



JANUARY



2025

- 8th Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 9th Local History Society talk
Charing Parish Hall 7.30 for 8pm
- 9th Stalisfield Parish Council meeting
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.45pm
- 14th Eastling Parish Council meeting
Eastling Village Hall 6.30pm
- 15th Warm Welcome Village Social
Stalisfield Village Hall 11.30am
- 20th Copy deadline for February 2025
Good News: goodnewsmagazine@me.com
- 22nd Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 23rd Arts Society lecture, Faversham
Alexander Centre 11am
- 25th Quiz Night
Eastling Village Hall 7pm
- 31st Together in Boots walking group
Doddington Church leave at 11.30am

FEBRUARY

- 5th Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm

***Good News
Parish Magazine***
for High Downs Parish
*Serving the villages of
Eastling, Otterden,
Stalisfield and Throwley*
www.goodnews.rf.gd

2025 HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our readers
and thank you to all our Advertisers who
pay for printing this magazine



Warm Welcome Village Social at Stalisfield Village Hall Wednesday 15th January 11.30am - 2.30pm

Escape the winter blues with tea, coffee
and a delicious lunch for everyone in
Stalisfield and Otterden.

Come to the hall and join an activity, use
the wifi to work or just have a chat with
your friends and neighbours. Free to all.

EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

QUIZ NIGHT

£5 PER HEAD

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25 JAN

Start at 7pm

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New Year Message

Advent, the four weeks in the Christian calendar of expectation and preparation leading to Christmas Day, and the celebration of the birth of a baby, a baby that would change everything, has happened. Many people attended carol services, children's nativity plays, and heard the well-known Christmas story re-told in services across our Benefice. The waiting culminated in Christmas Day, and all it meant for everyone, and especially the wondrous birth of Jesus.

From a time of expectation and preparation and general "busyness", January celebrates the feast of Epiphany, and a journey, when the Wise Men travelled to find the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. At the end of the reading from Matthew's Gospel there is a line, which is sometimes missed out when that lesson is read, but is an important part of the story: *And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.* (Matthew 2:12).

The Wise Men had a significant responsibility, they had been briefed by Herod before they left on their journey that he

wanted them to return and tell him exactly where the

baby could be found, he was so determined to find this baby.

The Wise Men made a long journey to see the baby, they were overjoyed to see Jesus with his mother Mary, they gave him gifts, and when they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they returned home a different way. They had an "epiphany" moment, they recognised the importance of this baby.

The Wise Men had a difficult journey, made a new discovery, and for them it was a transformative experience. For many during 2025 there will be new journeys and new discoveries. It could, for example, be starting a new job, getting married, a new arrival in the family, moving house, a long-planned special holiday, taking up a new interest and more.

At Canterbury Cathedral until 15th February there is an exhibition called *Cross-Currents, Life as a Journey*. It is an installation throughout the Cathedral of hundreds of beautiful hand-crafted boats made from objects found in the forest and along the coastline.



The artist, Frances Carlile, has aimed to capture the fragility of migrant crossing, and also the fragility of our life's journeys. The boats, some tiny, are arranged over the stone staircases in the Cathedral. It is a moving experience to see them and a reminder about the perils of any journey.

Our journeys in life can be calm and steady, but also at times unpredictable and hazardous. Jesus recognised this, his own life and ministry was fraught with danger. As we head into the New Year and all it will bring, let us be compassionate and understanding of those around us, especially when they are experiencing life journeys that are particularly challenging.

Pim Baxter, Reader

Prayer Pointers

Heavenly Lord, in this New Year we pray:

- On **Sundays** - For deeper strength in our faith and for guidance and blessings on ourselves and our families
- On **Mondays** - For guidance and blessings on all who are unwell and on those caring for them.
- On **Tuesdays** - For guidance and blessings on leaders in our country and in our church.
- On **Wednesdays** - For guidance and blessings on teachers and their pupils.
- On **Thursdays** - For guidance and blessings on those working in our emergency services and armed forces.
- On **Fridays** - For guidance and blessings on those working for charities and assistance services.
- On **Saturdays** - For guidance and blessings on those working in the entertainment industry.



Eastling Church Flower rota



5th & 12th January: Suzie

19th & 26th: Leigh-Anne and Aneta

2nd & 9th February: Di

If you would like to join the flower arranging rota, please call Bay on 01795 892036.

