

THE LINK



Restored at last – St James Church chancel window – see p.31

SEPTEMBER 2026

£1.20

Diary for September 2026

(Also visit stjameshanslope.org/whats-on)

Worship

Sunday Services

Parish Mass at Castlethorpe, 9.30am (Sunday School 9.15am during term time)

Parish Mass at Hanslope, 11.15am (Sunday School 11.15am during term time)

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

Weekday Services

Wednesday Mass at Castlethorpe, 5pm

Thursday Mass at Hanslope, 9.30am

Friday Mass at Hanslope, 12noon

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 – 9.30am to 11.30am

Wednesdays

Churchyard Team – 9.30am

Thursdays

Choir Rehearsals – Hanslope Church, 6pm

Fridays

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

Craftivists and Flower Team – 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

September 2026

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Tues 1 st | Castlethorpe's Standing Committee Meeting, Castlethorpe – 4.30pm
Oktoberfest Planning Meeting – 6pm |
| Thurs 3 rd | Wedding Rehearsal, Castlethorpe Church – 6.30pm |
| Sat 5 th | Pickering Ringers visiting, Hanslope Church – 9.30am
Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning – 10am to 12noon
Picnic in the Park, Children's play area in The Chequers, Castlethorpe – 12noon
Wedding Rite, Castlethorpe Church – 2pm |

- Sun 6th** **23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**
 Mon 7th Teatime treats, Lincoln Court – 2pm to 4pm
 Tues 8th Hanslope Standing Committee Meeting, The Vicarage – 4.30pm
 Wed 9th A Survival Guide to Sunday Worship, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Thurs 10th Benefice Safeguarding Team Meeting, The Vicarage – 11am
 Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
- Sun 13th** **24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**
 Heritage Open Day, Castlethorpe Church – 11am to 4pm
 Heritage Open Day, Hanslope Church – Guided Tours every hour
 and Church Tower Open, refreshments available – 2pm to 5pm
 Tues 15th Castlethorpe's PCC Meeting, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
 Hanslope's Fundraising Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Wed 16th A Survival Guide to Sunday Worship, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Thurs 17th Community Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm
 Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
 Sat 19th Castlethorpe's Monthly Coffee Morning in aid of Ho, Ghana –
 10am to 12noon
- Sun 20th** **25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**
 Joint Parish Harvest Afternoon Tea & Auction, Hanslope Church – 3pm
 to 5pm
 Mon 21st Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm
 Tues 22nd Hanslope's PCC Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Wed 23rd Carers' Support Group, Hanslope Church – 10.30am
 A Survival Guide to Sunday Worship, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Thurs 24th Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
 Fri 25th Tutored Wine Tasting, Castlethorpe Church – 7pm
- Sun 27th** **26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**
 Wed 30th Wholeness and Healing Mass, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm

October 2026

- Thurs 1st Soup and a Roll, Castlethorpe Church – 12.30pm
 Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
 Fri 2nd Burial of ashes of the Late Anne Hart, Hanslope Church – 1pm
 Oktoberfest – 6pm to 10pm, St James the Great
 Sat 3rd Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning – 10am to 12noon
 Oktoberfest – 3pm to 9pm, St James the Great
- Sun 4th** **27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**

St James Church Cleaning (not every week or at exact times)
Monday afternoons. Any queries, please contact Mary Nokes on
01908 337939

Sunday & Feast Day Readings

September 2026

September 6th **23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time** *green*

Ezekiel 33:7-9; Ps 95; Rom 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20

September 13th **24th Sunday in Ordinary Time** *green*

Ecclesiasticus 27:30-28:7; Ps 103; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35

September 20th **Harvest Thanksgiving (25th Sunday)** *green*

Isaiah 55:6-9; Ps 145; Philippians 1: 20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a

September 27th **26th Sunday in Ordinary Time** *green*

Ezekiel 18:25-28; Ps 25; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:28-32

From the Editor - And into Autumn

I've learned that the meteorological autumn begins on 1st September and ends on 30th November. Astronomical autumn begins on 23rd September and ends 21st December. Prefer the latter dates!

However, be warned, the church September diary is as full as ever.

Also, there is a fortuitous conflation of a Saint in *People Who Care* and the occasional *Extracts* – p29. The author is a dear friend, Judy Robinson. She, her husband John and Robert started the still thriving branch of the Shefford Bible Society nearly fifty years ago. Our children were friends at school. Judy is an inspiration with a rich personal history. A few years ago she built and created a blog, *Food that Builds a Community*, the source of this article. And we still meet in a Zoom group once a month that she organises.

UPDATE The Facebook Group for the Parish Churches of
Hanslope & Castlethorpe



From The Vicarage



Dear Friends,

And so it is September. As I write this mid-August, we are just coming to the end of the longest drought in decades. Over a two-month period we have managed I reckon 3mm of rain, and the temperatures have been consistently very high. I hate the heat, so it has not been an easy season for many of us, and not least for farmers and growers, and gardeners. As yet, then, no need to cave in and switch the heating on permanently (I try and hold out until October, if at all possible, and only reluctantly am I accepting that the presence of asters in flower (Michaelmas Daisy) means that autumn is inexorably taking hold. Season gives way to season, as indeed it must, and every phase of the year brings with it consolations too, of course. Let's hope that consolation this autumn comes in the form of persistent gentle rain!!

September, is, not unlike January, of course, **an opportunity for new starts** after the Summer break.

