



St Mary's Parish Church, Portchester

St Mary's News

No 131 November 2026



From the Vicar

November is a special month in the Church Year when we reflect on our belief in 'The Communion of Saints' (Apostles' Creed). It is known as 'All-Saints-tide' or 'The Kingdom Season'. It is one where we honour saints, martyrs and the faithful departed.

The Christian understanding is that we are one Church with those who have died in Christ. They are the 'Church Triumphant' in Paradise whose battle is over, while we are 'The Church Militant' on earth whose fight remains. This is particularly reinforced in the Communion liturgy when we say:



*"Therefore, with angels and archangels and **all the company of heaven** we proclaim your great and glorious name ..."*

One of the things I like about the Anglican Church is that as an institution we are an old 'building', perhaps like an inherited stately home or castle where each room is surrounded by portraits of our ancestors and has bits of furniture and other collectables from the passing centuries. As the Church of England, we have 500 years of experience of doing church, but as 'reformed Catholics' we also draw on a heritage of the last 2,000 years expressed in liturgy, hymns, spirituality, writings and theology. We're not like one of the newer whizzy churches starting from scratch who believe that the Church was wrong in its worship and teaching until they came along 20 years ago! (Although sometimes it is tempting!)

This idea has a scriptural basis in Hebrews chapter 12:1 when, after describing the lives of some of the heroes of the Old Testament, it tells us that now we are '*surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses*' and verse 4, '*being dead, still speak*'. I commend to your study not just the saints of biblical times, but the saints of the past two millennia whose special days are celebrated in the Church Calendar (mainly at mid-week services). This month has plenty of them.

Do you have any favourite saints? I've got several from various generations whose lives and writings inspire me. I particularly like those who were somewhat 'balanced' (and so agree with me!). From the early Western Church Fathers, I like Tertullian and Augustine; the Greek Fathers tend to be too philosophical for me, but I like John Chrysostom of Constantinople (not Istanbul!). In the Middle Ages, it is Bernard of Clairvaux and Catherine of Sienna. My favourite 16th century reformer is Martin Luther; my Puritan mentor is Richard Baxter; and my evangelical revival hero is John Wesley. You'll hear me quote them often. Women include Pandita Ramabi of India and Evelyn Underhill.

However, the saints are not just those of the long-distant past, but those who influenced our life by their example of love and whose faith we seek to follow. You will have your favourite saints among them as I have mine. At St Mary's over the past few years, we have lost some wonderful saints whose Christian witness encouraged me by the words, smiles, regular attendance, and prayers – which I knew they engaged in regularly for me. I dare not mention them by name lest I leave any out.

I wonder how those in the next generation will remember us? Will they miss our fellowship (did we actually seek them out to befriend them?); will they miss our presence in the services (did we turn up enough to be noticed when we weren't there?); will they miss the time we spent just chatting and listening to them and getting to know them (or could we not get out the door quick enough when the service had finished?)?

Now is the time to start developing more 'saintly' qualities so that we might be remembered with fondness by at least a few people for whom we were 'their favourite saints'.

Your friend, and trying to be saintly Vicar, Ian

Remembering the Caribbean Prisoners at Portchester



On Friday 9th October, we hosted a special occasion when we remembered over 2,000 prisoners of war from the Caribbean islands who were imprisoned in Portchester Castle in 1796.

We were privileged to welcome distinguished guests including His Excellency Hon Anthony Severin, High Commissioner for St Lucia; His Excellency JM Brereton Home, High Commissioner for St Vincent and the Grenadines; the Yurumein Royal Delegation led by Queen Mother Chief Freda Paulino-Sideroff; Tony Hales, Chairman of English Heritage; and the Deputy Mayor of Fareham, Councillor Susan Bayford.

The day began with the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the Sea Gate of Portchester Castle, followed by a warm welcome from our Vicar to the many guests who had travelled from near and far to attend. Cultural tributes, presentations and a fellowship lunch provided opportunities to learn, reflect and celebrate the rich heritage and enduring legacy of those remembered.

In the afternoon, Professor Kate Astbury and Dr Abigail Coppins from the University of Warwick led historical interpretation tours of the castle, bringing to life this important chapter of our shared history.



Our commemoration continued on Sunday, 11th October, as part of our celebration of Black History Month. Music began from 10:15am with the True Steel Band who played before, during and after the service, and we were delighted to welcome Rev Reginald Grant, Associate Priest of St Mark's, Reigate, as our guest preacher. Traditional hymns were sung including *Amazing Grace* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* interspersed by some modern songs and choruses. Nell sang a negro spiritual, *The Gospel Train*, and we had a moving visual tribute accompanied to *The Slaves Lament*, a song by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns.

