



THE LINK



Advent and
Christmas 2025

The Angel Gabriel
by Sally Scott (details p3)

Diary for December 2025

(Also visit stjameshanslope.org/whats-on)

Worship

Sunday Services

Parish Mass at Castlethorpe 9.30am (Sunday School 9.15am)

Parish Mass at Hanslope 11.15am (Sunday School 11.15am)

Evening Prayer at Castlethorpe 5.00pm (2nd and 4th Sunday)

Weekday Services

Wednesday Mass at Castlethorpe 5pm

Thursday Mass at Hanslope 9.30am

Rosary Group

Every 1st Saturday of the month at The Vicarage 4.30pm

Following the Silence Prayer Group on Mondays

11 Weavers End, Hanslope 5.30pm

Shrine Live Stream @walsinghamanglican.org.uk

Sunday Mass 8.30am

Weekly Events

Mondays during term time

Little Angels – 9am to 11am

Wednesdays

Choir Practice – either Castlethorpe or Hanslope Church 6pm

Fridays

Hanslope Church open for refreshments and reflection – 10am to 12 noon

Craftivists – 10am to 12 noon

Fridays during term time

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church 2pm – 3pm babies and pre-school age

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church 3.30pm – 4.30pm school age children

Inspire Youth Group - Hanslope Church 4pm – 6pm

December 2025

Mon 1 st	Teatime Treats at The Club – 2pm to 4pm
Tues 2 nd	Hanslope's PCC Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30p
Thurs 4 th	Benefice Community Christmas Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12 noon Advent Courses – for venues see p 9
Sat 6 th	Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning – 10am to 12noon Lantern Parade meet St James 5pm for lights on at 5:30pm Milton Keynes Brass and Hanslope School Choir Concert, Hanslope Church – 7pm
Sun 7 th	2nd Sunday of Advent, Service times as above Castlethorpe's Christmas Fayre, Village Hall - 12noon to 4pm

Mon 8 th	Christmas Wreath Night, Castlethorpe Village Hall – 7pm
Thurs 11 th	Castlethorpe's WI Christmas Service, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm Advent Courses – for venues see p 9
Sat 13th	Adrian Boynton Concert, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
Sun 14th	3rd Sunday of Advent, Service times as above
Mon 15 th	Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm
Thurs 18 th	Advent Courses – for venues see p 9
Sat 20 th	Castlethorpe's Monthly Coffee Morning – 10am to 12noon
Sun 21st	4th Sunday of Advent, Service times as above Christmas Carol Service, Castlethorpe Church – 6pm
Mon 22 nd	Hanslope church – decorating church from 10am
Wed 24 th	Crib Service and Nativity, Hanslope Church – 3pm Children's Crib Service, Castlethorpe Church – 5pm Early Midnight Mass, Castlethorpe Church – 9pm Midnight Mass, Hanslope Church – 11.30pm
Thurs 25th	Christmas Day, Sung Mass of the Nativity with Carols, Hanslope Church – 10am
Fri 26 th	St Stephen, Said Mass at Hanslope Church – 10.30am
Sat 27 th	St John the Evangelist, Said Mass, Castlethorpe Church – 10.30am
Sun 28th	Christmas 1 Sung Mass with Carols, Service times as above
Mon 29 th	St Thomas Becket, Said Mass at Hanslope Church – 10.30am
Tues 30 th	6 th Day of Christmas Octave, Said Mass, Hanslope Church – 10.30am
Wed 31 st	7 th Day of Christmas Octave, Said Mass, Hanslope Church – 10.30am
January 2026	
Thurs 1 st	Mass of our Lady of Walsingham, Hanslope Church – 12noon Teatime Treats Christmas Party, the Club 2pm – 4pm
Sun 4th	Christmas 2 Sung Mass with Carols, Service times as above
Tues 6th	The Epiphany – Joint Parishes Solemn Sung Mass and Procession, Hanslope Church – 7pm
Thurs 8 th	Advent Courses – for venues see p 9



The Angel Gabriel is by Sally Scott, a renowned artist, glass engraver and printmaker. The original depicted the Angel visiting Mary, is part of a huge glass screen Sally engraved at the Roman Catholic Shrine to Our Lady at Walsingham in 2010. The full size copy, as a freestanding banner, will hang in the Chancel at Hanslope.

In 1999 Sally produced the beautiful glass doors into St James Church at Hanslope. In the past 60 years Sally's work has helped shape the face of modern British ecclesiastical architecture. Pieces can be seen in churches and cathedrals throughout the UK including Westminster Abbey.

