

Services at the Parish Church

Sundays 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) 10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)
 Thursdays 10.00 am Eucharist (BCP) 3rd Sunday 10.00 am All Age Communion

Christmas Services at St Andrew's

Sunday 16 December, 6.30pm

Traditional Candle-lit Carol Service
With mince pies



Thursday 20 December, 6.30pm

Community Carols

in the churchyard with Soham Comrades Band (inside if wet)

Christmas Eve, Monday 24 December

4pm Crib Service

Children may dress as a character from the Christmas story

11.15pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day, Tuesday 25 December

8am Holy Communion (BCP)

10am All Age Communion Service



Sunday 30 December

8am Holy Communion (BCP)

10am Parish Communion Service

Epiphany: Sunday 6 January

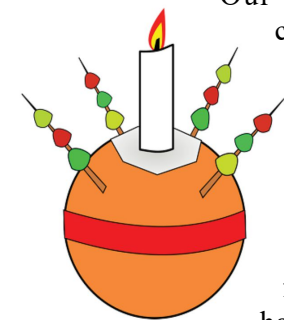
8am Holy Communion (BCP)

10am Parish Communion Service



Christingle and the Children's Society

Our Christingle Service is on 9 December at 4pm. All children and grown-ups welcome. There is also a drop-in 'Get Ready for Christingle' session in church on Saturday 8 December from 10.30am-noon. Children accompanied by a grown-up are welcome for snacks, fun, crafts and chat.



The Christingle Service helps to raise money for The Children's Society. We also give out collection boxes for them that can be filled with loose change. If you have one of these boxes, please can it be returned by the end of December? We can then issue you with a new one if you like. Either bring it to a church service at St Andrew's or call Dawn on 01353 723134 to arrange collection.



Soham Remembers: Thank you

In November a number of events were held to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

A major part of this was an exhibition in the church of more than 7000 knitted poppies, flower arrangements, painted rocks and details of all the men who are commemorated on the WW1 part of the Soham War Memorial. SVC pupils provided a very moving video inspired by their trip to the battlefields of the Western Front and St Andrew's pupils brought paper poppies when they came with their teachers to learn about the war. People of all ages came to look around the exhibition, some returning to bring friends and family. Many tears were shed for the young men who had died.

There were also well attended concerts by Soham Comrades Brass Band and St Andrew's year 6 pupils. The week ended with the Remembrance Day parade and service followed in the evening by the lighting of a beacon and bell ringing.



Thank you first to Carol Weyman, Susan Taylor and Linda Palmer (pictured with the Bishop of Ely). Carol had the idea of decorating the church with poppies and co-ordinated the knitting as well as being present in church for the whole week selling poppies and chatting to visitors. Susan and Linda co-ordinated the flower arranging and refreshments.

Thank you too to all who knitted poppies, arranged flowers, served refreshments, baked cakes, welcomed visitors, rang the bells, and worked behind the scenes. And thank you to all the organisations who took part: Knit and Knatter, the Royal British Legion, the local schools, Soham Rocks, Ely Air Cadets (for lending us the perspex silhouettes), Soham Comrades Band, Soham Town Council, Soham Heritage & Tourism and the town's uniformed organisations who marched in the parade.

Over £2000 was raised by the exhibition and concert, to be shared between church and the RBL Poppy Appeal and the events brought the community of Soham together in a moving and fitting tribute to the men who lost their lives.

South Door

The National Churches Trust is delighted to support St Andrew's Church Soham with a grant of £1214 towards the repair of the church's south door.



The National Churches Trust (founded in 1953 as the Historic Churches Preservation Trust) is the national charity supporting church buildings of historic, architectural and community value that are open for worship. They receive no financial support from government or church authorities and rely on the support of the public to carry out their work.

Details of their work can be found at www.nationalchurchestrust.org

Co-op Community Fund

Good news! St Andrew's Church Restoration Appeal is one of the local causes Co-op members can donate their 1% spend to from now until November 2019. To donate, you need a Co-op membership card. To let the Co-op know that this is the cause you'd like to support, either sign into your Co-op at <https://www.coop.co.uk/membership/local-causes>, or call the membership helpline on 0800 023 4708.

Carols Galore

There is, of course, plenty of carol singing planned for December. St Andrews' Candlelit Carol service is a traditional service of readings and carols.

Soham Community Carols is a less formal singalong to popular carols led by Soham Comrades Band. We will also be visiting the local care and nursing homes to sing carols to the residents.

