St. Michael & All Angels
CHURCH IN THE PARK | LIVING, LOVING, SERVING

outLook

The magazine for the people of Hughenden Parish | **JANUARY 2026** | FREE

INSIDE: January Reflection | *What's In A Name - Part 2* | **Bookends**

Welcome to **Your Church**

This magazine serves the parish in which our beautiful church of St Michael & All Angels is situated. Outlook aims to give you a flavour of what it is to live in Hughenden and to worship here.

There has been a place of worship and prayer on this site since the 12th century and today the church is open for anyone wishing to wander around or sit a while in its peace. We are an open, welcoming and inclusive church where there are many opportunities for fellowship, social activities and of course the possibility for spiritual growth.

Outlook is published monthly. Articles or comments can be submitted to mag@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk. The deadline is the 15th of the month. If you would like the magazine delivered then please contact Andrew Cole - 01494 305020.

We hope you find something here to interest, inform or enlighten you. We wish you well and would love to have the chance to get to know you.

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Grant us Lord, faith to believe and strength to do thy will

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Dear Readers

Here we are in 2026 and who knows what life has in store for us over the next 12 months. Humans are very good at making plans whilst seeming to ignore the fact that we actually have no idea what will happen tomorrow. This seems to me to make it all the more important to try and live in the present as we all move inexorably forward on our journey through life.

There are many articles in this edition of Outlook that speak of pathways and journeys and travelling onwards. Helen uses the metaphor of the yellow brick road from the Wizard of Oz, Bea's new series of meditations focus on walking forwards and beginning gently, even my Bookends takes you through the life of one man, the decisions he made and the bumps in the road along the way. Roger's article takes an interesting and thoughtful angle on those arriving from faraway places for a myriad of reasons.

On Sunday 4th January we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, when the Three Kings finally arrived at Bethlehem to worship the new baby, born to be a king unlike any other. The route they travelled and the time it took is not clear but it was long. They were foreign and did not know the area where they found Mary, Joseph and Jesus. However, reading the Bible accounts it is clear that they knew God was guiding them and they were not alone.

You also do not need to be alone on what can sometimes be a bumpy ride. Helen makes it clear that God is with us every step of the way and St Michael & All Angels will do all it can to fill in life's metaphorical pot holes.

The Outlook team wish you a happy and blessed 2026.

Susan Brice
Editors

from the Vicarage

Not

Helen Peters

Associate Minister

St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

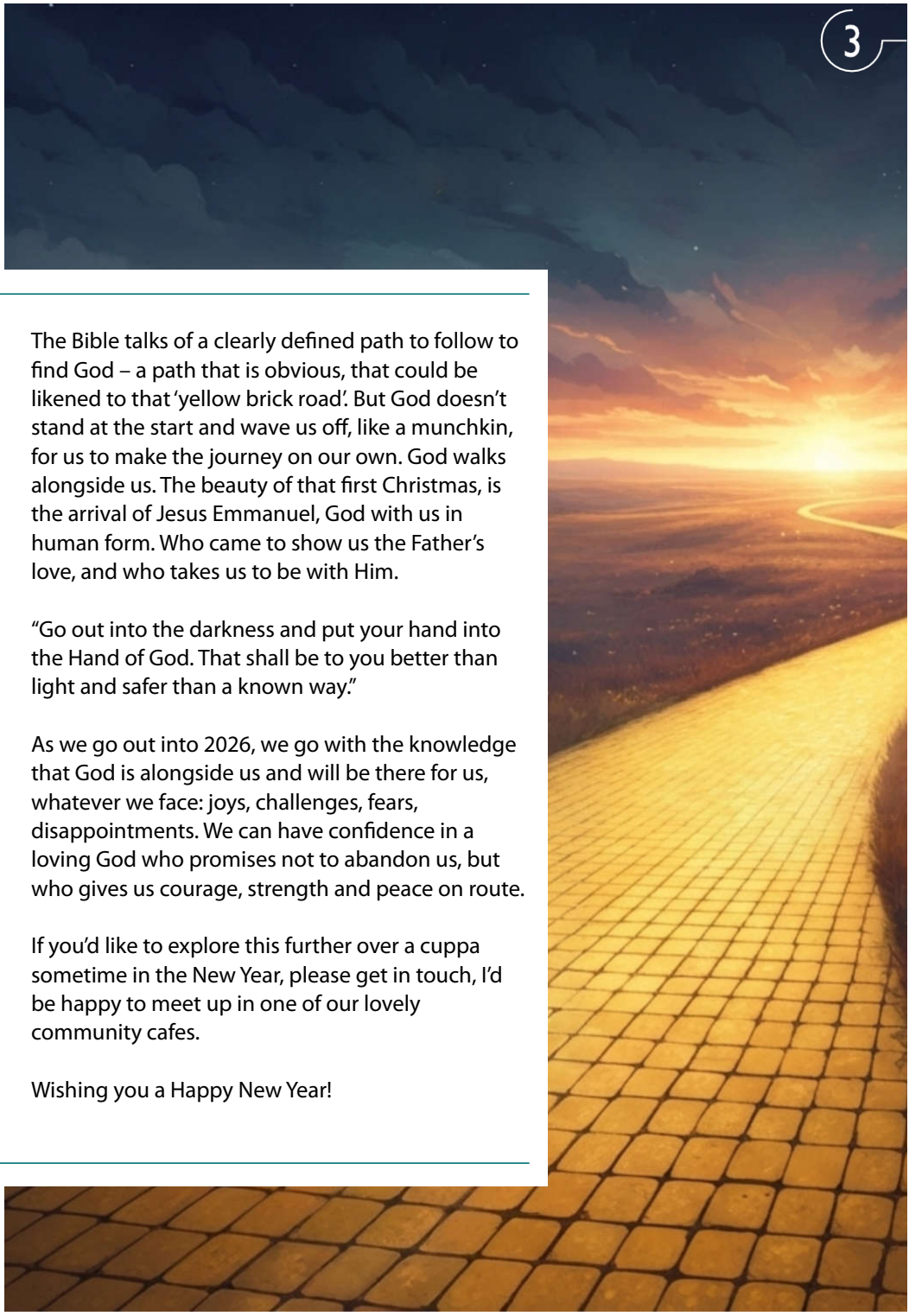
By Minnie Louise Haskins

At the end of last year, I posed the question 'what might 2026 hold for us?' suggesting too, that there always feels something slightly strange about stepping over the threshold into a New Year. I noted how none of us can know for sure what it will hold: joys, sadnesses, challenges and delights.

