



Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor

# Pews News

February 2026

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

## From Catherine, our Vicar

Sadly, at the time of writing, Catherine is ill and so no letter from her. Hopefully she will be back with us in February. Please pray for Catherine.

## St John the Baptist Church – February 2026

|     |        |       |                              |                       |
|-----|--------|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sun | 1 Feb  | 9.00  | Holy Communion               | Speaker – Anne Curtis |
|     |        | 10.30 | Morning Worship              | Speaker – Anne Curtis |
|     |        | 10.30 | Children’s Church            |                       |
| Sun | 8 Feb  | 9.00  | Holy Communion               | Speaker – Catherine   |
|     |        | 10.30 | All Age Service              | Speaker – Emily       |
| Sun | 15 Feb | 9.00  | Holy Communion               | Speaker – Pat         |
|     |        | 10.30 | Morning Worship              | Speaker – Pat         |
|     |        | 10.30 | Children’s Church            |                       |
| Wed | 18 Feb | 19.00 | <b>Ash Wednesday Service</b> | Speaker – TBC         |
| Sun | 22 Feb | 9.00  | Holy Communion               | Speaker – Stephen     |
|     |        | 10.30 | Family Communion             | Speaker – Stephen     |
|     |        | 10.30 | Children’s Church            |                       |

### Regular Events

|            |       |                                     |
|------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| Wednesdays | 20.00 | <b>Wednesday Fellowship Group</b>   |
| Thursdays  | 9.00  | <b>KBS Café</b> at the Village Hall |
| Fridays    | 10.30 | <b>Fizzy Coffee</b>                 |

### Special Events

|     |        |       |                              |
|-----|--------|-------|------------------------------|
| Wed | 4 Feb  | 14.30 | <b>Hymns We Love</b>         |
| Fri | 13 Feb | 19.00 | <b>Film Club</b>             |
| Wed | 18 Feb | 14.30 | <b>Hymns We Love</b>         |
| Wed | 18 Feb | 19.00 | <b>Ash Wednesday Service</b> |

# Thanks

Don't the Church Room, Kitchen & Loo look better now they have been redecorated? Big thanks to **Simon and Maria** for overseeing the project, and for our good friend, **Phil Manley**, for all his splendid work.



And thanks to everyone who helped empty the Church Room for the Redecoration and then helped return all the furniture.



# How I became a Christian

*Sue Wales writes:*

I grew up in Liverpool where my Father kept a pub. My family didn't go to church. However, I was taught to say my prayers before going to bed, and at the age of seven, it was decided to send me to the Sunday School at the local church. My older sister, ten years older than me, had a best friend who helped at the Sunday School, so she took me each Sunday afternoon. I didn't mind too much but I could get a little bored. I remember we had quite a young teacher at first. We were all meant to be sitting on chairs in a circle listening to a story. I began climbing over the back of the chairs. "Sit down Susan. Susan! Sit down." I don't believe I took any notice.

One Sunday in Winter, several teachers were off ill, and so the Sunday School Superintendent took one large class of all the children without a teacher. I knew better than to mess with him!

“Who says their prayers every day?” ... I felt quite good, I’d got that one right.

“Who reads their Bible every day?” ... “Oh”, I thought, “I didn’t know you were meant to do that.”

Well, we read the Bible in school, I reasoned, so that counts; though, I knew in my heart that is not what he meant. So I began to read my Bible. In those days, it was the King’s James Version. I could read quite well, and so I started at Genesis. Well you start a book at the beginning don’t you? I got as far as chapter six. In the King James Version, chapter six begins “There were giants in the earth in those days.” “Where did they come from?”, I thought, “I must have missed a bit”. So I re-read the first six chapters of Genesis several times, trying to find out where the Giants came from!

Meanwhile a new school year came, and I had a new Sunday School teacher, who was also a rep for Scripture Union. She told us about *Bible Reading Notes*, and *Adventurers*. I went home, and asked my parents if I could subscribe to them. After some consideration and discussion, they said “Yes”. *Adventurers* was a four-sided weekly sheet. A story on the back, a graphic story on the front and various puzzles on the inside pages. One week the story on the back was about a girl who lost her temper. I was very interested in that because I would lose my temper. I don’t mean I would just get angry; I mean I would *really* lose it ... it was beyond my control. Of course, losing my temper got me into trouble, but I had learnt to sneak off to my bedroom, at the far end of the house, where I could scream, and beat up my pillow, without getting into trouble. Anyway I decided to try not to lose my temper for a month. I didn’t manage one day!

Summer came, and there was no Sunday School, but there was Children’s Church. I don’t know who the speaker was that Sunday; I had never seen him before, or since.