After the service, we enjoyed a variety of cakes with a Caribbean flavour, lovingly baked and generously donated by Samantha Holder.

The Deputy Mayor of Fareham, Councillor Susan Bayford wrote:



I write to express my thanks to you for inviting me to attend the Cultural Connections Sunday Service to remember the 230th Anniversary of the prisoners held at Portchester Castle.

It was a wonderful service which Sue Wilson and I very much enjoyed. The atmosphere was joyful, as well as being respectful of the significance of the Anniversary. The steel band was a delight and the prayers and hymns were so fitting for such a unique commemorative service. I loved having the opportunity to chat to some of those attending.

I know that there will have been a huge amount of preparation both before and during the Friday and Sunday events, and I congratulate you and your team of helpers on your great achievement.

I look forward to my next visit to St Mary's which may be next year!

With kindest regards, Councillor Mrs Susan Bayford, Deputy Mayor of Fareham.

Dr Jacqueline Roberts, one of the organisers wrote to say:

“Your support, hospitality, and care helped make the event deeply meaningful for all who attended. Every volunteer worked with such dedication and kindness, and please know that this did not go unnoticed. The day was a success in every sense, and our guests spoke warmly of how welcomed they felt within the church. The delegation from Belize were equally impressed by the beauty and history of St Mary’s, and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about its heritage.”

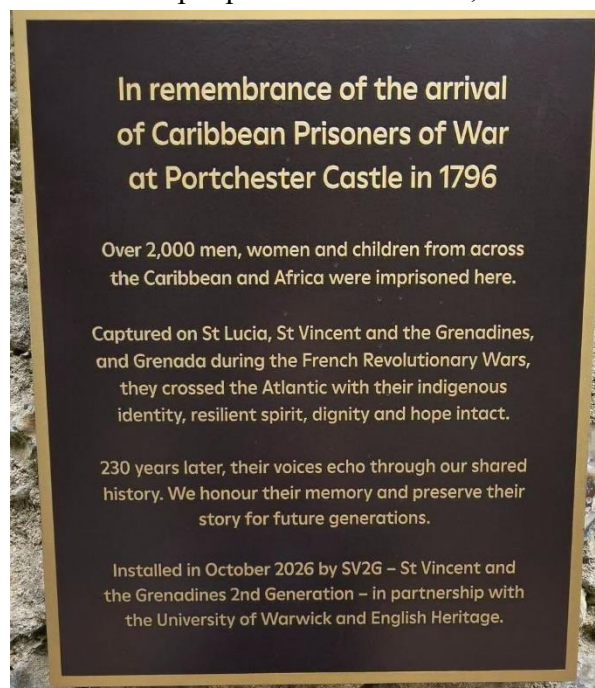
However, sadly, within a couple of days things went sour with the news that the plaque had been stolen, possibly through racist motivation as, at the same time, there appeared racist graffiti on one of the benches nearby.

Anthony Severin, St Lucia’s High Commissioner and chair of the Caribbean Community condemned the removal as a ‘desecration of the memory and spirit of our commemorated ancestors’. He pledged:

“We will ensure that the plaque, whether returned or replaced, will remain affixed to the walls of Portchester Castle. A resilient spirit never dies.”

Dr Jacqueline Roberts, said the loss was deeply upsetting for the community. People had travelled from across Britain, the US and the Caribbean to attend the unveiling. She said:

“Its removal is not just an act against an object, but against memory itself. Our ancestors’ story will not be silenced.”



Sir Patrick Vernon, of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, described the plaque’s removal as ‘outrageous’ and called for an urgent investigation. “I am concerned this may be another racially-motivated attack on our heritage.” Sir Patrick called for stronger protection of Black heritage, warning that such incidents compound the harm caused by everyday racism, and undermine communities’ sense of dignity and belonging.

Battle of Trafalgar commemorated

Cadets' Pickle Night



On 16th October, we welcomed the Portsmouth Sea Cadets (TS Alamein) for a 'Pickle Night'. While Navy officers hold a more formal dinner to remember the battle, Pickle Night is a fun, relaxed celebration. It is modelled after the everyday sailors who lived and worked 'below decks'. It's all about teamwork, naval history and enjoying good food together – no stuffy formal manners, but loud sea shanties and maritime fun.

