

# PARISH NEWS

The Parish of Aldingbourne, Barnham & Eastergate



50p



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IN THIS ISSUE

CHRISTMAS 2025

REV DOUGLAS FARNHAM

EASTERGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

[www.parishofabe.org.uk](http://www.parishofabe.org.uk)

December 2025



# PARISH OF ALDINGBOURNE, BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE

## SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2025




<b>Saturday 6</b>	<b>Our Lady of Walsingham</b>		
	9.30am Said Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
<b>Sunday 7</b>	<b>Advent 2</b>		
	8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)		St George's, Eastergate
	9am Mattins	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	9.30am Said Mass	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	10am All-age Communion		St George's, Eastergate
	10am Parish Communion		St Mary's, Aldingbourne
	11.15am Sung Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
	4pm Christingle		St Mary's, Aldingbourne
	6pm Evensong	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
<b>Monday 8</b>	<b>Immaculate Conception of the BVM</b>		
	6.30pm Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
<b>Sunday 14</b>	<b>Advent 3</b>		
	8.30am Holy Communion	BCP	St George's, Eastergate
	9am Mattins	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	9.30am Said Mass	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	9.45am Sunday Seekers		Eastergate Primary School
	10am Parish Communion		St Mary's, Aldingbourne
	10am Family Communion		St George's, Eastergate
	11.15am Sung Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
	6pm Evensong & Benediction		St Mary's, Barnham
	4pm Community Carols		Eastergate Village Hall
<b>Sunday 21</b>	<b>Advent 4</b>		
	8.30am Holy Communion	BCP	St George's, Eastergate
	9am Mattins	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	9.30am Said Mass	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	10am Parish Communion		St Mary's, Aldingbourne
	10am Family Communion		St George's, Eastergate
	11.15am Sung Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
	4pm Carols by Candlelight		St Mary's, Barnham
<b>Sunday 28</b>	<b>Christmas 1/Holy Innocents</b>		
	8.30am Holy Communion	BCP	St George's, Eastergate
	9am Mattins	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	9.30am Said Mass	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham
	10am Parish Communion		St Mary's, Aldingbourne
	10am Family Communion		St George's, Eastergate
	11.15am Sung Mass		St Mary's, Barnham
	6pm Evensong	BCP	St Mary's, Barnham

### Other regular weekly services:

10am – Holy Communion every Wednesday at St George's, Eastergate  
 6pm – Evensong (BCP) every evening at St Mary's, Barnham  
 6:30pm – Mass every Tuesday at St Mary's, Barnham





# CHRISTMAS IN THE PARISH OF ALDINGBOURNE, BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE

## St Mary's, Aldingbourne (Church Rd, Aldingbourne, PO20 3TT)

### Sunday 7 December

4pm Christingle

### Christmas Eve

4pm Crib Service  
8pm First Mass of Christmas

### Christmas Day

10am Eucharist of the Nativity

## St George's, Eastergate (Church Lane, Eastergate, PO20 3UX)

### Wednesday 3 December

7.30pm Candlelit Advent Service

### Wednesday 17 December

2.30pm Christmas Carol Service

### Christmas Eve

2pm Crib Service  
11.30pm Midnight Mass

### Christmas Day

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10am Family Communion

## St Mary's, Barnham (Church Lane, Barnham, PO22 0BP)

### Sunday 21 December

4pm Candlelit Carol Service

### Christmas Eve

4pm Crib Service  
7pm First Mass of Christmas

### Christmas Day

9am Mattins  
9.30am Said Mass (BCP)  
11.15am Sung Mass  
6pm Evensong (BCP)

### Friday 26 December

6.30pm Said Mass (St Stephen)

### Saturday 27 December

9.30am Said Mass (St John the Evangelist)

### Thursday 1 January

11.15am Sung Mass (Mary, Mother of God)



Grand  
Raffle

Christmas  
stall

Homemade  
Cakes

Toys &  
Games

Gift  
stall

Tombola

Join us for festive fun



# Christmas Fair 2025 Parish of ABE

Saturday, 6th December

11am—2pm

Eastergate Village Hall, Barnham Road

Eastergate, PO20 3RP

Entry by donation

[www.parishofabe.org.uk](http://www.parishofabe.org.uk)

Registered charity No: 1131523





## AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS

In his gospel, Luke tells how the shepherds in the fields were keeping watch over their flocks when they were terrified by the sudden arrival of heavenly angels, surrounded by the glory of the Lord. And the message of the angel that night has rung down the centuries:

*"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10,11)*

And so, the first people to greet the Saviour were not rich VIPs, but humble shepherds. And in turn, it was the shepherds who

became the first evangelists: for they would have gone home to their families and neighbours that night with the amazing news of what they had seen.