The Arts Society Faversham



The Arts Society is the UK's leading arts education charity that brings people together through a shared curiosity in the arts. We enjoy illustrated talks on a fascinating wide range of topics, outings to galleries and historic houses and an elegant annual Society Dinner. Meetings are held at The Alexander Centre in Preston Street, Faversham on the 4th Thursday of the month. Come along for a complimentary coffee at 10.20 for the 11am start. You can try us out for a modest fee and no doubt will want to become a member!



23rd January 2025: Our lecturer is Jonathan Conlin, and the subject is:

The National Gallery:

200 years of Art for the Nation.

2024 was the bicentenary of the National Gallery. The lecturer tells the history of the gallery in 10 paintings. How has our taste in masterpieces changed?

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY

"What do they get up to in there?" On May 8th 2025 10.30-3.15pm.

Lyndon Jones, Roy Campbell.

Learn from two senior Masons about the history of the Masons and take a private tour of the Masonic Lodge of Faversham.

£38.00 including a light lunch.

Contact Maureen Bush, Membership

Secretary:

tolly@clara.co.uk or visit our website:

www.theartsocietyfaversham.org.uk

Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.

Happy New Year to all Good News readers. The last meeting of our W.I. Group was just before Christmas and was a social gathering, so we all brought fare to share food and drink. Those who wished to do so, created wreaths or Christmas decorations and as usual, they were all very different.

We will not be meeting in January due to predicted inclement weather, but instead have a lunch time gathering at the Longbrook garden centre, Bybrook on 15th January.

Looking forward to the 5th February, our Speaker will be from the Kent, Sussex & Surrey Air Ambulance - a very worthwhile charity which members of this community have had use of in the past.

Otterden & Stalisfield W.I. meet the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at Stalisfield Village Hall. If you wish to join us as a guest or regular attendee, please contact Helen Brooks on 07477 580727 or Ellie Cameron on 07775 649337.



Christmas fun was had at two Stalisfield parties in December.

The Seniors' Party kicked off the festive celebrations, with wine, food and merriment being the order of the day.

A very jolly afternoon was enjoyed by friends and neighbours coming together, culminating in some rousing singing of Christmas carols.



The Children's Party followed a week later. Activities, games and competitions provided something for everyone, with parents and grandparents joining in.

Traditional fun was the plan for the day and lots of it! It was an afternoon of joy and laughter, with party food and a chance to make new friends. The party ended with the surprise visit of Father Christmas who, with the magic of Christmas, arrived with a present for every child.



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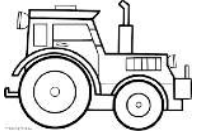
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Richard and Hannah Baker report on the Farmers' protest in Westminster



On a gloomy Wednesday morning in December at

6.15am we trundled in convoy to the first meeting point on our mission. It felt exciting and poignant from the first moment we climbed into the tractor. As we approached, the glow of lights grew bright like a scene from a Christmas film. We joined another twenty or so tractors and farming vehicles intending to make our way to London. Unbeknown to us the leader of the pack had no real knowledge of the route to take, but we all faithfully followed in unison heading in what felt like the right direction. There was much talk along the way between drivers about whether this was indeed the best way to reach the capital. Remember many of us country folk rarely visit the city, let alone in a tractor.

Throughout the journey many lorries, buses and bystanders were frantically beeping their horns, waving, shouting enthusiastically and throwing fervent fists in the air in support of our plight. Finally, after having battled through the centre of London, we were ushered by police into Whitehall Road. The sight before us was astounding. Tractor upon tractor, upon tractor – seven wide in places and as far as the eye could see in both directions. But what was more amazing was the noise, hooters and musical air horns filled the air continuously. Tractors decorated with lights



galore, banners, flags and signs all in support of the farmers protesting against the budget's inheritance tax and food security for this country.

Once parked up near the cenotaph we hopped down to be greeted by a couple of gents who had travelled from Staffordshire, others had come from Devon and the Home Counties. It was clear that passions had arisen. Walking down the street past the Prime Ministers residence, we saw many a familiar face, some we knew personally, some from social media or television news broadcasting but everyone had a friendly handshake and a look of hope.



The morning continued with speeches from the organisers of Fairness For Farmers. Each conveyed their message with gusto, passion and encouraged non wavering solidarity going forwards. It struck me that this coming together of a community was really something to be proud of. Proud of what we provide for our country and will continue to do so to for many generations to come, if we are allowed to. The speakers reiterated the reasons for the farmers upset and outrage. Taxes for farmers have been kept low in years before now to keep food affordable for the masses. Simply put, if food inflation rises it will ultimately be the poorer people in society that suffer. The inheritance tax is one thing but also



the tax on twin cab 4x4's and the import tax on fertiliser will almost certainly break many in this industry.

