

The Net



Christmas 2025

Issue 109

Community Newsletter of St Michael and All Angels, Lancing

Sunday Services

10.30 am Sung Mass

followed by refreshments

10.30 am Alive!

(monthly on first Sunday)

Stories, games and crafts for children aged 0-11

Church Open

The Church is open for visitors and private prayer Monday - Friday 9 am - 4 pm

Christenings, Weddings, Banns of Marriage

please contact The Revd Ben Scott Telephone: 01903 753653

Editor

The Revd Ben Scott
c/o St Michael's Vicarage
117, Penhill Road
Lancing, BN15 8HD
E: chalkspringscurate@outlook.com
www.chalkspringchurches.org



/stmichaelslancing

@ParishofSLS



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Origins of the Christmas Tree

The precise origins of the fir tree's connection to the celebration of Christ's birth remain uncertain. According to a legend from early British Christianity, Saint Wilfrid, a monk, felled a great oak tree that was central to Druid worship. When the oak fell, it split open, and a young fir tree grew from its centre. Saint Wilfrid dedicated this new tree to the Christ-child, declaring, "Its wood is the wood of peace for your houses are built of fir. It is the sign of endless life for its leaves are evergreen." This story establishes the fir as a symbol of peace and eternal life in the Christian tradition.

Martin Luther and the Advent of the Decorated Tree

The tradition of decorating fir trees is also linked to Martin Luther in the 16th century. According to tradition, Luther brought a fir tree into his home and adorned it with candles. He used this as a visual aid, explaining that the candles represented Jesus as the light of the world, while the evergreen tree symbolised everlasting life through Christ.

This custom resonated deeply with Luther's followers, quickly gaining popularity across Germany. In the early 19th century, the tradition spread further, becoming fashionable in European royal courts.

The Tradition Spreads Abroad

As German emigrants settled in other countries, they brought the Christmas tree tradition with them. However, in places such as the United States, the custom was initially regarded as a foreign pagan practice and did not become widely accepted until the mid-19th century.

The Introduction of the Christmas Tree to Britain

Long before it became a part of British festivities, the Christmas tree was already an integral feature of German Christmas celebrations. Its introduction to Britain is largely credited to Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria, who arranged for a Christmas tree to be installed at Windsor Castle in 1841. This was in keeping with his German heritage and Christmas customs. The tradition



H G KING FUNERAL SERVICES

LOCAL. INDEPENDENT. FAMILY RUN

UNATTENDED CREMATION - PRE-PAID FUNERAL PLANS

The Old Bank, 24 North Road, Lancing, BN15 9AB

www.hgkingfuneralservices.co.uk

Tel: 01903 765766



Jacobs | Steel est. 1984
living property

Do you know how much your property is worth?

Call **01903 750335**

To arrange a free, no-obligation, valuation at your property. Or for a free instant online valuation simply scan QR Code.



| jacobs-steel.co.uk

Lancing Office | 28 North Road | Lancing | BN15 9AB

gained widespread popularity after an illustration of the royal family celebrating around a decorated Christmas tree was published by the Illustrated London News in 1848.

Two years later, the same image appeared in Godey's Lady's Book in the United States, with alterations to make the scene appear more American by removing Victoria's tiara and Albert's moustache. This publication marked the first widely circulated picture of a decorated Christmas tree in America, inspiring the custom's popularity across the country.

Madison Square in New York saw its first public Christmas tree in 1912, and it took several more years before similar displays became common in British towns. Today, decorated Christmas trees adorned with stars or angels and sparkling with fairy lights are a familiar sight in churches, town squares, and homes throughout Britain.

The Rise of Illuminated Christmas Trees

The practice of illuminating Christmas trees has roots in ancient pagan festivals such as Saturnalia and Yuletide, where fire and evergreens were used in fertility rituals to encourage the return of spring. In late 19th-century Britain, Christmas trees were decorated with candles held in special holders, which were lit on Christmas Day. This created a spectacular display but posed significant fire risks, leading to numerous accidents. The introduction of electric 'fairy lights' in the 1890s greatly improved safety and made illuminated trees even more popular. During this era, it was also common to decorate the trees with national flags, reflecting the strong sense of nationalism and imperial pride of the time.

Christmas Tree Festival

We'll be using Christmas trees to celebrate our community in early December with the third "St Michael's Christmas Tree Festival" this year. Lots of Lancing and Sompting businesses, local groups, schools and others in the community will be decorating and promoting their tree and work among us. Please join us at any time from **10 am - 5 pm on Friday 5, Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 December**, and do come to the official opening on 4 December at 7.30pm. You can also join in three special events during the Festival - our **Christmas Fair** on Saturday from 10 am -

1 pm, a concert by **Worthing Community Concert Band** on Saturday at 6.30 pm - an evening of Christmas music and carols for all.