Meanwhile, for Mary there followed a time of reflection. She gathered up in her mind all her impressions, and all that the shepherds had shared about the angelic visit. She knew it was treasure, and not to be squandered. Then she quietly pondered in her heart the meaning and significance of all that had happened, so that she would never forget.

Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are, in fact, good companions in the spiritual life!

So, this Christmas, let's be filled with the joy that the Saviour has also been born 'to us'. May our lives reflect the glory of His coming, even in a small way. May our interactions with friends, colleagues and families during this Advent season reflect the great joy that the angels brought that night, so long ago.

And having spent the Advent season in expectation of the joy that this to come at Christmas, let us come together at the many services we have during December to celebrate with Mary and Joseph and then the shepherds too the joy at the birth of Jesus.

Happy Christmas (when it comes!).

**Fr Paul**

*See page 7 for the latest news  
from the Parish of ABE*

## THINKING ABOUT A WEDDING OR CHRISTENING (BAPTISM) IN ONE OF OUR CHURCHES?

Contact our Parish Office on 01243 553955  
for more information





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## FROM THE REGISTERS OCTOBER 2025

### Funerals

- 7 Sept Margaret Collins [90] \*
- 8 Oct Terence Briggs [77] (Ashes) (E)
- 13 Oct Sylvia Slaughter [96] (E)
- 30 Oct Anne Gunning [69] (Ashes) (E)
- 30 Oct Rev Douglas Farnham [95] (E)

\* Cremation

### Baptisms

- 12 Oct Clara Tompkins (E)
- 26 Oct Evie Robertshaw (A)
- Charlie Robertshaw (A)
- Harry Robertshaw (A)

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

Events coming up in the Parish include:

- **6 December – ABE Christmas Fair at Eastergate Village Hall from 11am-2pm (page 4)**
- **14 December – Community Carols at Eastergate Village Hall from 6pm**
- **18 December – A Bote to Eat (Parish Lunch) at Eastergate Village Hall from 12:30-2pm (page 21)**
- **21 December – Carols by Candlelight at St Mary's Barnham from 4pm**
- **13 June 2026 – ABE Summer Fair**

## CHRISTMAS CARD TO THE PARISH

As is our custom, our Christmas card to the parish is now available for delivery. We need lots of volunteers to deliver these to every house and dwelling in our parish. Please take as many roads as you think you could manage. We never know how these cards are received and indeed for some it may be a much need Christmas message of cheer. Please start delivering them from 1 December and complete by 14 December.

## COME AND MEET THE PCSO

Our local Police Community Support Officer, Caroline Wilson, is holding a series of 'Come and Meet Me' events over the coming months. The dates are:

- Wednesday 3 December: 10:30am to 11:30am at Barnham Community Hall, Yapton Road, Barnham, PO22 0AY.
- Tuesday 27 January: 10:30am to 11:30am at Eastergate Village Hall, Eastergate, PO20 3RP.
- Wednesday 4 February: 10:30am – 11:30am at Barnham Community Hall, Yapton Road, Barnham, PO22 0AY.

## ST GEORGE'S ADVENT AND CAROL SERVICES

We are all invited to a candlelit Advent service at St George's on Wednesday 3 December at 7.30pm and then on Wednesday 17 December at 2.30pm for a Christmas Carol Service. Please come to hear seasonal readings and sing favourite carols and hymns. Refreshments after each service will be offered.

## ECUMENICAL ADVENT LUNCHES

We will be holding a series of Ecumenical Advent lunches in the hall at Westergate Methodist church on the following dates:

Wednesday 26 November, Wednesday 3 December, Wednesday 10 December and Wednesday 17 December.