On the 'go slow' convoy we took a loop around Westminster where we were encouraged to make as much noise as possible with our horns on passing the Houses of Parliament, which we certainly did. It seemed the more noise we made, the more the crowds encouraged us. 628 tractors were clocked in that day, many more than was reported on the news and many more than were expected. At one-point, tractors were diverted on a different route as the loop we were following was completely jammed up. Surely this display would have some Pertinence?

With no uncertainty it is for everyone to remember that everything we eat and drink every day of our lives comes from the farmer. Flour for bread, vegetables, milk, eggs, oil and meat and the grapes for wine, ALL come from the farmer.



Embarrassed by Jesus

By Richard Bewes

“Where did this man get these things?.... Isn't this the carpenter?” (Mark 6:2,3)

Ever been back to your earliest home town? Weithaga, on the lower slopes of Mount Kenya was mine. Returning there only a few years ago, very little had changed. The old CMS house was there, where I had been growing up. No gas, no electricity, no tarmac roads, no postal service, no telephone, no running water, no sanitation – but I felt welcomed home once again, and it was wonderful....

Not so, in the case of Jesus. Having been brought up in Nazareth for some 30 years, his public ministry had then taken off, following his baptism in the Jordan. And then.... Galilee. Next, Capernaum, where they let a man down through the roof to be healed. Now he's by the lakeside, where the crowds are so great he preaches from an

off-shore boat. Off next, into Levi's home for a big party. Now he's teaching in a cornfield; next, he's healing a man in the synagogue. Where now? Jerusalem.... Idumea.... Tyre and Sidon.... back to the lakeside and the calming of a great storm.... the freeing of a possessed man in Gadara.... the healing of a haemorrhaging woman.... the raising of Jairus' daughter. In rapid, quick-fire succession the mission of Jesus never stops.

And then, and then.... back home to Nazareth, where – despite the reports of his mission – his own people couldn't, wouldn't believe. Mark writes, 'And they took offence at him' (Mark 6:3). We read that Jesus was amazed at their unbelief. Up to the present day, Jesus has been an embarrassment to most of Nazareth.

Nazareth gives the lie to the excuse given by so many across history, who have said, "Well, it was all right for those who actually saw Jesus. If I could see him for myself then I'd believe." The fact is, there had been those in Nazareth who had seen Jesus every day for thirty years. As a carpenter he had built doors and tables, made cots for their babies. Now their attitude was that of despising the familiar figure they had known so long, of paralysing his power - so that barely a miracle could be performed among them - and thus of closing the door. Had they but known it, Jesus was with them for the last time.

The mission of Jesus never ceases - except among those who find themselves embarrassed even by the mention of his Name.

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With Epiphany in mind...

I was telling my children the story of the Nativity and how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the infant Jesus. Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six-year-old observed, "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."



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CHARING AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 9th January 2025

Charing Parish Hall

Doors open 7.30pm, talk start at
8pm prompts



Dover Castle

Speaker - Len Howell

Dover Castle has a longer and more complex history than most people think. This talk gives a summary of the the history of The Castle followed by a slide show highlighting key areas and including some amusing anecdotes accumulated from 13 years of working there.

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The story of aspirin

You will probably have taken aspirin, in one form or other, many times. But how much do you know of its history?

It was 125 years ago this month, on 6th March 1899 that the German pharmaceutical company Bayer first patented aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid).

But this is based on salicylic acid, which was used in herbal medicines as far back as Sumerian times, in 2500 BC. It was then that the Assyrians used willow leaves for rheumatic disease. The Egyptians also used willow leaves, as well as myrtle, to ease joint pain or inflammation.

In Greece, Hippocrates (460-377 BC) recommended an extract of willow bark for fever, pain and childbirth. And even the peoples of ancient China, Rome, and Native America all discovered and used plants containing salicylic acid.

Fast forward to Chaucer's 14th century, and the Knight's Tale recommends the use of meadow sweet for pain, another source of acetylsalicylic acid.

In 1763, some science was introduced, when an English clergyman, the Revd Edward Stone, used willow bark to successfully treat fever 'ague' in 50 of his parishioners. He carefully documented it all for the President of the Royal Society.

In 1828, Johann Andreas Buchner, a Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Munich, purified salicin from willow bark.

In 1859, Professor Hermann Kolbe, at Marburg University worked out the chemical structure of salicylic acid and made it synthetically.

In 1897, Dr Felix Hoffman, a German chemist at Friedrich Bayer and Co, managed to produce pure stable acetylsalicylic acid (ASA). His discovery was the *first time* that a drug had been made synthetically, and so it was the birth of both aspirin and the pharmaceutical industry.

Finally, in early 1899 the new compound was named and registered Aspirin. The 'A' comes from acetyl and 'spir' from the first part of *Spirea ulmaria* (Meadowsweet) a botanical source of salicylic acid.

So next time you take an aspirin, think of the Assyrians chewing willow leaves, 4,000 years ago.

Services in our Benefice

5th January Epiphany

Isaiah 60. 1 - 6, Psalm 72, 10-15, Matthew 2. 1 - 12

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

12th January Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43. 1 - 7, Psalm 29, Luke 3. 15 - 17, 21 - 22

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

19th January Epiphany 2

Isaiah 62. 1 - 5, Psalm 36. 5 - 10, John 2. 1 - 11

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

26th January Epiphany 3

Nehemiah 8. 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, Luke 4. 14 - 21

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

2nd February Candlemas

Malachi 3. 1 - 5, Psalm 24, 7 - 10, Luke 2. 22 - 40

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Online Daily Worship Continues

As well as the services in our churches, the daily 9am Morning Prayer will continue on the Benefice Facebook Page via

<https://kc-hd.org.uk> .

More information is updated weekly on St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>



Exhibitions in Canterbury Cathedral

As well as the 'Cross-Currents' exhibition mentioned in Pim's New Year Message, there are many other wonderful things to see within the Cathedral and inspiring music to be heard during services - visit: www.canterbury-cathedral.org to find out more.

High Downs Parish

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07516 411269 paula.jardine.rose@kc-hd.org.uk

Benefice Administrator Joyce Warren

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Reader Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)

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ramshawcaroline@gmail.com

Reader Pim Baxter (07710 116269)

Church Contacts

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Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King, Warden (01795 890366)

Chrissie Webster, Administrator
(07590 351977)

Throwley David Elvin, Warden (07973 837122)

E mail: david.j.elvin@gmail.com

High Downs Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mark Harlow (07979 864000)

E mail: mark.harlow@kc-hd.org.uk

CONTACT THE GOOD NEWS EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in the February 2025 magazine, send your submission by 20th January to: goodnewsmagazine@me.com.

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on www.goodnews.rf.gd

Anna Chaplaincy

Please contact our Anna Chaplain, Caroline Ramshaw, if you know of someone who is isolated, alone or unable to attend church.

An Anna Chaplain can offer a listening ear and company. Communion can be brought to you in your own home.



Contact your local Anna Chaplain on:

ramshawcaroline@gmail.com 07799 538 809

Every person who ever lived was once a sperm and an egg. Those two cells fused together, and in nine months they turned into a living, breathing, human being. Each of us emerged from this same embryonic development process, which is highly complex and organised, but variable enough to turn out a unique individual every time.

If you like order – such as neat piles of stationery, or tidy colour-coded files – you will enjoy this story. One of the most important stages of an embryo's development is when each section of the body, from head to rump, takes on its identity. Each part is told what shape to take, and which limbs or internal organs to grow: legs or arms, lungs or kidneys, and so on.

The most beautiful part of this body-patterning process is that it brings the dimensions of time and space together in such a neat way. The DNA instructions for the procedure,

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

known as genes, are organised in the order in which they are needed during development *which is also* the order in which they appear on the body. No other sets of genes are known to be arranged in such a tidy pattern.

So, as the embryo develops, the tissues near the head end activate the first sets of genes. Those active genes then make all the proteins needed for that part of the body to grow and develop in the right way. The tissues just below the head then switch on the second set of genes, and so on. A wave of activation passes down the embryo, specifying each section of the trunk in turn.

The Wisconsin-based developmental biologist Jeff Hardin

often quotes Psalm 139 to express the wonder of embryonic development. The Psalmist did not understand how this process happened, but he knew that it was a marvellous thing. *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb... your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth."*

The story of the tidy genes brings out the hidden beauty in the very early stages of embryonic development. The more biologists get to find out about how we came to be born, the more we can say, *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"*!

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Eastling Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be in Eastling Village Hall at 6.30pm on Tuesday 14th January 2025. All residents are welcome to attend.

