

# December 2024 & January 2025 together in Wotton

Christians living, working and worshipping together  
in Wotton under Edge



## THE LIVING CRIB

WITH CAROLS

THE STORY OF THE BIRTH OF  
JESUS, TOLD DURING  
CHRISTMAS UNDER THE EDGE



SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER

AT ~~5.00~~ PM 4.30pm

OUTSIDE WOTTON TOWN  
HALL

Whatever your age, if you would like to join in with a (non-speaking) part please contact Karen Dover  
[karend@wottonbaptist.org.uk](mailto:karend@wottonbaptist.org.uk)

Look out for the Christmas Story Window display

**What does it mean to belong to a Faith Community?**

This term in RE our Y1/2 children have been exploring the themes of ‘Belonging’ and ‘Faith Communities’. We’ve been fortunate enough to have three very willing and very talented volunteers visiting our classes to help us learn more about Infant Baptism and the ways of knowing that all people are important to God.

Alan Bell from St. Mary’s Church gave us a fun and interactive demonstration of Infant Baptism, whereby children were invited up to the front to act out the service. We heard about the promises that parents and Godparents make and listened to the prayers to bless the baby as he began his Christian journey. ‘Simon’ was a very well behaved baby... he didn’t cry once!

Our children asked some good questions showing great interest and curiosity:

- How many crosses are put on the baby’s head?
- Does it matter what the baby wears?
- Do they put oil in the water? \* Can it be outside? Can it be anywhere?
- Does it matter what colour the skin is? \* How long does it take to be baptised?
- How long do they hold them under water? (this child was remembering the visit to the Baptist Church when Rev’d Tom showed him the Baptismal Pool).



To further support the Y1/2 children in their understanding of ‘What does it mean to belong to a Faith Community?’, we were also pleased to welcome Karen Dover from Wotton Baptist Church. Karen performed the story of ‘The Woman at the Well’ John 4:4-42 to a captivated audience of 90, six and seven year olds! The story reinforces the central themes from the Gospels; Jesus cares for everyone, regardless of their social standing. A strong and important message for us to carry within our hearts. This beautifully linked to our school Christian Vision of ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself’. Like the woman in the story, Karen echoed the excitement of sharing the ‘Good News’ of Jesus.



The legacy of Rev’d Phil Summers lives on through Jane Gray Wallis! Jane from Wotton United Church, enjoys re-enacting Bible stories with children who attend our after school Christian Club ‘Ignite’. Inspired by Phil, Jane brings the stories to life, encouraging our young people to seek out the messages and make parallels with their own lives. We do love Jane’s visits to Ignite Club!

We are thankful to the many people within the church community who support our young people at Blue Coat School to explore and develop their spirituality.

*Jane Blaken*



### Alpha 2025

St Mary's will be holding an Alpha course starting on Wednesday 8 January at 6.45pm, at The United Church and lasting 10 weeks.

Alpha is an opportunity to explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. We'll look at questions such as "Who is Jesus?", "Why did Jesus die?", "How can I have faith?", "How does God guide us?" and "Who is the Holy Spirit?" Each evening has 3 parts: a meal together, watching a pre-recorded talk and a time in small groups, for sharing thoughts and asking questions.

Alpha is for everyone - those who have questions about Christianity – about what it means to be a follower of Jesus and those who are Christians but want to remind themselves of what they believe, refresh their understanding and renew their experience of God. All are welcome.

If you'd like to come or want to find out more, please contact Clive Hamer on 07523 405417.

### Ark Apron Washing - or 'looking for an ArkAngel'

We have a noble band of ladies who wash the ARK aprons each week but they would like some more help please.

The rota is dated for Friday each week but the soiled aprons can be collected Thursday afternoon, Friday or Saturday morning as long as there is a stock ready for Monday morning. They dry surprisingly quickly if hung outside and we do not iron them as long as they are pressed flat and folded neatly.

If you can help please contact Sue Marsland asap. Either text or phone 0748580265 or email [suemarsland@gmail.com](mailto:suemarsland@gmail.com). Men may also apply!

## Dryleaze Saturday Club Held at the United Church on 9 November 2024

As part of the Remembrance weekend this was a quiet reflective afternoon. A poppy decorated cross and table reminded everyone that the poppy was now traditionally the national remembrance emblem. The afternoon started with a prayer and hymn. Led by the Rev. Jimmy Cullingford it then continued with appropriate readings, prayers and hymns. The Last Post was sounded by the trumpeter, followed by a period of silence before Reveille rang out.

After telling his own memories of earlier times and saying what remembrance meant to him, the Rev. Jimmy invited everyone to recount their own memories. Several people did. Prayers of thanksgiving, remembering those of both past and present generations who had served their Country and their communities during times of conflict and paid with their lives were then said. A prayer for peace and hope for the future followed with a concluding hymn.

