St Lawrence, Stratford sub Castle Parish Magazine December 2026/January 2027

Delivered free to every house in Stratford sub Castle





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View a digital version of the magazine at www.stratfordsubcastle.org.uk

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Dates for your December and January Diaries

December

1st (to 6th) St Thomas's Christmas Tree Festival, see p 33
1st Advent Bible Group, 09.30-11.00, Tompkins Room, see p13
1st It's Advent - Time for Christmas Carols, 19.15-20.45, 4 Victoria Road SP1 3NG, see p35
2nd Mobile Library, 11.00-11.25 Castle Keep
4th (to 12th) 'A Christmas Carol', Studio Theatre, see p34
5th Stratford Christmas Café, 11.00 - 14.00, The Reading Room, see p25
7th New Sarum Singers, see p 32
8th Advent Bible Group, 09.30-11.00, Tompkins Room
9th Last day of posting for Scouts post, see p35
9th Stratford Guild, Social evening, members only
10th Ladies Together, 12.00 Wilton Garden Centre for lunch, see p15
12th 50s & Beyond , 14.30-16.00 St Francis church hall see p32
15th Advent Bible Group, 09.30-11.00, Tompkins Room
16th Mobile Library, 11.00-11.25 Castle Keep
20th Carol Service, 18.00, St Lawrence Church
24th Nativity Service, St Lawrence churchyard *weather permitting see p14*
30th Mobile Library, 11.00-11.25 Castle Keep
31st Garden Club, no meeting

January 2027

5th Last day to register for Christmas Tree collection, see p32
13th Mobile Library, 11.00-11.25 Castle Keep
14th Guild, 'A History of magic', 19.30 Reading Room, see p31
20th Kettle's On, 2 Millers Close, 10.00 - 11.30, see p24
27th Mobile Library, 11.00-11.25 Castle Keep
28th Garden Club, 'Square Metre Gardening', Reading Room, 19.30 see p30

The Revd Suzie Allen writes:

Hopes and Expectations…

This time of year often turns our thoughts towards the Christmas story, and at its heart is a young woman expecting a baby.

Pregnancy is a season filled with hopes and dreams. Parents wonder what their child will be like, what life will hold, and what the future might bring. There are hopes for a safe arrival, hopes for the family, and hopes that stretch far beyond the immediate weeks and months into years ahead.

Alongside hope, however, there are often expectations. While hope and expectation can seem similar, they are not quite the same. Hope looks ahead with openness and trust. Expectation often comes with a picture already formed in our minds of how things should turn out.

We all live with expectations, whether we realise it or not. We expect the bus to arrive on time. We expect the sun to rise each morning. We might even expect our friends and family to remember our birthdays. Some expectations are reasonable; others are less conscious, quietly shaping our reactions when life does not unfold as we imagined.

The Christmas story contains this tension between hope and expectation. For centuries, God's people hoped for the coming of a Messiah. They longed for a world made right, for peace, justice and freedom. Yet many had also developed firm expectations about what that Messiah would be like. They imagined a powerful king, a military leader or a national hero who would restore Israel's fortunes.

Their hope gradually became tied to their expectations.

Then, when God acted, he did so in an unexpected way. Instead of arriving in power and splendour, Jesus came as a vulnerable baby, born to ordinary parents in humble surroundings. The hopes of God's people were fulfilled, but not in the way many had anticipated.

Perhaps there is something in that for us today. Our expectations can sometimes narrow our vision, causing us to miss the good things that arrive in unfamiliar forms. Hope, on the other hand, leaves room for surprise. It trusts that even when life does not follow the script we have written, something good may still emerge.

As Christmas approaches, many of us will carry hopes into the season: hopes for family gatherings, for reconciliation, for better health, for peace in the world, or simply for brighter days ahead. The Christmas story

reminds us that hope is not dependent on everything happening exactly as we expect. Sometimes the most wonderful gifts arrive in ways we would never have imagined.

The birth of Jesus invites us to hold our expectations a little more lightly and our hopes a little more deeply. For in Bethlehem, God showed that hope can be fulfilled in ways greater, richer and more surprising than we could ever have planned for ourselves.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, may we hold our expectations lightly, cherish our hopes deeply, and remain open to the surprising ways that light and joy can enter our lives.

Revd Suzie

Services at St Lawrence Church

6th December - Advent 2

10.00 Parish Communion (Streamed)
Readings: Isaiah 40: 1-11 (Carrie Walsh)
Mark 1: 1-8 (Barry Goldsmith)
Intercessions: Judy Villiers
Celebrant and Preacher: Revd Sandra Williams

13th December - Advent 3

10.00 Christingle
Reading: John 1: 5 (Gwynneth James)
Intercessions: Revd Suzie Allen
Officiant: Revd Suzie Allen

No Evensong Service

20th December - Advent 4

18.00 Carol Service (Streamed)
Readings: see panel (readers TBD)
Intercessions: Jane Miller
Officiant: Revd Suzie Allen

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7
Luke 1:26-38
Luke 2:1-7
Luke 2:8-20
Matthew 2:1-12
John 1:1-14

Services at St Lawrence Church *continued*

24th December - Christmas Eve

11.00 Nativity Service
This service will take place in the churchyard
Officiant: Revd Suzie Allen

24th December - Christmas Eve

21.00 Parish Communion, Midnight in Bethlehem
Readings: Isaiah 11:1-9
Luke 2:1-20

25th December - Christmas Day

10.00 Family Communion
Readings: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7
John 1:1-5, 9-14
Intercessions: Revd Suzie Allen
Celebrant and Preacher: Revd Suzie Allen