As I think about the New Year ahead, I wonder if you had a chance in the run up to Christmas to see 'Wicked for Good' at the cinema? Written as a prequel to the original 'The Wizard of Oz', it ends as that film starts. In a nutshell: Dorothy's house is blown long distance in a storm and, on landing crushes the Wicked Witch of the East. The locals, known as 'munchkins', are delighted. Dorothy is homesick and wants to get back to Kansas. The munchkins believe (wrongly) that the Wizard of Oz can help, so instruct Dorothy to follow the 'yellow brick road', waving her off.

Vacancy Update

The advert for our new vicar is now with Church Times, scheduled for inclusion for the first four weeks in January. The closing date for applications is 29th January with interviews scheduled for 26th February.



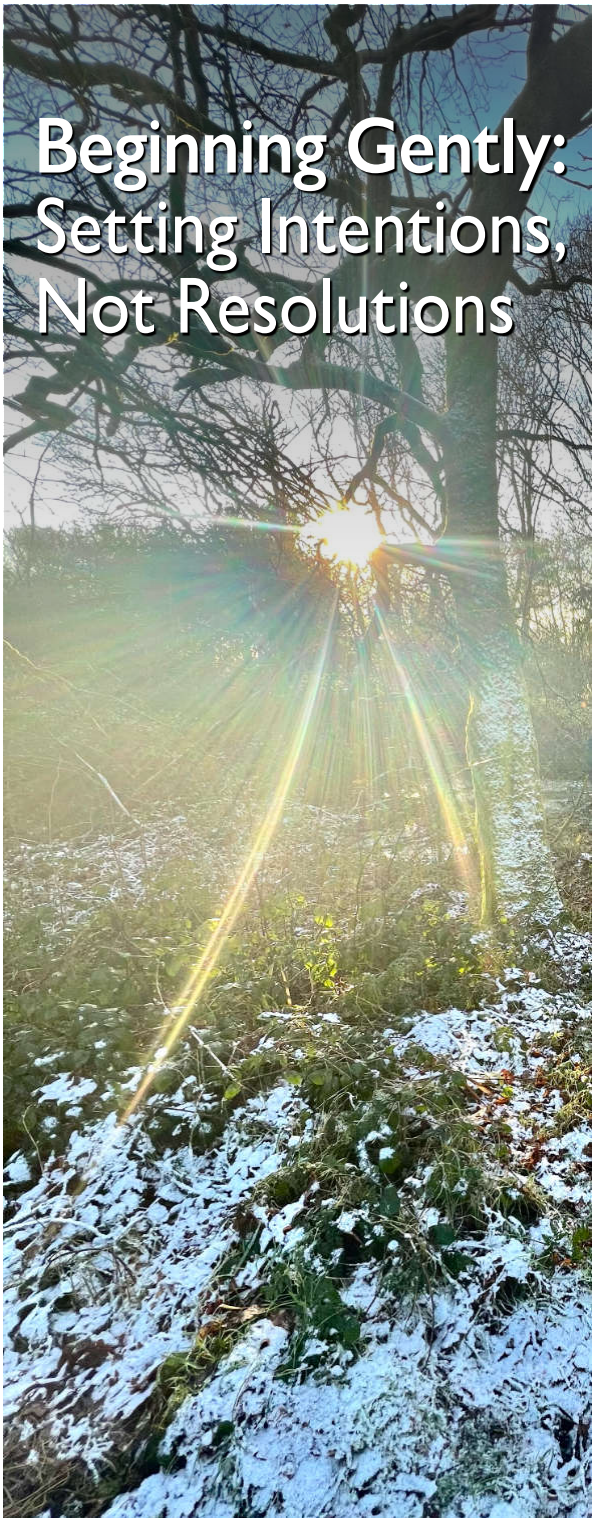
The Bible talks of a clearly defined path to follow to find God – a path that is obvious, that could be likened to that 'yellow brick road'. But God doesn't stand at the start and wave us off, like a munchkin, for us to make the journey on our own. God walks alongside us. The beauty of that first Christmas, is the arrival of Jesus Emmanuel, God with us in human form. Who came to show us the Father's love, and who takes us to be with Him.

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

As we go out into 2026, we go with the knowledge that God is alongside us and will be there for us, whatever we face: joys, challenges, fears, disappointments. We can have confidence in a loving God who promises not to abandon us, but who gives us courage, strength and peace on route.

If you'd like to explore this further over a cuppa sometime in the New Year, please get in touch, I'd be happy to meet up in one of our lovely community cafes.

Wishing you a Happy New Year!



Walking Forward: Living with Intention and Compassion

As we step into a new year, I would like to begin by saying thank you. As shared in December, the Seasons of the Soul series came to a close at the end of last year. Since then, I have been touched by the kind words, encouragement, and thoughtful feedback many of you shared. It has been a real joy and privilege to write these reflections, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue serving our church community through a new series this year.