“If you want to be good you can’t do it on your own, but if you ask God he will send his Holy Spirit to help you.”

I thought that was very interesting but I don’t like making decisions in a hurry, so I thought about it for a week. The following Saturday, on my own in my bedroom, I asked God to send his Holy Spirit to help me.

So that is my story, or at least the start of it. I expect your story is different. In fact, I think there are probably as many different stories as there are people in God’s kingdom.

*The Editor would love to hear stories from other members in the Congregation as to how they became Christians.*

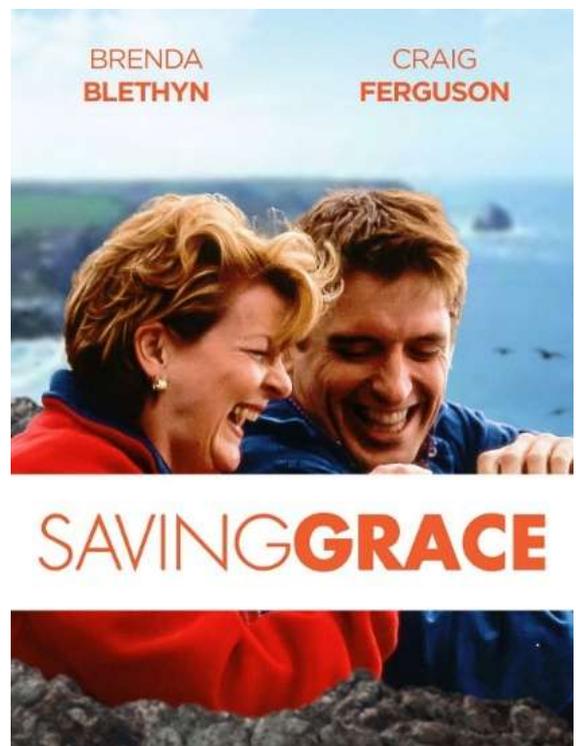
## Film and Music Night

Our next Film Night will be on **Friday 13th February** in the Church Room when we will be showing, **Saving Grace**, a comedy to cheer up the winter evenings.

Brenda Blethyn stars as Grace Trevethen, whose late husband jumped out of a plane without a parachute. Grace has been left with a manor on the Cornish Coast ... and the massive, suffocating mountain of debt her husband had been secretly amassing. Now, with creditors on her heels, Grace is faced with the prospect of losing everything. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so when Grace is asked to tend an ailing, if illicit, plant she gets an outrageous idea. Join us to find out more ...

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 01865 820805 and Margo 01865 820900 [margoevans@mac.com](mailto:margoevans@mac.com)



# Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

*For the November Pews News, Celeste Loots wrote about her recent Camino walk in Portugal. This month, veteran Camino walker, Stephen Schneider, writes (emphasis added by Editor):*

“A cold coming we had of it  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey ...”

TS Eliot’s poem “Journey of the Magi” is often read in churches at Epiphany, along with the singing of “We Three Kings” or children dressed up to present their gold, frankincense and myrrh. Yet the poem sits oddly in this setting. Its text seems so removed from all the familiar characters and events of the Christmas story. The focus is instead on how that epic journey, one of the great pilgrimage narratives in the Bible, changed the Wise Men ... they are never the same again.

On a smaller scale, this way that pilgrimage changes you has been my experience too, having completed the Camino de Santiago several times (by various routes – each one ending in Santiago de Compostela) and doing a few short pilgrimages in the UK. It is hard to sum up how pilgrimage works, as so much depends on the individual and their own relationship (or lack of one) with God. But I will just point to three themes I have found relevant: Encounter, Burdens, and Community.

## Encounter

Pilgrimage is about encounter with God, or, at least, opening yourself up to that possibility. I vividly remember the first day I started walking the Camino (the Camino Frances) by heading into the Pyrenees. Upward and upward I strenuously climbed, heavy backpack on my back, moving up from sunny flatlands until I was walking amid snow. When I got to the top, I had crossed from France into Spain. The wind was so fierce I was nearly blown off my feet. Exhausted, I headed to the monastery and pilgrim refuge at Roncesvalles. The bell was tolling for evening mass as I arrived. At the service, the pilgrims were called to the front and the priests gave us a blessing, each in our own language. There were about 25 of us who arrived that day, of various nationalities. After a pilgrim meal when we got to know each other, a priest took us on a tour of the monastery. In the middle of the quadrangles the snow had fallen off the steep roofs and was piled 10-feet high. In one chapel, the priest said: “The acoustics are good in here.” He started humming Amazing Grace and the pilgrims started singing it. At that moment I realised **pilgrimage is a thin space, a place of encounter with God, where heaven and earth seem closer**. I have experienced that vivid sense of God’s presence on that pilgrimage and others since. My daughter Helen and I use the abbreviation “Dios Aqui” (God is here!) when this happens.