We enjoyed a three-course 'square meal' (each course eaten from the same plate!) and, in place of rum, black-currant cordial to toast the King and the immortal memory of Admiral Lord Nelson. Rev Ian, as Padre, read Nelson's prayer and said the grace, along with the Corp's Assistant Chaplain (Rev Alex Coakley-Young) who as you can see is a bit more 'high'.

The historical background is that on 6th November 1805, a tiny Royal Navy ship named HMS Pickle raced back to Britain with huge news to the Admiralty that the Navy had won the Battle of Trafalgar on 21st October, but that Britain's greatest hero, Admiral Lord Nelson had fallen.



Trafalgar Night



A week later, on 23rd October, it was the turn of the 'officers', as over 70 guests held a more formal Trafalgar Night Dinner organised by Richard and Margaret Andrews. A tot of (real) rum was offered to each guest as they arrived, and we sat down to a lovely three-course dinner prepared by Ron and the Tea Room staff. We were entertained by 'Captain Hardy' (aka Roger) who told us something about a naval officer's uniform at the time of Trafalgar. The immortal memory of Nelson was toasted and Rev Ian read Nelson's prayer and said grace.

Restored 'Angel' paintings

One of the main purposes of the evening was to raise funds for the repair, restoration and framing of the three 'angel' paintings, and the event raised more than £2,300 which covered the cost. These paintings were discovered a few years ago, when we stripped the alcoves in the transept to make room for the new artwork. They were in a sorry state, and one option was putting them in the skip! However, this did not happen, due to the dogged determination of Sally Young to have them preserved, restored and even mounted.

The years passed and nothing was done, but Ian Parker and Richard Andrews also had a passion to see them restored. They were taken to Richard Martin's art shop in Gosport, and both Richard and Elaine Martin worked on the restoration, and were present at the dinner. The result drew gasps of wonder at the restoration work, and they were thanked and complimented during the evening. We are now thinking about where they can be placed – probably on the south wall of the nave.

The paintings, by an unknown artist, are copies of paintings by the medieval artist Fra Angelico of Florence, where the originals are on display. The copies were donated to St Mary's in 1894 by a Miss H Lewis of Amery House, Alton, Hampshire. They depict three nativity angels with Latin inscriptions underneath: *Gloria in excelsis* (Glory in the highest); *Laudate Dominum* (Praise the Lord); and *Pax Vosbiscum* (Peace to everyone).



10% Charity & Mission Fund

Bryan Jerrard writes:

DID YOU KNOW?

Some time ago Rev Ian distributed copies of WORD FOR TODAY, daily Bible Study notes to those who may need them. The notes for 10th August under the heading GOD HAS GIVEN YOU SEED TO SOW are based on Christ's words in Matthew ch.13 v 31, and these notes are exceptionally interesting.

Jesus... said that the mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds and eventually grew into a tree, giving birds a home. A mustard seed is only one to two centimetres in diameter and comes in three primary varieties: yellow, black and white. Within that seed is a remarkable nutritional profile, including vitamin A, B6, B12, C, E, and K. It's also a source of calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, and zinc. It has anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

St Paul later wrote: "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower....multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness (2 Corinthians ch 9 v10 NKV). The seed you sow can be in the form of time, service, wisdom, money, and compassion. And God promises that when you sow, you will reap His blessing. ... God has given you seed – sow it!

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Next month, Joe Snowden will report on the missionary work in Guatemala, now supported by our charity giving, an outreach, started many years ago by Portchester Free Church.

During the month of October, we were able to give away £1,500

from the fund we hold where we put 10% (tithe) of our offerings for charity and missionary work where there is a connection with a member of the congregation. So, thank you for your continued financial support of St Mary's through the Parish Giving Scheme, standing orders at the bank and cash in the offering basket.

Naomi-Hub Christian School, Uganda

We gave £500 to the local charity Faith and Football, headed by Mick Mellows. Their Facebook page said:

"For us, going to school, having books and teachers, learning to read and write and receiving an education can seem like a normal part of growing up. But for many children in Uganda, it is a privilege their families simply cannot afford.

This is particularly true for the children of the mums we are looking after at our Naomi Hub. Whilst we continue to train them in skills so that they are able to start micro businesses and earn money, this still falls short of enabling them to afford an education for their children. Hence our dream for the Naomi-Hub Christian School is to enable us to make a profound difference to a generation.

A team of builders are on their way in the near future to build the foundations for a school that will eventually give more than 300 children an education that they would not otherwise have. This will be our gift to them and their single mums which will be life changing for all of them."