This new series is titled Walking Forward: Living with Intention and Compassion. Over the coming six months, we will explore themes that gently support everyday living, faith, and personal growth:

- January: Beginning Gently — Setting Intentions, Not Resolutions
- February: Listening Within — The Wisdom of the Heart
- March: Growing Through Patience — Trusting the Process
- April: Renewed Life — Hope That Rises Again
- May: Connection and Belonging — We Are Not Meant to Walk Alone
- June: Living Fully — Carrying Light into Everyday Life

January often arrives with a sense of expectation. A new year stretches out before us, full of possibility. We are encouraged to make resolutions, set goals, and promise ourselves that this will be the year we do better, try harder, and finally get things right. While there is hope in new beginnings, there can also be pressure — the feeling that we must change everything at once.

But what if we began the year gently?

Rather than focusing on resolutions, which can sometimes feel rigid or overwhelming, January invites us to set intentions. Intentions are quieter. They come from listening rather than striving. They allow space for compassion, flexibility, and grace as we move forward.

Winter teaches us something important. The earth is not rushing. Beneath the cold surface, life is resting, gathering strength, preparing for growth that will come in its own time. In the same way, we don't need to force transformation. Growth often begins with small, thoughtful steps.

An intention might sound like:

- I choose to be kinder to myself.
- I will make space for rest and reflection.
- I want to live with greater honesty and care.

These are not rules to be enforced, but directions to return to when we lose our way.

Scripture reminds us in Lamentations 3:23, "His mercies are new every morning."

Each day offers a fresh start — not just once a year, but again and again. When we stumble, we are invited to begin again, without judgement.

This month, you might like to take a few quiet moments to reflect:

- What do I need more of this year?
- What can I gently release?
- What intention would support my wellbeing, my relationships, and my faith?

January does not ask us to become someone new overnight. It invites us to begin where we are, just as we are, with openness and trust.

As we step into 2026, may we choose beginnings that are gentle, hopeful, and grounded — walking forward with intention, kindness, and patience, one step at a time.

Bea Glowacki

Floodlighting Dedication

10th January 2026

In memory of Shirley and John Babb, both greatly missed by Sheila, Rachel, Raymond, their families and friends.

Christmas Crackers

The Church was full to bursting as we eagerly anticipated the pre-Christmas (November 29th) performance by the Hughenden Singers.

Our anticipation was not misplaced, as we were treated to a spirited rendition of Christmas carols, festive songs and dramatic readings, including my personal favourite: Nativity Rehearsal Notes, which captured the essence of all the School Nativity Plays we have been to!

The choir was in fine voice, and indeed fine action ability too. It was probably wise that the action packed 12 days of Christmas was the finale. The three actioners looked exhausted at the end, having demonstrated swans a-swimming, pipers piping, and the like.

The interval provided an opportunity to sample wine or hot drinks and a huge array of sweet treats, all of which were provided by the Choir, cooked with their own fair hands, or purchased out of their weekly 'subs'. This meant that every penny donated (the concert was free) went to the three chosen charities (Embrace the Middle East, One YMCA, and the Children's Society).

As ever the performance took place under the choir's indefatigable and ever-smiling Musical Director, Richard Peters, who clearly manages to create a musical experience open to all which is suffused with joy and laughter.

That feeling clearly spread to the audience who left with a spring in their steps and a song in their hearts.

The remaining Christmas events in the Church are of course too late for THIS edition of Outlook, but by the time you read this, you will hopefully have enjoyed one or more of the services on offer.

Happy 2026

Jane Tyrer

Deck the Halls!

Another Christmas; another year.
I toss the shrivelled holly on the bonfire-patch,
Its berries dry and wrinkled,
Unlike those snatched from busy pigeon-beaks.
Then the leaves were glossy green
With clustered fruit that brightens grizzled days.

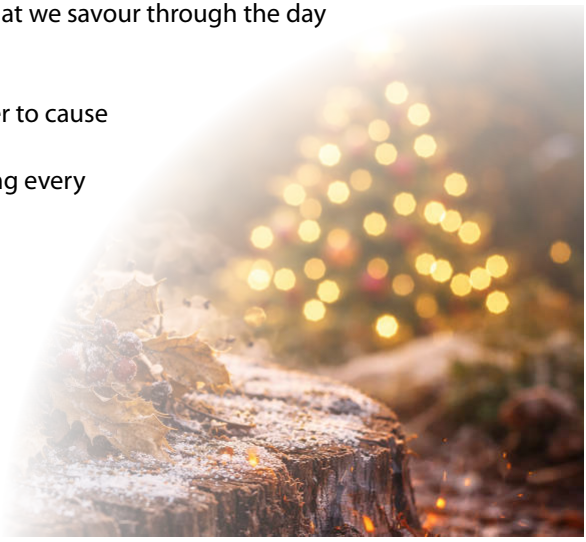
Why do I delay with so little time to burn?
Tinsel everywhere
Streamers to take down
The tree to strip
Its baubles put away for another Christmas day?
So why this strange imperative to stay?

Because there's something in this lifeless heap,
Something in these holly sprigs that seems to want to speak.

What do they say?
That our delight
Carols by candlelight
The midnight moment chimed
The special Christmas-flavour that we savour through the day
Is not lost.

Simple things possess the power to cause
another flowering.
Just as berries green and swelling every
year for Christmas, redden,
So the joy we thought had died
nothing can deaden.

Ron Cretchley



Holy Day in January

6th January - The Epiphany

You probably know from tales of Greek mythology that gods and goddesses would often appear out of nowhere in ancient Greece to beguile or trick mortals. The word for this in everyday Greek was 'epiphany'; – the appearance or manifestation of a divine being on earth to humans. For Christians Epiphany is the season after the 12 days of Christmas.

