

Vol.66 No 1 January 2026 Online Edition

ST PETER'S CHURCH BRACKLEY

ST PETER'S

**"LOVING GOD,
LOVING EACH OTHER,
LOVING BRACKLEY"**





Rev. Rich Duncan writes...

I rarely like to make these articles too much about me but, this month, I mainly need to communicate that I will be on leave from 7th January to 7th April.

2026 marks 10 years since I was ordained, and the Church of England offers its clergy a 3-month sabbatical after the first decade of ministry. Aside from a study project that I have to present to the Bishop, the main purpose of the sabbatical is rest and spiritual refreshment.

It is all too easy to turn into a Martha instead of a Mary (Luke 10:38-42), so please pray that I can reset during this time and emulate the latter, who “chose what is better” and simply “sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said”. God-willing, this will help me to serve the congregation better over the years to come.

We will also have a chance to make memories as a family, with roughly a month abroad (visiting Kate’s relatives in South Africa), a month travelling around the UK (mainly visiting friends and family), and a month of rest and retreat locally.

I am acutely aware that this is an enormous privilege and that a sabbatical is not something many people get to enjoy. Thank you so much to all those who are enabling it and making this time off possible. It is lovely to know I’m leaving the church in the safe hands of Rob, ably assisted by Helen and Val, along with the wardens and Revds Sylvia, Dave and James. Kate and I are hugely grateful to you all.

I will say goodbyes on Sunday 4th January and then won’t be contactable until after Easter. Kate and the children will still attend St Peter’s on the odd Sunday but I will be worshipping elsewhere, making the most of this rare opportunity to visit (and learn from) a large number of different churches. It goes without saying that I will miss the church family greatly, but I will pray for you all to grow in your knowledge and love of Christ, and I’ve no doubt the 3 months will fly by!

As another year ticks over, it’s a chance for us *all* to reset and reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord. The hymnwriter Frances Havergal made a point of doing so each year and wrote several New Year’s

hymns as a result, the one below being the most famous. It is set to the tune of 'The Church's One Foundation' and a letter she wrote afterwards suggests it helped her to navigate with remarkable peace and poise even serious trials and setbacks in her life. May this be our prayer as we head into 2026 and whatever it has in store:

ANOTHER YEAR by Frances Havergal (1874)

Another year is dawning! Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting, another year with Thee.
Another year of leaning upon Thy loving breast,
Of ever deeper trusting, of quiet, happy rest.
Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace,
Another year of gladness enlightened by Thy face.
Another year of progress, another year of praise,
Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.
Another year of service, of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training for holier work above.
Another year is dawning! Dear Master, let it be,
On Earth or else in Heaven, another year for Thee.

Happy New Year!

HOPE | EXPLORED

WHAT'S THE BEST FUTURE
YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE?

DISCUSS THE BASICS
OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE
AND ASK ANY QUESTION



15th Jan, 22nd Jan, 5th Feb
ST PETER'S CHURCH HALL
7.30pm, JUST TURN UP

Prayer Partner Scheme

Dear Friends,

I hope you have had an opportunity to celebrate and be thankful for the birth of Jesus and to have spent time with those you are closest to. I trust you managed to remember your prayer partner for 2025 with a Christmas card. I would like to thank you for the many Christmas greetings I have received.

Reflecting on how nice it is to receive good wishes and to remember those we love during Christmas, now might be a good time to remind you that the beginning of January is the time to take out a card from the prayer box if you have put one in during Advent. There is still time to join our prayer partner scheme. If you put a card in during January, you can take one out at the same time! Hopefully the box will be empty at the end of January and you will have someone to pray for and someone who will be praying for you.

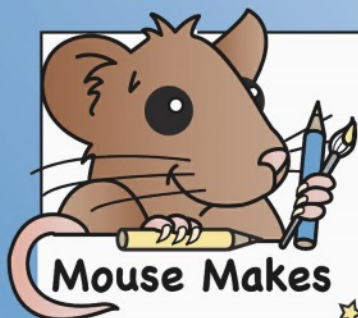
Thank you to all who have, or maybe going to, join in with this scheme.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

With love and every blessing,

Rev'd Sylvia





Mouse Makes

DID YOU KNOW ?

Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellowish-white, yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets foretold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in Matthew 2:1-12

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

Can you find these words in the word search?

WISE MEN • MAGI
STAR • SIGN
JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
CHRIST • KING
GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
FRANKINCENSE
WORSHIP • JOY
EPIPHANY



An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: Mark



Mark is the second of the synoptic gospels, along with Matthew and Luke. Traditionally this gospel is ascribed to John Mark, a close associate of Peter. It was written for Gentile readers, probably in Rome during Nero's persecution of the church (c AD 64-7).

Mark unveils Jesus' public ministry with the words: *'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'* (1:1). The gospel provides a succinct and vivid account of Jesus' ministry, concentrating on what Jesus did rather than what He said. Mark moves quickly from one episode to another, often using the word

'immediately' which is characteristic of his gospel.

For Mark, understanding the true identity of Jesus is fundamental to his gospel. Jesus asks the disciples, *'Who do people say I am?'* (8:27), to which Peter replies, *'You are the Christ'*. This is evident in Jesus' role as teacher, the call for discipleship and the account of Jesus' death and resurrection, which occupies the last third of the gospel.

A key verse which helps us to understand the nature of Jesus' mission and how we might live in the light of it is: *'Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'* (10:44,45). As the Suffering Servant, Jesus gave His life on the cross, that we might know and share his love.

Mark is understandably in a hurry to tell us about Jesus: the one who reveals the truth of God to us, that we might live in reality not ignorance!



ADVENT TREES

As always a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to decorate and display Advent trees in the Church .



They are now such a feature at St Peter's and enhance the beauty of the Church at this special time .



Thank you Caroline

The latest from Heidi & Bosco Bukeera



(Sent mid-December) Greetings from Uganda! On Tuesday evenings we have an open home. It's always a lovely time for people to gather in our house to share a meal, share in family devotions, play games and encourage one another. It's just turned 11pm here, and our final visitors have just left!



Here are some pictures and prayers points from recent days...



On Saturday we attended a clan meeting, about three hours away. Bosco belongs to the Ngabi (antelope) clan, and this was a gathering of around 400 people from his family, primarily the descendants of his great great grandfather. Bosco had been asked to preach, so praise the Lord that he was able to share the good news

with so many family members in one go!

Praise God too that we were kept safe when our hire car (our car is so unreliable) suddenly stopped in the road when I was driving. It had just turned dark, and we had to get out of the car until the situation could be rectified. These roads are treacherous. Pray for continued safety as we drive on these crazy roads. Many vehicles are not road-worthy, and pretty much no one follows the rules of the road. In fact, someone once said to me, "If you follow the rules of the road, you WILL have an accident!"

Our church tent is not big enough! Here are people sitting outside our church tent for our Sunday morning English service, because the tent was full. We even took all our dining chairs from our house out so that more people could try to squeeze in! Praise God for the many people



who come to Ssenge Baptist Church. Pray for provision so that we may be able to build a permanent church building on land that we have already acquired. For many reasons, it is not sustainable for church to continue meeting in our home.



We are in Holiday Bible Club week. Praise God for the 300+ children who have been coming each day. This picture shows the 'small groups' meeting under the shade of various trees to discuss the morning teaching session. Praise God for opportunities to share the gospel with the children in the small groups. If

costs £5 per child to attend the Holiday Bible Clubs, because we feed them meals as well. If you would like to sponsor some children for future clubs that would be hugely appreciated.

Here is the land we have bought where we will build a church building. At the moment many enjoy using this land to play football! Pray for the Lord's provision.



On Sunday afternoon we are planning to sing Christmas carols in the community. This is something we've not done before! Pray for the people in our village of Ssenge, that they may grasp why Christ was born as they listen to the carols sung by Ssenge Baptist Church. As ever, thank you so much for your prayers.

With love, Bosco and Heidi xxx

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