Also, during the Festival everyone will be able to vote for their favourite Christmas carols and we'll announce the **Top 10 Carols** on Sunday afternoon at 4 pm when we'll hear the stories of how our favourite carols came to be written, and have a good sing as well!

Please join us.



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Trees decorated by schools, businesses and community groups

Friday 5 December, 10 am - 5 pm

Saturday 6 December, 10 am - 5 pm

Christmas Fair 10 am - 1 pm

Worthing Community Concert Band 6.30 pm

Sunday 7 December, 12 noon - 4 pm

Top Ten Carols 4 pm

St Michael and All Angels Church
South Street, Lancing, BN15 8AJ

Free Admission - Donations Welcome

For more information, please visit www.chalkspringchurches.org/christmas



A Christian Invitation

For many, Christmas is about decorations, presents, food, drink, time off work with family and friends and festive cheer - a global holiday of joy, fun and togetherness. However for Christians Christmas is far more profound: it's about the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the moment God entered into our human history as a vulnerable baby in a stable in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago.

Christmas marks the beginning of our story by reminding us of God's immense love for us all: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son".

Christians believe that Jesus is "God-with-us", sent to live amongst us, walk alongside us in our daily lives, to bridge the gap between the human and the

divine. Jesus lived a life without any sin, he taught us how to love and forgive others, he died on the cross out of love for us, and broke through the powers of death by rising again to offer eternal light and hope to us all.



Amid the tinsel and turkey, we gather in churches for carols, candlelight services, and nativity plays that retell this timeless story. It's a season filled with Love, Joy, Peace and Hope.

If you're curious, or seeking deeper meaning beyond the commercial hustle and bustle of the season, why not come to a Christmas service? Experience the warmth of community, hear carols and discover that peace that surpasses all understanding.

This Christmas, come and see for yourself the light that dawned in the manger.

May you all have a Happy and Blessed Christmas!

Fr Ben Scott

An Invitation to Celebrate Christmas Together

As Christmas draws near, our churches extend a heartfelt invitation to all - parishioners, families, friends, and visitors alike - to join us in celebrating the joyous occasion of Christ's birth. There is something truly special about coming together in worship, song, and reflection during this season, and we warmly welcome you to be part of our Christmas services.

On Christmas Eve, the celebrations begin at 6 pm with a **Candlelight Crib Service** at St Michael and All Angels, Lancing. This beautiful and family-friendly service is the perfect way to start the evening, as we gather around the crib to hear the nativity story and sing beloved carols by candlelight, creating an atmosphere of wonder and hope for people of all ages.

For those who wish to continue the evening in worship, St Peter's Church in Sompting hosts an **Early 'Midnight' Mass** at 8 pm. This service offers a moment of quiet reflection and

anticipation, marking the holy night with prayer and thanksgiving as we prepare our hearts to welcome the newborn King.



Later in the evening, at 11.15 pm, St Michael's will hold its traditional **Midnight Mass**. This moving and solemn celebration marks the very first moments of Christmas Day, inviting us to rejoice together in the light that

shines in the darkness. The service is a treasured tradition, filled with music, readings, and the profound message of God's love come down to earth.

On Christmas Day itself, join us at 10.30 am for **Mass with Carols** at St Michael's. There is no more joyful way to begin Christmas morning than by lifting our voices in song and giving thanks for the gift of Jesus. This service is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate with the whole church family and share in the peace and goodwill of the season.

Whether you are a regular worshipper, newcomer or have not visited in a while, we would be delighted to welcome you to any or all of these services. Come and experience the warmth of our community, the beauty of the liturgy, and the hope that Christmas brings to each of us. Let us gather together, united in faith and love, to celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas.

Can you help conserve our banner?

St Michael's has a lovely parish banner which was presented to St Michael's at the end of the Second World War by Mr and Mrs A.G. Sparkes in thanksgiving for their son returning safely from active service.

The banner depicts St Michael holding a cross, flanked by seven further angels. It also includes a cross and set of scales (a symbol of St Michael).

The banner was embroidered by the Sisters of St Margaret, East Grinstead, Originally known as a nursing order helping the rural poor, the St Margaret sisters, established in 1855, also ran a renowned school of embroidery. Examples of their work are on display in the V&A.



The banner is still just about structurally sound but due to its age and the effects of light damage, it requires work to renew stitching which has come loose, replace the lining and apply conservation net where necessary. The banner will also be surface cleaned.

The work will be undertaken by Zenzie Tinker Conservation based in Brighton and will cost in the region of £5000.

We have 10% of the cost pledged by the congregation and £500 has been received from a charitable foundation. Can you make a donation to help this project get underway? Go to <https://www.chalkspringchurches.org/> banner to make a donation. Thank you!

bennett
griffin+

01903 229999
info@bennett-griffin.co.uk

With you
wherever life takes you

Bennett Griffin offers a wide-ranging, caring, and expert legal service to private and commercial clients in Sussex and across the South East.