Our Epiphany Bible readings tell of the 'manifestation' of Jesus to a wider audience than those in the Christmas stories. We mark this in the first instance by placing the Wise Men in the crib scene; they have now arrived to see the consummation of their hopes and travels in the infant Jesus. And our Epiphany readings usually continue through the season with Jesus' baptism; John the Baptist's witness to Christ; Jesus' family attempting to take charge of Him because of His popularity with the crowds; and the Presentation in the Temple. In all these, something of divine glory is being made manifest.

In more common parlance today, an epiphany means a sudden or blinding realisation ('I had a sudden epiphany that John was going to marry Celia'). That modern meaning is helpful; 'Gosh, epiphanies can be part of our Christian experience!' Remember that occasion we were so conscious of God's love holding us? Or the time we knew the words we used to that stranger were infused with a grace we didn't know we had? These and similar experiences which we've probably all had can be seen as our epiphanies- a time when God was made manifest to us (and possibly through us) in a distinct way.

Have you ever thought of those sorts of experiences as an epiphany? Not ring-fenced to a particular time of year, but part of our everyday experience, as we seek to live out our baptism promises, and follow Jesus through the ups and downs, the humdrum and the extraordinary, the joys and sorrows of the everyday.

The promise and reality of Christmas is 'Emmanuel-God with us'. And the reality of Epiphany is that God IS with us, in the everyday realisation of how great God is, how much God loves us, and how God pours upon us grace after grace after grace.

May we have many epiphanies in 2026, and may they all bring us closer to the God who has chosen in His love to reveal Himself to us.

From the Parish Pump

Mothers' Union

We held our Advent Communion Service in the church on 2nd December. Helen led the worship and afterwards there was an opportunity to enjoy "Christmas" refreshments in Church House. We also welcomed two new members at the service. Our branch at Hughenden is one of the few remaining in the wider area. We are always delighted to see any new faces at our meetings.

The Christmas appeal for ladies toiletries and gifts for the children resident at the Wycombe Womens Refuge produced an incredible response from you all. A letter of thanks is posted on the notice board in the church foyer.

We resume our meetings with the AGM on 3rd February 2026 and a coffee morning on 17th February.

Ann Gee

BRA COLLECTION

Ready? I hope you are and have gathered up all those bras which are just taking up space in your lingerie drawer.

I will be collecting your unwanted bras on two Sundays - 18th and 25th January for passing on to Against Breast Cancer.

I will put a box at the back of church for your donations on each of these dates and will remove the box after Evensong on each date. I won't leave the box out at other times as it will make the Church look untidy, so please don't leave your donations at any other time.

Thank you to everyone who will be supporting this simple act which helps to raise funds for research.

Lin Smit

What's In A Name?

Part 2

> ***When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.***
>
> Leviticus 19:33-34

If you read my previous article, the name 'Biddles' will be familiar to you. It was the maiden name of my paternal grandmother, native to Loughborough but who spent her married life in what was, for the most part of the 20th century, the industrial village of Kinlochleven, in the Scottish Highlands.

In 2016, following the untimely death of my brother, Alan, on South Uist, I phoned a hotel in search of accommodation while attending his funeral on the island. What I heard when the voice on the other end spoke, transfixed me, "Mr Biddles speaking, can I help you?" Long story short: the hotel owner was from Loughborough but, regrettably, I had not found a long-lost relative. Hopes had been raised when he told me that his father worked at the market garden that the Biddles owned. During that time, he fell in love with a co-worker who agreed to marry him only if he changed his name, his nationality being Lithuanian. He chose the name of his employer – Biddles!

Mr Biddles' father was one of the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons (DPs) who, at the end of World War II, chose to stay in the UK rather than return to their country of origin: primarily Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. This, mainly because their homeland fell under Soviet control, making return unsafe or undesirable due to lack of freedom and political oppression, while Britain offered refuge and work in its labour-stricken economy.

I am very familiar with DPs, although I was into my late teens before I fully understood the extent of the agonising and heartbreaking choice these men (as it was in this case), had made. Almost all the local DPs worked in the aluminium smelter in Kinlochleven and, until the early 60s, when a brick, five-storey hostel was built to accommodate them, lived less favourably in poorly insulated Nissen-style huts.

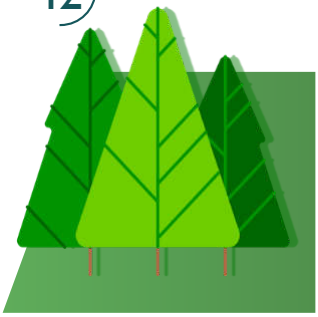
Woodcut from Die Bibel in Bildern (1860) - Schnorr von Carolsfeld.

My own class at school included a Sturas, Adruilus and a Joanis. Indeed, my first proper girlfriend was a Czarnecki (Char-net-skee). Her father, 'Bill The Pole', when he found me in his front room watching TV with his daughter, chased me down the road brandishing a knife! A squat man, he was as broad as he was tall and earned money-on-the-side mending cars. To this day I am uncertain if the tales of him holding cars up with one hand while working on them with the other, are apocryphal or not. Integrated well into our village community, many of these men married locally and built successful family lives. Sadly, however, a good number finding or seeking solace in alcohol, cut very sad figures at times.

I recall, during my preparation as a volunteer with the Homeless Night Shelter, never to say to a homeless person, "I can't imagine what it's like." because you're right – you can't. The best we can do in these situations is to empathise – to try and understand and share the feelings of another.

So, when the current global refugee crisis, driven by conflict, persecution, poverty, hunger and the impact of climate change, is forcing millions from their homes in search of safety, let us recall with grace and humility, that Our Saviour Jesus Christ found himself a refugee child in a foreign land when his parents, Mary and Joseph, fled to Egypt to escape King Herod's persecution.