Candlelit Carol Service

St Andrew's
Church,
Soham,
6.30pm,
Sunday
16 December

Traditional carols and
readings. With mince pies



Soham Community CAROLS



Singalong with Soham Comrades Band

Christmas refreshments afterwards

in St Andrew's Churchyard, Soham
(in church if too cold/wet/windy)

Bring a torch if you have one!

Thursday 20 December, 6.30pm

Organised by Churches Together in Soham
Funded by Soham Town Council; refreshments donated by Soham Co-op

A Councillor's Comments

At our November meeting two people used the 15 minutes open for Public Comment Time. Mr. Ken Cranfield spoke about the respect councillors must show to others when addressing an issue, and quoted from the standard that is given to all councillors. Mr. Duff raised the question of affordable houses and the difficulty of most people to be able to afford them. He had prepared a written case for his point, which he handed over to the clerk. In the answers given in response it was pointed out that the answer could lie with the Community Land Trust. A scheme whereby a local trust is able to provide homes for local people at a reasonable cost. We have our own local trust called Thrift who have already built some down the Shade, and hope to extend this provision. The important thing about these homes is that they remain in the control of the community for all time, and remain available for local people.

Development and Sewerage Capacity: The question was brought up yet again about this problem of continued development going on at pace, and the capacity to cope with the sewerage. The district council are keen to pass plans for more houses, but have they got the assurance from Anglia Water that they have the present capacity to cope? In the light of this problem a meeting has been arranged for all parties involved to seek an answer.

Future Cemetery Provision: The time has come when we need to plan for future cemetery provision. We are running out of space, and although we still have some years left we need to seek new land for the future. So a meeting had been arranged with the councillors involved to meet with an authority to plan for this.

Financial Support: This was granted to Air Ambulance; and also to Churches Together for the cost of PA system for their Community Carols to be held in the Churchyard on the 20th December at 6.30pm. *Councillor Ginn*



- ☆ **Winners for the St Andrew's Church 200+Club** in November were: Claire Rutter £5, Sue Wingham £10
- ☆ **Weatheralls Christmas Fair:** Saturday, 1 December from 1pm – 4pm. Lots of stalls, games, tombolas, etc and Father Christmas.
- ☆ **St Andrew's School Christmas Fair:** Friday 7th December - 3pm to 5pm Free Entry. Christmas themed stalls and games.
- ☆ **Soham Museum Coffee Mornings** – First Saturday of each month at Soham Library, 10am – 12 noon. Bring along any items or photos of local historical interest you may have, or just join us for a chat and coffee, All welcome.
- ☆ **Neighbourhood Cares:** Coffee, Cake & Soham Info sessions first Wednesday of each month 10-12 at the library. Plus our Friendly Dog Café third Friday each month, 12.30-1.45pm also at the library.
- ☆ **Over 60s Club** meets at the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground every Friday from 2-4pm. £2.50 annual membership plus £1.50 weekly charge and 50p raffle. Speakers, entertainment or bingo, quizzes etc and occasional outings.
- ☆ **Soham Branch of the Royal British Legion** meet at 7.30pm on the second Thursday of every month at the Soham Rangers Football Club, Julius Martin Lane in Soham. Membership is open to everyone.
- ☆ **Methodist Wives** meet on the third Thursday of each month (except August) from 7.30-9.30pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Berrycroft. All women welcome. You don't have to be wife or a Methodist!
- ☆ **Cam Sight (Soham)** meet on the second Thursday of the month at the Causeway Community Room from 10am – noon. Support and friendship for people with a visual impairment.
- ☆ **Twilight Tuesday WI:** We round off the year and our Christmas celebrations with the quintet Hi 5!! A programme of Christmas songs, Hi 5 will entertain us for the evening, a mixture of performance and workshop will give us the chance to join in with a few songs. Come and join us for a lively evening, visitors welcome for a fee - £5
- ☆ **Items for the February edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Wednesday 23rd January. Please send material to aly-evans@hotmail.co.uk

Soham Giving Tree



That time has come round again! For those yet to have started on that annual outing of shopping (or those who may have already finished) please add another child to your list and make it a special time for someone who may otherwise not get anything, for whatever reason.

Visit the Co-op and look for the Christmas tree near the front of the shop. There will be tags on the tree with an age and gender of a child. You take a tag, buy a gift suitable for that child, wrap (or leave unwrapped) then return the gift WITH the tag to the Co-op to a member of staff (NOT under the tree). Please return it to the Co-op no later than the 10th December. Thank you.

PLEASE NOTE:

No used/second hand items. No selection boxes as main gift.

