



Benefice Newsletter January 2026



From Revd Karen

Happy New Year! This was my third Christmas at St Edward's with two more to go. If we are measuring success by the amount of mulled wine at the Carol Service, then this year was the best yet with sixteen bottles going into the urn and then into our visitors. Stow is very much a tourist town at Christmas so thank you to all those in our congregation who made it such a welcoming church to visit. It was wonderful to see so many locals at the village services.

At the time of writing Stow is still very busy with visitors but we know it will calm down a bit until Easter. As we look to the next season we have a chance to stop and reflect on where we have been, where we are and where we are going. My focus over the next few months will be on how we live in God's hospitality. This is a very broad topic and I'm excited to delve into the theology of hospitality which goes beyond mulled wine and sherry, although both are very important.

Thank you to Bernice

Bernice has been opening and closing the church for many years now accompanied by her faithful dog and is stepping down. Thank you Bernice for all you have done (and continue to do) for St Edward's.

Thank you to Newlands

A huge thank you to Newlands for providing a Christmas Tree this year. Susan added some birds and Jo at Newlands made all the baubles.

The Prayer Tree

We have a prayer tree for visitors all through the year. This Christmas it was swapped out for a real tree and it has been very hard keeping up with the tags and ribbons that enable visitors to leave their prayers in our sacred space. The tree will stay up until Candlemas on 2nd February.

Benefice Contacts

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Condicote:
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Adam Fleming

The Swells:
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Website and Social Media for St Edward's

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14393/>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/people/St-Edwards-Church-Stow-on-the-Wold/61566790355827/>

Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/st_edwards_stow/

Online services links

4 January: <https://bit.ly/StEd040126>
11 January: <https://bit.ly/StEd110126>
18 January: <https://bit.ly/StEd180126>
25 January: <https://bit.ly/StEd250126>

Blessing

Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.
Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.
Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.
And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

(Frank Borman, Apollo 8 space mission, 1968)

Christmas services around the Benefice

The Christmas Season is a marathon and not a sprint. We started with the Kate's Carol Service which raised over twenty-two thousand pounds. We love hosting this service. The next service was at St Mary's Upper Swell with the candlelit carol service which was very well attended by locals. The church looked beautiful, the music was gorgeous and the canapés afterwards were very welcome.



St Edward's Carol Service was really well attended with people staying for the whole service or just a few carols. Our hospitality was very well received with a record number of bottles of mulled wine served and mince pies eaten.

Carols were sung at Brio, Newlands and Edwardstow, December was a rather busy month....!



St Nicholas Condicote was the first of the Christmas Eve services where the children read the lessons and accompanied the carols. The church was rammed (technical term) with locals and visitors. St Mary's Lower Swell had its first Christmas service for at least five years. We sang carols and told the Christmas story in a beautiful 12th century church. It was Stow's turn next with Midnight Mass which was moved to 11pm. We had 135 people at the service compared to 78 in 2024. This may be down to the change in time or the social media campaign that Karen (Facebook) and Elizabeth (Instagram) put in place in December. On Christmas morning we celebrated at St Nicholas and then at St Edward's. The chocolate nativity allowed Revd Karen to tell the Christmas story to a rather surprised congregation but they got the hang of it eventually.



Thank you to everyone who made this possible. To musicians Adam, Annette, Dominic, Fenella, Mark and Nicholas. To the church wardens, readers, and stewards, to the hospitality teams who made and served food, to the flower arrangers and to our knitters for the nativity scene and to everyone who said yes when we asked them to cover in a season of virus. A huge thank you goes to Elizabeth and Peter at Stow for coordinating behind the scenes.



Thank you!



Percy the undercover pigeon: Behind the scenes...

Percy has been taking a well-deserved break over the past few months, but he has been paying attention to the life of St Edward's. Our roving newsbird continues his search for the things you might not know.

It may not be well known that he is a very musical pigeon.

Unfortunately, he has to put up with Icelandic folk and Scottish fusion techno folk on repeat at the Rectory. He is however

delighted that there is music more to his classical tastes at St Edward's.

In his latest scoop he's been chatting with Adam to find out what he's been playing before, during and after various services throughout 2025.



Bach

Italian concerto BWV971
Tocatta and Fugue in d minor BWV 565 (organ)
Fugue in C minor BWV 562 (organ)
Fugue in G minor BWV 578 (organ)
Prelude and Fugue in C (organ)
Tocatta in F BWV 540 (organ)
Fantasia in G BWV 572 (organ)
Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 550 (organ)

Beethoven

Piano sonata in F minor Op. 2, No. 1
Piano sonata in C minor Op. 13 (pathétique)
Piano sonata in G, Op. 14, No. 2

Chopin

Waltzes Nr 1 in Eb, Nr 3 in A minor, Nr 6 minute waltz, Number 7 b minor
Nocturne Nr 15 in f minor
Preludes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15

Debussy

Clair de Lune
Homage à Rameau (Images book I)
Golliwog's cakewalk

Einaudi

La Linea Scura

Haydn

Sonata in b minor Hob. 16:32

Thank you Adam!

Hisaihi

Merry go round of life (Howl's moving castle)

Joplin

Bethena waltz

Liszt

Consolation Nr 3 in Db

Mompou

Cancion y danza 7 & 8

Mozart

Sonata in F K. 332
Sonata in Bb K. 333

Poulenc

Trois Novelettes
Mouvements perpétuelles

Rachmaninov

Prelude Nr 3 in G minor
Prelude Nr 6 in Eb

Ravel

Prelude pour une infante défunte

Satie

Gymnopedies 2 & 3

Services

Mondays 9.00am	Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel at St Edward's Stow
Sunday 4 th January 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow with bells before the service
Thursday 8 th January 11.00am	Holy Communion, Newlands Court
Sunday 11 th January 9.15am	BCP Matins, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 11 th January 11.00am	BCP Matins (lay led) St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 11 th January 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Wednesday 14 th January 3.00pm	Prayers and hymns at Beechwood Park
Sunday 18 th January 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 18 th January 10.30 am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 18 th January 3.00pm	Dementia Friendly Service, Edwardstow Court
Sunday 25 th January 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 25 th January 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow



RIP

Funeral of Frank Williams 12 noon Friday 16th January at St Edward's
Funeral of Barbara Wakefield 12 noon Monday 19th January at St Edward's

Dates for your diary

Sunday 8th February 3pm VIVA LA VIOLA - The Midland Sinfonia

A programme offering centre-stage to the often overlooked yet magnificent viola, part of the Midland Sinfonia's 30th Anniversary Season.

Regular Events

Wednesday Coffee Club - 9.00-10.30am in Huffkins

Closely Knit - 10am-noon every Saturday in the Church

Mother's Union – Thursday 8th December 2pm – AGM in the Church Room

Cotswold Dementia Café Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, 2-4pm at the Baptist Church Hall off Back Walls. A community café offering friendship, support, advice and more for anyone living with or caring for someone with dementia.