One new start might be building in a commitment to **attending a weekday service** - especially if you have been unable to attend on Sunday. There are Masses on Wednesdays (at Castlethorpe at 5.00pm) Thursdays (at Hanslope at 9.30am) and on Fridays (at Hanslope at 12 noon) with Morning, Midday or Evening Prayer being led by a member of the congregation if I am unable to be present. These services all have growing congregations, and over a typical week as many as 35 people in total worship at these thirty-minute Eucharists, with typical half of those present on Thursdays when we have coffee after Mass also.

Meanwhile, Monday's thirty minutes of guided silence at 11 Weavers End is at 5.30pm and the monthly Rosary Group is on the first Saturday of each month at 4.30pm. Attendance at both of these has grown in the last year too, you would be very welcome.

Our various **Health & Wellbeing** activities are fully back under way for the autumn this month too. This includes: **The Carers' Group**, run alongside the *Patient Participation Group* of Hanslope Surgery, is clearly valued by those who can come along. If you know someone who cares for friend or relative, either at home, locally, or at a distance, then please let them know about the group. Likewise, the monthly **Cancer Wellbeing & Support Group** is fulfilling a very real need at its meeting on the third Monday evening of the month too. October sees, I think, the tenth birthday of the **Teatime Treats** sessions at Lincoln Court.

This is open to the whole community and not just to residents of Lincoln Court, so do pop along – a huge well done to Ann Ellis and her team who have nurtured this group over the last decade. Our well attended **Coffee Mornings and Community Lunch** are much appreciated parts of this department too.

Otherwise this month sees the start of our **Harvest celebrations** and once again we shall be raising funds for our link charity **Farm-Africa**. This year a **Harvest Afternoon Tea** is being held on Sunday 20th September and it is Hanslope's turn to host the event this year at St James. It is 23 years since we started supporting Farm Africa and you can read much more about them elsewhere in this magazine. Over the years we have raised over £33,000 through our annual Harvest endeavours, a three-page article this month looks back at Farm Africa's 41 years, having been formed in the wake of the 1984 famine in Ethiopia made famous by the BBC's Michael Buerk, whose award winning reporting brought to public attention the desperate situation of people, and which prompted Live Aid, and staggering generosity from the British Public to support those in need.

September also sees the re-start of our **Learning and Teaching Groups** with a short three-week series "Survival Guide to Sunday Worship" starting on Wednesdays (from the 9th) and another Explorer Course (from Thursday 10th). During the rest of the autumn term there will be a full range of courses on offer for people at every stage of the Christian journey.

In addition, our **Little Angels and Little Lambs** groups kick off for a new academic year, there is **Sunday School** in both churches, and our youth group **Inspire!** re-starts too. All our church families are invited to a **Picnic in the Park** at Castlethorpe on Saturday 5th September 12noon-2pm. The Pandemic had huge impact of children and young people's work in the churches, and it has been a joy to see so many new joiners to our various groups. Our youth group was probably the most adversely affected, but this too is starting to grow back into a committed and viable group again, anyone who is in Year Six or above is welcome to attend this group on Fridays at St James from 4.00pm-6.00pm.

Hearteningly we have welcomed quite a flurry of **new worshippers** across the two churches over the last 12 months and we offer a very warm welcome to all those who have joined us. I know most of those who have bravely dipped their toes in the waters of church life, have done so after months or even years of pondering. Be assured of a friendly welcome if you want to join us this autumn. The more the merrier!

The autumn promises much and I encourage you to make the most of it!

With every blessing,

Fr Gary

2026 Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court

Mondays 2.00pm – 4.00pm

7th September – Bingo

5th October – Ukulele Sing Along

Transport available on request

More information please contact

Ann Ellis 01908 511435



Community Lunches are back!

Thursday 17th September

Thursday 15th October

St James Church, Hanslope 12.30pm
everyone welcome for homemade soup,
crusty bread and pudding



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 THE MONTH

10.30am to noon – venue

St James the Great Coffee area

Contact - 07889181158



**DO
YOU
CARE?**

Learning & Teaching Term Ahead

Lifelong learning is a critical part of Christian Discipleship and we are richly blessed to have a knowledgeable team to lead us. This term no fewer than five courses will be on offer, over twenty-eight evenings, please do make the most of it!



A Survival Guide to Sunday Worship

Starting on Wednesday 9th September at St James

This is the first in a new strand of short “Survival Guide” courses. This course is for anyone and everyone who would like to learn more about how we worship on Sundays, and how we might get more out of the experience too. There are three sessions beginning at 7.30pm, and taking place at St James.

Explorer Course

Starting on Thursday 10th September at The Vicarage

This course is for you if you:

- Are wanting to think about the possibility of Baptism or Confirmation or
- Are needing a refresher on the basics, or
- You have joined our two churches from a different Christian worshipping tradition or ever wonder “why do we do that?”

Session one, of ten, is at The Vicarage, Park Road, Hanslope at 7.30pm

The Chosen: Series 4

Starting on Thursday 1st October at 12 Weavers End

An eight-week DVD based series exploring the life of Jesus Christ, and in this series especially, looking at how God uses suffering to bring about good in the life of God’s people.

A Survival Guide to the Bible

Starting on Wednesday 7th October at Ss Simon & Jude

This course is for anyone and everyone who would like to learn more about how we begin make sense of The Bible, and how we might get more out of reading it too. There are three sessions beginning at 7.30pm, and taking place at Ss Simon & Jude, Castlethorpe.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: CASTLETHORPE CHURCH



We are opening the church for visitors on
Sunday 13 September, 11am – 4pm, as part of the national Heritage
Open Days, one of over 300 events happening in Milton Keynes!