The groups will be 12 midday until 2pm and the first hour we will share together in a soup and cheese lunch followed by a discussion based on an Advent book '*Unexpected Jesus*' by Anna Robbins, part of the Cover to Cover series. All are welcome from across the denominations in our area. If you would like to join us please contact Rev Sheila Higgins at 01243 553901 or [smhandaway@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:smhandaway@hotmail.co.uk).

## COMMUNITY CAROLS

On Sunday 14 December at 6pm there is an opportunity to hear the Christmas story and sing some of the most popular carols at Eastergate Village Hall as we count down towards Christmas. Please do invite others to come along.

## CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Our traditional Carol service is at St Mary's Barnham at 4pm on Sunday 21 December. This popular service is followed by seasonal refreshments. A perfect way to start Christmas week. Do invite others too.

## IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

The price of our magazine has been at 50p (annual sub £5) since 2009 and therefore, after 16 years, it is now time to revise this. From 1 January 2026 the price will be £1 a copy (£10 for annual subscriptions).

This, we believe, still represents excellent value for money and is comparable to the price of magazines in neighbouring parishes.

## ALPHA COURSE

St George's, Eastergate, is holding an Alpha Course starting 18 January and running for 8 weeks with a break for half term. The course

allows people to explore the Christian faith and the meaning of life.

Alpha is for everyone, no matter your background or beliefs. Whether you're new to faith or simply open minded about it all, Alpha is for you.

We all bring different thoughts to the table, and at Alpha we want to create a space that's open for everyone to find what faith means for them.

Each session starts with food (a great way to connect and get to know everyone there) has a video with a talk (about the basics of Christian life) and then a discussion or conversation time. It's a very friendly and welcoming space and you can ask any questions you like.

If you'd like to come along (maybe bring someone else too?) please could you e mail Fr Paul (at paularmstead@btinternet.com) and let him know if you have done this course before or not.

The sessions (which are free) will be held in the church and be on 18 Jan, 25 Jan, 1 Feb and 8 Feb and then 1 Mar, 8 Mar, 15 Mar and 22 Mar. We might have to reflect on this when numbers are known.



## EASTERGATE & BARNHAM

This has been a month focused on craft and charity for our WI. We were very pleased to provide the poppy display for Eastergate Village Hall, a fitting reminder of those who gave and continue to give their lives for us. We have also worked with the Veterans Volunteer Service, making quilts to keep them warm while they work on a local allotment, a project that sees them working with young people to pass on their skills and knowledge. This month's meeting will focus on Christmas food and comparing "Cheap vs

Steep" options. We are looking forward to a visit to Pinks Ice Cream as well as our Traditional Christmas Dinner at Chichester College.

**Georgette Budhrum**

## EASTERGATE FRIENDS



Our November speaker was Diane Levantine, the co-founder of The Sussex Snowdrop Trust. This charity was established in 1993 to provide financial/emotional and respite care to families, at home, who have children with life limiting or terminal illnesses. Hospital care is provided by paediatric nurses and counsellors through the trust, while links are still retained with the NHS and the hospitals the children are involved with.

The charity provides support for 0 - 19 year old children who live within a 15 mile radius of Chichester with their offices based in Westhampnett. Over half a million pounds is needed each year to provide their services and this is achieved through fund raising and donations. Some of this money is also used to provide fun family days out and respite weekends for parents which are very much needed and appreciated. The trust also supports a number of children at Fordwater School in Chichester.

It is very obvious, through Diane's informative talk, that the Snowdrop Trust is run by amazing and committed people, including volunteers, who provide a valuable and necessary service to some extremely vulnerable young people and their families within our society.

Our coffee morning in November was held at Serving Thyme in Ford and some members took part in a walk along part of the Centurian Way between Lavant and Chichester, a local asset.



We also welcomed two members from North Bersted WI to our meeting.

Eastergate Friends meet on the second Monday of each month at Eastergate Village Hall between 10am and 12noon. Please feel free to come and join our happy group.

**Debbie Mead**



## WESTERGATE

We had such fun. Instead of listening to a speaker we played tabletop games such as shove halfpenny, snail race and bagatelle. Members were each given a numbered piece of card when they arrived which told them which table to sit at. This was then their team. We had done this to encourage people to mix and talk to people other than their usual friends. Judging by the noise level and laughter it worked very well. We scored the games amongst our own teams but there

wasn't an overall prize. The point was the taking part and having fun. The balls in a bucket caused much hilarity as instead of landing in the bucket they were going under people's chairs

Before we started David Bathurst came to tell us about his new book which is of walks in Sussex based on the time of year. He then stayed to join in the fun.

Yoma had made individual chocolate cakes for us. They were decorated with sugar poppies.

As it happened to be 11th November we donated our tea money to the British Legion. A worthy cause.

Members were asked to think over the Christmas period whether they would like to join the committee next year and plans were announced for our upcoming trips.

Come and join the fun. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Westergate Methodist Church at 2pm.

**Catherine White-Aldworth**

## PRAYER DIARY FOR DECEMBER

**For our three church communities:** As we begin Advent, we pray that our reading and support of Advent groups may increase our understanding of this festival.

We pray that in all our worship over the Christmas season we reach out to others, especially those who find this time of year difficult. We also pray our worship over Christmas will speak to all in our community.

And we give thanks for the increased numbers supporting our Messy Church afternoons and pray for all those whose hard work makes these events so much fun.

**For the wider community of ABE:** We give thanks for all the hard work that goes on in our schools and especially give thanks for the

work of the interim head at Eastergate CE Primary School as we pray for the new leadership in the New Year.

We pray for the ongoing work of our new Medical Centre. And we also pray that residents in our new housing developments will soon feel part of our local community.

**For our nation and the world:** We pray for increased awareness of mental health care and crime in our country.

We also pray that our government makes just decisions about the financial needs of our country. And we continue to pray for just and compassionate decisions to be made about immigration in our country and in Europe.

And we also continue to pray for the future of the planet. We also pray tirelessly for peace in the world and for all those who suffer from the effects of war and violence.

# ALDINGBOURNE BELL RINGING

Church bells are often muffled for funerals and other solemn occasions, including Remembrance Sunday. Other days can include Good Friday and New Year's Eve.

On these occasions, the bells are half-muffled, where one side of the clapper (the metal part of the bell which hangs inside the bell) is covered with a leather pad, which dulls the sound of the bell when the clapper strikes. This is usually done on the backstroke, so the clapper strikes once without the pad and then with the pad, which produces an echo effect.

Fully muffled bells (when both sides of the clapper are covered) are only used for the death of the monarch, the death of the diocesan bishop or the incumbent vicar. Muffling the bells probably dates from the 1600s in England, when change ringing started. Change ringing is when a group of ringers systematically change the order of the bells following a particular pattern or sequence, or just change the order of the bells called by one of the ringers. The patterns have exotic names such as Cambridge Surprise, Grandsire and Aladdin Bob Doubles.

On Saturday 8 November, twelve ringers from the Western District of the Sussex County Association of Change Ringers rang the half-muffled bells at St. Mary's Church, Aldingbourne, before a service of

Remembrance to remember the bell ringers who served in the First and Second World Wars and more recent conflicts, and those who gave their lives in service. The service was followed by tea, cake and sandwiches. The bells were also rung half-muffled before the service on Remembrance Sunday.

The bells at St. Mary's, Aldingbourne, are rung on Sundays and special occasions. The bell ringers practise on Monday evenings between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. Anyone who wishes to learn how to ring and experienced ringers are most welcome. We have five bells at St. Mary's. Please contact Claire Tunnell for more information ([claire.tunnell@gmail.com](mailto:claire.tunnell@gmail.com)).



**Remembrance at St Mary's Aldingbourne**



**Remembrance Day was marked across the Parish, including at a Remembrance Sunday service at St George's Eastergate on 9 November**

# REV DOUGLAS FARNHAM

**Rector of the Parish of ABE, 1992-1996**

Doug and Jean Farnham moved to Eastergate in 1970, when Doug became lecturer in education at Bishop Otter College (later the University of Chichester). Jean worked at the Barnham doctors' practice and together they ran the parish Sunday School. In time, Doug, a former headteacher in Devon became a governor of Eastergate School and was

involved in various church and community events: for example on the committee for the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1977.