Roger Henry Grant



Nature Note

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:2

What an amazing tree that must be!

Echoing Ezekiel 47:12 : "Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing." Fruit trees are God's gift, and what a gift. Not just for food, did you notice "Their leaves for healing" ?

Those Bible passages got me thinking about leaves in general. The use of them is universal, in food, drinks, to smoke, as perfumes and cosmetics, and yes as medicines/tonics/ointments. As it turns out fruit tree leaves do have strong medicinal properties which, judging from Ezekiel, has been known for a long time.

I love growing aromatic plants that scent the air as I brush against them, from mint to basil to lavender, walking into the greenhouse that pongs of tomatoes.

Leaves are multipurpose for their owners, acting as lungs AND solar panels. On the one hand absorbing oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide as we do, on the other absorbing carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen as they convert sunlight into sugars, starches and cellulose.

The latter process is the basis of animal life on our planet. The bottom line is that we all, vegetarian or not, rely on plants to convert sunlight into plant edibles and provide us with oxygen to breathe!

So not only do plants give us food and nutrition but enable us to breathe fresh, oxygenated air!

"Grow your own" has an almost biblical ring to it bearing in mind that our Lord created plant based environments intentionally for us to flourish in.

Of course, as with all life forms that the Lord took huge pleasure in creating, Genesis 1 repeatedly says "and God saw that it was good", plants included. From tiny mosses to giant sequoias scientists reckon that there are around 400,000 plant species alive on earth today. I don't know about you but plants, or lack of them, are fundamental to my view of the world. The woodlands that surround our area, farmlands covered in pasture or food crops, heather draped hillsides, reedbeds clothing marshes - and so on. The bare hillsides of our uplands were historically wooded, something that Scottish environmentalists are keen to reverse before the remaining topsoil is washed away. Plants give us fuel from current treewood and old fossilised trunks existing now as coal or peat, with other material crushed under huge pressure resulting in vast oil reserves, both of which fuel most of our industries and give us power for modern life.

So plants give us so much, from food to clothing, from fuel to construction, from medicinal use to decoration, the list seems endless.

Ezekiel's passage focuses on food and health from fruit trees, which would include grape, pomegranate, olive, apple, fig, date, almond, all of which produce medically important leaves.

Ezekiel's vision is of a sanctuary that provides for the well being of its inhabitants, a truly holistic approach. Almost a new Garden of Eden.

Winter is here, by the time you read this we will have passed the shortest day (the winter solstice falls on the afternoon of 21st December), and be looking forward to next spring!

Start making your seed lists you gardeners. Onions for exhibition have already been started by sowing around Christmas time.

Redwing and fieldfare numbers are swelling as we move into mid-winter plus small numbers of waxwings are turning up on the east coast. A Scops Owl has turned up in Cardiff, to the delight of rare bird fanatics although it may possible be an escape from a local collection or zoo.

I hope you've all had a satisfying Christmas, celebrating the Lord's birth, the stunning fact that God actually took on human form.

Don't forget to think of Ezekiel's vision when you marvel at the taste of a grape or cook something in vine leaves.

Happy New Year

Mike Bevan

BOOK-ENDS

Mother's Boy - Patrick Gale

Timothy Winters comes to school
With eyes as wide as a football pool,
Ears like bombs and teeth like splinters:
A blitz of a boy is Timothy Winters.

Timothy Winters has bloody feet
And he lives in a house on Suez Street,
He sleeps in a sack on the kitchen floor
And they say there aren't boys like him anymore.

These are a couple verses of one of Charles Causley's most famous poems. I wonder if you know it or were introduced to it via a school anthology. Charles Causley was a celebrated 20th century poet whose life was lived in Cornwall, Launceston in particular. At one time he was seen very much as a children's poet but that is a rather lazy view, just sliding over the surface. There is far more going on than maybe initially meets the eye.

Patrick Gale, a writer I am gradually getting to know and to admire, lives in a farm near Lands End. You will begin to gather that this Celtic foot of England is central to this story. It is easy to say what this book is not. It is not a scholarly biography of the poet, that opportunity is still open. It is however, minutely and carefully researched and then the gathered information has been used to create this biographical novel which aims, and I think succeeds, in giving a full, well rounded picture of the rather unusual life of this consummate writer.

Charles Causley was an only child whose father died of TB after the First World War. His mother was a laundress and cleaner who didn't remarry.

School was frequently a trial for a boy who was small, bespectacled and always came top in tests, even when he tried not to! Eventually he did find friends who, simply by associating with him, acted as protection. The thumps, bruises and broken glasses became fewer.

As his small household needed money, Charles did not go to university but followed through a series of boring, clerical jobs in local businesses. What must have seemed to be his real life happened after working hours. He played the piano, accompanied dance bands, wrote stories and plays; some bought and aired on the radio.

And then it was wartime again. Charles signed up and became a coder in the Royal Navy. Possibly this had been a poor choice as he was appallingly seasick and never really grew accustomed to the motion of a ship. He had decided there was really no choice as his eyesight was far too poor for the RAF to be interested in him and the stories his father had told about the army made him determined to avoid that particular force. His intelligence helped him out here as he became very successful, very quickly and thus spent a good part of the war on land, training others to code.

It seems it was being far away from home and in the very masculine society of a warship that enabled Charles to come to terms with his own sexuality, if he ever truly did come to terms with it. Difficult to remember now that the war years of the 1940s were still over 25 years before homosexual acts became legal. In other aspects of his life, his years in the navy gave him a wide view of real life, real life further afield than Launceston and the surrounding Cornish villages.

