

Dear Friends

The old year behind us (Auld Lang Syne), the new year ahead of us. And since civilizations ages ago, people wish one another the best for the year ahead. I can only presume that a kind of fear for the unknown laid at the basis for this.

With fear at the background, it is a privilege to have a faith that exceeds fear and knowing that there is a God who stands above everything that we might fear.

I wish you all the best and the strength to trust ever more in this God who in Christ Jesus became one of us and understands our possible fears and is able to help us to overcome all our fears and uncertainties in the year ahead.

Rev Hans

Happy 2026! The start of a new year is traditionally a time to look forward and maybe even make some resolutions. But as we put away the decorations and (maybe) promise not to eat so many mince pies next year, the true gift of Christmas, Jesus, is still with us. Christmas is just the start! That tiny baby born 2000 years ago, whose birth we celebrate, grew up to change the world..... and us too if we let him. He offers us a life of joy, hope and love if we follow him and his Holy Spirit is always with us.

May I suggest that our new year's resolution this year is to get closer to Jesus? To read about him, listen to him and pray for his wisdom and guidance? Then it really will be a HAPPY new year.

Rev Cathy



FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

Jesus Heals the Blind - Two blind men followed along behind Jesus, shouting, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, "Do you believe I can make you see?" "Yes, Lord," they told him, "we do."

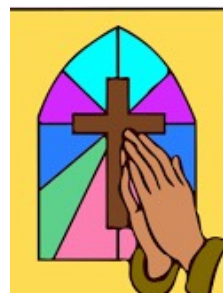
Then he touched their eyes and said, "Because of your faith, it will happen." Then their eyes were opened, and they could see! Jesus sternly warned them, "Don't tell anyone about this." But instead, they went out and spread his fame all over the region. **Matthew 9:27-31**

In this passage we hear of two blind men who followed Jesus. They could not see Him, and yet they stayed close to Him as He walked along. There is something very moving in that. We might recognise ourselves in those two men. We too try to follow the Lord, but we often do so with our own blindness.

We do not always see as Jesus sees. We do not always notice the many ways He is present in our daily lives. We can miss His face in others, and even fail to see the traces of His grace at work within ourselves.

Psalm 27:13 speaks of seeing "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living", yet how easy it is to overlook that goodness. Yes, there is darkness in our world, but there is also so much quiet goodness: the kindness of others, small acts of love, moments of light that can easily pass unnoticed.

O dear Lord, three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly,
Day by day.



This prayer is believed to have been Richard of Chichester's dying prayer. He was an English bishop and saint 1197-1253



We have had a difficult few months with drought and the trees have really suffered. One of the first indications that a tree is stressed is through the leaves, they can become yellow very early on and can even drop well before Autumn begins. The Beech trees are more susceptible to this as they are shallow rooted trees unlike Oak trees which have large tap roots and so can easily access water lower down in the soil. Most of the trees should recover and as long as when they drop their leaves, even early, they have buds ready for Spring they should survive.

In other news, the first weekend in October we celebrated our Harvest Weekend at New Inn. It is a community engagement event to celebrate the Harvest we have had across the portfolio from the many fruit trees that are growing. I also included flowers and other fruits and nuts from the portfolio such as Crab Apples, sweet chestnuts, conkers and pumpkins and a home-made bread wheatsheaf in our display. We have had an incredible harvest of fruit this year and it was lovely to share this with visitors, who could purchase a bag of apples, pear, damsons and sloes for a donation. Along the same theme we will be having fun with blessing the orchards with our annual Wassail on Sunday 25th January too, to make sure we have a good crop again next year!



The Twelve Days of Christmas revisited (Alternative version)



On the first day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
The Christ Child gifted to me.

On the second day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Light that we share
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the third day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Dark that flees
Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the fourth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the fifth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the sixth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the seventh day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the eighth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Hearts that are blazing; Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare! Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the ninth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Trust that's untiring;
Hearts that are blazing; Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the tenth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Faith that's inspiring; Trust that's untiring;
Hearts that are blazing; Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Love that's contagious;
Faith that's inspiring; Trust that's untiring;
Hearts that are blazing; Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees Light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, I'll sing of grate-full-y
Joy that's outrageous! Love that's contagious,
Faith that's inspiring; Trust that's untiring;
Hearts that are blazing; Mercy amazing; Grace that is dazing;
Peace that is rare!
Hope ev'rywhere; Dark that flees light that we share;
And the Christ Child gifted to me.

AM



As our WI year comes to a close, I am pleased to report that our Christmas meeting in our President's lovely home in Dadford was a wonderful success. With enormous thanks to Liz, we dined in style on a delicious menu fit for royalty, enjoyed each others company, toasted absent friends and reflected on another successful year.

We now look forward to 2026 when Dadford WI will celebrate our 80th Birthday. There are several ideas in the pipeline so watch this space. Our programme is not quite ready to print at present but our first meeting in the New Year will be on **8th January, 2.30pm in the Village Hall**. Come along and join in the fun.