3rd January - Epiphany

10.00 Family Communion (Streamed)
Readings: Isaiah 60: 1-6 (Carrie Walsh)
Matthew 2: 1-12 (Barry Goldsmith)
Intercessions: Jo Harrison
Celebrant and Preacher: Revd Sandra Williams

Streamed services are only available to those who have requested a link. If you would like to attend a service online please contact Jim Platt
stlawstreaming@gmail.com

Services at St Lawrence Church *continued*

10th January - Baptism of Christ

10.00 Together in Worship
Readings: Mark 1: 4-11 (Gwynneth James)
Intercessions: Suzette Sheppard
Officiant: Revd Suzie Allen

16.00 Evensong
Readings: Isaiah 42:1-9 (Susan Carey), Ephesians 2:1-10 (Sue Thomson)
Intercessions: Revd Suzie Allen

17th January - Safeguarding Sunday

10.00 Parish Communion (Streamed)
Readings: *1 Samuel 3:1-10 (Chris Lush), John 1:43-end (Sarah Wilson)*
Intercessions: Carrie Walsh
Celebrant and Preacher: Revd Sandra Williams

24th January

09.45 Breakfast Church
in the Reading Room

10.00 Matins (Streamed)
Readings: *Jonah 3:1-5, 10 (Heather Balston), John 3:16-21 (Joy James)*
Intercessions: Mr Peter Westmacott
Officiant: Mr Peter Westmacott

31st January

10.00 Celtic Communion (Streamed)
Readings: *Malachi 3:1-5, (Carole Long), Luke 2:22-40 (Jeff Long)*
Intercessions: Jane Miller
Celebrant and Preacher: Revd Suzie Allen

Saint Lawrence Church
Stratford sub Castle

Christingle Service

Sunday 13th December
10am
All welcome!

A separate collection will be going to the Children's Society



St Lawrence Church Calendar - 2026/27

Advent Evening Service	29th November 18.00
Advent Bible Group	1st December 09.45
Advent Bible Group	8th December 09.45
Wedding of Sarah Best & Grahame Dailey	12th December 15.00
Christingle	13th December 10.00
Advent Bible Group	15th December 09.45
School Christmas Service	17th December 14.15
Carol Service	20th December 18.00
Outdoor Nativity	Christmas Eve 11.00
Midnight in Bethlehem	Christmas Eve 21.00
Christmas Family Communion	Christmas Day 10.00

2027

Family Epiphany Communion	3rd January 10.00
Ash Wednesday Benefice Service at St Lawrence	10th February 19.30
Friends of St Lawrence talk in the Reading Room	5th March 19.30
Mothering Sunday Service	7th March 10.00
Palm Sunday (with procession from the school)	21st March 10.00
School Easter Service	24th March 14.15
Maundy Thursday Benefice Service at St Francis	25th March 19.30
Good Friday Last Hour	26th March 14.00
Easter Garden Making	26th March 16.00
Easter Day Family Communion	28th March l0.00
Anzac Day of Remembrance	23rd April 11.00
Ascension Day	6th May
APCM (in St Lawrence Church)	16th May TBC
Wedding of Harry Nicoll and Amelia Lewis	29th May TBC
School Leavers Service	23rd July 09.00

Lay Pastoral Assistant is available for pastoral care
Jenny Stone - 07511 226828

Why is Safeguarding Sunday needed?



Churches play a vital role in supporting individuals, families, and community groups. Yet history has shown that when safeguarding fails, the consequences can be devastating. High profile reports, including the work of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) 2022, have highlighted abuse within multiple church contexts and the urgent need for culture change.

At the same time, churches across the UK are doing significant, often unseen work to make their communities safer. Safeguarding Sunday is a chance to:

- acknowledge and celebrate positive safeguarding practice.
- be honest about past failures and commit to doing better.
- raise awareness so everyone knows how to speak up or seek help.
- honour and encourage those involved in safeguarding roles.
- rebuild trust with congregations and communities.

Do join us at St Lawrence on Sunday 17th January when the service will reflect this important issue.

Families and Children at St Lawrence

2027

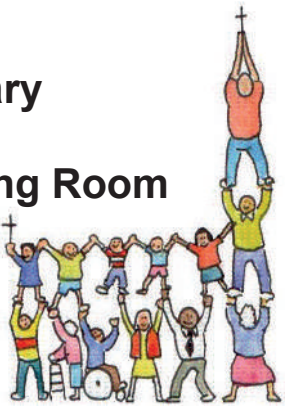
Sunday 13th December
10.00 Christingle Service

Christmas Eve
11.00 Nativity Service

Christmas Day
10.00 Family Communion

Sunday 3rd January
10.00 Epiphany Family Communion

Sunday 24th January
Breakfast Church
09.45 in the Reading Room



Breakfast Church

October's Breakfast Church explored the theme of Heroes and Saints, inviting us to reflect on who our heroes are, who the saints are, and what sets them apart. We began with a lively charades-style game, acting out different saints for others to guess, before taking part in a range of activities designed to help us discover the gifts God has given each of us and how we can use them to make a positive difference in the world.



The photograph shows a line of dominoes toppling, illustrating how our words and actions can influence those around us. Just as one domino sets the next in motion, our example can inspire others, creating a ripple effect for good.

Revd Suzie

Sunday 24th January, 09.45 in the Reading Room

Start the new year with us and enjoy a delicious breakfast in the warmth of the Reading Room!

