jo Kane and other halves.
- Green Team: Stephen Haywood, Michael Jarvis
- Yellow Team: Ian Belloch, Stephen Schneider, Andre King
- Blue Team: Nathan, Charles Adar-Donkor, Edouard Nibelle

Big thanks to Hazel & Bob, who organise the work and ensure the mowers are serviced and fuelled.

The mowing is a quite a bit of work but the results are worth it. If you would be willing to spare an hour and a half every other month, please speak to Hazel.



Thanks to **Wendy Robinson** who has coordinated the **Church Cleaning Rota** for the last few years and, as a Team member, has helped keep the Church looking lovely. Wendy would like to hang up her duster now, and Maria Haywood will take over the coordination.



A big thanks **Poul Christensen** who has created a magnificent notice board for the Church entrance. The photo shows Poul installing the board with **Simon Dando's** help.



And finally (it's great to have so many lovely things for which we can express our thanks), you won't have failed to notice what has happened under the Yew Tree. A big thanks to the **Sharon Cooper & Andre King** who have removed all the weeds under the tree and have planted a variety of shrubs and flowers. The plants were a gift from Sharon and Steve Smith in appreciation of their welcome at the monthly Film Nights.

The plants include

*Creeping Comfrey:*

A spreading, low-growing and hardy ground-cover plant. It has the ability to create a dense mat that suppresses weeds. Great news for us on the grass cutting teams!

*Bergenia Cordifoli:*

Blooms from February to March, producing bell-shaped flowers.

We can't wait to see them bloom in the Spring.

## Church Cleaning

You may be aware that there is a small group of people who squirrel away now and then in the church to keep it looking clean and welcoming. We would love for some new folks to join us next year. You will be paired with a partner, and the two of you will take on the cleaning together for one month, possibly twice per year.

Thinking about it? Have any questions? Then do please speak to one of the current team: Julie Carpenter, Margo Evans, Maria Haywood, Andre King, Jo Lister, Celeste Loots, Vicky Saywell and Corrinna Thomson.

If you would be willing to be on the Cleaning Team, please contact our Church Warden, Maria, at [cw4.sjbchurch@gmail.com](mailto:cw4.sjbchurch@gmail.com)



## Carol Singing

*Maria Haywood writes:*

Getting into the festive spirit?

Why not support the church carol singing in the village this year?



- Outside the KB Co-op on **Saturday 6 December** at 12 noon, and then going to Rimes Close to sing again with a warm drink as Father Christmas finishes his round.
- In Petypher House on **Wednesday 17 December** at 7pm, and then in The Waggon and Horses pub at 8pm. Both venues are looking forward to hosting us and joining in.

Do bring your voices so that we can do the Church proud and really encourage the villagers with the joy of Christmas!

# What I love about Christmas

The Editor asked the Wednesday Fellowship Group members what they most liked about Christmas:

- School Nativity plays.
- The Carol Service at KB House.
- The Crib Service.
- The Midnight Service – the peace and quiet walking home after the service, shouting “Happy Christmas” to passers-by, especially on a stary evening or when it has snowed.
- The excitement in the Christmas Day Service.
- Watching the grandchildren opening presents and then scrunching up the wrapping paper for an indoor snowball fight.
- Christmas Day Lunch with family.
- Eating leftovers on Boxing Day.
- All the traditions, including watching the Royal Speech. (We loved some of the recent ones from QE2)
- Festive films, especially “Love Actually”.

## Favourite Carols

*Pat Clamp writes:*

Judging by the well-attended Village Carol Service and the midnight Christmas Eve service, we all love carols. When I was asked to write about my favourite carols, I found it hard to choose. I realised that we don't think about the familiar words we have probably sung since childhood. I wondered: do we really think about the real “meaning of the season” ... *Christ-mas?*

So this got me thinking and I have chosen three carols:

### **Once in Royal David's City.**

This carol brings together the divinity and humanity of Jesus: *“He came down to Earth from Heaven.”* Jesus, the Son of God and King of Heaven came to Earth to live as a humble human. His birth *“in a lowly cattle shed”* gives us an insight into Jesus' earthly mission among the poor and despised. *“Through his childhood”* he set us an example to follow and shows us how he experienced the joys and sorrows of human life. Finally it shows us again his divinity: *“Not in that poor lowly stable shall we see him, but in Heaven, set at God's right hand on high.”*



