

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PARISH OF CALNE & BLACKLAND



*...keeping you in
touch with your church family.
Happy Christmas & New Year
December 2025 & January 2026*

Parish contact details

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The Reverend Sarah Errington

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Training Curate:

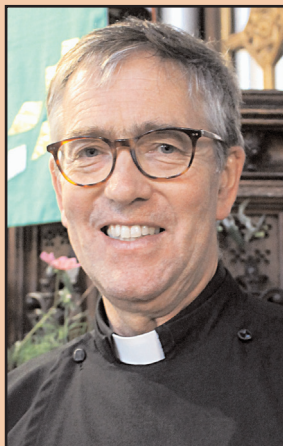
The Reverend Carly Taylor

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Parish Administration:

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*Church House is open from 10.00am to 12noon
on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.*

Prayer for Winter

*Lord, in the midst of Winter,
when the days are cold and wind can pierce,
remind us of the warmth of your love.*

*In the midst of Winter, when days are short, dawn comes
late, and dusk arrives early, remind us that in the darkness
your light still shines.*

Amen

Church addresses

Holy Trinity Church, Quemerford, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 0AR

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 0HU

St Peter's Church, Blackland, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8UQ

Website: <https://www.mardenvale.org.uk>

Find us on facebook @stmaryschurchcalne



Thought for Christmas



One of the aspects of clergy ministry which isn't necessarily pointed out to candidates applying for selection is that it's helpful if a clergy person can sing, especially in traditional sorts of churches like the ones in our benefice. Notably at smaller funerals, where the family is nonetheless keen to include a couple of hymns, the vicar does sometimes end up nearly singing a solo.

Happily for me I really enjoy singing. Every Monday evening I join in the bass section of Calne Choral Society, which incidentally has people in it from across the benefice, though we rehearse in Calne. We do three or four concerts a year, always in St Mary's Church, and the audience is mainly made up of our long-suffering family members.

In my two years here, we've done a few challenging works which have definitely been more fun to sing than for the poor audience to listen to. So imagine our delight when this year we were presented with a piece published only in 2019 which not only (a) is in English, so the audience has a sporting chance of understanding the words and (b) retells the Christmas story, so the audience already has an idea what's going on, but it also includes some absolutely gorgeous, harmonious music that makes my soul sing as well as my vocal cords. I've played it in the car a little bit, and last week my wife Alice actually asked me to play it again – unheard of for a Calne Choral piece!

The reason I'm mentioning this is because it's an example of how the age-old Christmas story of God coming among us is still inspiring people to retell, and reimagine, the story – even in the 21st cen-

tury. The work is called Christmas Oratorio by Bob Chilcott and you can listen to it on Spotify or Amazon Music. Shameless plug: you could even come and hear it live on Sat 13th December at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church!

More unusually for a big Christmas work it includes the Magnificat – the words of Mary just after she's been visited by Archangel Gabriel. She proclaims the greatness of God, but also speaks of God scattering the proud, casting down the mighty from their thrones, sending the rich away empty, while filling the hungry with good things and lifting up the lowly. It's a timely reminder that God is particularly interested in the people who have the least, and those society typically overlooks, or even looks down upon. Worth remembering as we approach Christmas with its temptation to over indulge. Is there a way we can share our abundance with those who have very little?



This Christmas season may God enable us to hear with fresh understanding the age-old story, the extraordinary good news, that God loved the world so much that he has come to live among us in the person of his son Jesus Christ.

With my prayers, and very best wishes
Caspar Bush, Team Rector
(email address see page two)

Calne and Blackland – Christmas Charity

This year we will be remembering our brothers and sisters in Sudan. We will be collecting donations to go to support people in Sudan through the Salisbury Diocese Sudans Partnership. The link was first established in 1972. The Partnership link has many aspects, and currently supports both the partner churches and diocese in both Sudans in a number of ways:

- Prayer – a constant priority in our mutual caring and sharing.
- Education – in schools and colleges including the Episcopal University in South Sudan.
- Medical support – funding diocesan

clinics with basic drugs and clinical and midwifery training through our Sudan Medical Link (SML).

- Advocacy – encouraging HM government, parliament and agencies to better support humanitarian needs, funding and peace initiatives.
- Humanitarian support where natural disasters and conflict destroy communities.
- Deanery and Parish Links where Deaneries and Parish initiatives can be mutually created, developed and sustained.
- Giving of our time and resources.