A coming birthday was then celebrated with an appropriate birthday song and cake. Families and friends who could not attend that afternoon were remembered and special prayers said for those who were unwell.

Refreshments then appeared and were enjoyed and appreciated by everyone.

With thanks to the Rev. Jimmy for leading the remembrance thoughts (his first visit to the Club) and to all who contributed in any way to the afternoon - the ladies who provided the refreshments, the pianist, Bernard, and trumpeter, Richard, and those who kindly provided transport.



The Remembrance Table at Dryleaze House

The Keepers is a community hub supporting the residents of Wotton and surrounding areas. It is here for everyone. Either come along to one of the organised groups below, or just pop in for a chat and a cuppa - whenever we are open. Come as you are, bring what you can and take what you need.

## Monday

**Parent Support Group** - a support group by parents for parents. 9:15am - 10:45am

**Citizens Advice** - to book an appointment call 0800 800 0510/0511 or just drop in. 9th December. 10am - 2pm

**Age UK Gloucestershire** - a social group for those who are 50+. 11am - 12:30pm

**Digital Drop-in** - any help on anything digital. 9th December. 11:30am - 1:30pm

**Chair Yoga** - join in with some gentle, supportive yoga. Open to all. No booking is needed. Pay As You Feel. Followed by refreshments (optional). 1:30pm - 2:30pm

**IT Course (Adult Education)** - next steps for tablet/phone users. 1:30pm - 3:30pm

**Keepers Kidz** - board games, craft and toast available. Children to come with an accompanying adult. Also runs through the holidays. 3:15pm - 4:30pm

**Menopause Support Group** - a peer support group for those affected by menopause. 2nd December. 7pm - 8:30pm

## Thursday

**Lloyds Bank** - drop in for basic transactions such as account balance, direct debit, standing order and bill payment enquiries for both personal and business account customers. No cash services are available. 9:30am - 3pm

**Wotton Area Neurodivergent Support group (WANDS)** - a group run by, and for, ND adults and parents/carers of ND children including Autism, ADHD, PDA, Dyslexia etc. 12th December. 9:30am - 11:00am

**Art Shape** - a 6-week creative arts course. This course is full, if interested in another art course, please contact us. 9:30am - 11:30am

**Wotton Area Breast Support Group** - anyone touched by breast cancer is invited to drop in and meet others who know just how it feels. The next meeting is on 19th December. 10am - 11am

**GDA Hearing Aid Clinic** - support for those with hearing aids. To book an appointment, call 01452 372999. 19th December. 10am - 2pm

**NHS social prescriber's Drop in** - help to connect and grow in confidence. Just come in, no appointment needed. 11am - 1pm

**Oigong** - gentle exercises for physical strength and balance plus emotional relaxation. Pay As You Feel. 12pm - 1pm

**Rethink** - mental health drop-in. Every Thursday. 1pm - 3pm

**Spanish For Beginners/The Terrified** - informal Spanish conversation group. Just drop in. 7:30pm - 8:30pm

## Tuesday

**The Keepers' Garden** - the garden is open - come along to plant, dig, weed, sit or just chat with our gardener. Refreshments provided. 10am - 12pm

**The Carers' Café** - run by the Healthcare Assistant from Chipping surgery. Coffee, chat and advice if needed. Just drop in. Carers can come by themselves or bring the person they care for. 3rd December. 10am - 12pm

**CONNECT (previously called Dementia Connections)** - for anyone who would like to make connections, including those living with dementia, long term health conditions, and unpaid carers. Activities and chat. 10th December. 10am - 12pm

**Sing 2 Remember** - sing together, share memories and make friends. Come and join this supported, dementia-friendly singing session. Just turn up. 3rd and 17th December. 10:45am - 11:45am

**Tuesday Lunches** - come and join us for a meal and chat. Open to all and Pay As You Feel (PAYF). Spaces are limited, so to book a place please call 07585 466418 or pop in to find out what's on the menu! 12:30pm - 2pm

**The Keepers' Car Club** is also running on Tuesdays to provide transport from your home to the hot lunches. Places are limited. To book, please call 07585 466418 or pop in.

**Rainbow Cuppa** - all LGBTQ+ folk and allies welcome to join us for a relaxed chat, coffee or bring a craft along. 10th December. 2:15pm - 3:45pm

## Friday

**The Keepers Tots** - a session for babies, toddlers and their responsible adult. 9:15am - 10:30am

**The Keepers' Garden** - the garden is open. Come along to plant, dig, weed, sit or chat with our gardener. Refreshments provided. 10am - 12pm

**Drop In Café** - all welcome on a Pay As You Feel basis. This café is quieter than a Wednesday, the tables are spaced apart, board games available if wanted. 11:30am - 12:30pm

**23rd and 27th December**  
Drop in Cafes (see separate flyer)  
We are only open from 10am - 12pm  
No regular groups on those days

## Wednesday

**Drop In Café** - all welcome on a Pay As You Feel basis. 10am - 12pm

**The Keepers' Car Club** provides transport from your home to The Keepers. Places are limited. To book please call 07585 466418 or pop in.