### **O Little Town of Bethlehem.**

The Christmas story in poetic language. Into a dark world, a light shines. Jesus has come to Earth, born to a humble young girl. In the silence of the night, God's most wonderful gift is given to us for ever. A child whose birth is proclaimed by *“morning stars”* praising God. A bringer of peace to our troubled, broken world. *“O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.”*



### **O Come all ye Faithful**

Our response to this wonderful gift of Jesus, the King of Heaven, born to a virgin, a Son begotten of God, not a human father: *“Yea Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning.”* We come to adore the one *“born for our salvation. Jesus to you be glory given. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.”*



This *Christ-mas* let us think about the words we are singing and make the Christmas message alive and personal to each one of us.

*Editor:* I always thought Jesus was British. This fact was confirmed by Pat's original version of this article where she had written *“Jesus Britton of God”*... but then I realised this was probably a result of the predictive text feature of her tablet.

# Lee Abbey

*Emily Bisset writes:*



Lee Abbey is a distinctive-looking, gothic-style, peach-coloured building, nestled into the hillside of North Devon above Lee Bay. Previously a hotel and a school, and many centuries ago a farmhouse, it was purchased by a group of Christians in 1945 and has been the home to a Christian community since 1946.

More than just a building, it is a home. Around 50-60 community members from all over the world live there year-round. Each community member has their own role: some manage the farm, livestock and estate; others cook food in the kitchens; some are chaplains or on the pastoral team; others manage room changeovers for Lee Abbey's guests and keep the house clean. They take turns to welcome the guests that come to stay for a few days at a time, many of whom would also consider Lee Abbey to be a kind of spiritual home.

It was in 2018, 72 years after the house became home to this community, that my journey with Lee Abbey began. At church during my university years I had heard this almost-mythical name spoken, as friends told of summers spent at this special "God-place" by the sea. But it was only 8 years post graduation, as I left a job that had put me on sick leave with stress, that I myself ventured there for the first time.

Since then, I have visited in several moments of brokenness and life transition: in 2020 as I recovered from a nasty bout of glandular fever; in 2022 as Leon and I recovered from a tough first year as parents; and most recently in October of this year as I processed being made redundant from a role I had poured my heart and soul into.

As a setting, Lee Abbey offers drama and stillness. Raging elements, sublime sunsets, crashing waves below sheer cliffs, alongside the warmth and peace of joining in with community meals, receiving prayer, and finishing days in quiet contemplation.



It is what some call a “thin place”; a place where God somehow feels nearer than in other locations, and this is certainly my experience. Whether Lee Abbey is indeed spiritually set apart – or whether it is the conscious action of setting apart time for God in visiting Lee Abbey – my times there have always felt significant.



My most recent visit this autumn was spent napping, exploring the cliffs, staring at waves, joining in with sung worship, listening to talks, reading a novel by the fire, and writing in my journals. It allowed a conscious slowing down and stilling of my mind that is not possible with the demands of everyday life, and which allowed space for me to organise my thoughts and hear from God. Joining in with the worship of a community committed to God, with guests who had all come specifically to seek Him was very special indeed; a room packed with as many back stories as people, but all raising voices in praise.

As with my other visits, I didn't come away with a solution or a clear “answer” to my current circumstances. But I did come away with peace, with the sensation that something had shifted deep in my soul, and with many small reflections on where God was already at work in my every day life.

Whether at Lee Abbey or elsewhere (closer to home I'm also a big fan of Stanton House), or even just in a phone-free half hour walk around our village, my experience has been that **when we make time to look and listen, we often find that God is closer than we think.**

## Contacting Churchwardens

Maria asks that if you are contacting her on Church business, please can you use her Church email address: [cw4.sjbchurch@gmail.com](mailto:cw4.sjbchurch@gmail.com) (Her husband is frequently told off for using the wrong address.)

## Write an Article for Pews News

The Editor (Stephen) would welcome articles from the congregation which relate to our Church Family or our Christian Faith. If you have something which you think would be suitable, please speak to me ([StephenJHaywood@outlook.com](mailto:StephenJHaywood@outlook.com)). In the meantime, I will be picking on people to contribute.

Copy date for January edition is **Saturday 20 December.**

## For the January Edition

Please let [StephenJHaywood@outlook.com](mailto:StephenJHaywood@outlook.com) know

- 1) What I love about Winter
- 2) My New Year's Resolutions

Send me your thoughts by 20 Dec.