Mick is part of the school building team, describing the vision as "our most ambitious and rewarding overseas project in the life of Faith and Football". If you wanted to support our dream through him, please take a look at his JustGiving page.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/michaelmellows8?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL



Adelin, a blind lad in Romania



Ray and Ann Lunt asked if we would donate to a project for which Ann's brother John is raising funds in Romania, and we have been able to give £1,000 to this.

Adelin was born blind and placed in an institution by his parents when he was a year old. Twenty years later, he has enrolled in an IT course at the Liceul Special pentru Deficienți de Vedere (Special High School for the Visually Impaired) in Buzău, Romania. The school has a Facebook page with photos: <https://www.facebook.com/liceunevazatoribuzau/>

Adelin already reads and writes braille fluently, but his dream is to have his own Brailiant BI40X, so that he can read books.

Adelin is quite gifted, despite all the difficulties (he loves music and sings well, and knows a lot about songs and performing singers and their history). John sent a voicemail with him singing with great feeling in a beautiful mellow voice.

He's more than adept with the computer, having won a national (Romanian) speed test!

John has taken him a few times to a local cafe in Buzau, for lunch plus a milkshake etc. He didn't know what a menu was and was astounded there was so much to choose from! His world has changed a lot this year thank goodness and bodes so much better for the future. Here's a photo taken of him today at lunch.

When Louis Braille created a tactile writing system in 1824, he opened up new worlds for millions of people who were able to read for themselves for the first time. The French educator's legacy continues into the 21st century with a hi-tech device called a 'refreshable braille display'. The Humanware Brailiant BI 40X converts digital text from a computer screen into braille by means of mechanical actuators that raise and lower 40 tiny pins through a flat surface, creating up to 80 braille cells that refresh continuously as the user navigates the screen.

Unfortunately, this wonderful technology is expensive. A single device costs £3,714.00 in the UK. That is far beyond Adelin's means. . . He receives welfare payments of approximately £200 a month.

Nell has also offered to do an afternoon of Caribbean singing to raise extra money for this project. Details later.

Rev Celia's Art Exhibition

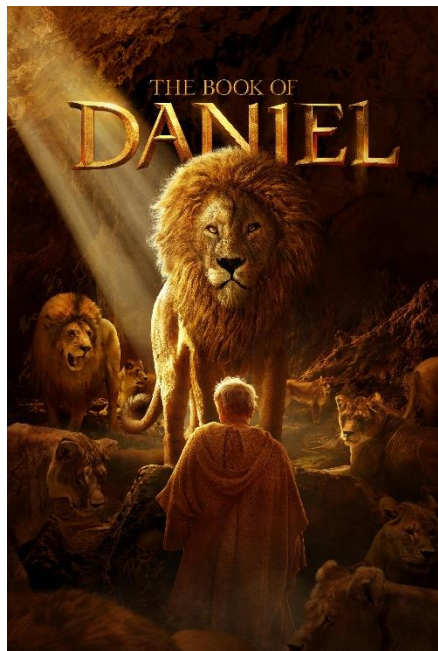


For a week during October, Rev Celia Jones exhibited her work under the title 'An Extraordinary, Ordinary Love Story', featuring collage, calligraphy, artwork, nature, textiles, and photographs. The exhibition explored the theme of 'Seeds of Hope'. Well over 100 people visited the exhibition during the week, and over £200 was raised for church funds.

'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' was the winning entry, chosen by visitors to Rev Celia's exhibition. The artwork was created by **Marilyn Nash**. Rev Celia would like to

extend her heartfelt thanks to everyone who took the time to create hearts for the exhibition, as well as to all those who came along to visit and support it.

Evening Services



We're half way through the series of evening services held at 6.00pm in the Parish Hall. This session we've been looking at an Old Testament book, Daniel. While most people only know about 'Daniel in the lion's den', we've discovered it is much more profound than that and offers contemporary wisdom as to how to live the life of faith in a sceptical and even hostile world. The next few weeks, taking us up to the end of November, deal with Daniel's amazing prophecies about the time he lived in and right up to the end of the world. This is a good theme for Advent and, even if you've missed the others, you will still find the rest insightful.

The sermons have not been recorded, but Rev Ian is happy to share the transcripts of his talks. Someone has even suggested his next book, *Dare to be Daniel*. We'll see what interest there is.

On Sunday 6th December, we will be joined at the Parish Hall by friends from other churches for our annual Christians Together in Portchester Advent service.

Calling men – 'The Gateway Sessions'

Starting 4th November

Lee Williams is starting up a group which will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the church at 7.30pm.