Stalisfield Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be in Stalisfield Village Hall at 7.45pm on Thursday 9th January 2025. All residents are welcome to attend.

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394 or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

For any scam or cyber attacks or calls please report it on 0330 123 2040

With the new year celebrations upon us please take extra care on the roads. There will be those people who think they can drink/drug drive around and, as the media have quoted, there are far too many people who have been stopped and prosecuted for the offence especially on the drug side.

Over the last month it has been quite quiet everywhere mainly, although some vehicles with their owners have decided to drive over the planted fields but no other problems.

Happy New Year everybody.

Take Care

Alan

Eastling Parish Council

Update on Community Greenspace project

Members of the Parish Council wish to report that we are no longer in a position to ask all Eastling residents whether or not they would support the community greenspace proposal. This is because the trustees of the Harris Belmont Estate (the owners of the land) have withdrawn their offer to lease the land to the parish council. The reason they have given is that they have been approached directly by a few local residents who object fundamentally and in principle to the idea of the greenspace.

The process set out by the working group included a detailed engagement exercise with those residents thought to be greatest affected by the proposal. At the engagement meeting in May there were a lot of concerns raised but no one said that they objected in principle, implying that they would change their view if sufficient safeguards/conditions were put in place. Following the engagement meeting in May the working group carried out a great deal of research and due diligence on the understanding that the residents that expressed concerns would be willing to engage further in the process and potentially have their minds put at rest. It is now clear that this was never going to happen due their "in principle" objections.

Despite the Parish Council's best endeavours to carry out a democratic process, the future of the village has been dictated by a tiny minority of villagers. We are confident that the process we set out was fair and democratic and the actions taken by the working group to develop the proposal were professional at all times.



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Stalisfield sited at Stalisfield Village Hall, ME13 0HY

Throwley sited in the old Telephone Box outside the Old Post Office, ME13 0PJ

News from Citizens Advice Swale

Dealing with damp and mould in privately rented accommodation

Does damp and mould build up in your rented home over the winter? The first thing you should do is report the issue to your landlord or letting agency.

Damp is when an area of your property doesn't dry out, often because it's cold. Damp can lead to mould, which is a fungus that grows in areas where warm damp air condenses on cold surfaces, like window frames.

Your landlord is responsible for fixing a damp problem if it's making your home unsafe to live in. For example, this could be if it's affecting your health or the health of someone living in the property with you. Your landlord will also be responsible if the damp is related to repairs they should have carried out, for example if the roof is damaged. They would also have to cover the cost of repairs to any items damaged by the damp, including carpets and furniture.

One of the things that can contribute to damp and mould is condensation. You can prevent condensation by keeping your home well-heated and ventilated, but high heating costs and cold weather can make this difficult for lots of us. If you're finding it hard to insulate and heat your home you can contact Citizens Advice Swale for support. We can give you energy saving tips, and if you're eligible we can issue you with a fuel bank voucher.

There are steps you can take to make sure you're not contributing to a damp problem, like avoiding drying clothes on heaters, blocking air vents, or using portable gas heaters. However, showering, cooking, and laundry are the kinds of things everyone expects to be able to do in their homes. If the property can't be heated and ventilated adequately to cope with normal day-to-day living activities, then it's the property that's the problem, not your behaviour.

If your landlord is responsible for the damp in your home but doesn't do anything about it, there are steps you can take, like reporting them to the local authority. And as a private renter, if you've got evidence from a health professional that damp is making you ill, you may be able to get free legal advice through Legal Aid.

If you'd like additional support, you can attend our drop-in sessions without an appointment:

- Monday, 10am-12pm, Swale House, Sittingbourne
- Tuesday, 10am-12pm, Sheppey Gateway, Sheerness (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)
- Wednesday & Friday, 10am-12pm, 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Alternatively, email us at www.citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice (Monday-Wednesday) or call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979.

citizens
advice



January by Audrey Keen

January and it is cold
Sheep stand huddled on the fold,
Snow so bright it hurts my eyes
I shade them from the glaring skies.
All flowers and autumn leaves are lost
Perished by the snow and frost.
Sunshine tries to trickle through
The muddled sky, once shades of blue.
Spasmodically the small birds sing
Their efforts certainly do bring
Some comfort, though for them I fear
At this their hardest time of year.
I pray for them and hope they take
Refreshment from the bread I break
And leave it in small pieces where
They find it and together share
This meagre meal.