When he took early retirement, he trained for the ministry at Sarum College Salisbury, serving the parish as a non-stipendiary priest with Rev Iain Morrison, in the Benefice of Barnham and Eastergate. In 1992 he was invited to be the Rector of the Parish of Aldingbourne, Barnham and Eastergate, and in his time he successfully drew together the three separate parish communities to worship together with a single PCC, six church wardens and one treasurer. Vera Saunders was appointed his secretary, with the Parish Office being created in Barnham village.

In 1996, with his wife Jean in poor health, Doug retired first to Walberton, and later to Chichester. Doug was able to assist with services at St Pauls Chichester, where they worshipped. Jean died in 2017, and Doug continued to live alone, supported by Alison and family, until he passed peacefully away in September 2025 aged 95. He was a devoted husband, a great-grandfather, a gentle wise and humble man, and a much loved and respected priest: God's faith – filled servant to the end.

On 30 October, following his funeral in Chichester, Doug was laid to rest in Eastergate Churchyard among his many friends and parishioners.



**Rev Douglas Farnham**

**Sue Hyland**





# BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE COMMUNITY TRUST

December is here and we are full of festive cheer ....We look forward to welcoming you to our community halls - Eastergate Village Hall and Barnham Community Hall no matter what time of year. Both our buildings have many friendly events to offer you including the following:

- **Pop Up Shop Opportunities at Eastergate Village Hall on Tuesdays** during the busy coffee morning. £10 a table. Please contact Nina for more information.

- **Weekly Coffee Mornings:** Nina's Friendly Coffee Morning on Tuesdays at Eastergate Village Hall, 10am – midday (quiet space also available). Wednesdays at Barnham Community Hall, 10am – midday. Just pop along, you will be made very welcome. Please note that on the 1st Wednesday of the month, Barnham Community Hall's Cutten Café (see: *page 27*) will be open from 9am–3pm. As well as the usual delicious cakes and savouries, a light lunch will be on offer.

- **Friendly Foodie Fridays:** 11:30am-1pm on Friday 12 December at Eastergate Village Hall (in the Community Hub at the back of Eastergate Village Hall). Just the one Friday in December because of Christmas. We will have rescued/surplus food on offer to our community from our partners UK Harvest.

This amazing initiative is available to everyone. We accept cash donations but they are not compulsory. Please bring a bag. We look forward to welcoming you.

This project is now sponsored by Nyton House Residential Care Home.

In the main hall we will now have a **regular clothing and furniture swap** working with our partners West Sussex Recycles.

Please contact Nina for more information or should you want to help (details below).

- **Textile Workshops:** Wednesday 10 and Wednesday 24 December at Barnham Community Hall.

- **Christmas Fun Quiz:** Friday 5 December at Eastergate Village Hall. Doors 6.30pm. **SOLD OUT**

- **Christmas Fair:** Saturday 6 December at Barnham Community Hall with Santa's Grotto. Craft and gift stalls, music, delicious festive treats, Santa's Grotto and Christmas raffle. See below for contact details.

- **Christmas Community Lunch:** Sunday 14 December at Eastergate Village Hall. 1pm. Just £15pp for two amazing courses. Bookings in advance only please, see below for Nina's info. Supported by Westergate Care Home.

- **Fun Christmas Quiz:** Friday 19 December at Barnham Community Hall. £5pp, max 6 in a team. Doors 7pm. Please book in advance. Fully licensed bar, hot dogs, snacks and raffle. Please contact Ali, details below for more info.

Please keep an eye out on the local noticeboards, our Facebook pages and our website for more information [barnhamandeastergatecommunitytrust.com](http://barnhamandeastergatecommunitytrust.com).

Our motto is 'Together We Are Stronger' and we look forward to seeing you very soon.

Take care.

**All the staff and volunteers at Barnham and Eastergate Community Trust**

*For enquiries and more information please contact Nina-Maria McMaster on 07849 356097 or email [nina@eastergatehall.org.uk](mailto:nina@eastergatehall.org.uk) (based at Eastergate Village Hall) or Ali Tarbard/Sally-Ann Barker on 07714 456482 or email [events@barnhamcommunityhall.org](mailto:events@barnhamcommunityhall.org) (based at Barnham Community Hall).*

# YOUR COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS – 20 IDEAS

1. **Plan your budget.** Don't let Christmas 'fever' make you reckless.