When he was demobbed he took up the opportunity to train as a teacher and was soon installed back in his village school where he worked for many years. All the while he was writing, and indeed publishing, and eventually he was well enough recognised as a writer and poet to leave teaching and ensure his mother could have a comfortable retirement with no more cleaning or laundry work.

It would be true to say he was devoted to his mother. His dedication to her care meant that he didn't travel far or frequently. However, he did become great friends with Ted Hughes, just over the border in Devon, John Betjeman (another lover of Cornwall), Seamus Heaney and Phillip Larkin. After the death of his mother, Charles Causley travelled widely with the British Council and enjoyed the company of many British poets and novelists.

Almost inevitably, reading Patrick Gale's book sent me back to Charles Causley's poetry, a couple of books that I haven't taken off the bookshelves for several years. Overall this has been a very enjoyable and unusual journey and I look forward to a new book by Patrick Gale: 'Love Lane' which will come out in March. He will be talking about it at the Oxford Literary Festival. I shall go.

Happy reading,

Susan Brice

January Recipe

A lovely warming recipe for January and one I have prepared for many years. At the time of writing this in December all we can think of is Christmas, but January always seems such a long way from spring and it is good to have comforting food.

This is a good recipe if you are entertaining as it keeps very well once cooked. Serve with rice and if you want it a bit more special you could also have a green salad.

Julia Grant

Lamb with Coconut and Black Pepper

INGREDIENTS

740g cubed lamb

2 onions chopped

2 tbs coriander seeds

2 tsp black peppercorns

4 tbsp flavourless oil

4 cloves garlic finely chopped

3cm fresh ginger peeled and shredded

4 medium tomatoes chopped (can use a tin of tomatoes)

1 tsp turmeric

2 medium sized chilies

115g coriander

METHOD

1. *Toast the coriander seeds over a moderate heat for a couple of minutes, then grind finely in a pestle and mortar. Repeat with the black peppercorns.*
2. *Pour the oil into a casserole and heat, put in the lamb cubes and brown lightly. You may need to do this in batches, then remove from the heat.*
3. *Add the onions, garlic and ginger to the pan, reduce the heat and cook gently for 15-20 mins until the onions are translucent. Add the tomatoes and cook gently.*
4. *Stir in the lamb, coriander, pepper, turmeric and red chilies.*
5. *Pour in the coconut milk and a teaspoon of salt. Simmer gently for about 30 minutes until the lamb is tender. This time will depend on what type of lamb you have used as some cuts may need longer.*
6. *Just before serving stir in the coriander and season if needed.*

Have you ever wondered…

Who sculpted our pulpit?

The pulpit was made as a tribute to James Seawright who (as loyal readers will know) paid for the repair of the church in 1870. It was carved by Thomas Earp (1828–1893) who was a noted stone carver in the Victorian age. He worked with and for many notable architects and designers including Pugin, Barry, and Gilbert Scott. His career reached its peak after the Great Exhibition, when the Gothic Revival Movement, prompted by the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament created a huge demand for ornate ornamentation.

The pulpit is decorated with detailed figures of angels and archangels. The Archangel Michael is depicted casting the dragon (i.e. the devil) out of heaven and is still recognisable by the (oddly, rather weak looking) dragon under his foot despite some damage to the carving of what was presumably a sword.

As befits the dedication of the Church, other archangels are depicted: the angel of the Annunciation, identified by the lily motif symbolising Mary; the angel of the Revelation of St John; and the Archangel Raphael. The Revelation to St John is shown by the unwinding scrolls in the Angel's hand. Raphael is recognised by the fish whose liver helped expel the devil, referencing his 'guidance of Tobit or Tobias (see below) on his journey'.

At this point, when I was attempting to summarise the life and works of Thomas Earp from the detailed account by Anthony Mitchell (see reference below) I got sidetracked onto the complicated story of Tobit, which I have never understood. This is what I found out.

The Book of Tobit is found in the Deuterocanonical (Apocryphal) books of the Catholic and Orthodox Bibles but is usually omitted from Protestant Bibles. This makes me wonder why this reference is in our Church, save for the fact that it provides an opportunity to identify a particular event involving Raphael.

Tobit was a devout Israelite living in exile in Nineveh. His life took a sad turn when he became blind. He asked God to let him die. At the same time, far away in Ecbatana, Sarah, a young woman who had lost seven (!) husbands at the hands of the demon Asmodeus, also prayed for help.

Tobit then sent his son Tobias (a confusingly similar name) on a journey to retrieve some money he had deposited in Media. (I don't know why, or what was in Media.)

Son Tobias is unknowingly accompanied on his journey by the angel Raphael, in disguise. Along the way, Tobias catches a fish whose organs—Raphael tells him—will be useful for healing and protection. Tobias meets Sarah (see above if you have forgotten her), and with Raphael's encouragement, marries her. Using the fish's organs, he drives away the demon that has plagued her.

Once back home, Tobias uses the fish's gall to heal his father's blindness. The fish is to be seen in Raphael's hand and thus identifies him on the pulpit.

Four other angels decorate the pulpit above the main characters. Each of these has their hands in a different gesture: eg arms open wide, arms crossed (Check them out). I had not noticed this until I looked specifically for this piece.

The pulpit is cleverly decorated with spheres of marble set into and held in by another type. Does anyone know how this is done? Were the orbs (from the Blue John mine in Derbyshire) inserted from the back?

Back to Thomas:

Thomas was born in Nottingham, where he trained at the local School of Art and Design before moving to London where he worked with many famous architects and designers as mentioned above.

Said to be his most famous commission, is the reproduction (who knew it was a reproduction? Not me, certainly.) of the original Eleanor Cross* which is in the Strand near what was Charing Cross Station.

However, perhaps as famous are the stone carvings inside and outside the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, all of which were carried out by Earp and his workmen. On the roof are four statues of Law Givers: Moses, Christ, Solomon and King Alfred.