We work with you, side by side, providing expert and friendly legal guidance that's right for you, your family and your business.

bennettgriffin.co.uk

Hayley Richards DipFH, MCFHP, MAFHP

FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER

Nail cutting / fungal / thickened / ingrown nails
Corns and callus removal / verrucas
Diabetic foot care / Medical Pedicures

Appointments at my treatment room in Lancing
or I can bring my mobile clinic to you.

Contact **07737 229904**

Carols reworded

Can you decipher the carols from the clues?

- 1. Heavenly Messengers Announce the News _____
- 2. Not Here Cradled in the Stable _____
- 3. Adorn the Lobbies with Greenery _____
- 4. Lofty Bells Ring with Merriment _____
- 5. The Noble Monarch Kind Deed _____
- 6. The Deity Helps Tired Men _____
- 7. Listen! The Angels Proclaim _____
- 8. The Cold and Desolate Season Before Spring _____
- 9. The Divine and Humble Child _____
- 10. The Dead of Night Message, Not Raining _____
- 11. Jubilant Tidings for the Globe _____
- 12. Snowfall Welcomes the Saviour _____
- 13. Peaceful Period After The Sun Sets _____
- 14. Divine Evening of Holiness _____
- 15. Approach Those Who are Not Traitors _____
- 16. Advance, Advance, God-with-us _____
- 17. Mini Metropolis Where The Birth Takes Place _____
- 18. Formerly in King Beckham's Major Town _____
- 19. The Heavenly Messenger Arrives _____
- 20. Not The Second Mr Edmonds _____
- 21. The Green and Red of Christmas _____
- 22. A Trio of Monarchs from the East _____
- 23. Season's Cheer to All _____
- 24. Herdsmen Observe Their Care After Dark _____
- 25. Two Days Short of a Festive Fortnight _____

Place your answers in the Net competition box at St Michael and All Angels Church, South Street, Lancing. The first entry drawn on **1 January 2026** will win a £10 High Street voucher.

Name _____

Address _____

COMPETITION CONDITIONS - Entries will only be accepted from addresses with postcodes BN15 8__ or from persons whose names are entered on the South Lancing and Sompting Parish electoral roll. The first entry received per household will be accepted. The entry form is the whole of Page 4 of *The Net*. Do not tear or cut the page - a copy may be made, or one may be printed from <https://www.chalkspringchurches.org/st-michael-and-all-angels/community-newsletter>



What's On

WINTER REVERIES
A festive evening of musical tales, including:

Karelia Suite – Sibelius
 A Somerset Rhapsody – Holst
 Four Characteristic Waltzes – Coleridge-Taylor
and works by Nielsen, Coates and composer-in-residence Ansel Chaloner-Hughes

Friday 28th November 2025, 7:30pm
 St Michael and All Angels
 South Street, Lancing BN15 8AJ

Conductor: Laura Kjaergaard-Grier
 With the Lancing Chamber Orchestra, led by Rob Campkin

Tickets £8 / under 10s go free

With thanks to our sponsors:

DILLSTONE & WRAIGHTS
 Bombay Tikka

Scan for tickets

Tickets at www.lancingchamberorchestra.co.uk

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
Trees decorated by schools, businesses and community groups

Friday 5 December, 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday 6 December, 10 am - 5 pm
Christmas Fair 10 am - 1 pm
Worthing Community Concert Band 6.30 pm
Sunday 7 December, 12 noon - 4 pm
Top Ten Carols 4 pm

St Michael and All Angels Church
 South Street, Lancing, BN15 8AJ
Free Admission - Donations Welcome

For more information, please visit www.chalkspringchurches.org/christmas

Supported by
H G KING FUNERAL SERVICES
 LOCAL · INDEPENDENT · FAMILY RUN

St Michael and All Angels, Lancing

Messy Church

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

Friday 12 December
 from 3.15 - 5 pm
St Michael's Church Hall
 South Street, Lancing

Please book online (to help with catering) at www.chalkspringchurches.org/coming-soon

Messy Church is for everyone - young and old alike. If you are a child, you will need to bring an adult with you

No charge - donations welcome

Further details
 01903 761913 / messychurch@stmichaelslancing.org

Dementia Friendly

The Memory Lane Cafe

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH HALL, LANCING

Friday 19 December, 2-3 pm

Join us for tea, coffee and cakes and a chance to meet friends old and new, share old memories and make new ones.