The Gateway Sessions A monthly evening for young men who want space to explore Christianity, listen, reflect, and talk honestly about real life. Through gentle worship, scripture, prayer, and open conversation, we look at faith and the pressures men face today, including mental health, anger, isolation, purpose, and hope. No pressure. No need-to-know loads about church. Just come as you are.

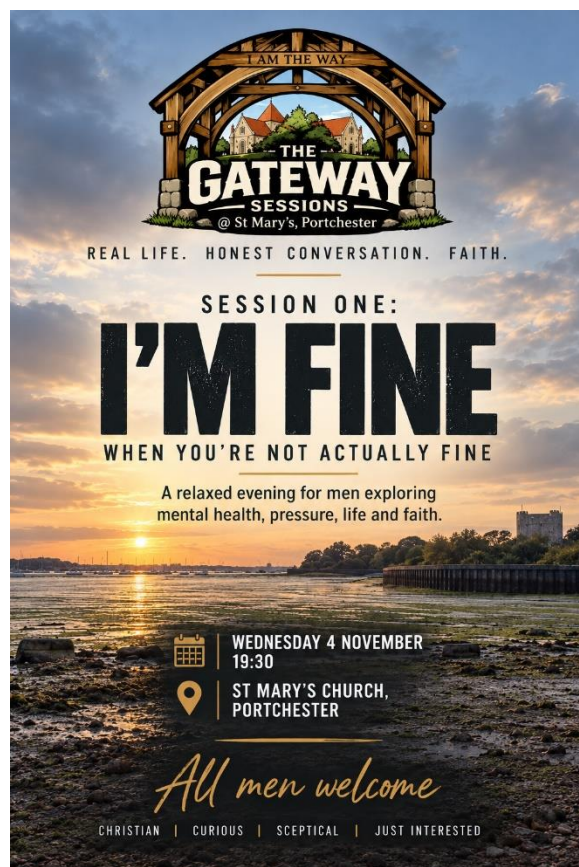
Possible first 6-session series

1. Carrying Too Much pressure, stress, weariness
2. Why Men Stay Silent struggling to talk, isolation, shame
3. Anger and What Sits Under It frustration, hurt, control, healing
4. When Life Goes Dark depression, hopelessness, where God is in it
5. Who Am I Really? identity, purpose, worth, calling
6. Hope and the Way Forward Jesus, trust, belonging, next steps

Who it is for

- Men with some interest in faith or Christianity
- Men who may feel disconnected from church that might be looking for answers in the bible but not confident of finding them at church.
- Men who struggle to talk openly
- Men facing pressure, loneliness, anxiety, anger, depression, low mood, shame, confusion, lack of purpose, or spiritual hunger

Further information from Leigh: 07741 611482.



Portchester Remembers

7th November

The annual service at the precinct will be held on Saturday 7th November at 10.15am and led by Rev Ian and other clergy. Uniformed organisations and members of the armed forces as well as veterans will be present. This year, the parade will be led by the newly-formed Portchester Volunteer Marching Band, which arose out of the ashes of the former TS Tenacity band.

We have around 30 copies left of the booklet *War & Peace*, which is an anthology of poems and reflections from local residents as well as a short biography of everyone remembered on the war memorial at St Mary's. This might be your last chance to buy a copy, as we'll not be re-printing it.

8th November

On Sunday 8th, we have our own St Mary's service at 9.30am. There will also be an Act of Remembrance at the 8.00am and 9.30am services.

Saturday 14th November –

The poster for 'The Big Quiz Night' features a blue background with various illustrations including Big Ben, a chili pepper, a rocket, a man in a top hat, a woman in a yellow shirt, and a snake. The title 'The Big Quiz Night' is written in large, stylized blue letters. Below the title, the date and time are listed: 'Saturday, 14th November 2026' and '7pm'. The location is 'Parish Hall, Portchester'. The event includes 'Bring & Share Supper' and a team-building challenge. Tickets are £6 for adults and free for under 12s. A QR code is provided for ticket purchase.

The Big Quiz Night

Saturday, 14th November 2026

7pm

Parish Hall, Portchester

Bring & Share Supper

(Bring your supper, eat someone else's)

Form a Team of up to 6

for the FUNd-Raising Event of the Year

Tickets: Adults - £6 Under 12 - Free

Tickets from the Tea Room, Parish Office or via QR Code

tearfund.org
Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE
☎ 020 3906 3906 ✉ info@tearfund.org 📱 @tearfund

Registered office as above. Registered in England: 2963337. A company limited by guarantee.
Registered Charity No. 245446 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No. SC037624 (Scotland)
Photo: Makumbi Simwazi/Tearfund

FR Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

tearfund

This will be quite a busy day for some people, as we have three events on:

Men's Breakfast 8.00am

Our speaker this morning is Rev Ian who will speak about 'Woodbine Willie' (aka Rev Geoffrey Studdart Kennedy) He was a WWI army chaplain and war poet.