2. **Practical details.** Make sure you have in a good stock of coal and logs, Christmas tree lights that work, a clean oven, a stock of candles and matches, and spare batteries.

3. **Choose a colour theme.** Red? Gold? Purple? Silver? Then use it on everything – from your candles, tree baubles and wrapping paper, to table napkins and Christmas cards and lights.

4. **Hang a wreath.** You can buy one, or get creative with a mixture of garden foliage.

5. **Enjoy any Christmas fairs and markets.** Also, consider taking a housebound person with you, or someone who may be lonely.

6. **The trip to Bethlehem.** Dig out your nativity set, and start Mary and Joseph and the donkey at the top of your stairs – moving them a bit closer to the manger downstairs each day. And don't forget to start the wise men on their way!

7. **Plan your Christmas lunch early.** Try and think of everything that you will need on the day – and make sure you have it ordered or bought in good time.

8. **Think about decorating your table.** You could use holly and ivy and narcissi and snowdrops... and lots of red ribbon.

9. **Pick the perfect tree.** Bear in mind that an artificial tree is not just for Christmas, but for life.... all that non-renewable plastic will spend eternity in some landfill site. So why not branch out and look for the real thing.

10. **Display your cards with style.**

11. **Deck the halls.** Would your front entrance hall take a small tree, wreath, or maybe just a bowl of pretty sweets? Run a garland up the

banister. Add some ivy and some fairy lights.

12. **Donate to charities** who help the homeless and the migrants.

13. **Sing carols** – and play carols at home. Remind your family what Christmas is really all about.

14. **Wrap those presents.** What you get and how you wrap it will say a lot about your attitude towards the person you are giving to! So, select your presents and wrapping materials with care. Adding some ribbon is well worth the effort.

15. **Fill those Christmas stockings.** A must for Christmas mornings.

16. **Give your pets some extra care.** If you have a curious dog or cat, avoid tinsel on the tree, keep a watchful eye on the turkey bones on Christmas Day. Also, don't leave scraps of wrapping paper around. Finally, ensure your pets can find a quiet place to rest if all the family is there.

17. **Go crackers.** In 1847 the confectioner Tom Smith invented the Christmas cracker. Legend says that he spotted a beautifully wrapped French bon-bon, and had a 'eureka moment'. In effect, he said to himself: "What that bon-bon needs is a tiny plastic key-ring, an awful pun on a piece of paper, and a tissue paper hat, all crammed into an exploding toilet roll." The rest is history.

18. **Read your children the Christmas story.** There are any number of excellent children's books which tell it with wonderful illustrations.

19. **Make sure your neighbours are all right.** Is there anyone who could use a helping hand? Anyone needing a lift to church?

20. On Christmas Eve/Christmas, make time to **have a family reading of the Nativity stories** in Matthew and Luke. As a family, make time to praise God for the gift of Jesus!

# HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS

## 13 December – Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse

Lucy was a Christian girl who got caught up in the fierce and widespread Diocletian persecutions of 303-4. She refused to give up her Christian faith, and so was put to death. Her tomb can still be found in a Catacomb in Syracuse, and there are early fourth-century inscriptions bearing her name (Euskia).

Lucy's full story has been lost in the mists of time, but a romantic legend of her martyrdom grew up after her death. According to the legend, Lucy was arrested while giving to the poor at the height of the persecution. Her own fiancé had betrayed her, telling the authorities about her faith. The judge ordered that she be raped in a brothel and then burned, but all attempts to inflict such punishment on her

went amiss, because God protected her. At last, Lucy was killed by the sword.

Lucy's legend was written in the 5th century, and she was honoured in Rome from the 6th century. The name Lucy means 'light', and so in time she became the patron saint for those with eye diseases. Her feast day is close to the shortest day of the year, so it is celebrated in Sweden as a festival of light.

As the full details of Lucy's martyrdom will never be known, she can represent all the young women who have been willing to die for Christ, and whose full stories will also never be known to us.

## 26 December – St Stephen, the first martyr

Have you ever stopped to consider that the very first martyr of the Christian Church was a deacon? (But no, he wasn't worked to death by his church.) It was Stephen, one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. He'd been appointed by the apostles to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful poor, and to help in the ministry of preaching.

Acts 6 and 7 tells us all that we know of his life, and the passages seem to suggest that he was an educated Hellenistic Jew. Certainly, Stephen's famous challenge to the Jews reveals him to have been learned in the Scriptures and the history of Judaism, besides being eloquent and forceful.

Stephen's proclamation on the day of his martyrdom pulled no punches. He told the Jews that God did not depend on the Temple. The Temple was but a temporary institution destined to be fulfilled and superseded by Christ, who was the prophet foreseen by Moses as the Messiah for whom the Jewish race had so long awaited.

Stephen then challenged his hearers for resisting the Spirit and for killing the Christ, as their fathers before them had killed the prophets. The Jews were so outraged by this



*Lucy Before the Judge by Lorenzo Lotto.*



that they stoned Stephen on the spot for blasphemy.

As he died, (c 35 AD) Stephen saw a vision of Christ on God's right hand. The men who were witness to the stoning placed their clothes at the feet of Saul (afterwards Paul), who (to his deep regret later) consented to Stephen's death.

By the fourth century Stephen had his own feast day in both East and West Churches. When his supposed tomb was discovered in 415, his popularity soared. His relics were taken to Constantinople and then Rome, along with some stones (allegedly) used at his martyrdom.

Early on the Church made Stephen the patron saint of deacons. In the Middle Ages he was also invoked to help against headaches (?!).

In England, 46 ancient churches are dedicated to him, most of them built after the Norman Conquest. In art Stephen is usually given a book of the Gospels and a stone, and sometimes the palm of martyrdom.



**Saint Stephen the Martyr by Carlo Crivelli. Part of the from The Demidoff Altarpiece.**

## SMILE LINES

### *True story*

The nativity play was going as planned and Joseph and Mary were going from 'house' to 'house' knocking on the doors and asking if there was any room for them.

As they continued to get 'no room' answers, a little voice called from the back of the church: "You should have booked!"

### *Who was the Real Virgin?*

A ten-year-old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which virgin was the mother of Jesus? The virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"

### *What Are the Three Gifts?*

While participating in a church Christmas pageant many years ago, I was delighted to be chosen as the narrator. Each rehearsal went off well and then on the night of the show, I announced, in a loud and penetrating voice, the gifts of the Magi as being "gold, Frankenstein and myrrh."

### *Actual children's versions of Christmas Carols:*

"...sleep in heavenly peas"

"Joy to the world, the Saviour rains!"

"Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plane..."

"While shepherds washed their socks by night..."

"Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly..."

"We three kings of porridge and tar..."

"On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me..."



# EASTERGATE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As we move through this final half term of 2025, it's hard to believe how quickly the first term year has flown by. The children continue to bring great energy and joy to school life — from their enthusiasm for learning to their care for one another, it's a daily reminder of what makes Eastergate such a special community.

This time of year also brings some of our most meaningful moments together. The children have been learning about Remembrance, reflecting deeply on what it means to honour those who gave their lives for others. Our beautiful display in the school lobby — “Lest we forget” — captures their thoughtful work and reminds us all of the importance of peace, gratitude, and hope. I've included a picture so you can see what I mean.

As we look ahead to Christmas, excitement is building for our Nativity performances and festive celebrations. These special occasions are always a highlight for pupils, staff, and families alike, offering us a chance to come together to share the joy and message of the season.

A particularly special recent moment was our Headteacher's Pizza Party, celebrating those children who have consistently followed our Eastergate Ways — showing that we listen to each other, show that we're respectful and kind, develop resilience and remain hardworking and continue to try to be responsible and safe as much as we can be. It was a wonderful opportunity to recognise their positive attitudes and the way they live

out our school values every day.

This month also marks a time of transition for the school, as it will be my final month in charge before, Mrs Sarah Davy, our new headteacher, joins us in January 2026. It has been a privilege to serve as the Interim Headteacher during this period, and I am deeply grateful for the warmth, support, and partnership shown by staff, families, governors, and the wider parish community.