Sunday & Feast Day Mass Readings

November 30th **ADVENT SUNDAY** *purple*

[Readings Year A begins]

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

December 7th **ADVENT 2** *purple*

Isaiah 11:1-10; Ps 72; Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12

December 14th **ADVENT 3** *rose*

Isaiah 35:1-10; Ps 146; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

December 21st **ADVENT 4** *purple*

Isaiah 7:10-14; Ps 24; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24

December 24th/ 25th **THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD** *gold*

Midnight Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Day Isaiah 52:7-10; Ps 98; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1: 1-18

December 28th **CHRISTMAS 1 [The Holy Family]** *gold*

Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6,12-14; 7; Colossians 3:12-21; Matt 2:13-15,19-23

January 4th **CHRISTMAS 2** *white/gold*

Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2,8-12; Ephesians 1:3-6,14-18; John 1:1-18

Friday 6th January **THE EPIPHANY** *white*

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ps 72; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12



NEW FRIDAY MASS

Starting on Friday 5th December
there will be an additional weekday Mass
at 12 noon at St James.

Weekday services at in both churches are increasingly well-attended and we hope this extra Mass will provide more opportunity for people to worship.

Making your Confession in Advent



Wednesday 10th December at Ss Simon & Jude 4.15 - 4.45pm

Thursday 11th December at St James 10.00 - 11.00am

Friday 12th December at St James at 6.00 – 6.30pm



Fr Robert Nokes left this earthly life on 26th November 2021. Over his 58 years of ministry, he wrote countless carefully crafted sermons. Every Friday was spent writing, in later life painfully using a lap top (he was no typist) or revising earlier work. All were annotated with date, place, occasion. Saturday evenings meant reading through and double checking. He was a demanding preacher. Every word mattered; you missed a word or sentence at your peril.

The original of this sermon was first preached at two Eucharists on Advent Sunday, 2nd December 1990 – at Furneux Pelham and then at Braughing, Hertfordshire. He delivered this revision at Castlethorpe and then Hanslope on 18th November 2018.

A Sermon for Advent – 2nd December 1990

Then they will see the son of Man, coming in a cloud with great power and glory.” St Luke 21 (27) and Mark 13:26

The word Advent means ‘coming’, ‘Christ is coming.’

A huge amount of Jesus’ own teaching in the Gospels and of the teaching of the Epistles and Revelation looks forward to his final Coming at the end of time. Over and over again in his parables he described his Kingdom as a process that goes on quietly under the surface all the time, but which will finally breakthrough in reality for all to see.

Now we’ve got to be honest. Christians are deeply divided about how to interpret all this. Does it mean that he will one day return to *this world*, and set up his Kingdom here? Or is his kingdom something beyond this world – and even beyond heaven? He himself said, ‘*Heaven and earth will pass away,*’ and the Revelation describes him as bringing the saints from heaven with him, and establishing a new heaven and a new earth.

You might think that the question of whether his kingdom will be in *this world*, or utterly *beyond* this world, was an absolutely crucial. But, oddly enough, in practice, it isn’t. Because, in practice, the steps

we should take in *this* life, to prepare for it, are exactly the same, whichever it is.

What then does our Lord's own teaching, and the teaching of the rest of the New Testament, tell us?

Three things at least:

First, that when his kingdom does come it will come suddenly. Even if his kingdom is to come in *this* world, it won't be a matter of steady and gradual advance. Christians have been praying, '*Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*' for nearly 2,000 years – and we sometimes get depressed that progress, if any, is so slow.

We're right to get depressed – we should grieve over the vast amount of suffering and injustice that there are still in the world. That grief should spur us to new action.

But this doesn't mean God's forgotten us. Both our Lord's own teaching and the Revelation tell us that, despite our best endeavours, conflict and suffering will, in practice, get to their worst just before the final breakthrough; and that if we think there's peace, it will be a fake peace. We should see '*Wars and rumours of Wars*' as a warning that it might come soon. Christ's own teaching, and St Paul's, are equally clear – that we can never say with certainty *when*.

Secondly, Christ will come as Judge. And by what standard will he judge us? By nothing less than the standard of his own perfection, a standard by which we've all failed.

If that sounds terrifying, as in one sense it should, we must remember that the whole purpose of his first Coming was to bring redemption and forgiveness. If we put no faith at all in our own puny achievements, if we put all our faith and trust in his mercy, then the Good News is that we shall be accepted, despite everything, just like the penitent thief, for example, was accepted on the Cross. That's the heart of the Christian message.

But what about those people who've never heard Christ's message, or never had a fair chance to respond to it? St John says that God's revelation of himself, his '*word*' which finally becomes incarnate in Jesus, is also '*the light that enlightens every man*'. Everyone who's ever lived has had some inkling of God's will for us. If that seems vague, our Lord himself gives us a very big clue in the parable of the sheep and the goats, when he says that people will be judged far more by the acts of kindness they have, or haven't done, to others, than by anything else.