**Craft and Chat** with tea and cake - held fortnightly. 4th and 18th December 10am - 12pm

**P3 Drop in** - help with a range of issues e.g. housing, debt and benefit support. No booking needed. 10am - 1pm

**Back to Work** - help with online job searching, confidence building, CVs, covering letters and job applications. Every week apart from the 1st Wednesday in the month. 10am - 12pm

**Stroud Foodbank** - offering emergency food and essentials along with support and advice. 10am - 12pm

**Health Visitor Drop In (with Real Nappy Project)** - available to weigh babies and answer any questions. 4th December. 10am - 12pm

**Men's Shed** - talk about the projects they're working on and discuss yours. 11th December. 10am - 12pm

**Stroud District Housing Officer** - advice on any social housing issues. No appointment is needed. 10:30am - 11:30am

**Talk Club** - a talking and listening club for men to help keep mentally fit. 4th and 18th December. 7pm - 8:30pm

## COME AND JOIN US

**Fundraising Dinner at Tortworth Court Hotel**  
Places need to be booked. 4th December. From 7pm

**Wotton Good Food lunch**  
4th December. 12:30pm - 1:30pm

**Christmas Under The Edge**  
Santa's grotto and afternoon tea. Places need to be booked. 7th December at Wotton Town Hall

For more details or to book a place please:  
Call: 07585 466418, email:  
thekeeperscommunityhub@gmail.com or pop in

## OPENING TIMES

**Monday, Tuesday and Thursday:**  
9.00am - 4.00pm

**Wednesday and Friday:**  
9.00am - 1.00pm

**We are closed on the 24th, 25th and 26th December**

## Christmas Services and Events

The Churches Together Christmas Card, prepared by the Baptist Church, thanks to Julie and Geoff Ashby has been delivered to every house in the town.

In case you live outside Wotton, or have mislaid your copy, below are the details:

- Sunday 1 December 6pm Advent Service of Darkness to Light – *St Mary's*
- Saturday 7 December 4pm Living Crib – *Market Street*
- Sunday 15 December 4pm Children's Advent – *St Mary's*  
5pm Carol Service – *Oliver Memorial Chapel*  
7pm Carol Service: A Celebration of Love Joy, Hope and Peace – *Baptist Church*
- Sunday 22 December 6pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols – *St Mary's*  
6.30pm Candlelight Carol Service – *United Church*. Please arrive from 5.45 to share in tea and cake.
- Tuesday 24 December  
Christmas Eve 4pm Christingle Service – *St Mary's*  
5.30pm Christingle Service – *St Mary's*  
6pm Christmas Eve Communion – *United Church*  
9.30pm Bethlehem Midnight Mass – *St Mary's*  
11.15pm Midnight Mass – *Oliver Memorial Chapel*
- Wednesday 25 December  
Christmas Day 9.30am Celebrating Christmas Together with Communion – *St Mary's*  
10am All Age Christmas Day Service – *Baptist Church*  
10.15am Christmas Day Worship – *United Church*
- Sunday 29 December 11.15am Christmas Songs of Praise – *Oliver Memorial Chapel*  
11am Benefice Service with Communion and Speaker – *St Mary's*
- Tuesday 31 December  
New Year's Eve 6pm New Year's Eve Concert – *St Mary's*

For Services at Holy Cross Catholic Church and Christ the King, Thornbury please see <https://ctkandholycross.org.uk/>

## Social Events at the Baptist Church

**Singles Space** - for singles - every month on the **first** Saturday at 10.30am.  
**Men's Breakfast** - for men - runs monthly on the **last** Saturday at 8.30am.

## LITTLE FISHES CHRISTMAS PARTY

for Little Fishes tots, mums, dads, grandparents and carers



Real live nativity – kids can come dressed as an angel, shepherd or king if they want to  
Singing

Party lunch (no need to bring anything)

Mince pies and coffee for the grown ups

A visit from you know who and a gift...



Thursday 19 December

10am - 12 noon, Wotton Baptist Church



Year 6+ youth  
Drop-in

Games, snooker, Wii, tuck

7 December 24  
4-8pm

Wotton Baptist Church



## Available at The Ark now

**Christmas cake, stollen and mince pies**, delicious with a cup of fair trade coffee or tea.

**Various gift ideas** – Fair trade canvas bags, chocolates, & candle holders, Also, we have some 2025 calendars, pens, magnets and small mirrors.

