

Services at the Parish Church

Sundays 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) 10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)

Thursdays 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) Tues – Fri 9am Morning Prayer

Services & children's activities are also available on our *St Andrew's Church*

YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTN2wLO8SA964mSgDpX5_bg

Christmas Services at St Andrew's

Christmas services will a bit different this year because of Covid-19. Some will happen twice in the hope of fitting everyone in! Please wear a face mask and wrap up warm: 'ventilation' needs to be good, which means having the doors open (Jesus was born in a stable after all...!) *Eleanor*



Christmas Services in St Andrew's Church



Hum Along to Carols

& listen to some Christmas-y readings

Sunday 20 December 3.30pm & 6.30pm

Early Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve, 8pm



Midnight Mass



Christmas Eve, 11.15pm



Christmas Day



Holy Communion (BCP), 8am

All-Age Communion, 10am

These services and this year's on-line Crib Service (4pm on Christmas Eve) will also be posted on our **St Andrew's Church Soham YouTube channel** and **StAndrewsChurchSoham Facebook page**

St Andrew's Community Events

Due to lockdown, our plans for community events at St Andrew's Church this Christmas have had to change, but fingers crossed, we hope to be able to go ahead with these but on new dates in December.

The Winter Fair, planned for 21 November has been re-scheduled to Saturday 12 December, 1pm – 4pm in St Andrew's churchyard: Government regulations permitting. There are still some places available. If you'd like to have a stall, please email me at standrewsheritage@gmail.com.

Our first ever Christmas Tree Festival is now planned to open on Wednesday 9 December and will run until Tuesday 15 December, 10.15am-4.15pm Monday-Friday; 12.15pm – 4.15pm Saturday and Sunday). If you are a local businesses, society, group or school and are interested in taking part, please email me, and I will add you to the growing list of participants.

Claire Halley

St Andrew's Heritage Project Co-ordinator

Winter Fair

in St Andrew's Churchyard

Sat. 12 Dec.: 1-4pm



Christmas Tree Festival



9–15 December

10.15am-4.15pm Mon.-Fri.

12.15pm-4.15pm Sat. & Sun.

If you're interested in having a stall or displaying a tree, contact Claire: standrewsheritage@gmail.com.

Covid-19 guidelines must be followed at all times by staff, stall-holders & all attending these events

All Welcome! Entry Free!

200 Club

Winners for the 200 + Club for November are: Daphne Trinder, £5 and Clare Fisher, £10

PARISH REGISTERS

Funerals

4 November

Tracy Reah

8 December

Lilian 'Peggy' Cook

11 December

Bert Howe

Notice of Passing: Stephanie Ann Berry (Doe)

Steph died on 24 October 2020 aged 59 years from breast cancer. She was a member of an old Soham family: the Does came to Soham probably in the 1840s from Suffolk as Journeymen Stone Masons to repair the gargoyles of Soham Church tower and stayed, setting up their own business.

Steph was educated at the Infants and Shade Schools (later becoming The Weatherall's), before going on to The Perse, Cambridge and then to the University of Manchester, where she studied the history of languages.



After her marriage she moved north and taught languages at Warbottle High School for 33 years and eventually became one of the deputy heads.

Steph was always determined and independent from when she crawled from her cradle right through her life.

A tribute to Steph from one of her friends' mothers said: "Beautiful memories, charming, elegant, confident, friendly, helpful, kind, capable, fun, talented, loving, generous, caring, hardworking, thoughtful and many words like this describe Steph".

She will be greatly missed by her husband, brother, children, stepchildren, nephews, nieces and all their partners, her grandchildren, the extended family and many friends.

Steph was my lovely daughter. *Brenda Doe*

Children's Society boxes

Due to us being discouraged this year from using coins, I don't think many boxes will have much in them. So, unless you have a full box that you want emptying, I will not be collecting the boxes in this year. *Dawn 723134*

A Message from the Editor

As you will have read in November's magazine, this is the final issue of Lodestar before it is merged with the Jigsaw community magazine. I just wanted to thank everyone who has been involved with it over the years whether editing, writing articles, co-ordinating the deliveries or delivering and collecting subscriptions.

Look out for your copy of Jigsaw (incorporating Lodestar) which should be delivered free in January.

Christmas Windows



I have been trying so very hard not to head up into the loft and get the Christmas decorations and put up my tree. I've seen a few of my friends who have already got theirs up and the temptation is huge!

Every year decorations seem to go up in November (or even earlier) but I think this year in particular people are grabbing onto the joy that putting up the Christmas tree brings; my main hesitation is that I'm really not sure whether our puppy, Wilson, will refrain from eating the baubles.

I also got rather a surprise the other week as I was driving past Julius Martin Lane and saw "the Christmas house". Having not been here for a Christmas before I wasn't expecting it at all, and to hear the wonderful backstory behind the lights, and to see so many people going to enjoy them really did make me smile.

Some of you may have seen in Jigsaw that Churches Together in Soham planned to do an Advent Window activity and we asked for people to volunteer to decorate their windows and reveal them on a particular day. At the same time members of the community were planning to do a Christmas Window Wanderland (Wanderland because we will be wandering) with neither knowing about the other.

It's so wonderful that this community is focused on making sure the Christmas season is joyful and exciting – despite the difficult time we are in – and so the more windows the better, I think! It does, however, seem odd to have two similar schemes running at the same time, so for those who planned to do the Advent Windows, we will not wait for a date to be given, but put our windows together for the 1st December as the Christmas Window Wanderland group suggests. (You can find the group on Facebook if you search for Christmas Window Wanderland Soham or contact me).

As we head into Advent, a time of preparation, expectation, and anticipation I hope we can find space in the busyness and the hustle and bustle to take a moment for peace and quiet, to think about the day that is coming. Because despite the differences of this year, and despite the very real difficulties which are not to be ignored or minimised, the joy and importance of celebrating the birth of Jesus does not go away and does not change.

I'll look forward to seeing decorated windows (I've already started wondering about what I will put in mine) and to seeing the community celebrate together. Wilson the puppy is very much getting into the festive spirit (as seen in the picture of him demolishing the wrapping paper and a Father Christmas carrot!) *Hannah*
Revd Hannah Richardson, Curate



Foodbank News

Our Soham distribution centre has a new indoor home: we are now located in the Methodist Church, 60 Berrycroft, Berrycroft Lane, Soham CB7 5BL, 9.30-11am on Thursdays. For assistance please call 01353 468626 or email info@ely.foodbank.org.uk

Last year we gave out 250 hampers to families in need, and we are expecting this to be more this year. If you would like to help, please collect items to fill a shoebox or similar size with festive non-perishables, or donate individual items. Suggestions are: Christmas pudding / mince pies / custard / festive biscuits / cheesy biscuits / sweets / chocolates and a small generic gift. Drop them off at distribution centres or the usual food bank collection points (Co-op in Soham). No alcohol please.

News from Wicken Fen

Overwintering birds have been steadily arriving at the fen, with winter thrushes such as redwing and fieldfare enjoying the berries around the reserve, and lapwing gathering in numbers on Baker's and Burwell Fens. At the time of writing the first couple of hen harriers have been spotted and we're expecting the arrival of short-eared owls very soon – keep an eye on our social media channels for the latest news.

We've got an exciting new activity planned for the winter period. For families and all fans of Beatrix Potter young and old, we will have a Peter Rabbit™ winter activity trail on the Boardwalk. Due to the recent lockdown, the opening date has been postponed, and we are hoping to start the trail in early December. To take part you'll need to book an entry slot for Sedge Fen in the normal way and pick up a children's Peter Rabbit™ trail activity pack for £2 when you check in at the Visitor Centre. More information coming to the 'What's On' section of our website soon.

Wrap up warm and pull on your walking boots or wellies for crisp, winter walks throughout the festive season. We'll be open every day apart from Christmas Day, so if you need a peaceful stroll or to walk off the Christmas excess; our car park is open 8:30am to 4:45pm (last entry 3:30pm); the Docky Hut Café is open 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm at weekends; and the Visitor Centre is open from 10am to 4.30pm. This is subject to the latest government guidance, so do check our website before visiting to get the most up to date information.

Tickets are released every Friday for the following week for Sedge Fen walks (Boardwalk and Woodland Walk), and booking details can be found on our website <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve> It's not necessary to pre-book to use the car park and walk in the wider reserve.



Short-eared owl © Richard Nicoll

A View from the Vicarage



‘How can this be...?’

How can this be? No Community Carols!

How can this be? An on-line Crib Service!

How can this be? Only 5 days to get together over Christmas!

Put the clock back 2000 years: ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’

The Angel Gabriel, unlike the vicar (and unlike Government ministers) had answers no one could argue with. Lucky him! And it wasn’t just Mary who had questions: Joseph, surely, must’ve had a few of his own...



Gabriel’s response to them both is the same. The angel offers reassurance (‘Do not be afraid’) and he promises God’s strengthening presence (‘the Holy Spirit will come upon you’, ‘the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit’). He doesn’t talk much about next steps, but what he says is enough for Mary and Joseph to move forward faithfully. These unexpected tidings have disrupted their plans – so much for their dream of an ordinary life – but their heavenly encounters mean they’re willing to play their part in the drama of salvation. Each of them says ‘OK’ (which of course sounds better in the Greek!).

I don’t know about you, but I wouldn’t mind having a visit from an angel, especially as Christmas approaches. So many uncertainties, so many practicalities still to be worked out. ‘Do not be afraid’ is as reassuring a message today as ever it was, it seems to me. And ‘angel’ simply means ‘messenger’: God gets through to us, I believe, in all sorts of different ways. God makes his presence felt through the kindness and goodness of friends and strangers.

It goes without saying that Christmas this year won’t be the same, but what will still be the same is that enduring presence of God – with us and alongside us, whatever these next few weeks bring.

And a word of encouragement: this year’s Crib Service may be on line (available via YouTube and Facebook from 4pm on Christmas Eve), but it WILL be worth waiting for: the Nativity as you’ve never seen it before. Watch this space!

With my prayers and good wishes for Christmas when it comes, *Eleanor*

The End of an Era

Alison Evans, our Editor, has thanked everyone involved in the production and delivery of Lodestar, and I’d like to add my thanks to hers – including to Alison herself and to Keith at Riverside Print who has served us so faithfully for so many years. We are working with the Jigsaw team to sort out how deliveries of Jigsaw will happen from January onwards, and we’re looking forward to establishing new ways of doing things. Please be aware that unlike Lodestar, Jigsaw will cover two months at a time, and copies might not be delivered in time for the 1st of the month. Articles you’d like to have included should be emailed to Jenny Fletcher via sohamcanews@gmail.com before the 10th of the month before Jigsaw comes out (ie. by 10th December for the January-February edition). *Eleanor*