Confirmation 5.45pm

James Burgess and Samantha Holder are being confirmed at the cathedral this evening. We hope that a few from St Mary's will come along and support them as they reaffirm their faith and mark this event with a lovely service.

Tear Fund Big Quiz 7.00pm

The Big Quiz in aid of TearFund, at the Parish Hall starting at 7.00pm, teams of up to 6 players, tickets now on sale, £6 each from the Tea Room and Parish Office. Further details from Sharon Pearse

Christmas

The Christmas Fayre will be on Saturday 28th November from 10.00am – 4.00pm

Christmas Fayre Donations. As we begin our countdown to the Christmas Fayre, we'll be inviting donations of different items each week to help make the event a festive success. For example, Jars for the Jambola stall (full of small gifts/chocolates/toys). If you're able to contribute, please bring your donations to Dillon in the Tea Room. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Christmas Hampers Appeal - The Pastoral Team and Friday Friends Group are preparing Christmas hampers for those who will be spending Christmas alone. Donations of hamper items are gratefully received. Please take a white ticket for each item you choose to donate from the box by the prayer board table and keep the ticket, so others know it has been selected. Financial donations may be placed in an envelope marked 'For Hampers'. All donations should be received by 27 November. Thank you for your support. For more information, contact Sue Oliver on 07909 223347.



Christmas Lunch

Wendy Callear writes: I'm helping out at the Christmas lunch for elderly folk, who would otherwise be alone this year, at Cams Hill School. See flyer or see Wendy for details.

Community First

Fareham Christmas Day Lunch 2026

You are warmly invited to lunch on Christmas Day from 12 noon to 3.30pm at Cams Hill School, Shearwater Ave, Portchester, Fareham PO16 8AH

Door to door transport can be provided, free of charge but donations are welcomed.

If you would like to attend, please fill in the form below, detach and send it to Fiona McCrae, Community First, 163 West Street, Fareham, PO16 0EF or telephone me on 07969 225 002.

Please return the slip no later than December 11th.

 **Please keep this top section for your information.**

Fareham Christmas Day Lunch 2026 Application

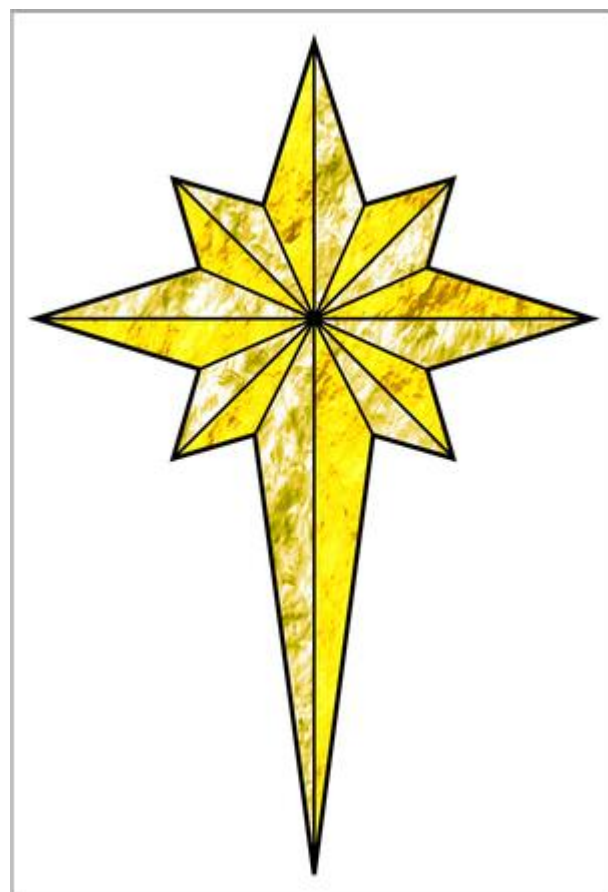
Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms
First name: _____ Surname: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
Telephone number: _____

Any special dietary requirements? Yes / No
If yes, please give details: _____

Any disabilities or assistance required? E.g. Wheelchair user Yes / No
If yes, please give details: _____

Would you like transport to and from the venue? Yes / No
A free wheelchair-accessible community bus and private cars are available.