So, **first** – Christ's coming will be sudden; **secondly** – he'll come as Judge; and **thirdly** – when his kingdom is established, it will be a community in which people really do accept him as their king, and love one another in his power, and as he wants.

So, we must go on, in *this* life, asking the Holy Spirit to transform us more and more deeply into the loving people he wants us to be. It will be no good on Judgement Day throwing ourselves on Christ's mercy if, in our heart of hearts, we don't want to live in a society of perfect love anyway.

In the very last resort, even on Judgement Day, Christ will never force his will on us. But, in that case, there will be no future purpose for us: that's the end. The Hebrew word for Hell is *Gehenna*. *Gahenna* actually exists in this world. It's the place outside Jerusalem where they burnt all the rubbish. The idea of hell-fire isn't everlasting revenge, but it is finality!

That, ultimately, is the choice we must make. Do we want the Holy Spirit to transform us into people who love each other with Christ-like love, and who will one day be able to live in a genuinely perfect society – or, is that asking more than we want to give? That should be the theme of our Advent thoughts.

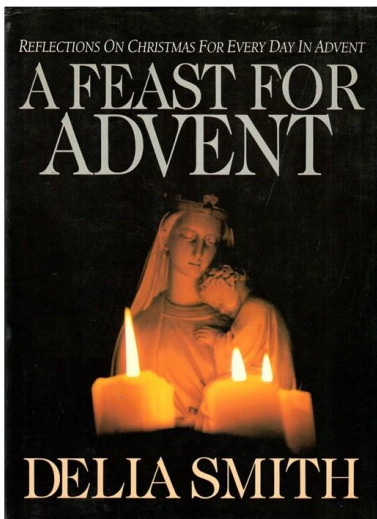
The best way to prepare ourselves worthily to re-live Christ's first Coming at Christmas is to prepare for his final Coming – whenever it may happen.



ADVENT COURSES

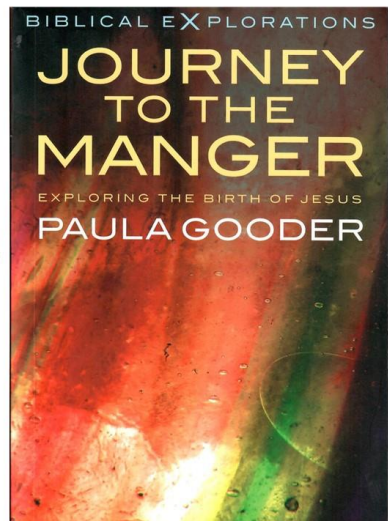
advanced notice

**Meeting on four Thursdays
4th, 11th, 18th December 2025
and 8th January 2026**



Simple meditations and
reflections leading up to
Christmas

&



A more detailed study of the
biblical passages surrounding
the birth of Jesus

VENUES: 4th December: Delia Smith at The Vicarage;
Journey to the Manger at 12 Weavers End. Subsequent
venues to be announced.

Christmas Party

Teatime

2025

Monday 1st December

Treats

2.00 to 4.00 pm

at Hanslope Club
High Street

Father Christmas

Seasonal songs

Buffet with Tea

For more information contact Ann Ellis 01908 511435

NEW this year

Advent Collection Boxes

Mission Direct is the charitable arm of the Society of the Holy Cross (SSC) of which Fr Gary and Fr Robin are members. The charity supports small-scale mission and evangelistic projects, mainly in some of the poorest parishes in the country, providing grants towards things like teaching resources, children and youth work and the cost of minibus hire to take people on pilgrimage,

2026 Calendar of Roses for HO

On sale in both churches at only £5, beautiful A4 size calendar of roses growing in Ann Nixon-Caney's garden this year. A different rose every month printed on card and spiral bound.

Many thanks to Jamie Cooper who took the photos and designed this on our behalf in loving memory of Ann to raise money for the HO Diocese. Ann was one of its first and most loyal supporters.

Ho Group



To reserve a copy please contact:

Mary Nokes 01908 337030 email m.nokes@easykey.com
or speak to Yvonne Hands at Castlethorpe.