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a family run, independent, award winning pub & restaurant offering an extensive menu of both 2 AA rosette dishes and your traditional pub classics.

We will be open from 30th - 1st then closed until 8th January 2025

Our NEW TAKE AWAY MENU will be running Wednesdays - Fridays 5-7pm.

Don't forget to book up for Valentine's Day - it's a Friday this year so the perfect night for date night with your loved one

Keep up to date by following us on Facebook, Instagram or X (twitter)

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Stalisfield Youth Group!

Stalisfield Youth Group is for 11-17yr olds.

We meet on Wednesdays, usually twice a month,
7 - 8.30pm in the village hall AND it is free to come.

We have music, gaming, craft, table tennis,
table football, outside games in the Summer,
craft table, tuck shop (everything 10 - 50p),
free cake and drink.



It is a time when young people can relax,
hang out and catch up.

Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday 8th and 22nd January

Contact Catherine 07929 928 046 or
clnorwood@doctors.org.uk or see our Facebook page
for more details.

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n	u	p	e	o	p	l	e	a	d	e	r	c
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Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 2 verses 22-38

God promised the Jews that when times were bad, He would send a leader to save them. He told Simeon it would happen in his lifetime.

God told Simeon to go to the Temple.



He saw a couple with a baby.

Mary and Joseph had come to give their offerings for their first-born, Jesus, and for childbirth.



Simeon held Jesus and praised God.



I can now die in peace because You have kept Your promise.



I have seen the one You have sent to save Your people and all the world!



Mary and Joseph were amazed! Simeon blessed them, but said..



This child will show what people are really like inside and this will mean pain for you as well.



Anna the prophet was also in the Temple.



Her family was from the north of Israel and she was very old.



She spent every day praying in the Temple.

When she saw Jesus she praised God.



Anna spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God's Saviour.

Temple
family
offerings
peace
Jesus
praying
waiting
Leader

baby
praised
Prophet
die
everyone
people
Israel
world

Anna
God
lifetime
couple
Mary
Joseph
Saviour
inside



FROM LITTLE THINGS

Sometimes the smallest, most innocent looking things can cause great changes. The proverb says that great oaks grow from little acorns and it seems a miracle that something as small as an acorn, so small that you can hold a lot of them in your hand, can grow into something as huge and strong as an oak tree.



Jesus talked about this power in the parables, the stories that he told, when he said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast (Matthew, chapter 13, verse 33). Yeast is a small fungus but without it we wouldn't have bread, wine or beer. Jesus reminded us that you don't have to be big to make a difference. A very small amount of yeast turns a lot of flour into bread. We may be only one, small person but we too can make a difference.

As I write, the assisted dying bill is making its way through Parliament. Many people have strong views on both sides of the argument. So, for this month's parish update, I thought it would be a good idea to write about this.

I am grateful to everyone who contacted me to share their personal experiences and views. I thought hard and read widely before deciding how to vote on the bill.

As an MP I want to make life better for people. I believe people should be free to make their own choices. But we should also look out for people. The world can be cruel. Not everyone is kind or good.

I support assisted dying in principle. I am lucky that my own experiences of death have not been traumatic, but I know about horrific deaths that no amount of palliative care could alleviate. I have heard from constituents who see a cruel death coming and have asked me to vote for assisted dying for their sake. In that situation I believe I would want the choice of assisted dying for myself.

Despite that, I voted against the assisted dying bill before Christmas because it was not good enough and the safeguards were not really

An update from local MP Helen Whately

safeguards. One flaw is the definition of Terminal Illness. This is much broader than it might at first appear. It could, for instance, include diabetes, and other diseases which quickly become terminal if someone decides to stop their treatment.

Another problem is the approach to mental capacity. The bill uses the approach in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 which aims to give people as much control as possible over living their lives. It errs on the side of maximising capacity because it was never intended for use when the question is about hastening death.

The bill does not properly safeguard against coercion. A doctor involved could be concerned a patient is being coerced. But if they denied the application for assisted dying, it could just be made to another doctor. No

one is under any obligation to investigate whether coercion is occurring.

This law will not just affect those who want it. It will affect everyone, and particularly anyone who may be nearing the end of their life or living with serious illness or disability. The choice will be there whether you want it or not; the choice to continue to live or to opt for an early death. It will change our society and we must get it right. I will be looking to Kim Leadbeater and the bill committee to make the bill better before it returns for third reading.

There are more details on my website if you are interested at www.helenwhately.org.uk.

As ever, if I can help in any way, please reach out.

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