Emergency Contact
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Contact number: _____



Portchester Volunteer Marching Band



It was our pleasure to offer the church for the band to practice during these first few months when they were re-forming from the former TS Tenacity Band. However, the band has grown considerably and rather than one room, they need several rooms for different sections to practice. They will, therefore, be leaving St Mary's after November, and holding their practices at the Hub. We wish them every success for their future and we look forward to them joining us at Christingle and again on Palm Sunday.



Volunteer help needed

All Christians have gifts and are called to be part of the Body of Christ, to use these gifts to build up and encourage the Church and to reach out into the community. However, St Mary's is sadly a church with a few people doing a lot of jobs, and most members doing nothing. We reckon it's a 20/80 split.

We could really be doing with some help and here are some areas you might want to pray about.



However, they feel it is time to give this up and to pass the baton on to someone else.

We wonder if there is anyone out there who could take this on, and perhaps even offer some fresh ideas, as it has great potential? Perhaps a married couple, or a group of individuals. There is a good team of helpers, including Hilda, Pam Nut and Sally Nguyen, who will continue to help.

If you are interested, please have a word with Eric or Rachel. They would ideally like this to start from January.

Leading Tea & Company

This is a monthly group which meets on a Sunday afternoon at the Parish Hall. It was originally set up as a bereavement group, but is now wider to include anyone who might be on their own on a Sunday and would fancy what's on the tin – tea and company.

Eric and Rachel Standen have been running this group for the past few years and we have greatly appreciated their ministry.





Church Garden

This is the garden to the right of the path leading to the church, and also the flowers around the front door. It does not include the rose garden at the Labyrinth or the Garden of Remembrance.

The scent of roses and lavender and others plants is often remarked on as people come to the services.

We still haven't had any response from anyone who would be willing to take this over from David and Jan Palmer who have done it faithfully for the past few years. Ever since Barbara Howe had to give it up, we have been helped by non-members of the church, John Halsey, and then David and Jan. If no one from the church is interested, we will put something on

Voice4Portchester to see if anyone from the wider community could help.

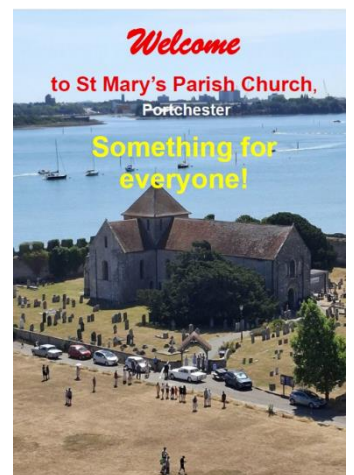
Please contact Chris at the office or speak to Ian or Denise, Churchwardens.

Counting flyers into street bundles

This is something which you could do at home and would be a great help. We want to do an outreach of flyers round the whole of the parish, and we need people who will count them out and put them into street bundles. There are 7,000+ but we are not expecting one person to do this. If quite a few of you could help, this would be appreciated. We could bring the leaflets round to your house. Please see Chris at the office.

Readers for the Sunday 8.00am service.

Unfortunately, numbers have dwindled slightly at this service, with several of our members either dying or no longer able to attend services. We are looking for more members of this service who would be prepared to read the lesson.



People to lead Prayers of Intercession at the 9.30 Parish Eucharist.

This is another beautiful ministry which helps to lead the worship at St Mary's. We have a small team of dedicated people, but they are being asked to do this quite frequently now due to a shortage of volunteers. Please consider if this is something you could do. Contact Chris Hayes, our Parish Administrator and Head Server, if you could help with reading or prayers.

There are plenty of resources available on the internet, although it is always lovely when those praying compose their own prayers. The lectionary readings for the day will often suggest themes for the prayers, or you could ask the preacher what they will be speaking about.

Sue Oliver writes ...

ANNA CHAPLAINCY

On the 13th of October, Eric Standen and I attended an Anna Chaplain Annual gathering held at Holy Rood Church in Stubbington. We attended in person with others joining online. There were some workshops held throughout the day, including craft, prayer and useful talks given by guest speakers. There was a focus on reflection, which was very refreshing.

Anna Chaplaincy continues to grow within our Diocese; please pray for all of us as we go out and continue to do God's work.

HARVEST SERVICE AT CAMS RIDGE CARE HOME

Fiona, the activities co-ordinator at Cams write on their Facebook page:

“We were very lucky to have Sue from St Mary's Church, Portchester to join us and kindly lead a lovely Harvest Festival service for our residents. We enjoyed hymns, prayers and a chance to come together and celebrate the harvest.”