For more details please feel free to call me on 01280 817943, we would love to see you.

All members of Dadford WI wish you a Very Happy New Year.

Loreen

DADFORD BIBLE STUDY

Everyone is welcome to this informal and friendly group as we get together to look at the Bible and what it means for us today.

We meet at Dadford Village Hall at 10.00am Friday.....

23 January, 13 February, 20 March, 17 April, 8 May, 12 June, 10 July.

Any questions please ring: Rev Cathy Pearce 01280 821976

I'm available in the Parish Wednesdays and Thursdays, and at Sunday services .

Thank you
Cathy

*Jesus said "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"
John 10:10*

Carol Singing round Dadford was a joyful event. A group of eleven church members and family, in fine voice, walked round Dadford singing carols at regular points. We knocked at each door to wish people Happy Christmas and to give a Christmas flyer of the services at Stowe.

We were very pleased and grateful to come back to a lovely warm welcome at the Village Hall with the table laid with home made sausage roll, mince pies and gluhwein. A lovely ending to an enjoyable evening.

Stowe Nativity

Stowe Church looked splendid with a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and the crib in place.

Rev Cathy retold the Nativity story with the help of little angels, sheep, shepherds and wise men, ending the story by singing Away in a manger.



What's been happening at St. James and St. John Church of England Primary Schools in Akeley and Chackmore

Firstly a very warm 'Happy New Year' to all the friends and families of St. James and St. John C.E. Primary school! We hope everyone had a relaxing and peaceful time over the holidays and would like to extend our grateful thanks for all the messages, thoughtful gifts and greetings we received before Christmas.

Before the end of last term, we enjoyed many Christmas events at both sites, including the Christingle service at Chackmore, Nativity performances in Akeley, Christmas lunches, Christmas jumper wearing opportunities and the annual whole-school trip to the panto- oh yes we did! The PTFA also ran their popular Elfridges shopping event for the children at both sites, where children could shop by themselves for various presents (with some guidance) using prepaid tickets. We hope their recipients enjoyed opening them!

As we move through January, with the memories of Christmas and the holiday period still with us, it can feel a long month. At school we are making the most of the potential of the new year with opportunities to try new things and widen our learning opportunities. We have various class trips and visitors planned for the Spring term, across all years, as well as Forest School sessions for our Year 2 class. We look forward to welcoming 'Bounce beyond' to the school soon for some trampolining sessions , involving all year groups and even staff.

With the wintry weather in mind, the PTFA has organised another 'Comfy' day for the first week back, with PJs, snugly clothing or even onesies being worn, along with a warming cup of hot chocolate at breaktime. What a cosy way to end the first week!

The start of February also brings the Spring disco, organised by the PTFA, with the funds going to benefit the school. Another chance to see some exciting new dance moves!

If you have a child who is due to start Foundation Stage in September 2026, we are excited to welcome prospective families to our school. Come and see our school in action, meet our caring team and discover how we aim to support every child to flourish in ALL aspects of their life! School tours can be booked in advance, at:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/stjamesandstjohn>.

Date 2026	Warden/Sidespeople	Prayers	Refreshments
January 4th	Andrew Rudolf/Chris Close-Smith	Liturgy	Lyn East
January 11th	Nancy Pullin/Loreen and Hilary		Gill Smith
January 18th	Tamara and John Kimpton	Tony Meredith	Nancy Shepherd
January 25th	Gill Smith/Lyn and Ray East	Gill Smith	Nancy Pullen
February 1st	Richard and Essex Close-Smith		Tamara Kimpton
February 8th	Laurence Gibson/Chris Close-Smith	Liturgy	Lyn East
February 15th	Andrew Rudolf/Tamara and John	Andrew Rudolf	Elsbeth Mullineux
February 18th	Ash Wednesday		
February 22nd	Lauren Gibson/Lyn and Ray East	Kay Murray	Kay Murray

Date 2026	Flowers	Cleaning	Prayer-board
January 4th			Tamara Kimpton
January 11th		Chris Close-Smith	John Kimpton
January 18th	Loreen Williams		Gill Smith
January 25th			Kay Murray
February 1st	Heather Meredith	John and Tamara Kimpton	Lyn East
February 8th			Tamara Kimpton
February 15th			John Kimpton
February 18th	Ash Wednesday		
February 22nd		Lyn and Ray East	Gill Smith

Date 2026	Time	Service	Lead/Preach	Chalice
January 4th	9.45	1662 Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	Lyn East
January 11th	9.45	Family Service	Rev Cathy Pearce	
January 18th	9.45	Common worship & communion	Rev Hans Taling	Andrew Rudolf
January 25th	9.45	Morning prayer	Rev Cathy Pearce	
February 1st	9.45	Family Service	Dave Pearce	
February 8th	9.45	1662 Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	John Kimpton
February 15th	9.45	Common worship & communion	Rev Hans Taling	Lyn East
February 18th		Ash Wednesday		
February 22nd	9.45	Morning prayer	L. John Kimpton P. Paul Woods	