Calne Mothers' Union

October Mothers Union we welcomed Dave Sandberg who told us of the work of the Open Blue Bus – although we knew of the work here with young people in Calne on Friday evenings, we were interested to hear of the various work carried out throughout the week with different ages across

the area. At the November meeting, members brought a variety of items precious to them and shared memories of the item with the group. At the next meeting on 9th December, there will be a quiz and Christmas carol singing with punch and nibbles.

All welcome, Jane Wells

New for January 2026: Mary's Makers

This new group will be run by Tonia and Tamara from our congregation who are both skilled crafters. It is planned to start on 26th January 2026.

Day and time: Mondays, 10.00 – 12.00am weekly. Venue: Upstairs at Church House.

The aim is for our craft group to be inclusive, filled with love, laughter and lots of fun. This group will be for both men and women, providing compan-

ionship, the opportunity to learn new skills and share skills and improve mental health.

There will be a suggested donation of £2 per session to cover refreshments and that will also go towards any materials for small workshops we are hoping to include from time to time. Most of the weekly sessions will be "bring your own". Tamara is happy to teach crochet and knitting.

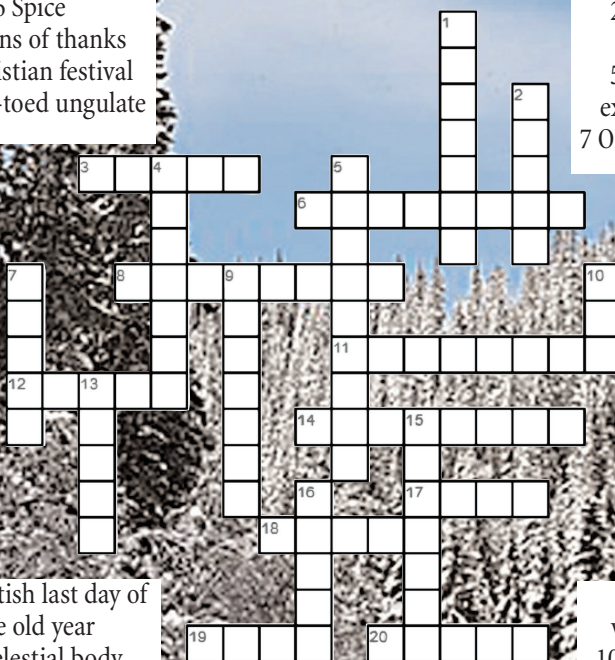
Christmas Crossword 2025

Across

- 3 Pudding
- 6 Spice
- 8 Tokens of thanks
- 11 Christian festival
- 12 Even-toed ungulate

Down

- 1 Seasonal fir
- 2 Christmas song
- 4 Angel
- 5 Lives on others, excuse for affection
- 7 One of the five senses



- 14 Scottish last day of the old year
- 17 Celestial body
- 18 Call to church
- 19 Optimistic feeling
- 20 Number of wise men

- 9 Favourite vegetable/new life
- 10 The Holly and the
- 13 Fragrant gum resin
- 15 Son of God
- 16 On the sixth day of Christmas

Answers on page 7... Don't cheat!

Calne Christmas Shoe Boxes

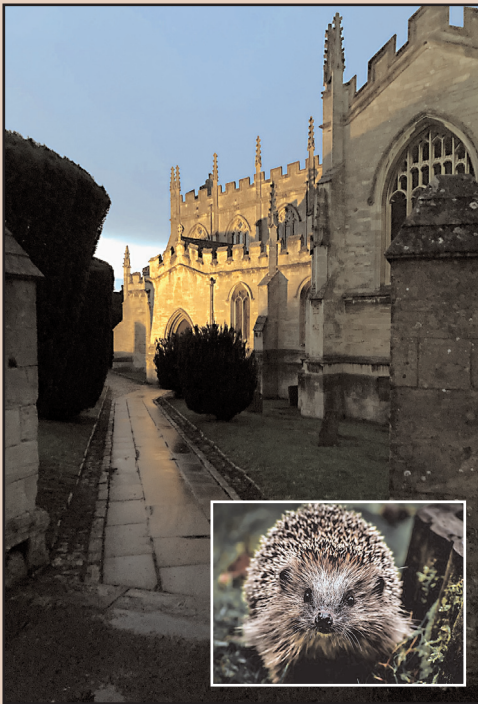
This year churches in Calne and Blackland will be supporting the Calne Exchange Christmas Appeal by donating shoe boxes with useful items for vulnerable people and families in Calne. You can include non-perishable

foods, toiletries, gloves, hats, scarves and Christmas treats. Bring your wrapped boxes to one of our churches or Church House by 5th December. More Information on Facebook at Calne Exchange Christmas Appeal.