**NEW** selection of **Hannah Dunnett coasters & mugs**, plus some individual Christmas cards

We have a few packets of Christmas cards & individual Christmas cards left, but hurry!!!



**Please support The Ark, 45, Long Street, W-u-E.** Opens Monday to Friday 9am – midday & Thursday/Friday 2.30pm - 4.30pm plus Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm. **All are welcome.**

Contact Val Smith- 07729885457 for information about current stock.

**The Ark will also be open from 3.00pm to 7.30pm on Saturday 7 December during Christmas Under the Edge.**

## Charities Fair

A big thank you to everyone for their continued support of the Charities Fair, especially in view of the challenging weather on Saturday 23 November.

Altogether the charities raised an amazing **£4,555.75** which is actually more than last year! Obviously, people didn't let the wind and rain put them off and I know it was appreciated by all the stallholders who, like me, thought it might have been a disaster! Again, many thanks.

*Alison Sutton*

As a separate note, perhaps I should mention that the Christian Aid stall raised £229.75 at the Charities Fair. The Christian Aid Committee would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

*Alison Sutton*

## December's Dryleaze Saturday Club

Saturday 14 December 2.30 – 4pm at the United Church, with games, carols and a special visitor!

January's Saturday Club will be on Saturday 11 January 2.30 - 4pm

## Holy Communion at Dryleaze House

There will be Holy Communion services at Dryleaze House on Wednesdays 18 December and 15 January at 11.00am. Calm half hours of hymns, prayers and readings plus peaceful music. Family and friends, particularly those who are unwell, are included in the prayers. Communion is available for those who wish to receive it. All are welcome.

**Please note** As the Lounge will be shut for some time yet for refurbishment work (probably to the end of January) the services will be held in the ground floor seating area. On coming into the House by the main entrance turn into the right hand corridor and follow the red painted walls and doorway arches.

## Praying for the Churches

### December - Holy Cross

### January - United Church

Kate Barlow writes: Thank you everyone for your prayers for Father George Malecki who died suddenly on 13 September. May he rest in peace.

We at Holy Cross and Christ the King are still without a Parish Priest. Deacons Lawrence and Kingsley are organising the parish and we are having visiting priests to say Mass on Saturday at Holy Cross and Sunday at Christ the King. We thank God for this and are very grateful.

Father Richard ( The Salvatorian UK Provincial ) is working hard to get us a permanent priest.

Please pray for the Salvatorians and Father Richard, our Deacons Lawrence and Kingsley and all the parishioners through these challenging times.

Thank you and God Bless.

From the United Church: At the United Church we give thanks for Revd Jimmy Cullingford who has joined us as a Probationer Minister. We pray that his training progresses well as he also manages Cam, Dursley and Stonehouse Methodist Churches and that we all do our part where we can, in helping him share the daunting work load.

The United Church was not alone in losing several loved and faithful members and friends this time last year, and we ask for prayers for all those who will find Christmas a difficult time.

LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

## WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD?



### PLACES TO TRY THIS NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2024



#### **MEN'S SHED: KEEPERS**

Wednesday 13 November, 10am to 12 noon

Wednesday 11 December, 10am to 12 noon

[www.thekeepers.org.uk](http://www.thekeepers.org.uk)



#### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Saturday 30 November, 8.30am

Full English, All Welcome, Wotton Baptist Church

[vince@wottonbaptist.org.uk](mailto:vince@wottonbaptist.org.uk)

#### **TALK CLUB: FOR MEN ONLY**



Wednesday 6 & 20 November, 7pm to 8.30pm

Wednesday 4 & 18 December, 7pm to 8.30pm

[www.thekeepers.org.uk](http://www.thekeepers.org.uk)

**MIND INFO HELPLINE 0300 123 3393**

[UK.MOVEMBER.COM/MEN-S-HEALTH/SPOT-THE-SIGNS](http://UK.MOVEMBER.COM/MEN-S-HEALTH/SPOT-THE-SIGNS)

**SAMARITANS 24/7 116 123**

Churches Together in Wotton  
The Keepers



[www.wottonbaptist.org.uk](http://www.wottonbaptist.org.uk)

[www.wottonparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.wottonparishchurch.org.uk)

[www.thekeepers.org.uk](http://www.thekeepers.org.uk)

*'Together in Wotton' is produced ten times a year on behalf of all the Churches of and Christians in Wotton.*

Articles, diary items and anything of interest can be sent to [judy.mills@live.co.uk](mailto:judy.mills@live.co.uk) and for the February edition, these should arrive by **5pm on Monday 20 January**