After breakfast, we'll explore the wonderful story of Anna and Simeon, two faithful older people who met the baby Jesus in the Temple. Together we'll discover what this special encounter meant for them and consider what it can still teach us today.

We'll be following our usual family-friendly format, with a story, activities, games and a craft, so there's something for everyone to enjoy.

We'd love to see you there!

Children's Corner

Do you like singing Christmas Carols? We are sure you do, so hum the tunes to yourself as you search for the words from some of them in this letter square.

S	J	S	R	R	V	P	N	H	S	T	C	N	G	R
J	H	O	D	B	C	G	L	O	R	I	A	I	P	H
O	I	E	N	E	T	R	U	H	C	D	R	S	I	S
Y	S	N	P	T	C	Y	L	N	H	I	O	E	S	H
F	A	R	G	H	L	K	L	A	O	N	L	S	A	C
U	E	S	I	L	E	N	T	N	I	G	H	T	W	A
L	O	N	O	E	E	R	N	H	R	S	W	C	E	L
H	A	H	E	H	E	B	D	H	E	T	I	A	N	E
G	A	A	D	E	S	T	E	S	O	H	Y	E	C	L
E	E	W	I	M	W	L	L	L	I	D	A	I	E	T
F	L	H	B	E	D	E	J	T	L	N	U	L	S	H
P	H	I	E	N	G	C	W	A	S	S	A	I	L	O
R	H	M	A	N	G	E	R	M	O	A	I	E	A	S
S	L	C	A	A	D	E	T	N	N	Z	H	D	S	H
T	V	S	Y	H	H	E	A	O	O	R	M	A	L	H

DECKTHEHALLS
WENCELESLAS
WASSAIL
ANGELS
SILENTNIGHT
BETHLEHEM
TIDINGS
JOYFUL
JINGLEBELLS
SHEPHERDS
HERALD
MANGER
ADESTE
GLORIA
HOLLY

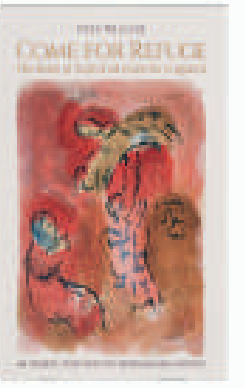
There are two other words as well, not from carols but associated with them. Can you find them?

Answers on p34

Saint Lawrence Church
Stratford sub Castle

ADVENT GROUP

We are looking at the book of Ruth and seeing what we can learn about how God views migration. We are using the 'Come for Refuge' book written by Pete Wilcox.



Tuesdays 24th November, 1st, 8th & 15th December
9.30am - 11am
In the Tompkins Room (behind the Reading Room)

Please let Rev Suzie know if you are planning on coming along to one or all of these

revsuzieallen@gmail.com



Saint Lawrence Church
Stratford sub Castle

Nativity Service

Christmas Eve, 24th December, 11am

In the St Lawrence Churchyard,
if weather permits

Look out for our local animal friends joining in!
Children (and adults!) are invited to come dressed as their favourite nativity characters



Ladies Together



Ladies Together met in November in the Tompkins Room to make decorative gift baskets for Christmas. Expertly and kindly led by April Hall the group enjoyed hands-on craft work, with everything provided by April. It was a gentle, absorbing morning, with conversation, coffee and cake, as always! With grateful thanks to April and all the ladies who came along and contributed to an enjoyable morning together.

The next gathering is at 12.00 noon at the Wilton Garden Centre restaurant for lunch on Thursday 10th December. Please let Jane know if you would like to come along. Ladies you are all welcome to a sociable Christmas lunch, even if you haven't joined the group before.

The January meeting will be at 10.30 in the Cathedral Refectory on Thursday 14th January when the new programme will be available.

The Ladies Together coordinators would like to thank everyone who has taken a lead on one of the coffee mornings, and everyone who has come along and made it so enjoyable to meet up! Thank you, Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2027.

Glenys 01722 697309 Jan 07919 050798

Jane 07932 180903 (Text or WhatsApp)

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th - 25th January 2027

Are you a Christian living in Stratford sub Castle? Wherever you worship, would you be interested in meeting with others during the week of prayer for unity? Maybe for breakfast, tea or for coffee one evening?

If you are interested, please contact me.

Carole Long
longoak@tiscali.co.uk

Save the date: Friday 5th March 2027

The 100th Anniversary of the establishment of the World Day of Prayer will be celebrated at an ecumenical gathering in St Thomas's Church Salisbury, at 2 pm. The theme for this special service will be "Justice and Peace"

Thank you to …..

The Church Cleaners

St Lawrence always looks well-cared-for and this is due, in large part to the regular attention given by the cleaners.

Heather Balston, Karen Baxter, Carolyn Cardus, Jim and Heather Platt, Jo Harrison, Jane Miller, Tricia Redshaw, Sue Thomson, Jenny Stone, Ted and Veronica Uren

Twice a month a pair of diligent volunteers attend to vacuum, dust and generally tidy up the nave, chancel and the front and tower porches. In addition everyone gets together to undertake a major spring clean. We are very grateful for this dedicated group of people.

We would very much like to include more cleaners. If you are able to volunteer please contact Jenny Stone at 01722 334231

Demographic difficulties? – not in Stratford….

There is a steady ground-swell of concern over the European demographic crisis – too many seniors, and not enough active contributors. A word of appreciation therefore for Mrs Elizabeth Byford, born 22nd December 1930 and only just having to retire from hands-on activity in support of St Lawrence Church. Elizabeth has just resigned from the intercessionary roster, a role she has filled for longer than she can remember. This can be quite a demanding call, since intercessionary prayers are delivered on behalf of the congregation, and address our current situation and the turbulent world of our daily experience. We were especially impressed by Elizabeth's positive reaction to restricted mobility – she simply turned to a pew microphone to deliver her customary clarity and reflective wisdom.

Well done Elizabeth, and resounding thanks from the Parochial Church Council - and from our church congregation. We like the lucky omen of your birthday coming just one day after the shortest day, and looking toward more illumination…

Ted Uren

St Lawrence Church Porch Giving Basket



There is always a box in the porch of St Lawrence Church. Please feel free to add donations for both the **Foodbank** and **Alabaré** at any time. They will be collected and delivered to the appropriate charity.

Alabaré thank you

Many thanks for continuing to support Alabaré, enabling me to deliver three bags of groceries and toiletries during October and a further five during November. They are very grateful for your continued support .

Here is their 'Wish List' for the winter months.

Carole Long

ALABARÉ
Homes. Hearts. Minds.

Instant coffee
Tea bags
Long-life powdered milk
Sugar
Tinned Soups
Curry in a can
Pie in a can
Bratwurst sausages in a can
Tuna in a can
Baked Beans
Spaghetti hoops
Ravioli
Porridge sachets
Bottle of Squash
Honey

Tea towels
Kitchen sponges, cleaning cloths
Washing up brush
Washing powder or laundry pods
Washing up liquid
Kitchen surface cleaner
Flannels
Soap
Shampoo
Nail brushes
Toothbrushes, Toothpaste
Deodorant (roll on or aerosol)
Razors and shaving foam
Sanitary products
Socks
Gloves (waterproof or thermal)
Warm hats
Scarves
Vests (medium or large)
T-shirts (medium or large)
Reusable cotton or plastic shopping bags eg as those sold at the supermarket checkout

Saint Lawrence Church
Stratford sub Castle

Epiphany
Family Communion Service

3rd January 2027 | 10am

Join us for special cake after the service !



The porch giving donations amounted to 57.3 in November and were, as always, gratefully received.

Now it's Advent, Christmas is just around the corner and the Foodbank would really like to give out some festive items to their hard-pressed clients. To help you decide what to give, they have created a reverse Advent calendar suggesting items that you could provide on each day of December up to the 25th. Many of these items will also be welcome during January

Heather Platt



A reminder that the church is open for core hours from 10am to 4pm.
You may find it open outside these hours, depending on the opener.

A personal reflection from Remembrance
Sunday 8th November 2026

This year's Remembrance Sunday was, for the first time in a good number of years, grey and overcast. Somehow I feel this weather better reflects the solemnity of the day. Listening to Brigadier (Ret) Ian McGill read the beginning of the Exhortation "*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old",* I thought about Henry Rice (left), a D Day veteran who died in October 2026, aged 100. Henry Rice was one of those who survived to grow old. While one cannot underestimate the sacrifice made by those individuals (and their families) who died in wars, I began to think about those people who returned from conflict and what memories they carried.



As a young boy, I found a small rigid cardboard box addressed to my dad containing some ribbons and medals, which if the truth be told, I never really gave much consideration to. While I am sure I asked my dad what they were, he never said very much about them. He also had a large photograph album containing pictures of a ship at sea and in Sydney. This was more like the "Boys Own" tales told in The Victor, of war planes and foreign places, a little more interesting than the medals and ribbons – little did I know. My dad never really talked about the photographs nor any aspects of what he did in the war, but he did say he volunteered for the navy, served on a torpedo boat and an aircraft carrier as a morse code and radio operator, and spent some time in Australia. I do recall a family story about him trying to persuade my mother to move to Australia after their marriage in the late 40's as £10 poms, but that as they say, would have been an altogether different reality.

My dad would have been 104 this year, but he died in 1981, so unfortunately I never had the opportunity to have that 'what was it like in the war' discussion, let alone, "When did you first hear Elvis?" or the thousands of other questions and opinions that make up the person you thought they were.

A few years ago, we came across that small box containing my father's war medals, but looking more closely, there were two 1st World War

medals, which must have been my grandfather's. Having had them properly mounted and prominently displayed, our oldest daughter asked me about them and my parents, so I got out the photo album. I was able to show Becky photographs of the Sydney Harbour bridge, southern Pacific islands, fighter aircraft, crashed planes, burials at sea, crossing the equator, and more importantly, his naval record and staff report. He served on 10 different ships between 1941 and 1946, operating around the world from the North Atlantic to the South Pacific. His staff report says in June 45 he was transferred to HMS Hind as radio operator, so it seems likely he was on duty to inform the crew of the surrender of Japan – wow, who knew and why did he never say? Becky was amazed, and so was I.

Had I known this in the 70's, how different would my relationship with my dad have been? Thinking back now, it is a poor indictment on me that I couldn't really answer Becky's question, as I actually knew so little about my dad apart from superficial family trivia and the odd 'fact'. He died before we could actually talk over a beer.

Each year we stand with people of Stratford sub Castle to remember those who fought in different conflicts, but after this year, I will look at the congregation in a different light – what is in their back story and what memories are they carrying?

As a part of this piece, I looked up how many 'special operations' are currently being fought around the world. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, in 2026, there are approximately 56 active armed conflicts worldwide, with 10 major wars, which are causing significant casualties and displacement, the deadliest being the Russia-Ukraine war (since February 2022), the Sudan civil war (since April 2023), and the Gaza conflict (since October 2023).

As the last notes of the Last Post faded away, I wondered what would Henry Rice, my dad, or any veteran make of today's world?

"*At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them".*

Dr Andrew Baxter OBE

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

John F Kennedy

Christmas Time Events in Salisbury

Salisbury Cathedral Details: www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/whats-on/

A Christmas Carol (Candlelit one-man Show)	Dec 3 (19.30 – 21.30)
Handel's Messiah	Dec 5 (19.00 – 21.45)
Afternoon Carols for Groups	Dec 8 (14.00 – 16.00)
Festive Late Night Opening	Dec 10 (18.30 – 20.30)
Christmas Organ Extravaganza!	Dec 11 (19.00 – 21.00)
Christmas Crafts for All Ages	Dec 12 (10.00 – 13.00)
Informal Festive Concert	Dec 12 (12.15 – 12.45)
The Muppet Christmas Carol (Film)	Dec 12 19.00 – 20.00)
Christmas Crafts for Pre-school Children	Dec 14 (10.00 – 12.00)
G4 Christmas (Singing)	Dec 14 (19.30 – 21.30)
Christmas with The Royal Philharmonic	Dec 19 (19.30 – 21.30)
Christmas Crafts for All Ages	Dec 21 (10.00 – 14.30)
Carols by Candlelight	Dec 22 - 23 (19.00)

St Thomas's Church Details: www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk/calendar/

Christmas Tree Festival	Dec 1 – Dec 6
Christingle	Dec 12 (16.00 – 17.00)
Magic of Christmas (St John Singers)	Dec 15 (19.30 – 21.30)
Carols for Busy People	Dec 16 (13.00 – 14.00)

Salisbury Museum Details: www.salisburymuseum.org.uk/whats-on/

Mending Club	Dec 3 (10.30 – 12.00)
Behind the Scenes Tour	Dec 5 (14.30)
The Snow Queen Puppet Performance and Workshop	Dec 6 (13.00)
A Ghost Story for Christmas (Performance)	Dec 13 (15.00, 18.00)
Mini Monday: Christmas Magic Fun	Dec 14 (10.00 – 11.30)
Discovery Day: The Great Christmas Craft-Off	Dec 22 (10.00 – 16.00)
Discovery Day: Imagination Station!	Dec 29 (10.00 – 16.00)

Mompesson House: Christmas at Mompesson Nov 20 – Dec 22
Details: www.experiencesalisbury.co.uk/whats-on/christmas-in-salisbury

The Medieval Hall

Medieval Carols by Candlelight	Dec 4 (19.30)

Details: www.experiencesalisbury.co.uk/whats-on/christmas-in-salisbury

Celebrate Voice at Christmas	Dec 10 – 12 (19.30)

Salisbury Playhouse

Pantomime (Beauty and the Beast)	Nov 28 – Jan 10
Backstage Tour	Dec 5 (11.00)
Beatrix Potter's The Tailor of Gloucester (Salberg)	Dec 7 – 27
A Christmas Carol (one-man show in The Salberg)	Dec 9 – 12

Details: www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/whats-on/category/salisbury-playhouse

Salisbury Arts Centre

The Noise Next Door (Improvised Comedy)	Dec 3 (19.30)
Children's Christmas Printing Workshop	Dec 5 (10.30 – 12.00)
Carsick + Guests (Live Bands)	Dec 5 (18.30 – 22.45)
Awake Arise (Folk)	Dec 10 (19.30 – 21.20)
Christmas with Woodfalls Band	Dec 12 (19.30 – 21.10)
Festive Barnstormers Comedy	Dec 18 (20.00 - 22.30)
Cheesy Bingo Party	Dec 19 (20.00 – 22.30)
New Year's Eve with The Deloreons	Dec 31 (20.30 – 00.30)

Details: www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/whats-on/category/salisbury-arts-centre

Salisbury City Hall Details: www.salisburycityhall.co.uk/whats-on/

Man in the Mirror (Michael Jackson Tribute)	Dec 3 (19.30 – 22.00)
James B Partridge (Singalong)	Dec 5 (15.30 – 17.30)
Abba Merry Christmas	Dec 6 (19.30 - 22.00)
Jim Davidson's Christmas Cracker	Dec 9 (19.30 - 22.00)
The Overtones – Jivin' Home for Christmas	Dec 10 (19.30 – 22.00)
Family Roller Disco	Dec 11 (18.00 – 20.00)
Over 18s Roller Disco	Dec 11 (20.30 – 22.30)
That'll be Christmas	Dec 12 (19.00 – 22.00)
Operababes Christmas Spectacular	Dec 13 (15.00 – 17.00)
Step into Christmas	Dec 17 (19.30 – 22.00)
Sweet (with Special Guest John Otway)	Dec 18 (19.30 – 22.00)
Bongo's Bingo	Dec 19 (20.30 – 23.30)

Across Salisbury

Salisbury BID Reindeer Trail	Nov 18 – Dec 24
Christmas on the Square (+Santa's Grotto until Dec 24)	Nov 20 – Dec 31
SCC Salisbury Christmas Trail	Nov 20 - Jan 4 Sunday
Festive Markets	Nov 29, Dec 6, 13, 20
Studio Theatre: A Christmas Carol	Dec 4 - 12
Community Christmas Window Painting (FREE)	Dec 12 (12.00 – 16.00)

Details: www.experiencesalisbury.co.uk/whats-on/christmas-in-salisbury

Kettle's On Coffee Mornings 2027



These seasonal coffee, or tea, mornings on the 3rd Wednesday in each month from 10.00 - 11.30, are organised by the congregation of St Lawrence but are for the whole village community. It is an opportunity, especially for newcomers to the area, to meet one another in a friendly and informal way. Just come and go as you please, no need to book!

20th January
2, Millers Close, off Mill Lane.
Kindly hosted by Heather and David Balston. Tel: 01722 411628

17th February
Manse House, Stratford Road
Kindly hosted by Chris and Barry Goldsmith Tel: 01722 332169

17th March
The School House, Stratford Road.
Kindly hosted by Carrie and John Walsh. Tel: 07970284629

21st April
9' Castle Keep.
Kindly hosted by Judy and Charles Villiers. Tel:01722 500173

"One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people."

Jean Vanier

Forthcoming Weddings at St Lawrence Church



12th December	Sarah Best & Grahame Dailey	15.00

Please pray for this wedding couple as they begin this new chapter in their lives.



Stratford sub Castle Lunchtime Christmas Café Special
Saturday 5th December 2026
11.00am to 2.00pm in the Reading Room

Don't miss out ……..

Make sure you come along and join in the festive atmosphere at this year's Christmas Café Special. Everyone is welcome, the more the merrier.

The doors will **open at 11.00am**, with mulled wine, beverages, festive cakes and mince pies being available throughout until 2.00pm, and our produce table will be selling a variety of festive items ideal for gifts. Plus, new for this year, we will have a **Tombola Table** (instead of a raffle) with lots of Festive Prizes.
will be offering a choice of fabulous homemade soups and bread, as well as homemade savoury cheese scones with cheese, grapes and chutney.

We regret that dogs, other than assistance dogs, cannot be accommodated in the main hall due to safety reasons.
CASH PAYMENTS ONLY PLEASE

All proceeds raised at the Christmas Café will be divided equally and donated between:

- The Stars Appeal - Mammogram Machine, for the Breast Unit at Salisbury Hospital. This will benefit around 4200 local people each year to have access to the latest technology to diagnose breast cancer.
- Beyond Dementia – Scots Lane Club. A specialist day care centre providing a stimulating and engaging day out for people to still enjoy life.

On behalf of the café helpers, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and to wish you and your families the very best for the festive season. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Barbara Mayall, Café Co-ordinator
Tel: 01722 411337

Andrew Richards April 1940 - October 2026



There was one ring to signify that it was a man that had died, (it would be two for a woman) and then 86 more tolls rang out. This was using the old village tradition to let everyone know that someone had died. This was all about my Andrew, so not a happy event on a chilly Autumn day, a toll for every year of his life.

Most people here knew him as quiet and unassuming, only having known him for the last twelve years of his life. I suppose that was a good description of him in his later years but that sharp intellect and huge memory for dates, chemistry, history, mathematics and railways lasted almost to the end beneath the quiet exterior.

For most of his working life he had been a Senior Lecturer in Textile Chemistry at The University of Bolton and just seemed to take those enormous chemical formulae as self-explanatory. Spinning, weaving, dyeing, extruding, lectures, working in Turkey to give training, were all things that dropped into our conversations and not many people would claim to be able to write 30,000 words about nylon. Andrew did this as Co - Author of a university level textbook on textiles. Taking a huge interest in our two sons and four grandsons, gardening fruit and vegetables, planning and going on wonderful exploring holidays kept his later years fully occupied – along with the occasional train ride. His exploration of the railway lines in Cornwall planned to fill three days actually filled four. Just before moving here, he and I were Assistant County Organisers for the National Garden Scheme in Lancashire for about ten years and we opened our garden for the NGS too.

Andrew had a serious stroke just over two years ago and made a big, but not 100% recovery. He suffered another enormous stroke in August this year, from which he never recovered. All the family, on our many visits to him, worked hard to try to make him recover but he died, in hospital, on 17th October.

We will miss him so much.

Dorothy Richards

A FUNDRAISING EVENT by
The Friends of St Lawrence Church
Registered Charity no. 1063271

Friday 5th March 2027 at 7.30 pm

In the Reading Room, Stratford Road,
Stratford sub Castle, SP1 3L

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Tickets on sale from 1st February
Details in the next magazine

Stratford Guild 11th November 2026

Swallows and Amazons and the Russian Revolution

Dr Martin Radford

Dr Radford, a retired paediatrician, gave the 41 members who attended a fascinating talk linking the two topics in his title. The link is Arthur Ransome. Although he is primarily known for his series of books about the watery adventures of four brothers and sisters when on holiday in the Lake District and other similar locations, he did not write these until he was in his forties. His earlier years were, however, full of adventure.

Born in Leeds in 1884, he lasted only two terms at Leeds University studying chemistry before pursuing his ambition to become a writer. He worked as an office boy in a London publishing house, before going freelance, ghost writing for sportsmen and other well-known figures. He continued to visit the Lake District and there he met the Collingwood family who took him under their wing. One of the daughters, Dora, would appear later in his life.

Ransome had a good life in London's artistic circles. After several failed proposals of marriage he met Ivy Walker, an intelligent, well-read young lady with wide interests. She proposed, so they got married! It was not successful and Ransome went to Paris where he met erstwhile friends of Oscar Wilde and wrote the first biography of Wilde. This resulted in him being sued for using unpublished material. Although his defence was successful, he suffered a near nervous breakdown and this led to him taking flight to Stockholm.



There he learnt Russian and wrote his first book for children, 'Old Peter's Russian Tales'. With the First World War underway he was taken on by the Daily News as a war correspondent based in Russia. When the Russian Revolution erupted, he wrote a two-page spread, "Russia's Day of Joy" in its support. His enthusiastic endorsement of the revolution gained him access to the Bolshevik leaders and he was granted an interview with Leon Trotsky. At this meeting he met Evgenia Petrovna Shelepina, Trotsky's secretary, and they fell in love. Civil war broke out and he found himself in danger as the White Russians threatened St Petersburg. The Bolsheviks arranged that he would leave

Russia clandestinely and, disguised as a British soldier, he nonchalantly strolled across the front line smoking a pipe.

In Stockholm he set up a Bolshevik propaganda unit but, when the whole unit was deported back to Russia, the British government insisted he return to the UK to be interrogated as a possible spy. After being exonerated, he and Evgenia moved to Estonia to avoid scandal as he was still married to Ivy.

By the mid 1920s Ivy agreed to a divorce and Ransome and Evgenia moved back to the UK and bought a cottage by Coniston Water. It was there that they were visited by Dora (née Collingwood), her husband and their four children. Their adventures during this visit led directly to Swallows and Amazons. Ransome wrote many more children's books. He died in 1967 and Evgenia a few years later. They are buried together in the Lake District.

Dr Radford, who specialised in childhood cancer, asked that the Gift Bowl proceeds, which amounted to £150, be donated to "Abby's Heroes", a charity set up to support the families of child cancer sufferers.

The Guild's next meeting on December 9th will be its Christmas Social.

David Balston

Kidasha update and hold the date

A recent visit to Nepal by our CEO revealed a desperate situation.

Whilst the devastating floods that made international headlines did not directly affect the charities work area, the wider consequences of a prolonged monsoon have pushed many of the children and families it works with into even deeper into poverty. Damaged infrastructure has far-reaching consequences and is making the cost of living less affordable for the most marginalised in society. They are finding children as young as four years old with nowhere to stay.

John and I have decided to open our Restaurant in the Village again for Pie and Mash on Saturday evening the 13th and Sunday 14th March lunchtime. **Please save the dates**. The menu has not yet been planned and we will not be taking bookings until February. Full details will be in the February Parish magazine.

Thank you to all of you who have supported our fundraising over the years.

Liz and John Waterman

Stratford Garden Club - Thursday 28th January 2027

The speaker for our first meeting of the new year is Claire Hart and it is titled Square Metre Gardening. She will be talking about how to make the most of small spaces. How to grow vegetables, including ideas for raised beds and vertical gardening.

She gives good practical tips and is an engaging speaker. Do come along.

Jo Harrison

Meet our new advertiser …..



Hello, I'm Colleen Balston and I recently had the pleasure of attending Clare Waddell's fascinating talk on the Blue Zones hosted by the Friends of St Lawrence. One principle particularly resonated with me: *move naturally*. Rather than relying solely on formal exercise, the idea is to weave movement into everyday life — walking, gardening, cycling or simply staying active in the things we enjoy.

But what happens when movement becomes difficult

An injury, surgery, recurring aches or persistent pain can gradually affect how confidently we move. We may start avoiding activities, doing less than we would like or adapting the way we live.

Physiotherapy can help at any stage — whether recovering from an injury, returning to sport, managing longer-standing problems or maintaining strength, mobility and balance as we get older.

I am an experienced musculoskeletal physiotherapist with over three decades of clinical practice and advanced postgraduate training, practising in Salisbury. Treatment is tailored to the individual and may include hands-on therapy, targeted exercise, movement rehabilitation and advice to help you better understand and manage your symptoms.

My aim is to help people move with greater ease and confidence, so they can continue doing the things that matter to them.

Move Better, Feel Better, Live Better.

Please see my advert toward the back of the magazine

Colleen Balston

Stratford sub Castle Guild

Join us for the first Guild meeting of the New Year

Thursday 14 January

at 2pm in the Reading Room

"The History of Magic"



Speaker: Robert Bone

Professional Close-Up Magician

Member of The Magic Circle

A wonderful compilation of history, with techniques revealed, magic from his professional repertoire and audience participation

Visitor & new member enquiries:
please contact Jenny Stone 01722 334231
View the Guild's latest programme on
www.stratfordsubcastle.org.uk





50s and Beyond

We are a St Francis based fellowship and service group focused on people 50+ in age. We hope to see you at our coming events. The events are open to all, so feel free to invite a neighbour or friend!

Saturday, 12th December, 2:30pm - 4:00pm

Come and get in a festive mood at our Christmas Tea in the Beatrice Room, St Francis Church. We will have carols, Christmas cookies, tea and even mulled wine! From those able, a £5 donation is welcome. For more information, contact Kris Richardson at 07963500331 or kris@richardson.net

Friday, January 15, 6:00pm for 6:30pm start

50s and Beyond joins Strictly Ladies for Fish and Chips and a Movie, in the Beatrice Room of St Francis church. Ticket cost is £12.00 including a small fish and chips and soft drinks.

St Thomas's Christmas Tree Festival 1st – 6th December

The Festival includes a daily programme of inspiring music provided by local community and school choirs, music groups and individual performers. The Festival Café will provide delicious home baked cakes and refreshments throughout the week. As a community event, the Festival is loved and enjoyed by people local to Salisbury and visitors from far and wide. For many it is the start of their Christmas celebrations.