A Christmas Tale

Ready black eyes looked out of the pile of leaves, nose and whiskers twitching, taking in the smells of the day. The sun was slowly sinking below the horizon, throwing a warm glow over everything.

Beautiful wafts of sound had been washing over the churchyard, loud bursts as the church door was opened, and closed, to let people in and out.



Curious to discover what was going on, the little hedgehog snuffled out from his hiding place beside the stone wall. He should have been hibernating but something drew him on. Taking care to shelter under the yews, he slowly made his way to the church porch,

nibbling on an errant beetle to sustain him.

As luck would have it, the side door had been left ajar. Feeling very brave and rather foolish he slipped in. Scurrying down the lip of the step he quickly made his way into the shadows, slowly he sidled into St Edmund's chapel, keeping to the base of the church screen to hide himself.

Soft candlelight cast shadows, and the faint smell of incense pervaded the air. Stunning glass windows seemed to shine a myriad of jewel-like colours into the church. Hesitantly, he continued up the side aisle, past the side pews, keeping well into the shadows. Every so often rolling himself into a ball if he thought the sound of footsteps were too close.

A choir was singing, magical music and organ playing smote the air. The little hedgehog moved ever closer to the altar. Sheltering behind the choir stalls, he found himself accompanied by a few mice, who were living in some old church kneelers, also drawn into the wonder. They appeared to realise it was a special day, a celebration. They wanted to join in too. The birth of Jesus Christ, time to pray for peace and better times ahead.

Suddenly they found they wanted to accompany the wondrous singing, and, as midnight struck, their voices could be heard, if you listened very hard ...

*Happy Christmas,
Charles and Serena Boase.*

Dates for your diary in December and January

December

See the back page for Christmas services in the Parish.

- 3rd** 2.00-3.30pm – Bereavement Café in St Mary's Church.
9th Mothers' Union Christmas Social and Quiz.
13th 7.30pm – **Calne Choral Christmas Carol Concert**, at St Mary's Church,
Admission Children free, £10.00 for Adults, (including refreshments).

January

- 4th** 10.00am – Sunday Club in Church House.
7th 2.00-3.30pm – Bereavement Café in St Mary's Church.
31st 7.30pm – Fundraising Concert for Project 2026. St Mary's Church.

Focus for Prayer

Please remember to pray for ...

- Christians throughout the world celebrating Christmas.
 - Children who find joy in Christmas.
- People who find Christmas stressful because of the financial demands.
 - Anyone who does not have a place to call 'home'.
- An increase in tolerance in our society and between nations.
- Project 2026 and all the changes planned for St Mary's Church.

Crossword Answers.

Across: 3. Figgy 6. Cinnamon
8. Presents 11. Epiphany 12. Camel
14. Hogmanay 17. Star 18. Bells
19. Hope 20. Three

Down: 1. Douglas 2. Carol 4. Gabriel
5. Mistletoe 7. Touch 9. Sprouts
10. Ivy 13. Myrrh 15. Messiah
16. Geese

Editorial Team:

Sue Twyman, Jane Ridgwell and Jack Robinson.

Illustration, Graphic Design and Layout: Alex Grenfell.

And finally ...

If you organise any groups or events in the parish and would like them to be included in this newsletter then get in touch with the editors.

We would also love to have articles about the different groups in the parish to spread the word more widely and encourage people to come along.

Please email or give copies of items to us in plenty of time for the next newsletter, the deadline is 10th of the preceding month.

email: cbp.news.editor@gmail.com



We would like to give you a warm welcome to the Services at our Churches over the Festive Season

Christmas Events in the Parish of Calne and Blackland



Thursday 18th December –
Blue Christmas in St Mary's Church 7.00pm –
for people who are sad at Christmas



Sunday 21st December

10.00am – Family Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church
3.00pm – Carol Service at St Peter's Church
6.00pm – Carols by Candlelight at St Mary's Church



Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

4.00pm – Crib Service at St Mary's Church
6.00pm – Carol Service at Bowood Chapel
11.00pm – Midnight Mass at St Mary's Church



Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.30am – Holy Communion at St Peter's Church (Traditional)
10.00am – Family Communion at St Mary's Church

Sunday 28th December

8.00am – Holy Communion at St Mary's Church
10.00am – Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Church

**The Editorial Team wish all our readers
a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year**

*IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A DONATION
to the Parish of Calne and Blackland you can use this QR code*

£5

Donate

£10

Donate

£20

Donate

Choose your own amount