Often a pilgrim is exhausted – the way can be muddy, mountainous and it’s pelting with rain, or it is hot, exposed and as waterless as a desert. It is a place of glory, and of beauty, but it can also be a place of tears, or of bitter struggle. But that sense of encounter with God – sometimes in solitude and sometimes with others – has been real.

## Burdens

I learned the hard way, on my first long pilgrimage, that every pound of weight you carry impacts how many blisters you will get. I had worn my heavy hiking boots and I was carrying way too much stuff, trying to prepare for every eventuality. I ended up getting such severe blisters that, two thirds into the pilgrimage (after about 23 days) I got a severe foot infection and I was hospitalised. I ended up finishing my pilgrimage months later, after all the friends I had started with had finished. The burdens I had carried endangered my ability to complete the pilgrimage. I needed lighter shoes, and a lighter pack. I learned that pilgrims pack very light, and offload what they do not need along the way. Most hostels have boxes for donated items. I learned to start each day by going through my belongings to get rid of whatever was in my pack that I did not need. Pilgrims can get obsessive about losing extra weight in their packs – they break the ends off toothbrushes and rip pages out of books once they have read them. I learned not to carry too much food, and only enough water to get to the next fountain. **Pilgrims learn to walk in trust.**



## Community

Pilgrimage is also about community. On my first Camino, the pilgrims I met that first night became friends that I would walk alongside, and we shared laughter and tears as we encountered the joy and struggles of the way. On another Camino two years ago, I remember walking many miles across a Spanish plain to reach a small village where the pilgrim albergue (*shelter*) was only a room with a four bunk beds in it. The first pilgrim to arrive had to get the key from the church. But, as there was no restaurant or bar, the five of us pilgrims there sat on our beds and shared what food we had with each other for our evening meal. On another occasion, I remember my daughter and I struggling for hours through pelting rain, until we arrived at our hostel soaked through, only to be greeted by a kind Italian couple from a lay Franciscan order who handed us life-saving cups of hot tea. In many ways, I have found **pilgrimage to be the Church at its best, or perhaps what it was meant to be: love, acceptance, openness and kindness seem to be its natural languages**, whatever differences of nationality (or of anything else) there may be. You make friends quickly, because there is openness, acceptance and vulnerability. And often **pilgrims are good at sharing what they have** – one person has blister plasters, another has extra water, or sun cream, or food – and we share it.

But of course a pilgrimage does not have to be an epic journey of many days. Shorter pilgrimages, and even those completed in one day, can be enormously spiritually beneficial times to set time aside, to make both **an outer and an inner journey, to seek a closer relationship with God, in community with our fellow brothers and sisters**. During Catherine's curacy in Dorchester, we helped organise a pilgrimage that visited many of the different parishes in the area. It proved a very enjoyable way of building up relationships between the different churches, and it was organised so that everyone (whether they were able to walk it or not) was able to take part.

So, whatever your age or ability or interest in walking, maybe give it some thought. **Making a pilgrimage can change you, and enrich your life, in ways that you won't expect.**



# Ho Ho

From "Physics for Cats" by Tom Gauld:



## Last Words from Daniel

The Wednesday Fellowship Group has been studying the Book of Daniel over the last few months. Daniel is a book with familiar stories about lions and furnaces, but also baffling prophecies. That aside, it is primarily about a humble man of faith and patience, who despite great intimidation continues to worship God, and who uses his God-given wisdom to serve his true king

We loved the last verse, which I paraphrase here:

As for us, we will go God's way till the end. We will rest, and then at the end of the days, we will rise to receive our allotted inheritance. [Dan 12.13]

## PCC Secretary

*We had no response to this appeal, so we will keep asking until someone volunteers! Don't hold back 😊*

Your church is lacking a PCC Secretary! If you think you could help, please talk to the Vicar or the Wardens

Role of a PCC Secretary:

The primary responsibilities of a PCC Secretary are to support the PCC Chair in the preparation and organisation of meetings and to handle all correspondence on behalf of the PCC. They are appointed by the PCC.

Duties of a PCC secretary:

1. Keeping record for the PCC.
2. Organising PCC meetings.
3. Preparing the agenda for PCC meetings.
4. Keeping the minutes.
5. Organising and minuting the APCM.
6. Acting as the communication hub for the PCC.
7. Acting as the compliance officer for the PCC.
8. Handling correspondence.
9. Supporting the Incumbent.

## 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)).

Copy date for March edition is **Sunday 22 February**.