Dementia Friendly

THE BOUNDSTONE CHORUS
 Registered charity 1173539

Christmas Celebration

An evening of Christmas music, readings and carols for all

Saturday 20 December, 7.30 pm
St Michael and All Angels Church
 South Street, Lancing, BN15 8AJ

Admission Free - Retiring Collection

www.theboundstonechorus.co.uk

JOY

CHRISTMAS EVE

6 pm Candlelight Crib Service
 St Michael and All Angels, Lancing

8 pm Early 'Midnight' Mass
 St Peter's Church, Sompting

11.15 pm Midnight Mass
 St Michael and All Angels, Lancing

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30 am Mass with Carols
 St Michael and All Angels, Lancing

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

GARDNER SCARDIFIELD

Builders Merchants and DIY Suppliers Throughout Sussex
 2-16 Penhill Road, Lancing, BN15 8HJ
 01903 755 774

Timber Electrical Tool Hire
 Ironmongery Housewares Bathrooms
 Building Supplies Garden Centre Door Showroom

www.gardnerandscardifield.co.uk

LEANEYS OF LANCING LIMITED

www.leaneys.com
 01903 752475

ESTABLISHED 1964
 60 Years
 SERVING SUSSEX

Christmas Tree Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients (makes 12-16)

- 3 eggs
- 250 g / 9 oz caster sugar
- 200 g / 7 oz butter
- 200 g / 7 oz dark chocolate
- 110 g / 4 oz plain flour
- 0.5 tsp baking powder
- 0.5 tsp vanilla extract
- For decoration
- 4-5 tablespoons icing sugar, sieved
- Green food colouring
- Various sugar sprinkles (hundreds and thousands, stars, snowflakes)
- Optional mini candy canes for the tree trunks

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) / Gas Mark 4 / 350°F. Grease and line a brownie tin with baking paper.

Beat eggs, caster sugar, and vanilla in a large bowl. Melt butter and chocolate together, then mix into the egg mixture. Fold in flour and baking powder. Pour into tin and bake for 20-25 minutes, until slightly gooey but not liquid. Cool briefly before moving to a wire rack.

Making the Christmas trees

Cut the cooled brownie slab into triangles. Insert short candy cane pieces into each triangle as tree trunks. Make thick green icing from icing sugar, water, and food colouring, then pipe onto brownies in zigzags. Decorate with sugar toppings while icing is wet; leave to set.

Caring for Your Winter Garden

Carry on weeding

As autumn concludes and foliage is replaced by snow and frost, managing these elements becomes crucial for maintaining a safe and orderly environment. Notably, weeds remain active throughout winter and can take advantage of empty flower beds to proliferate. It is therefore necessary to maintain consistent weed control during this period.

Clearing and Pruning

The quieter winter season provides an optimal window for removing overgrown shrubs - such as ivy and brambles - as well as addressing any dead or unwanted vegetation in beds and borders. Seasonal pruning is also advisable at this time; many woody plants respond well to trimming during dormancy, reducing plant stress and minimising disruption to local wildlife. Proper winter pruning fosters robust growth in the spring.

Protecting Your Garden from Frost

Frost poses significant risks to gardens in winter, making thorough preparation imperative. Ensure that garden taps and ponds are adequately insulated to prevent freezing. For outdoor plants susceptible to low temperatures, protective measures such as bubble wrap can help mitigate potential damage and preserve plant health through the season.



Preparing for the New Season

Winter presents an appropriate opportunity to review your gardening inventory in anticipation of the forthcoming year. Assess seed packets for use by dates, and clean or inspect plant labels and canes. Verifying that all tools and materials are maintained in optimal condition ensures operational readiness for spring.

Sustainable Christmas Trees

An increasing number of people are opting for potted Christmas trees, utilising them indoors during the festive season and relocating them outdoors thereafter. This method represents a more sustainable alternative to purchasing and disposing of cut trees annually. With proper care, a potted Christmas tree may thrive for multiple years, serving as both a seasonal focal point and a lasting feature within the garden.

Autumn Anagram Quiz

Congratulations to the winner - Simon Markwick

ANSWERS 1. Estuary 2. Singer 3. Nicholas 4. Androcles 5. Edelweiss
6. Tutankhamen 7. Longleat 8. Colorado 9. White House 10. Newcastle

Stanbridge House

54-58 Kings Road, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 8DY
Tel: 01903 753059
www.stanbridgehouse.co.uk

**A spacious detached family run care home
established for over 40 years**

Prospective residents are welcome to visit to look around, meet the staff and residents, and experience the importance of tenderness in a warm and loving environment.

Do you enjoy singing? Come and sing with us!

The Boundstone Chorus

**is a friendly group who perform a wide range of music.
We're open to all who enjoy singing.**

**We meet during term-time on Wednesday evenings,
7.15 - 9.15 pm in St Michael's Church Hall, Lancing.**

**For further information contact the Chorus Administrator
01903 762793 / theboundstonechorus@gmail.com
or just come along!**