2025

Christmas

Community Lunch

Thursday 4th December

St James Church

Hanslope

12 noon - 2pm

All Welcome

Soup, Pudding, Mince Pie
Crackers
Christmas Songs & Carols

**DONATION TO
WILLEN HOSPICE**



Coffee Morning

BACON ROLLS
HOMEMADE CAKES AND A RAFFLE

All very welcome at St James the Great Church,
Hanslope
6th December 2025
10am to 12noon



ST JAMES THE GREAT,
HANSLOPE
COFFEE MORNING
3RD JANUARY 2026
10AM TO 12NOON





A Christmas Concert

in aid of Willen Hospice, St James the Great and Milton Keynes Brass

Milton Keynes Brass

and

Hanslope School Choir

Saturday 6th December 2025, 7pm

St James the Great, Hanslope, MK19 7LR

Tickets: Adult £10, Child £1

Available from: Hanslope News (cash only)

Or order online: QR code or <https://tinyurl.com/mr8fwxy7>



miltonkeynesbrass.com

12-4PM

Castlethorpes CHRISTMAS Fayre



7
DEC



Cakes | Drinks | Stalls

Free Entry

location: Castlethorpes Village Hall



Have a Visit from St James knitted Holy Family?



Can anyone offer our Holy Family a room for the night? They start their travels on the 1st December (Advent Sunday). Please let me know if you have a spare room; we have a number nights still to book.

Full handover instructions will be sent with them. All we ask is for you to share a photo on our Facebook page and to look after them ❤️

Maria Ecclestone mariamadeley@yahoo.co.uk

DECORATING at ST JAMES THIS CHRISTMAS



**Festive fun with a great team –
everyone always greatly welcome**

Come and join us

MONDAY 22nd from 10.00am

If YOU'RE NOT FREE then –

would you like to provide a “ready-made”?

Contact Mary Nokes 01908 337939

**DONATIONS of GREENERY & money are always
very much appreciated**





DIRECTED BY ADRIAN BOYNTON


A Seasonal Celebration Concert

at Ss Simon & Jude, Castlethorpe

**FEATURING THE NEW ENGLISH
SINGERS & SPECIAL GUESTS**

Saturday 13th December at 7.30p.m.

Tickets £15 (inc.refreshments)



**Tickets available from
Stewart Tate 07976 267630
Judi Leon - judi.leon@hotmail.co.uk**

Thank you



A big big thank you to everyone who contributed to our children's shoebox appeal! 10 boxes have been delivered and cash donations too!!! We are so grateful!

Wendy Thomson



HANSLOPE AND DISTRICT CANCER WELLBEING & SUPPORT GROUP

Meets on 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm

Venue— St James the Great, Coffee Area

Contact – John Sorrell 07889 181158

HANSLOPE & DISTRICT CARERS' SUPPORT GROUP

Meets for a tea, coffee, piece of cake
and a chat and support on the
FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF MONTH

1030am to 1230am— venue:

St james the Great Coffee Area

Contact - 07889181158



**DO
YOU
CARE?**

2026 Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court

Monday 2.00pm – 4.00pm

January 5th

Transport available on request

More information please contact Ann Ellis

01908 511436



The Pop-Up Nativity: The Greatest Journey

Christmas Eve – December 24th at 3pm
St James the Great

Join in our very own immersive nativity!
Dress up, join in, and come on the
greatest journey with us this year.



Remembrance Weekend - Hanslope

On Saturday 8th we held a concert for Ho and the Royal British Legion in St James church with wonderful musicians and readers. We were extremely grateful to Adrian Boynton, Director of Music at Christ the Cornerstone in Milton Keynes, who stepped in to accompany singers and trumpeter after Justin Lavender had to retire due to ill health.

We were joined by MP Chris Curtis, City Cllr Alison Andrew, Cllr Dorothy Courtman and Stephen Tunney, Hanslope Royal British Legion.

There were great performances from the evening's scratch choir dubbed the Ho Chorus; soloists Tony Kempster, John MacDomnic – Trumpet, Wesley Biggs and Gayathrie Patrick. Readers were Sarah Murfin, Sandy White, Janet Shipton, John Sorrell, Glenn Shipton, Stuart Macfarlan, Gillian Glanville and Millie Latraille.

There was a great range of music from Faure's Requiem to Harry James' jazz interspersed with moving (and funny) readings; culminating in the Last Post and falling poppy petals. Our enormous thanks to everyone. We raised £557.20 ie £278.60 each to HO and the RBL.

Sunday's Remembrance Day Service began with the Act of Remembrance and laying of wreaths before the Altar in the Soldier's Chapel, Hanslope's War Memorial by representatives of the City and Parish Council, Royal British Legion, Hanslope World War One Committee and St James Sunday School. The Last Post was played by Helen Pakes (trumpet) and Jacob Glanville (euphonium).

On Tuesday, 11th November the Armistice Day Act of Remembrance took place on The Green in front of the cherry tree planted in 2016 to commemorate those killed in both wars. Wreaths were again laid by our local representatives; and movingly, poppies planted by children from Hanslope Pre School who joined in the occasion.