Earp's work now decorates public buildings, Oxford Colleges and notably, churches throughout the land, not just in Hughenden. For a most detailed and scholarly look at the man and his work see Thomas Earp, Master of Stone by Anthony Mitchell.

Jane Tyrer

**Eleanor Crosses (another digression!) refer to the crosses erected by Edward I after the death of his wife, Eleanor of Castile. He put a cross at each of places her body rested on its journey to London from Harby, Nottinghamshire: Lincoln, Grantham and Stamford, all in Lincolnshire; Geddington and Hardingstone in Northamptonshire; Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire; Woburn and Dunstable in Bedfordshire; St Albans and Waltham (now Waltham Cross) in Hertfordshire; Cheapside in London; and Charing in Westminster. Most are now sadly reduced to rubble but a few remain.*

Environmental Lifestyle Survey

Although the traditional date for making New Year resolutions has passed, the first month of the year is a good time to be planning for the year ahead and seeing if we can be more eco-friendly than last year, even if it is only in a small way. Let us start now and see what we can do to improve our score in the 2026 Environmental Lifestyle Survey, which will come out in May. This is not just for the sake of the score itself but for the sake of the planet, God's creation, as urged by the A. Rocha organisation, the Church of England and of other Christian denominations at home and abroad. Its contribution towards the Eco-Church Gold Award, acknowledges that the efforts and aspirations of those who come to the Church in Hughenden are already aware of what should and can be done.

For the 2025 Environmental Questionnaire Lifestyle, 33 completed forms were returned to or Eco-Church Group - thank you for those who took the trouble to do this. This number was approximately the same as in 2024. However, it represents quite a small proportion of the congregation so the results below may not reflect the true opinion of the church attendees as a whole but may suggest a trend.

A spreadsheet is produced each year to extract information in the following Categories: Faith & Church Activities, Environment, Travel, Home, Garden and Diet, and Investment.

The 2025 questions were modified slightly and re-arranged but still designed to be comparable with those of 2024 and there were some significant positive changes, as the results listed below show. The most 'improvement' was in the "Faith & Church Activities" category.

Faith & Church Activities

Out of all the sections this has risen the most for participation:

- Responses recalling the inclusion of creation care in sermons and talks doubled
- Browsing the Church Website has tripled
- Social Media activity has gone up by at least 10-fold, maybe due to 'WhatsApp' use.
- Outlook Magazine readers have increased by a half to almost everyone, indicating that it is considered to be interesting and relevant.
- Involvement in House Groups and Church activities has risen by a half, to almost 90% of everyone that replied.

Results 2025

Environment

Responses in the Environment section have stayed about the same, except 4 households carried out a carbon footprint audit, whereas none did in 2024. Two accessible suggestions were made on the 2025 form indicating how this could be calculated. The simplest was to be found on the World Wildlife Fund website (wwf.uk). If you managed to use that, perhaps you can try out the one which requires a more detailed input for 2026: the Climate Stewards 360° carbon tool (climatestewards.org). If this is completed annually, you can plot progress towards a goal of reducing reliance on fossil fuels and other factors which affect the climate and consequently the welfare of the local, national and world environment.

Travel

Giving people lifts doubled from 9 to 18.

People owning electric/hybrids cars was now 18, although the question was not asked specifically in 2024. This was an impressive just over half of all the people participating in the survey.

Home

The households with heat pumps was 4 in 2025, although the question was not asked in the previous year.

Properties with solar panels &/or batteries was 7 compared with 5 in 2024.

Garden and Diet

The result of about 60% of the respondents following ethical objectives in these areas is about the same as in 2024.

On the other hand, Ethical Financial investment was more difficult to achieve, but 45% of participants said that they tried to do this.

2026 Survey

The Survey Questions have already been revised for this year in the light of last year's responses and simplified by removing more ambiguities and the ability to choose the "Sometimes" response. Although the latter occurred on the samples of all the questionnaires which we used to construct our first survey, we feel that all the questions should now be in a form which should elicit either a definite "Yes" or "No" answer.

Households will be asked to nominate a single responder again this time, discussing with their families or other residents what the answers should be, as appropriate. We will try to encourage more people to take part with more ideas. In preparation, think: "What more can I do for God's earth?", action it as a routine, and record your efforts in the survey.

Colin and Pauline Wilkinson

On the perils of leading prayer in church

Historically, the Church of England has had its share of eccentric clergy. Clergy such as the elderly, Anglo-Catholic Uncle Eustace, who is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an evangelical curate in a busy urban parish… and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in how to run a parish. The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'…

My dear Darren

I do hope you have now settled down in your first parish – although it is such a pity that you did not choose a more distinguished one. I know you feel your vocation lies in inner city work – whereas mine, fortunately, has always been to the better sort of rural village. I have always felt that the Almighty understands me well in that regard.

We had a little flurry of activity in church on Sunday. At the signal "let us pray", as the congregation dutifully flopped to their knees, sounding like a flock of geese settling in for the night, Major Hastings lost his glass eye. Yes, again! That man is so careless at times. Anyway, released from captivity, the eye rolled under the pews like a fugitive marble, ricocheting from hassock to handbag over the stone flags.

My sonorous entreaties to the Almighty were completely lost as the entire congregation scuttled under pews, trying to retrieve it. It finally appeared on the collection plate – along with £4.17, 100 pesetas and Miss Simpson's front door key. I was unsure whether the last item represented a fit of absent-mindedness or an improper suggestion. I returned it to her very firmly at the end of the Service.

The eye stared at me mournfully as I blessed it, along with the money. But it left a small social dilemma. What is the etiquette of returning a lost glass eye to its owner?