Eastergate has a bright future ahead — what I have seen during my time here confirms that for me. The dedication of the staff, the enthusiasm of the children, and the strength of our community ensure that the school will continue to flourish in the years to come.

As we prepare for the season of Advent, we are reminded of God's promise of light and hope in all things:

*“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” – Matthew 5:16*

With heartfelt thanks and every good wish for the festive season.

**Mr Ricky Leigh**  
Interim Headteacher



**Our “Lest we forget” Remembrance Day display**

# ALL IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

It was... 250 years ago, on 16 December 1775 that Jane Austen, novelist was born. Over 30 million copies of her books have been sold, 7,000 of them in her lifetime.

150 years ago, on 6 December 1875 that Evelyn Underhill, writer and pacifist was born. Best known for her books on religion and Christian mysticism.

75 years ago, on 25 December 1950 that the Stone of Scone, the coronation stone of British monarchs, was taken from Westminster Abbey in London by four Scottish students. They transported it to Scotland but broke it. It was later returned to London and used in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Since 1996 it has been kept in Edinburgh Castle, with the agreement that it will be transported to Westminster Abbey when needed for coronations.

70 years ago, on 1 December 1955 that African American civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery Alabama. This

violated the city's racial segregation laws, and led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott (5 to 20 December 1956) and the birth of the modern American civil rights movement.

65 years ago, on 9 December 1960 that the first episode of the TV soap Coronation Street was broadcast on ITV.

60 years ago, on 22 December 1965 that Richard Dimbleby, journalist and radio-television broadcaster, died. He was one of the greatest figures in British broadcasting history and father of the TV presenters David Dimbleby and Jonathan Dimbleby.

40 years ago, on 7 December 1985 that Robert Graves, poet novelist, critic, translator and classical scholar died. Best known for *I, Claudius*, and *Goodbye to All That*.

30 years ago, on 8 December 1995 that headteacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death outside his west London school while trying to protect a student who was being assaulted by a gang of youths.

25 years ago, 13 December 2000, that George Bush finally claimed the US presidency, 36 days after the election was held. The results were delayed by disputed votes in Florida.



**The Stone of Scone being carried out of Edinburgh Castle for the coronation of Charles III**

## WHY IS THE RECTOR WEARING WHITE TODAY?

You may have noticed that the priest who officiates at Church Services wears vestments (chasuble and stole) of different colours. This can be white, purple, red or green and sometimes rose pink and black.

White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. Red at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. Green, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year.

So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red

for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth.

At the Eucharist/Mass/Holy Communion we use vessels which are called the Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A vessel called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine become for us the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care and honour.

The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

## 10 FUN FACTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS TREES

1. Even before the time of Christ, evergreen trees were seen in winter as a symbol of fertility.
2. It was the 16th century monk, Martin Luther, who is credited with the idea of having lights on Christmas trees. He added candles to his tree, to look like stars in a forest.
3. Windsor Castle got its first Christmas tree in 1800, brought by Charlotte, the wife of George III.
4. It was in 1835 that the term 'Christmas tree' was first used in English.
5. It was in the 1840s, when Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, began bringing

trees inside, that led to their popularity throughout the UK.

6. It was Woolworths who first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments – back in 1880.
7. The tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been a gift from the city of Oslo, Norway since 1947.
8. The world's tallest Xmas tree, at 221ft high, was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950.
9. In a survey of the nation's favourite smells, real Christmas trees came eighth, just behind the sea, but ahead of perfume.
10. About five million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year.



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THURSDAY	EVERY WEEK	WALBERTON, FONTWELL	SOCIAL TRIPS / VARIOUS DESTINATIONS	PM
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### **Candlelit Advent Service**

*(Hymns, Prayers and Readings)*

*Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 7:30pm*

### **Carol Service**

*Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 2:30pm*

*Followed by Seasonal Refreshments*

*We hope you can join us*



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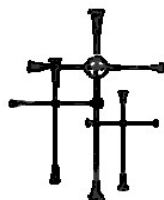
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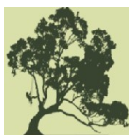
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