The Festival will be open:
Tuesday 1st December until Saturday 5th December
from 10am to last entries at 5.30pm.
Sunday 6th December from 12 noon to last entries at 5.30pm.

Visiting the Festival is free but donations are welcome as visitors leave. Thanks to the generosity of visitors making donations, the generosity of our sponsors and the profits from the Festival Café, the church is able to donate equal sums to two benefiting charities:

- Charlie's Star a small local charity supporting families in the South West who have lost a child under 19 and,
- Horatio's Garden South West: which supports people adjusting to life-changing spinal injuries at Salisbury District Hospital.
- St Thomas's Church itself benefits from an equal sum towards its community work, maintenance and upkeep.

More details: https://stthomassalisbury.co.uk/welcome-to-st-thomass-church-salisbury/ctf/

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Enquiries / To register an interest / To book a place
Contact Jane Miller Jane.e.miller@btinternet.com
or Tel: 01722 322791

If you wish to book a place please contact me before Christmas

Thank you from Dorothy Richards

So many lovely cards showed that you cared. Flowers, dinners and even puddings made their way to the door, after Andrew died.

All were most welcome, especially as on the Saturday that he died I went into SDH with Pneumonia. I was allowed home after five days, much improved, but in need of recovery time and with a funeral to organise. Regular invitations out to dinner were just amazing!

Thank you to everyone who came to his funeral, the support was such a great help. Already there has been lots I needed to tell him - but he wasn't there.

STUDIO THEATRE
'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'
4th - 12th DECEMBER



Christmas and ghost stories never go out of fashion and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is probably the most famous of them all. This adaptation runs at Studio Theatre from 4th - 12th December.

Tickets are now on sale.

Ebenezer Scrooge is mean-spirited, miserly and not about to change his ways - until one Christmas Eve and a series of ghostly visitors. A handful of actors play many parts from Tiny Tim to long-dead Marley. There will be dancing at Fezziwig's party, lots of carol-singing, puppets and a happy ending. The age guidance of 10+ reflects the harsh times of Victorian England and includes paranormal activity - but nothing too scary. Content advisory: use of haze, smoke, flashing lights and loud noises.

Please take careful note of timings for '*A Christmas Carol'* as they differ from our usual performance runs, to allow for additional matinées. Performances will be 4th December and 8th - 11th December at 7.30pm and matinées on 5th, 6th and 12th December at 3pm. Tickets are £15 and £8 for children aged 16 and under. The good news is that the family ticket is back for this show allowing entry for two adults and two children aged 16 and under for £40.

Tickets are available from: Salisbury Information Centre in Fish Row Tel 01722 342860 or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/studiotheatresalisbury

Children's Corner answers: The two extra words are Carol and Choir



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You can find out more information or buy your stamps from any 23rd Salisbury Leader or
- Emma Turner, Castlemere, Stratford Sub Castle, Salisbury, 07843 673788
- Rachel Squire, 1 Assisi Road, Salisbury, 01722 339006

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The Community in Stratford sub Castle

Listed below is the wide range of activities that are available to all, wherever they live. Each organisation welcomes new members.

The **Friends of St Lawrence Church** (Registered Charity no. 1063271) raises funds for the upkeep of our historic church and grounds through Gift Aided Membership Subscriptions and the sale of tickets for events.
Contact: Membership Enquiries - Rosemary Winson 01722 325183

The **Garden Club** is open to everyone interested in gardens, gardening and plants. It is especially useful if you are new to the area. The club meets on the last Thursday in the month September to June at 19.30 (no meeting in December; February at 14.30) in the Reading Room. ***Contact: Rob Barclay 07867 655642***

The **Stratford sub Castle Guild** is a friendly group of men and women who meet to hear talks on an eclectic range of subjects. The club meets on the 2nd Wednesday in the month September to June at 19.30 (except January & February 2nd Thursday at 14.00) in the Reading Room.
Contact: Jenny Stone 07511 226828

The **History Group** came about partly because of the wealth of material left by long-time residents which needed cataloguing. But the rich history of our parish is a fertile topic for further research and talks are arranged from time to time.
Contact: Barbara Mayall 01722 411337

Join the **Bell Ringing** team, an activity that stimulates the brain, helps keep you fit and makes a glorious sound. Practice nights Mondays. 19.30 - 21.00.
Contact: Alison Clayton (Bell Ringing Tower Captain) 01722 446634

Come along to our **Summer Sunday Cafés** in the Reading Room and meet up with neighbours for tea/coffee, cakes and a chat. Better still, volunteer to help. All proceeds to local charities. Cafés held once a month, May to September plus a Christmas Special. ***Contact: Barbara Mayall (Café Coordinator) 01722 411337***

The **St Lawrence Flower Team** is a friendly group of flower arrangers who decorate our (St Lawrence) church in a sustainable way.
Contact: Carrie Walsh 07970 284629

Don't forget to check the **Village Website:** **www.stratfordsubcastle.org.uk** available 24/7 for Local News and events; Photo Albums; Walks; Local History.
Contact: Rosemary Winson **sscvillagewebsite@gmail.com**

Defibrillator Guardian Rota : December/January

If you use the defibrillator or notice a problem with it please report it to:
Dec: Heather Balston Tel: 01722 411628 Email: hbalston@gmail.com
Jan: Barbara Mayall Tel:01722 411337 Email:barb.steve118@gmail.com

If you need to access the defibrillator urgently, the code is C123X