PARISH REGISTERS

Funerals

12 November
19 November
22 November

Anthony Prigg
Renee May Brown
Olive Fletcher

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

As part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January the Soham church ministers will be taking part in a preaching exchange. St Andrew's are pleased to be welcoming Rev Colin Watkins from the Methodist Church to preach at our 10am service on Sunday 27 January. This will be a Morning Praise service.

News from Wicken Fen

We're starting to experience some lovely crisp, frosty mornings here at Wicken Fen, and more of our overwintering birds are starting to return. We've had several reports of short-eared owls over on Burwell Fen, so those of you who like to walk in this area may want to take some binoculars with you to see these beautiful birds.



There is a new West Mere hide that has recently been installed and is well worth a visit. It is in a better position to see more of the mere area, and is elevated to offer a fantastic view. Even if you are not a keen bird watcher, it's a lovely place to stop off to soak up the peace and tranquillity of the fen.

By the time you read this article the construction of a temporary viewing platform on the edge of the Sedge Fen should be complete. This platform is part of our Resting the Sedge Fen project, and will allow us

to rest delicate peat soils in this area, while offering visitors spectacular 360° views. We're hoping to build a permanent structure in due course.

December's festive activity for under 5's is part of our Father Christmas at the Fen season: follow a Christmas trail, visit Father Christmas in Fen Cottage and do some festive crafts with our elves. These activities take place on Wednesday, 12th and Thursday, 13th December from 10:30-12:00, and the cost is £10 per child (normal admission applies for accompanying adults, NT members free). Pre-booking is essential for these activities, see:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve/whats-on>

We're open every day except Christmas Day, so do join us for a festive walk over the Christmas period. You can warm up with a hot drink and a treat in our café afterwards! If you want to get the New Year off to an active start, we're offering our new Wicken Winter Wildlife Safaris on Saturday 12 and Sunday 20 January, from 14:00-15:30. Join one of the rangers on a walk into the reserve, where you will be able to spot winter wildlife, and learn about our grazing herds and how they contribute to the fen landscape. It's the perfect way to explore the wider reserve at Wicken Fen and experience a fen sunset. The walk costs £8 per adult. *Julia Hammond, National Trust*



A View from the Vicarage

Hark the Herald

Say you've heard or seen an angel, and you'll probably end up down the Medical Centre - or being escorted to the manse/vicarage. In the Bible stories we hear in the run up to Christmas, however, angels pop up all the time. Their presence provokes fear, but not accusations of insanity. Angels in the Bible are heralds (the word 'angel' comes from the Greek for 'messenger'). They act as runners between God and humankind.



Flying solo

William Blake, artist and poet, saw angels all his life. Born in 1757, his first vision came when he was about 8. He told his mum he'd seen a tree filled with angels 'bespangling every bough like stars'. She gave him a good thrashing – but she didn't succeed in beating out the visions. In his mid-40s, living at Felpham on the Sussex coast, Blake saw angels descending on a ladder from heaven to his cottage. He painted what he saw, mused on the connection between earth and heaven, and sat down to write 'Jerusalem': 'And did those feet in ancient time, walk upon England's mountains green?

And was the holy Lamb of God, on England's pleasant pastures seen?'. Since I've been here in Soham, I've been struck by how often 'Jerusalem' is chosen as a hymn for weddings and funerals. One groom-to-be told me he'd picked it 'because of the cricket', but I think for many of us (and perhaps for him and his now wife, too) it's about more than that. 'Jerusalem' encapsulates an experience or an inkling we can't quite define. The Bible sums it up as 'God with us'.



Angels at Knit and Knatter, poised for take off...

And if that's all a bit deep, here's the counterbalance from Churches Together: thanks to the brainwave of Rev. Colin Watkins, distributors from Soham Rocks and knitters in and around Soham who wouldn't hear of stopping at over 7000 poppies (wasn't the exhibition just MARVELLOUS? Thank you so much to all who made it happen, and to all who came along and supported it), angels will soon be appearing on a street near you. Keep your eyes open, and if you come across one, either adopt it or help it fly elsewhere. He/she (it's hard to tell with angels...) will be there to spread the glad tidings of this year's Community Carols event (Thursday 20 December, 6.30pm in St Andrew's Churchyard – or in church if it's wet – accompanied by Soham Comrades Band), and, we hope, to spread a bit of festive cheer more generally. 'Bespangling every bough like stars' they might not be – not quite, and not this year, anyway – but from tiny acorns oak trees grow. Who knows what might happen in 2019? God is with us and amongst us.

With my prayers for Christmas and the New Year when it comes, *Eleanor*

The Revd. Eleanor Whalley, Vicar of Soham
01353 725948; sohamvicar@gmail.com