**91 Castlethorpe Church
Open Day**
**Parochial Parish Council of Ss Simon &
Jude, Castlethorpe**

The renovated medieval church of Ss Simon & Jude in Castlethorpe has late Norman architecture, an impressive 17th century monument to Sir Thomas Tyrrell and an environmentally friendly churchyard. We invite you to look around, ask questions and join us for refreshments.

Sunday 13

St James is open on the same day, so why not come and look around both churches, learn more about some of the historic features, and join us for a cuppa!

We look forward to welcoming you, your family, your neighbours and your friends!

Judi Leon
07533773023

heritage open days



St James Church Open

Sunday 13th September 2.00pm – 5.00pm

**Part of countrywide events and special buildings
open for free. Wander round our beautiful
ancient building OR join a guided tour**

Refreshments

CHURCH TOWER OPEN

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>

<https://www.mkheritage.org.uk/hodmk/>

HARVEST 2026



Sunday 20th September

**9.30am Harvest Sung Mass
at Castlethorpe**

**11.15am Harvest Sung Mass
at Hanslope**

**3.00pm Joint Parishes
Harvest Tea & Auction
at St James the Great, Hanslope**

Tickets £6 for adults and £3 for children.

**Donations of items for the auction
gratefully received at either church.**

**All proceeds to FARM Africa.
Sign Up in Church**



END HUNGER >>> GROW FARMING

FARM AFRICA



What is Farm Africa?

END HUNGER >>> GROW FARMING FARM AFRICA

In 1985, Sir Michael Wood, a doctor and the founder of *AMREF Health Africa* and David Campbell, an agriculturalist and specialist in African rural development, established Farm Africa in response to the famine in Ethiopia.

Wood and Campbell shared a vision of a prosperous rural Africa. They identified food as the best medicine and believed that developing small-scale agriculture is the key to reducing rural poverty. Speaking at Farm Africa's 30th anniversary celebrations in 2015, David Campbell commented:

"We both believed passionately in the need to revitalise African agriculture, to break the mould which often inhibited development and to find new more effective strategies."

Originally called FARM-Africa (Food and Agricultural Resource Management), the charity's initial aims were to target farmers and herders who had the capacity for expansion; work with them to find solutions to help lift them out of poverty; draw on the latest research; look for approaches that could be used more widely by other communities, development groups and governments; and publicise successes and also failures. These principles are still very relevant to the charity today, which has now been renamed Farm Africa.

In 1987, the charity started work with nomadic pastoralists in the remote north of Kenya, expanding to Ethiopia a year later. Initially they focused on assisting extremely poor widows and their children by providing them with goats on credit. When the goats gave birth, the family then passed two kids onto another family.

Access to veterinary services meant the goats were healthy and produced plenty of nutritious milk and as women usually look after goats, they were also able to help empower women through this project. The success of this project in 1988 led to other similar projects being adapted and rolled out throughout Kenya, and then in Tanzania in 1990 and Uganda in 2003.

Throughout the nineties they fostered community fundraising support from the UK before launching FARM Africa USA in 1998. Then in 2002 Michael Palin, a

long-term supporter of the charity, became our patron. Sir Michael has supported Farm Africa in many ways, including reporting on the charity's work in Ethiopia, presenting three BBC Radio 4 appeals for Farm Africa and giving readings at their annual Christmas Concert.

In 2012 Farm Africa and a consortium of partners began implementing Ethiopia's first reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) project. Having worked in the Bale Eco-region, a biodiversity hotspot, on a participatory forest management scheme since 2006, Farm Africa had been refining its forest management system for many years, supporting local forests users and the government to manage the responsibilities and benefits of the region's forests together. The REDD+ project is a framework that incentivises forest protection and mitigates global climate change, enabling developing country governments and communities to be paid for actions that prevent forest losses and thereby reduce carbon emissions. The work on REDD+ continues today with a *Making Forestry Sustainable* project.

In 2014 work began on the Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE) initiative, which improves the livelihoods of vulnerable people who depend on the Bale Eco-region, while ensuring the area's critical ecosystem is protected.

As part of the UK Government funded BRACED (Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters) programme, Farm Africa created the Market Approaches to Resilience (MAR) project in Ethiopia in 2015. This project tested market-based approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households to climate change in the Afar, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and Somali regions.

In 2016, having worked in the fish farming sector in Kenya for many years, Farm Africa began the Kenya Market-led Aquaculture Programme. This project boosted fish production in ponds to help protect Lake Victoria's strained resources, offered the population a sustainable source of fish and provided fish farmers with reliable incomes.

In 2018 Farm Africa started working in DR Congo, unleashing the potential of coffee production in the Virunga National Park and boosting the livelihoods of coffee farming families living along the park's borders. They also launched Livestock for Livelihoods in 2018, a project funded by UK aid from the UK government and Jersey Overseas Aid which supported women in South Omo in Ethiopia and Karamoja in Uganda to set up goat-rearing businesses, which enabled them to earn their own money and improve their families' diets.

Today, Farm Africa's work is focused on eastern Africa operating programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and DR Congo promoting sustainable agricultural practises, strengthening markets and protecting the environment.

Farming in harmony with nature is not only possible, but profitable. When conservation benefits those who steward the land, people and planet can thrive. Farming should feed people sustainably and renew the natural world, provide a proper living for farmers in Eastern Africa, combat climate change and give local people power to overcome inequality and prejudice.

