



Benefice Newsletter September 2025



From Revd Karen

Most churches pause in August but not a busy tourist church like Stow. Percy the pigeon accompanied me for one week in August and we have his report in this newsletter. We had two weddings and one marriage blessing in August and we have two weddings in September. In my last church I conducted three weddings in eight years as the outside of the church was rather plain. It has been a real joy to be present at the weddings in Stow and at the village churches. We already have six booked for next year.

In September we are celebrating the season of Creationtide. This resource has been available to churches for around twenty years, although this might be the first time it has been celebrated across our benefice. The readings and music allow us to focus on the beauty of creation around us and we end with our harvest festival on the 28th September. Following the success of the benefice community picnic at Bank Holiday we are going to have a harvest lunch after the service. This will be a catered event in church so please let us know that you are coming so that we have enough food. We imagine that the cost will be around £10 per head.

The next few months will be as busy so if there is something we need to share across the benefice please Karen or Elizabeth know as we might not remember unless you tell us.

Blessing

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field.
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

Benefice Contacts

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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

7 Sept: NO STREAMING
14 Sept: <https://bit.ly/StEd140925>
21 Sept: <https://bit.ly/StEd210925>
28 Sept: NO STREAMING

Electric news

Some of our wiring failed its five year inspection earlier in the year and we need to replace it. It looks like the wiring for the globe lights in the nave was installed in the 1970s. We are looking at how we might light the nave for services, concerts and for our visitors. We are on a limited budget but which parts of the church could we highlight? The rood screen? The corbels? The preacher? Please let us know by contacting Revd Karen or Elizabeth.

Percy's week with the Vicar

Those who followed the pigeon saga last month may remember Percy. Percy has now seen the error of his ways and has decided he needs to see what the vicar gets up to during the week. He is far too wise a pigeon to suggest that the vicar only works one day a week. He has checked the cookbooks – there is an old fashioned pigeon pie in there....

Percy started the week with morning prayer and then spent a few days going round Stow visiting the retirement complexes at Brio and Newlands as well as a lot of pubs and hotels to advertise the concert at the end of the week. This is what Revd Karen said she was doing. Percy is not so sure! He loved meeting lots of people at the coffee morning at Huffkins. Later in the week Percy had a trip out to Cirencester to see how other tourist churches welcome visitors as well as a visit to the Long Table which is a community project based in an old department store. They serve good tea there as well as host a repair shop. On Friday Percy checked out the refreshments for the Tyler Hay concert. He wanted to play a couple of pieces on the piano – the pigeon ascending perhaps - but a stern look from the vicar reminded him about the mess he made last time he ascended. Percy was banned from the wedding where the dress code was black and had a bit of a lie in on Sunday when the vicar did three services included a very good hymn sing at Edwardstow. If you want to see more of Percy join our Facebook page or community WhatsApp.



Benefice Picnic

On Bank Holiday Sunday we held a church safari/benefice community picnic. Adam, Karen and Percy started the morning with a BCP Holy Communion at St Nicholas Condicote. It was then a dash across the North Cotswolds countryside to get to Stow for 10.30am. After the service we organised ourselves into cars with the new St Edward's game of how many parishioners

and visitors can you get into a vintage Rolls Royce? Down at the School Field in Lower Swell Sally and Peter Green brought along some very comfortable picnic chairs and we munched through our picnics on a glorious sunny day. There was an exceptional lattice apple pie from Lindsey, a quiche from Donald, plums and cake from Sally and strawberries from Caroline. Karen managed to bake a cake before the service and rustle up a loaf full of cheese sandwiches. There was a lot of laughter and visitors, congregation and a very pretty dog had a great time.



Closely Knit

Our lovely team of knitters raised £1222 in July. A marvellous amount. Anyone wishing to join us please just turn up on a Saturday. You will be made most welcome!



Focus on...Music and Concerts

Music thrives at St Edward's! Our team of regular organists continues to support the Sunday liturgy and occasional offices. It's been a very busy year for us with many weddings taking place across the benefice.

Sadly we said farewell to Marjorie Fennessy who passed away in June. Marjorie was very musical and had been a stalwart member of the church choir when it was in existence. Her life was celebrated at a lovely, and very well attended, thanksgiving service in July.

Our church concert initiative is gaining serious momentum. Since its launch in 2023 we've had many piano/piano and string recitals, some given by myself and our other homegrown musicians. We hosted a stunning concert given by young musicians from Pate's School in Cheltenham at the end of last year. In February we welcomed the Seraphim Trio, a chamber group from Australia and, over the summer, Lumos came to give one of their beautiful candlelit concerts in church.



We were also delighted to secure a visit by the uniquely talented Alistair McGowan performing his mix of comedy, trademark impressions, reading of his own poetry and piano playing.

We now have available to us an excellent Steinway grand piano which will serve us very well as we continue to invite performers to come to Stow.

More events are planned for the rest of this year and for 2026 and beyond. Watch this space and please tell your friends about them!



This year's Ride+Stride day is Saturday 13th September, when individuals seek sponsorship through visiting Gloucestershire churches by walking, cycling, on horseback, on public transport or by car. Or some arrange coffee mornings or lunches.

Peter Dixon will again visit ten ancient Cotswold churches in a 20-mile walk, having survived the endeavour in previous years. Because 13th September is the final day of the Stow Festival, which takes up a lot of his time, Peter will do his walk on Monday 8th September, before the Festival gets going.

Could you do a fundraising activity on or about the 13th? If you let Peter know your planned activity, he will add it to the Justgiving page. Even if you can't do an activity yourself, please encourage family and friends to do so, or to donate at

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/st-edwards-at-stow>

The money raised goes to the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust, but GHCT returns half of the funds to St Edward's.

Services

Mondays 9.00 am	Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel at St Edward's Stow
Thursday 4 th September 11.00am	Holy Communion, Newlands Court
Sunday 7 th September 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow with bells before the service
Sunday 7 th September 1.30pm	Wedding at St Edward's Stow on the Wold
Sunday, 7 th September 4.00pm	Family Service, St Nicholas Condicote - a service led by children with reading, music and singing
Friday 12 th September 4.00pm	Wedding at St Edward's Stow on the Wold
Sunday 14 th September 9.15am	BCP Matins Communion, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 14 th September 11.00am	BCP Matins (lay led) St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 14 th September 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 14 th September 2.30pm	Dementia Friendly Service, Edwardstow Court
Sunday 21 st September 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 21 st September 10.30 am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 28 th September 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 28 th September 10.30am	Morning Service for Harvest Festival, St Edward's Stow followed by a Harvest lunch in church

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 3rd September 3-4pm – MU “Wave of Prayer” in the Lady Chapel at St Edward's.

This is a continuous expression of our commitment in prayer to each other. It runs throughout the year so that the work and members of each and every area in which Mothers' Union is active is prayed for at some point. It is quite powerful to realise that at any point in time members of the MU (over 4 million members in 84 countries) will be praying, round the clock and around the world!

Tea and cake to follow as per MU tradition.

Tuesday 9th – Saturday 13th September – Music at Stow – details here [Welcome | Music at Stow](#)

Saturday 27th September – Piano and Viola recital – Nicholas Ashton, Michael Brown and Chris Yates (principal viola with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra)

Regular Events

Wednesday Coffee Club -9.00-10.30am in Huffkins

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

Mother's Union – See Wave of Prayer above

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.