There were 22 residents in attendance, which is the most I have had for any service I have conducted there. I got to know a few more people, who would like me to call in on them next time I visit. I have been praying so much for a breakthrough at the home, what a great answer to prayer. Cams Ridge also gave a donation towards the work in our

Church.
Thank you to them.



Farewell to Peter Battley



In the next few weeks, we will be saying farewell to Peter Battley who is moving to a British Legion care home in Oxfordshire to be nearer to his family.

Peter has been a long-standing member of St Mary's, and we have very much appreciated his fellowship. Ever since the death of his dear wife, Sadie, in 2022, Peter's health has not been that great. He had moved to Postern Close in the past couple of years where he became part of that community. We will miss Peter who was a regular attender of our 9.30am and Friday Parish Hall service, even attending the Evening services. We wish him God's blessing.

High Tide Summer Residential — August

The summer seems a long way back, but this article may be a bit belated but is still important to include. Leroy writes:

“This summer, young people from across Portsmouth gathered at Fairthorne YMCA near Botley for a five-day High Tide residential exploring some of the Bible’s lesser-known characters, through figures including Zacchaeus, Onesimus, Timothy, Esther, Priscilla and Barnabas. The sessions taught the young people that no one is too young to be called by God. Each person has gifts, is deeply valued by God and has a part to play in his greater plan.

Activities included the famous ‘Hunted’ night game, the HTSS Talent Show, raft building, and archery and many more.

A huge thank you goes to the members of St Mary’s Church and everyone involved in its youth fundraising, which funded six of our young people. Two youth leaders, Leroy and Dillon, also attended; Scripture Union fully covered their accommodation, and VAT was waived.

Beyond the numbers, the week was transformative. Through worship and reflection, the young people connected with the Bible characters’ stories of faith, resilience and forgiveness, and shared personal testimonies of how God had spoken to them. It was a joyful week of faith, fun and friendship.

Final Reflections. These five days were a time of growth, encouragement and renewed vision, shaped by the faith and dedication of our leaders, the joy and energy of our young people, and the steadfast love and support of the St Mary’s community.”



Christian Aid Representative



Kathy Snowden has offered to do this, as no one else has responded. If you feel you would like to be involved, we are sure Kathy would appreciate your help. We want to support Christian Aid and Tear Fund equally, and Sharon Pearse is the Tear Fund rep. Please watch out for forthcoming events and support us.

Roger Price honoured

Rev Ian writes:



There can't be many politicians either local or national whom I've never heard a word spoken against, but one of these must be Roger Price. It was fitting therefore, that Fareham Borough Council convened a special meeting on Thursday 22nd October to confer on him the Freedom of the Borough of Fareham, an honour given only to a handful over the years.

Roger has faithfully served Portchester as a Councillor for over 50 years, during which time he was elected Mayor of Fareham twice. He has served on innumerable committees and has always supported community events.

His addresses at the annual Portchester Remembers services are always topical and poignant, and come over with a freshness not usually found among those who have to give an annual speech.

Roger has been a good friend to St Mary's over the years and has provided us grants on several occasions for various projects we have initiated to help the community.

I was privileged to have been one of his specially invited guests on the evening of his being honoured. The citations were given by councillors of 'opposition' parties showing the respect in which Roger is held by all. A true Portchester statesman and always supported by his wife, Sandra.

Small Groups / House Groups –

New members and leaders wanted.

The numbers of people attending smaller mid-week groups is probably a better indication of the spiritual health of a congregation rather than its Sunday services. We can't get all we need for our Christian growth just from Sunday sermons, and so we have a network of small mid-week groups to supplement these. We have almost 100 of our people in these groups, which is encouraging.

Hugh and Anna have offered the use of their house in Windsor Road just off White Hart Lane for a daytime or evening meeting. Likewise, Carol Downing would like her house in Lancaster Close, off Dore Avenue, for the same purpose, day or evening. If anyone is interested in forming a new group and even leading it, please talk to these people and include Carol Gay in your conversation, as Carol co-ordinates our small group network.

**Sunday Services: 8.00am; 9.30am & 11.30am (church in the castle)
& 6.00pm (Parish Hall)**

Wednesdays 6.30pm at the church and Fridays 10am at the Parish Hall.

Parish Office: Portchester Parish Hall, Assheton Court, Portchester, PO16 9PY

Tel: 02392 321380; E-mail: office@stmary-portchester.org.uk

Office hours: Tuesday – Thursday 9am – 4pm; Friday 9am – 1.00pm

Website: www.stmary-portchester.org.uk

Vicar: Rev Canon Dr Ian Meredith, Tel: 02392 375422; E-mail: irev@ymail.com