In rural communities across eastern Africa, poverty, food insecurity and biodiversity loss are being intensified by climate change and global economic instability. These communities are at the frontline of a stark global challenge – feeding the world without destroying it. But there is a solution.

Farm Africa believes farming shouldn't cost the Earth. It should provide a decent living, feed people sustainably, give young people and women in particular power to overcome prejudice and inequality, combat climate change and restore nature. Farm Africa helps farming communities become more prosperous and sustainable by improving the quality, quantity and value of their produce, accessing better and fairer finance, opening up new markets and increasing employment, especially for women and young people.

In addition to Sir Michael Palin the Charity's ambassadors include Kate Adie, former senior BBC reporter, Minette Batters, former president of the National Farmers Union and General Sir Peter de la Billiere, Sir Peter had a long and distinguished army career which concluded when he commanded the British forces during the first Gulf War.

Did you know?

£16: could help more farmers get access to the tools they need to change their futures.

£62: could give training in regenerative agriculture to a lead farmer to share with others affected by climate change.

£132: could help more farmers take part in business development training.

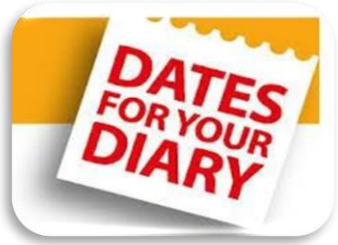
£33,389.00

**Raised for Farm Africa in Hanslope
& Castlethorpe since 2003**

To find out more: www.farmafrica.org

Coming Up

Details of these, and other (yet to be announced) events will appear in due course, but please put the dates in your diary!



Friday 2nd October – Saturday 3rd October: OKTOBERFEST

at St James the Great, Hanslope, Friday 6.00-10.00pm and Saturday 3.00-9.00pm

Saturday 3rd October: COFFEE MORNING

Monthly Coffee Morning at Hanslope, 10.00am-12 noon

Saturday 17th October: COFFEE MORNING

Monthly Coffee Morning at Castlethorpe, 10.00am-12 noon

Wednesday 28th October: FEAST OF Ss SIMON & JUDE

Patronal Festival Mass at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm followed by drinks

Saturday 31st October HO FUNDRAISING CONCERT & AFTERNOON TEA

at St James the Great, Hanslope from 3.00pm

Monday 2nd November: ALL SOULS' DAY SUNG MASS & COMMEMORATIONS OF THE DEPARTED

at St James the Great, Hanslope at 7.30pm

Saturday 7th November: COFFEE MORNING & AUTUMN FAYRE

Monthly Coffee Morning at Hanslope, 10.00am-12 noon

& Autumn Fayre at Castlethorpe from 12noon-3.00pm

Saturday 21st November: COFFEE MORNING & PRE-CHRISTMAS GIFT FAYRE

Monthly Coffee Morning at Castlethorpe, 10.00am-12 noon

& Pre-Christmas Gift Fayre at St James the Great, Hanslope 11.00am-3.00pm

Sunday 22nd November: CHRIST THE KING

Bishop Paul joins us for a Joint Mass of Baptism & Confirmation at Castlethorpe at 10.30am



pudding, a cuppa and a chat.

We would love to see you at these events!

CASTLETHORPE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

As the summer fades into autumn, a reminder of our regular and upcoming events

Our next Coffee Morning is on **Saturday 19 September**, 10 am - 12 noon, when we're delighted that all the proceeds will go to our friends in Ho.

We are holding a Tutored Wine Tasting Evening on **25 September**, at 7pm... ***all the tickets now gone!***

Soup and a Roll is back on **Thursday 1 October**, 12.30-2pm. Join us for homemade soup,



*A convivial summer!
Services and Coffee mornings
in both churches this August.*





OKTOBERFEST



2nd October 2026 6pm to 10pm

3rd October 2026 3pm to 9pm



All welcome; join us for food, entertainment and beer!

ST JAMES THE GREAT CHURCH
HANSLOPE



Open Weekend July 11th & 12th 2026

A HUGE thank you to everyone who came! We made a record £2,481.05 We had a fantastic community weekend: great weather, good numbers of people and a great atmosphere. We hope those who came had a great time. Thank you to all our volunteers who made the event so successful.

A RECORD £2,481.05



Summer Holiday Mondays

Our summer club happened on four Mondays over the summer with themed sessions ran by a fab team and young leaders who enabled fun and laughter to fill our beautiful church!

Many families attended, some new faces too, and we enjoyed games and crafts, snacks and a rainbow jelly courtesy of Finnian who blessed it admirably before it was devoured!

A HUGE thank you to everyone who came. We had a fantastic community weekend: great weather, good numbers of people and a great atmosphere. We hope those who came had a great time. Thank you to all our volunteers who made the event so successful.

Wendy and Melissa



News from HO



The Anglican Diocese of Ho joyfully celebrated the election of the Revd Canon Selin Selorm Sefakor Mereku as Bishop Coadjutor-Elect on 15th August.

Bishop Matthias writes: *his journey is a powerful testimony to God's faithful guidance, proving that the Lord continues to raise shepherds after His own heart for the service of His Church. Born in January 1986 at Kpando, Canon Mereku's Christian life began at St. Patrick's Anglican Church, where he was baptised and nurtured in the Anglican faith. From serving faithfully at the altar as a young member of the Guild of*

Servants of the Sanctuary to answering God's call into ordained ministry, his life has been marked by humble devotion, diligent preparation, and unwavering commitment to the Gospel. Through theological formation, lifelong learning, and faithful pastoral ministry, he has served the Diocese with distinction in Ho, Worawora, and Kpando. His passion for evangelism has inspired the planting of new worshipping communities, bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to many, and strengthening the Church's missionary witness.

Beyond parish ministry, Canon Mereku has offered dedicated leadership within the Diocese and the wider community, exemplifying the Anglican vocation of serving both Church and society. Together with his wife, Mother Yvonne Nutifafa Gavor Mereku, and their two sons, he continues to bear witness to Christ through a faithful family life rooted in prayer and service.

Bishop Selorm will assist and then succeed Bishop Matthias who retires at the end of this year. Please keep both in your prayers.

The very moving consecration service is available to view on the Anglican Cathedral Ho Facebook page.

Raising money for HO



Strawberry Cream Teas Sunday 15th August

The final total raised is £644.87 thanks to generous visitors and donations. Our enormous thanks to John Sorrell and his family who hosted the event in his beautiful garden. They and other volunteers worked hard to set everything up, provide refreshments, entertain and take everything down afterwards. THANK YOU



NEXT FUNDRAISING EVENTS

COFFEE MORNING Saturday 19th September at Castlethorpe

CONCERT FOR HO 31st October St James

ADVENT FAIR - plans underway!!

Finnish Joulua Tonttuus - in Translation: Christmas

Elves, Santa's Magical helpers – from Sarah Murfin.

Extracts . . .

Dare to declare who you are. It is not far from the shores of silence to the boundaries of speech. The path is not long, but the way is deep. You must not only walk there, you must be prepared to leap.

Do you recognise this month's Extract? Answer p30



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

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or contact manager@hanslopevillagehall.co.uk

07517 535898

BRINGING TOGETHER ANGLICAN AND METHODIST NEWS FROM
HANSLOPE AND CASTLETHORPE CHURCHES



THE LINK



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JANUARY – DECEMBER 20

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or contact your local distributor – see page 31

Hanslope – June Paterson; Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn

NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH



SUNDAY SERVICES

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

6 September	Rev. Kofi Tekyi-Ansah (Holy Communion)
13 September	Mrs Jackie Commey
20 September	Mr Chris Linford
27 September	Mr Bola Odunlami

4 October Rev. Barbara Winner (Harvest Festival) 3.00pm

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY 2026

'One Body, Many Parts' - 27 September

Methodist churches around the UK have been invited to mark Disability Awareness Sunday 2026. The official date is 27 September 2026, but churches can celebrate on a date that works for them.

The 2026 theme, 'One Body, Many Parts', celebrates the truth that the Church is not complete without people with disabilities.

Read more here - Disability Awareness Sunday - Through the Roof

https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/?utm_source=Methodist%20Church%20House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=15563841_Methodist%20News%2023%2F07%2F26&dm_i=BVI,99L4X,S50E2J,12X1B8,1,0,0,0



HANSLOPE SCARECROW FESTIVAL 19 & 20 SEPTEMBER

The Methodist Church will be an ideal place to stop off during the weekend of the Scarecrow Festival.



You can rest your weary legs and enjoy a variety of refreshments including home-made cakes and savouries. Our own Scarecrow will be there to welcome you! We will be open from 10.30am to 4.30pm on Saturday and from 1.00pm to 4.30pm on Sunday.



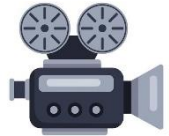
An extra treat...

On Saturday afternoon, at 2pm, the Orphean Singers will be entertaining you with a variety of foot tapping songs so do call in!

MK ECO CHURCH NETWORK

Churches Together in MK along with the MK Eco Church Network have arranged a Peoples Emergency Briefing (PEB) screening on Sunday 13 September, between 2pm – 4pm, at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone. The screening will be followed by a short discussion.

More information can be found on the PEB website: <https://www.nebriefing.org/peb>



LOOKING AHEAD - HARVEST FESTIVAL SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER

Always popular, our Harvest Festival service starts at 3.00pm and followed by Afternoon Tea. Non-perishable donations for MK Foodbank are most welcome and can be brought to the Church on the day or the previous Tuesday during Coffee Shop hours (10.00am to 12.00 noon).



MILTON KEYNES FOODBANK



A reminder that we have an ongoing collection for MK Foodbank. Non-perishable items may be brought to the church during Coffee Shop hours on Tuesdays (10.00am-12.00pm) or Knit 'n' Natter on Thursdays (2.00pm-3.30pm).

Saints from the Calendar September

September 3rd

St Gregory the Great

Born about 540; died in Rome in 604. While prefect of Rome, he founded monasteries there and in Sicily and himself became a monk. Called to be a deacon of Rome by Benedict I, and then sent as papal legate to Constantinople. Elected pope in 590. Reorganised Church life and administration in a time of crisis, sponsored liturgical reform, and initiated the evangelisation of the English. Known also for his extensive writings on pastoral care, spirituality, and morals, and for his self-designation as “servant of the servants of God.”

September 8th

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This feast originated in Jerusalem about the sixth century, a development of the feast of the dedication of the church of Saint Anne, built in Jerusalem “where Mary was born.” Observed in Rome in the seventh century, it was later used to determine the date of Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Because of her importance in salvation history, Mary’s birthday is celebrated as well as those of her son Jesus the Lord, and of Saint John the Baptist (24 June).

September 13th

St John Chrysostom

Born in Antioch about 347; died in exile in Comana (Turkey) on 14 September 407. After some years as a hermit, he was a priest at Antioch, where his brilliant preaching and catechesis earned him the sobriquet “Chrysostom” (golden-mouthed). Appointed patriarch of Constantinople in 397. His reforms, preaching, and ascetic life led to opposition from court and clergy and eventual banishment. Noted for his simplicity of life, his care of the poor, the courage of his witness, and his effective preaching of the Scriptures.

September 14th

Holy Cross Day

Originally this day commemorated the dedication of Constantine’s Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in the fourth century; after the celebration, the wood of the cross was venerated. The feast spread in the West after the recovery of the relics of the cross from Persia in the seventh century. A feast of the Lord, it celebrates the “lifting up” of the Son of Man on the cross, into glory, and the paradox of the cross as a sign of humiliation and death, yet the source of victory for all people.

September 15th

Our Lady of Sorrows

This commemoration originated in the medieval devotion to the seven sorrows of Mary. Approved for the Servite order in the seventeenth century, it was extended to the whole Western Church in 1814 by Pius VII in thanksgiving for

his release from captivity under Napoleon. In the light of Simeon's prophecy about a sword piercing Mary's soul (Luke 2:35), the feast celebrates Mary, first disciple and first to share in the pain and triumph of the cross.

September 16th Ss Cornelius(Pope, Martyr) and Cyprian (Bishop, Martyr)

Cornelius: Died in exile in Civitavecchia (Italy) in 253, two years after his election as bishop of Rome. Supported by Cyprian, he defended the power of the Church to reconcile those who had lapsed under persecution. Cyprian: Born at the beginning of the third century; died in Carthage (Tunisia) on 14 September 258. A lawyer, teacher, and adult convert. Elected bishop of Carthage in 249 and led this Church in times of persecution. Took a moderate position on the reconciliation of the lapsed but, like other African bishops, demanded the rebaptism of heretics even though their baptism was recognised by the Church of Rome. Both remembered as compassionate pastors who developed the Church's teaching and practice of reconciliation. Antagonists in theological debate, they were united in sharing the crown of martyrdom and are named together in Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon).

September 21st St Matthew, Apostle

Matthew, also known as Levi, was a Jew who collected taxes for the Romans at Capernaum in Galilee. Here Jesus met him and called him to be an apostle (Luke 5:27-28). Venerated as the author of the gospel which highlights Jesus' role as Messiah and underlines the presence of the kingdom of God in the Church.

September 27th St Vincent de Paul, Priest

Born in Gascony (France) in 1581; died in Paris on this day in 1660. A parish priest who worked for the apostolic renewal of the clergy, founding the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians or Lazarists) for missionary work in rural areas and for the formation of clergy. Committed above all to the oppressed and disadvantaged, he founded the Daughters of Charity with Louise de Marillac to work with the needy.

September 29th Michaelmas

The cult of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael began in the East. In the West, this day first marked the dedication of a fifth century church of Saint Michael in Rome. This festival of Michaelmas came to be very popular and widely celebrated in medieval Europe. Raphael and Gabriel were added to the Roman calendar in the twentieth century, and the three are now celebrated together. In the Scriptures (for example, Revelation 12:7-9, Luke 1:26-38, Tobit 3:16-25), each of the three angels is named as a messenger of God, entrusted with special divine missions on earth.

Wheat and Weeds

“Let them both grow till the harvest.”

In his sermon on Sunday 19th July Fr Gary reflected on Matthew Ch 13:24-30; Wisdom 12;13-19 and Romans 8:26-27

Back in the 1950s, faced with the spread of Soviet and Chinese communism, the United States turned in on itself to root out the enemy within.

Home-grown communists were believed to be everywhere – from Hollywood actors and directors, to lawyers, civil rights workers, teachers and trade unionists. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI spearheaded the efforts to weed out this internal threat. There was an atmosphere of mistrust and fear as friends and colleagues denounced each other, thousands of government workers were dismissed without just cause, while other people, such as the great Charlie Chaplin, abandoned the USA in search of greater freedom abroad.

The very standards and values of democracy which the US government was so determined to defend were in fact being eroded by the corrupt methods used to identify the so-called “Reds under the bed”.

The desire to root out perceived evil is a universal temptation for humanity. Hitler’s concentration camps, Stalin’s purges, China’s Cultural Revolution, the Spanish Inquisition and the witch-hunts of medieval Europe – humanity’s history is littered with the bloody attempts to create by force a pure and uncontaminated society.

Religion is particularly prone to the desire to create a perfect community of the saved. After all, isn’t that the point of faith – to strive for perfection and to root out sin?

So it is striking to hear Jesus warn against just such zeal. In response no doubt to questions about how the faithful should respond to the presence of evil in the world – and perhaps even within the community of believers – Jesus rejects the solution of the witch-hunt and inquisition: let both weed and wheat grow together, side by side, until the harvest.

Only God can judge the human heart, and if mere human beings set themselves up to be judge, jury and executioner, then the long dark history of persecutions, show trials and extermination camps provides ample evidence that the good are inevitably going to be destroyed along with the bad, the wheat will be pulled up with the weeds.

That is not the way with the kingdom of God. The next two parables go on to show that the kingdom is not to be imposed by force and violence. It is a kingdom that grows gradually – even from small beginnings – like the mustard seed. Such growth needs time, it has a rhythm all of its own – God’s rhythm. And the effect of the kingdom is that it gradually transforms people from deep within – like yeast which turns the dough into nourishing bread. There is no room for compulsion or imposition in the kingdom.

Human kingdoms and empires might grow by means of conquest or force, but the kingdom of God grows when people respond to it freely, when there is good soil – a receptive heart, which can bring forth a rich harvest of good works. The seed of the kingdom has the power to transform both individuals and the world. But never by force, and seldom in a hurry.

The first reading provides the key to God’s patience: God’s delay in uprooting evil is to provide us with the hope and opportunity of repentance. Just as every community is composed of good and bad, so it is with every individual.

Our lives are a mixture of wheat and weeds. The Lord is patient in order to allow us to respond to his love, so that our wheat may ripen, the seed of God’s word may grow within us and our true selves may flourish.

God gives us the time to show by our lives that our fundamental choice is for the values of the kingdom – that we choose to be life-giving wheat rather than life-choking weeds. And if we accept this pandemic season, as complex it is, as a moment of grace, then we will learn from God to be equally patient and compassionate towards our brothers and sisters, as the book of Wisdom tells us.

The way of the people of the kingdom is not to do violence to ourselves or to others, but to allow God’s gentle and persistent love to bring forth a harvest of good works within us. If we focus on the good in our lives and our world – if we allow God’s kingdom to grow within us and transform our lives – then we need not be concerned with the weeds. God can deal with that, and in God’s good time. Today we rejoice that the Lord is a patient Lord and a forgiving Lord – and gives us all time to grow into kingdom people.

Let us then, this week, pray for ourselves, and our church family, as we look to journey together over the coming months and years, and take time to pray about what we might need to do, individually and corporately, to become more and more Kingdom people.

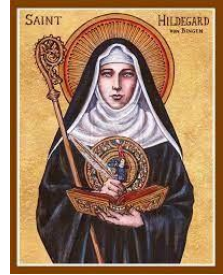
Fr Gary

People who Care by Judith Robinson

Creativity's Power! St Hildegard of Bingen Feast Day 15th September

Saints can inspire our learning and creativity

My brain has been buzzing and bubbling ever since I attended a workshop a few days ago on the amazing Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179) a Benedictine abbess.



Hers was not an easy life, the tenth child of the family, sickly, given to the Church (with dowry) at the age of 8, where she, with her anchoress teacher and one other child, were incarcerated in a bricked-up room with only a window, until she was 23. Although she was frequently ill, she spent her whole life battling for the rights of the women in her convent against a misogynist church-and-secular society that believed “the wickedness of women is greater than all the other wickedness in the world”. Hildegard was fearless in working for recognition, for the integrity of women, sometimes writing obsequiously self-effacing grovelling letters to get her way, sometimes implying that the Church leaders themselves were in league with the Devil. This protest continued all her life, up to two days before her death.

Nevertheless, Hildegard is known for her originality and holiness, stretching the boundaries for women, and her emphasis on the greenness, the life force of nature that nurtures the human soul. Her creative works span theology, stunning art depicting her visions, botany, medicine, visionary literature, lecture touring (to mainly male audiences) about the need for drastic reform in the corruption of the church, and an opera, the oldest medieval morality play, (and possibly the forerunner of the “Everyman” series). Music, she believed, was the source of spiritual healing. Her compositions are still sung today.

What a woman. How can someone so battered down, so suppressed, produce such a wealth of creativity and courage? How is it possible? And then I thought...

What if.... her abundant creativity was not a luxury or an add-on? An either/or? A both/and? What if it was **creativity itself** that fired her energy, her set of choices that made her so human, and adhered her to her

ideals? What if this creativity charged her tenacity, her unwillingness to accept wrong practices and corruption even though they were the norm?

And, today — what if creativity is the powerful, vital, essential element to our human spirit, not a hobby we pick up only when we have time? “Something to do when I retire”? What if it fires *our* inner beings into proactivity? What would that be like?

I *have* seen creativity being acted out today! Not for a hobby, but to hold life together. It never clicked until Hildegard. Our results may not come out as glorious or prolific as hers, but *it is **the act of doing*** that is vital to our brain, our soul.

There are people today who live complicated lives and yet are deliberately creative at the same time. Some are friends with whom I work and live closely. Others are ones I have heard about. For example

The prisoners who sang the Messiah in a Japanese Concentration Camp. Elgar, who felt inadequate and looked down upon, because he never got a university degree, but we certainly enjoy his music!

Little ditties, or a perfectly-composed piece of music emerging as gifts of cheer, from a person who is piled high with complex tasks, unable to be completed.

Someone being deliberately, persecuted, who manages to write a haiku at the end of each day.

A community encourager, valuing everyone’s gifts, who writes poetry that no one ever sees.

A student horribly bullied at school who comes home and spends time sketching.

Two friends, caring for their weakening partners, who cling to their musical instruments to sustain and enable them in these agonising times.

“I couldn’t live without music,” they both told me individually.

A prolific artist, turning out painting after painting, while caring for a partner in deep constant pain.

Is Creativity the life blood of these people? Seems so. And what could it do for others whose lives are deadened? The results are not important. *It’s **the act of doing***, no matter what the outcome.

Moreover, if this is even partially true, shouldn’t we be pouring funds into the Creative Arts as if Life Itself depends on it....because it does?

Thank you, Hildegard, for your inspiration and courage.

Stained Glass Repair at St James



The incredibly talented David Green returned on 24th July to install the glass repair in the Chancel after the burglary. The talent he has is inestimable! And we're hugely grateful for his skill in recreating the glass from our digital images.

The window was then blessed and re-dedicated on St James Day, 25th July.

Depicted is the Sermon on the Mount and created in 1884 by

William Worral (1831-1911), stained glass artist of Regents Park, London.



Mysteriously it is dedicated to Edmund Verney Wyatt-Edgell, a captain in the 17th Lancers, who was killed, aged 33, at the final battle of Battle of Ulundi, the Anglo Zulu War in 1879.

His body was first buried where he fell but later returned and interred in Chelsea Old Church, London. Edmund's family home is Stanford Hall, Stanford on Avon, Northamptonshire. There is a large memorial to him in the parish church.

Why this commemorative window is in Hanslope, and who commissioned it, is not known, but it seems likely that there was a connection with the Watts family.
(from St James Church guide book)



From the Registers

In Remembrance

7th August 2026 Funeral at the Oak Chapel Crownhill

Crematorium **ivienne Day**

Died 7th July 2026 aged 72 years

12th August 2026 Funeral at St James the Great
followed by burial in the churchyard

Linda Sylvia Wilkinson

Died 17th July 2026 aged 79 years

Friday 28th August St James the Great Burial of Ashes

Michael Anthony Fox Aged 91

Christina Isobella Fox Aged 91

Formerly of Hanslope

Baptism

16th August 2026 at Ss. Simon & Jude

Harley Matthews

Archie Matthews

Bob's Ramblings September 2026

Phew what a Summer, blistering Sun, temperatures in the mid 30's, NO Rain, and a hosepipe ban. Our garden, like most of yours I suspect look like a baron brown area with very little showing any green leaves. Our only success is the Roses which have bloomed and giving a good show, The Northants Cricketers are still performing well with a good win at Manchester against Lancashire. The Football teams have all had their starting matches with MK Dons playing well but The Cobblers still finding their feet in Division 2.

The railway scene has been varied, with some older and brand-new traffic. GBRf have fully introduced their Class 99's on liner trains through the parish with the Car Trains being introduced shortly.

So, let us start with 150234 heading back to Exeter in the Southwest after a refurb at Wolverton on



the 7th July. Then a colleague's photo of 34046 Braunton on a Euston to Chester trip on the 8th July. On the 10th July 70801 appeared on a



Lowestoft to Longport train. Then the first main line trip from Carlisle to Euston on 14th July for 89001



Avocet following its sale from GNER in 2006. This is a one-off



locomotive and was fully rebuilt by volunteers and support from the industry.

Then 99001 on its first down liner train on the 20th July with the 4M47 London Gateway to Hams Hall. Finally, being bombed by the Avanti Pendolino, the LSL Midland Pullman on the Hull to Paignton charter on the



26th July.

Hope you enjoyed this issues selection

Bob.

Daily Bible Reading Scheme September

Week 22 – Mon 31 st	1 Cor 2:1-5	Luke 4:16-30
Week 22 - Tues	1 Cor 2:10b-16	Luke 4:31-37
Week 22 - Wed	1 Cor 3:1-9	Luke 4:38-44
Week 22 - Thurs	1 Cor 3:18-23	Luke 5:1-11
Week 22 - Fri	1 Cor 4:1-5	Luke 5:33-39
Week 22 - Sat	1 Cor 4:6b-15	Luke 6:1-5
Week 23 – Mon 7 th	1 Cor 5:1-8	Luke 6:6-11
Week 23 – Tues <i>Nativity BVM</i>	1 Cor 6:1-11	Luke 6:12-19
Week 23 - Wed	1 Cor 7:25-31	Luke 6:20-26
Week 23 - Thurs	1 Cor 8:1b-7, 11-13	Luke 6:27-38
Week 23 - Fri	1 Cor 9:16-19, 22b-27	Luke 6:39-42
Week 23 - Sat	1 Cor 10:14-22	Luke 6:43-49
Week 24 – Mon 14 th <i>Holy Cross</i>	1 Cor 11:17-26, 33	Luke 7:1-10
Week 24 - Tues	1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-31a	Luke 7:11-17
Week 24 - Wed	1 Cor 12:31—13:13	Luke 7:31-35
Week 24 - Thurs	1 Cor 15:1-11	Luke 7:36-50
Week 24 - Fri	1 Cor 15:12-22	Luke 8:1-3
Week 24 - Sat	1 Cor 15:35-37, 42-49	Luke 8:4-15
Week 25 – Mon 21 st <i>St Matthew</i>	Prov 3:27-34	Luke 8:16-18
Week 25 - Tues	Prov 21:1-6, 10-13	Luke 8:19-21
Week 25 - Wed	Prov 30:5-9	Luke 9:1-6
Week 25 - Thurs	Ecclesiastes 1:2-11	Luke 9:7-9
Week 25 - Fri	Eccl 3:1-11	Luke 9:18-22
Week 25 - Sat	Eccl 11:9—12:8	Luke 9:43b-45
Week 26 – Mon 28 th	Job 1:6-22	Luke 9:46-50
Week 26 – Tues <i>Michaelmas</i>	Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23	Luke 9:51-56
Week 26 - Wed	Job 9:1-12, 14-16	Luke 9:57-62
Week 26 - Thurs	Job 19:21-27	Luke 10:1-12
Week 26 - Fri	Job 38:1, 12-21; 40:3-5	Luke 10:13-16
Week 26 - Sat	Job 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-17	Luke 10:17-24

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DEADLINE for the OCTOBER EDITION

Wednesday 23rd September

to cover Sundays Oct. 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

to our email TheLink@handcparish.co.uk



*Fr Gary with Susan at St James Open Weekend.
Susan has been to every Open Weekend event since they
started 39 years ago.*