Left: Adrian Boynton with the Ho Chorus, soloist Wesley Biggs.

Below: singers Andrew Biggs, Wesley Biggs and Stewart Tate. Reader John Sorrell, forever Baldrick.



Above: Remembrance Day soloists in front of the waterfall of poppies created by the Craftivists.

Right: 30 crosses for Hanslope men killed in the two wars; poppies planted by Hanslope Pre-School children.



Castlethorpe Remembrance Service

The congregation were greeted by a bright sunny November morning as they gathered around the village Memorial in North Street. This year's service was initiated by a march from the Village Hall with the Beaver and Cub Scouts, village dignitaries, local



councillors, PCO and the Vicar. The service commenced promptly at 9.15am with Fr Gary opening the service with a

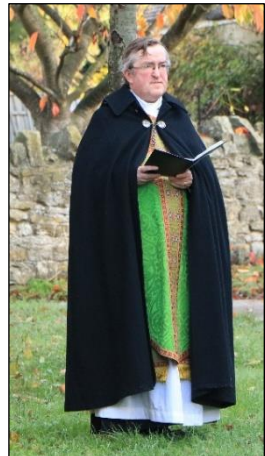
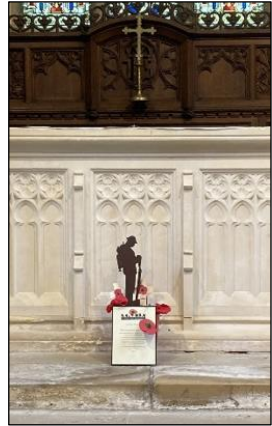
prayer followed by him reading the persons who gave their lives. The dignitaries in turn laid their wreaths at the memorial including a Beaver and Cub Scout. The traditional two



minutes silence was followed by the 'Last Post'. Reveille was then sounded followed by a short prayer. Fr Gary lead with the singing of the National Anthem which was followed by a

supporting prayer. The congregation were then included in a communal prayer and concluded the service with The Lord's Prayer.

Around 85 village residents and families attended the short service with the Beavers and Cubs all gathering outside the Village Hall for the formal dismiss.



Other News from Castlethorpe



Top tips for a greener Christmas from A Rocha's Eco Church Programme:

How can we be better at caring for creation and each other through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable choices at Christmas? The ideas below could make a world of difference, and a difference to the world. Take time to pray, reflect, and consider acting on one or two, or however many you like! You may find the change is for life and not just for Christmas.

- 1)** Start with your Advent calendar. Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your calendar, and any Christmas chocolate is Fairtrade. You'll be helping those farmers to make a decent living, and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.
- 2)** Rent a tree. Did you know that, in the UK, 6 – 8 million real Christmas trees go to landfill every year? With a Christmas tree rental scheme you can enjoy a real tree knowing it will be replanted later.
- 3)** Re-use cards and wrapping. Help reduce the huge amount of trees that go into making Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycle the section that carries the greeting, cut out the picture and use that as a tag. You could use fabric remnants and ribbons to make simple, drawstring gift bags in various sizes. Use these for your family and close friends and they could be reused for years to come. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Young children might enjoy decorating it and buy you five minutes to get all those other Christmas jobs done!
- 4)** Create homemade gifts. Baked goods for example, or buy gifts from a charity shop – you'll be amazed at what can be found. You could buy an attractive glass or vase and fill it with chocolates or flowers. Kilner jars, and other glass jars, filled with small items also make attractive gifts.

5) Give the gift of time. Too many unwanted gifts end up in landfill. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning, or whatever. Just make a 'gift of time gift voucher' and put it in a card for them.

6) Dim the lights but not the joy! LED Christmas lights help to save energy and money. You could make your table festive with some candles, scented ones perhaps. Use eco-friendly candles made from beeswax, soy or other vegetable alternatives. And empty jars with some ribbon make beautiful DIY candleholders.

7) Remember the reason for the season. Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ's love at Christmas. Invite someone who'd otherwise be on their own, to join you on Christmas Day. It's also a way of reducing energy consumption as they'll share your heating and cooking!

8) Recycle right. More waste ends up in landfill over Christmas than during the rest of the year, so it's a great time to review your recycling set up. Different local authorities offer different recycling provisions, so find out exactly what you can recycle at home. Don't forget – most wrapping paper is not recyclable. You can test it by doing the 'scrunch' test. If it springs back, it isn't recyclable. And always remove the Sellotape before recycling.

Coffee Morning and churchyard tidy

Despite the best efforts of Storm Claudia to call off a third consecutive organised churchyard tidy, we held our nerve! The end result was that we were joined by a merry band of about 14 volunteers, who clipped, trimmed, strimmed, removed ivy, cleaned pathways and gullies! A supreme effort by all involved for whom we are extremely thankful. The tidy also coincided with our Coffee Morning, which offered bacon and sausage baps. A grand total of £151 was raised! Thank you to everyone (on both sides of the counter) who supported us.

Castlethorpe's Autumn Fair Success!

Our Autumn Fair is always a very popular event and this year surpassed all others.

Tempted in with the promise of delicious homemade soups and cakes, we had a fabulous amount of visitors stop by to enjoy some lunch and do some shopping.

Our stalls included beautiful craft items, many handmade, fabulous gift ideas and even advice on our local yoga classes!

Proceeds from our raffle added to the total raised which this year exceeded £600!! An all-time record for us.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this such a success, we truly appreciate your hard work.

Judi Leon

For the Diary

It's easy to lose track of the days over the festive period, so here is a reminder of our regular activities:



Coffee Morning – the third Saturday of the month. Our next coffee morning is on **Saturday 20 December, 10.00am – 12 noon**, for those who want to step away from the inevitable rush towards Christmas (although we may have some festive treats!).

The first Coffee Morning in 2026 will be on **Saturday 17 January**.

Soup and a Roll – we are joining with St James for our Christmas Community Lunch on **Thursday 4 December** - see p 11.

Our first Soup and a Roll in 2026 is **Thursday 8 January at 12.30pm**.

Castlethorpe's Christmas Fayre – Sunday 7 December, 12noon – 4.00pm in the Village Hall. Organised by Kimberley Tibbs, a villager, all proceeds will go to the church. Do drop by for cakes, drinks, stalls and fantastic raffle prizes!

Christmas Wreath Making Night Monday 8 December at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. This is always a fun and creative event, which we run with Castlethorpe School. Tickets are £40 including all materials and refreshments - from Melissa (07525 668446).

Christmas Concert – Saturday 13 December at 7.30pm in the church. Adrian Boynton and his New English Singers are performing an evening of Advent and Christmas music. Tickets are £15 including refreshments and available from Stewart (stewartt@stoaway.co.uk) and Judi (judi.leon@hotmail.co.uk). We look forward to seeing you at these events!

BRINGING TOGETHER ANGLICAN AND METHODIST NEWS FROM
HANSLOPE AND CASTLETHORPE CHURCHES



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or contact your local distributor see back page

Hanslope – June Paterson
Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn

Conference Report Back



“Do you fancy a highly subsidised weekend in North Norfolk”, Fr Gary asked some of the key leaders of our Children’s and Young People’s ministry in the late Summer. The catch of course was that it involved attending a Conference at Walsingham designed for parishes of our worshipping style and tradition, to help encourage leaders, share good

practice, and develop new ideas. And so it was that Wendy Thomson, Natasha Corr, Melissa King and Jenny & Nick Fearn, three of whom were first time pilgrims to the Shrine, headed off on Friday 7th November...

Melissa King writes: “I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect of our weekend in Walsingham, on any level, but I was so impressed by the people, the place and the event itself, I can’t wait to go back! Walsingham truly is a very special place, our time at Mass and in the shrine was really quite moving. The event was the first of its kind for the organisers: its aim is to identify ways of improving young children’s experiences in church and how we might grow our younger congregational numbers. Workshops included Building a Bridge Between School and Church, which I found very useful, Sacramental Teaching to the under 5’s and Teaching Older Children. There were around 40 delegates with a sprinkling of clergy, including the lovely Bishop Will Hazelwood who preached on Sunday morning. I came away with two very positive thoughts firstly, that we’re actually doing a lot of good stuff already, and secondly, there’s scope to do lots more and to be bold in our quest to improve those relationships we have and are yet to have. I am very excited for the times ahead of us.

Nick Fearn also reflects on the Conference:

This was our first proper visit to Walsingham; it won't be our last and it didn't disappoint. I'm so glad that I could share the experience with my wife Jenny, and with good friends. We joined about 40 delegates from across the country all telling a similar story. Concerns of little or no participation at services from the Gen Z and A community and a common theme of a lack of volunteers.

Despite these concerns, the conference was buoyant. Excellent speakers gave fresh insights into what we could look to do and what we hadn't considered. While there were things we won't be implementing in the Benefice, opinions and ideas were shared freely. We've brought away some great ideas and a renewed energy to do more!

We also saw that we're in a fortunate position. We're relatively small parishes, both with thriving Sunday Schools. Not many churches can boast that and I think those who've led and nurtured Sunday School can be very proud of their achievements.

Away from the conference, we were able to attend services across the two days, Rite of Sprinkling at the Holy Well and managed to frequent the local winery for a debrief!!! The highlight for me was saying the Rosary in the Holy House just after Compline. I was alone and it was a privilege to be able to be able to do this in such a holy place. Our final act of worship on Sunday evoked memories of my first and only pilgrimage, which was to Lourdes in 1986. I felt the same emotion at the end of Mass in Walsingham, that I did in Lourdes.

A visit also wouldn't have been complete without a visit to the Shrine Gift Shop to hammer the credit card!





Family-run bakery based in Hanslope, offering:

Cupcakes & Celebration Cakes
 Traybakes
 Cream Teas
 Cinnamon Buns (& other flavours)
 Sausage Rolls
 Buffets for all occasions

www.facebook.com/the.cake.tin.mk
 email: the.cake.tin.mk@gmail.com
 Tel 07467336585

All available to order –
 Contact us to discuss
 your requirements!

Christopher

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NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICES

7 December No service at Hanslope due to the
quarterly Circuit Service at Woburn
Sands Methodist Church

14 December 3.00pm Carol Service (Revd. Stephanie Hibberd)

21 December Ms Effie Kumi

28 December Mr John Careford

4 January 2026 Mr Chris Linford

Sunday services are usually held at 10.30am and are always followed
by tea and coffee. We are a family friendly Church.

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month.



HOLY COMMUNION DURING DECEMBER

Church members are invited to attend a morning service on Sunday
14 December either at West End, Wolverton or Newport Pagnell,
both of which will be offering Holy Communion.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Everyone will be most welcome to join the Christmas Day service at
Newport Pagnell Methodist Church at 10.00am, which will be led by
Revd. Kofi, or Woburn Sands Methodist Church at 9.30am which will
be led by Katy Gillan.

There will be a Christmas Eve service at Woburn Sands at 8.00pm
which will be led by Chris Barron.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT



The Orphean Singers cordially invite everyone to their
annual "Family and Friends" Christmas Concert on
Monday 15 December. The concert, which is free, starts
at 7.30pm and there will also be refreshments and a raffle.



**FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND KEEP UP TO DATE WITH
OUR NEWS – HANSLOPE METHODIST CHURCH**

CAROL SERVICE

Our popular Carol Service is being held at 3.00pm on Sunday 14 December and we are delighted that once again the Orphean Singers will be joining us. The service will be followed by mince pies, tea and coffee.



KNIT 'N' NATTER

Our next project will be to make blankets, teddies, butterflies and twiddlemuffs for Milton Keynes University Hospital .



The group meets every Thursday afternoon between 2.00pm and 3.30pm in the old schoolroom at the rear of the Chapel (through the side gate). Everyone is welcome to participate in our project, bring their own knitting/crochet, or just call in for a chat and a cuppa.

HURRICANE MELISSA



All We Can, in partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain, is responding to the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa across the Caribbean.

We are working closely with our regional partner, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA), who are coordinating emergency relief efforts for affected communities.

Funds raised will help provide essential supplies such as food and shelter materials to those most in need.

COFFEE SHOP OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR



PERIOD Coffee Shop will be open as usual on 2nd, 9th & 16th December.

23 December – Closed 30 December – Open

Coffee Shop will resume normal opening on 6 January 2026

Bobs Ramblings December 2025

Hello again, I do hope you are all well and found some time to add your remembrance to all those people who paid the ultimate sacrifice during all the Wars. However, by golly the weather has certainly changed this week with a ten degree drop in the temperature, I needed big hat and gloves to walk the dog this morning.

Good news for the local sports clubs with MK Dons maintaining a third position, the Cobblers not losing too much ground, but alas the Saints losing their first match in the Cup against Newcastle.

This month has been extremely rewarding for us old un's with Steam and Vintage Diesel traction as well as some very new



locomotives. Last month I posted pictures of the new Class 93 operated by ROG, I now can show you the big brother of those locomotives, the Stadler



Class 99 operated by GBRf. This shot was taken at Aspley Guise to get a daylight shot with 69014/99001/02/69018 operating a test train from Tonbridge to Wellingborough.



Colas liveried 70816 on the 26th Oct hauling a Willesden to Bescot train. An ex-SR Pacific 34028 passing on the 1st Nov. Then on the 6th Nov a wonderful



Class 40, D213 on a Euston to Carlisle charter.

Some more heritage English Electric powered locomotives with 20005/207 passing on the 10th Nov with a Burton to Willesden



working. Finally, an Ex LMS 5MT 44871 on a Bury to Southall to make ready for a charter the following day. Thank You for reading and enjoy the collection this month.

Bob

From the Registers

Baptism

2nd November 2025 at St James the Great

Darcie Mai & Frankie JAH

In Remembrance of

28th September 2025 Funeral at Ss. Simon & Jude

Susan Clewett

Died 28th September 2025 aged 82 years

4th November 2025 Burial of Ashes

Ann Christine Nixon-Caney

Died 16th August 2025 aged 87 years

18th November 2025 Burial at St. James the Great

Joyce Hilda Conridge

Died 23rd October aged 94 years

Thank you

We would like to use a small corner of this edition of THE LINK magazine to say a big 'Thank you!' to all those involved in the life of Ann Nixon-Caney during her Hanslope years. Most recently, of course, there has been the spectacular care, centred inevitably on the church, medical organisations and close friends, at the end of her life. Thank you for that, and for making her family feel so welcome amongst you.

But our thanks are wider than that. We are full of admiration for all the warmth, kindness, generosity of spirit and love shown to Ann during her years in Hanslope. Many people in the local community gave her their time and friendship, and the church community in particular enabled her to find purpose and enjoyment in life.

Ann's niece and nephew, Beatrice and Theo, join us in sending you all our thanks and best wishes.

Crispin and Helen Collier. (Brother and sister-in-law)

Daily Bible Reading Scheme

Advent & Christmas

Advent Season:

Advent 1 – Mon 1st	Isa 4:2-6	Matt 8:5-11
Tues	Isa 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wed	Isa 25:6-10a	Matt 15:29-37
Thurs	Isa 26:1-6	Matt 7:21, 24-27
Fri	Isa 29:17-24	Matt 9:27-31
Sat	Isa 30:19-21, 23-26	Matt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8
Advent 2 – Mon 8th	Isa 35:1-10	Luke 5:17-26
Tues	Isa 40:1-11	Matt 18:12-14
Wed	Isa 40:25-31	Matt 11:28-30
Thurs	Isa 41:13-20	Matt 11:11-15
Fri	Isa 48:17-19	Matt 11:16-19
Sat	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11	Matt 17:9a, 10-135
Advent 3 – Mon 15 th	Num 24:2-7, 15-17a	Matt 21:23-27
Tues	Zeph 3:1-2, 9-13	Matt 21:28-32
December 17th	Gen 49:2, 8-10	Matt 1:1-17
December 18th	Jer 23:5-8	Matt 1:18-24
December 19th	Judg 13:2-7, 24-25a	Luke 1:5-25
December 20th	Isa 7:10-14	Luke 1:26-38
December 22nd	1 Sam 1:24-28	Luke 1:46-56
December 23rd	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24	Luke 1:57-66
December 24th	2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16	Luke 1:67-79

Christmas Season:

Friday Dec. 26th – St. Stephen , first martyr	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59	Matt 10:17-22
Saturday Dec. 27th – St. John , Apostle & Evangelist	1 John 1:1-4	John 20:1a, 2-8
Monday Dec. 29th – St Thomas Becket , martyr	1 John 2:3-11	Luke 2:22-35
Tuesday Dec. 30th – 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas	1 John 2:12-17	Luke 2:36-40
Wednesday Dec. 31st– 7th Day in the Octave of Christmas	1 John 2:18-21	John 1:1-18
Thursday Jan. 1st – Mary, Mother of God	Num 6:22-27 & Gal 4:4-7	Luke 2:16-21
Friday Jan. 2nd Ss. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen	1 John 2:22-28	John 1:19-28
Saturday Jan. 3 rd	1 John 2:29– 3:6	John 1:29-34
Monday Jan. 5 th	1 John 3:11-21	John 1:43-51

2026 Dates FOR YOUR DIARIES

The Link deadlines and publication dates for January – April 2026:

Edition name	deadline for material Wednesdays	publication date Fridays	weeks covered
1. JANUARY	December 31 st	Jan 8 th	Jan 12 th – Feb 18 th <i>5 Sundays to Ash Wednesday</i>
2. FEBRUARY/LENT	February 11 th	February 19 th	Feb 22 nd – March 29 th <i>6 Sundays to Palm Sunday</i>
3. HOLY WEEK & EASTER	March 18 th	March 26 th	March 30 th – 26 th April <i>Holy Week, Easter, 4 Sundays</i>
4. EASTERTIDE	April 15 th	April 23 rd	April 27 th – May 31 st <i>5 Sundays; Spring Bank Holiday on 25th May</i>

PERSONNEL ANGLICAN

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www.castlethorpechurch.org

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 Phone number 07354369772

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Funeral Co-ordinator:	Glyn Hollinshead	07947478189
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DEADLINE for JANUARY 2026 EDITION
WEDNESDAY 31st DECEMBER
to our email TheLink@handparish.co.uk
 For deadlines Winter-Spring 2025 see page 34



2025 Remembrance at Hanslope and Castlethorpe