To have processed down the aisle with it, accompanied by crucifer and verger seemed a little too public. To sneak it to him as we shook hands at the door seemed a little too furtive. I finally decided to send a server to deliver it during the last hymn. I still wonder if it was the right decision. Perhaps you could look through that new Common Worship book and see if they have included an appropriate rite for returning lost glass eyes. We here at St James-the-Least-of-All haven't yet got round to Common Worship. The days are evil enough as it is.

Your loving uncle

Eustace

What's On at St Michael & All Angels

January

8	8.00 am	Parish Prayers: Church House
18	3.00 pm	Lighthouse Live: Church
24	10.00 am	Marriage Preparation Morning: Church House
31	6.30 pm	Church Quiz: Princes Risborough Golf Club

February

3	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union AGM: Church House
7	8.30 am	Men's Breakfast: Church House
15	3.00 pm	Lighthouse Live: Church
18	7.00 pm	**Ash Wednesday** Holy Communion: Church
21	8.00 am	Parish Prayers: Church House
28	10.00 am	Marriage Preparation Morning: Church House

1st & 3rd Sundays

9.00 am **Choral Communion**
11.00 am **Service of the Word**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays

9.00 am **Matins (Sung)**
11.00 am **Family Communion**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

Tuesdays

11.00 am **Holy Communion (Said)**

One morning service is usually live-streamed on Sunday. Find it on our website, or on the church YouTube channel: youtube.com/hughendenchurch

Regular Groups

Hughenden Community Singers

Mondays from 7.30 to 9.30 pm. No need to be able to read music or to have sung before, and no auditions. Under-18s welcome with parents. Contact Liz on 07768 790029 or evmoseley@btinternet.com

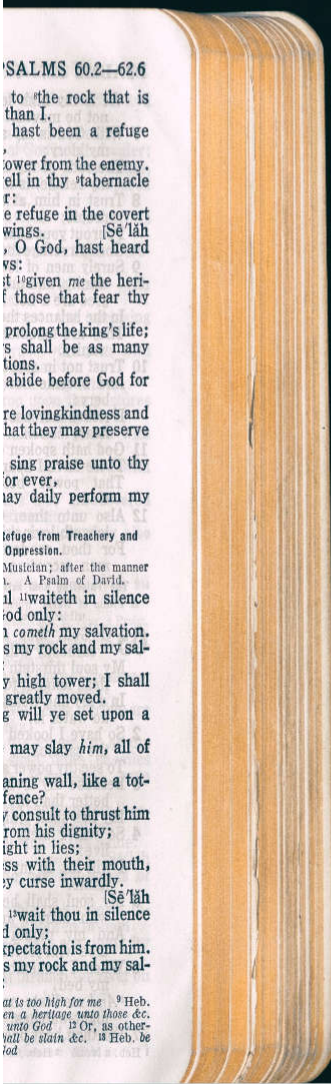
Friendship Morning

This is a get together in Church House on the third Thursday each month at 10.30 am. Primarily for those who are bereaved, who live on their own or who are lonely. The emphasis is on companionship and the atmosphere is light and cheerful. Contact Helen Peters on **01494 716772.**

Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's

Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's meets every Thursday in term time from 9.30 - 11.30 am in the North Room. Come for chat, play, craft and refreshments. Included, every second Thursday of the month, will be the Tiny Tots service, a time of fun worship in church. For details contact Helen Peters - **helen.peters@peters-research.com**

January Lectionary



4th : The Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Ephesians 3: 1-12

Matthew 2: 1-12

Evensong: Psalm 98

Isaiah 60: 1-9

John 2: 1-11

11th : The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 42: 1-9

Acts 10: 34-43

Matthew 3: 13-17

Psalm at 9.00 am: 29

Evensong: Psalms 46 & 47

Joshua 3: 1-8 & 14-17

Hebrews 1: 1-12

18th : Second Sunday of Epiphany

Isaiah 49: 1-7

1 Corinthians 1: 1-9

John 1: 29-42

Evensong: Psalm 96

Ezekiel 2:1 – 3:4

Galatians 1: 11-24

25th : The Conversion of Paul

Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Acts 9: 1-22

Matthew 19: 27-30

Psalm at 9.00 am: 67

Evensong: Psalm 119: 41-56

Isaiah 56: 1-8

Colossians 1:24 – 2:7

Who's Who at St Michael & All Angels

The post of vicar at Hughenden is currently vacant.

Helen Peters

Associate Minister

Home: 01494 716772
Mobile: 07792 118357

helen.peters@peters-research.com

Day off: Monday

Chris Coyston

Children & Families Minister

Mobile: 07855 389998

chris@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Parish Office

Administrator: Ben Brice

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

07928 536543
office@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister	David Tester	563354	Safeguarding Officer	Roger Grant	07909 960938
Churchwardens	Frank Hawkins	565050	Captain of Bellringers	Verity Nicholls	07952 850760
	Andrew Cole	305020	Church Flowers	Sylvia Clark	07570 876530
PCC Secretary	Susan Brice	445899	Friendship Morning	Helen Peters	716772
PCC Treasurer	Brian Morley	528633	Social & Outreach	Antony Rippon	07747 643270
Organist & Choirmaster	Neil Brice	445899	Mothers' Union Parish Link	Louise Stallwood	712705
Servers	Andrew Cole	305020	Hughenden Village Hall	–	07815 163269

All numbers are High Wycombe area code (01494) unless otherwise stated.

OUR VISION IS

to know God's love, and to share that love with everyone.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:16-19

Our aim is that all may know Jesus Christ, become his lifelong followers, and grow into mature members of the Church.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Our Church family will actively contribute to the life of our local community. Our Church activities & facilities will be accessible and we will welcome all with warm and generous hospitality.

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk