

**ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SANDRIDGE  
PARISH MAGAZINE  
FEBRUARY 2025**



**DIARY FOR FEBRUARY  
LETTER FROM OUR VICAR  
CHURCHYARD NEWS  
CHRISTMAS ROUNDUP  
THE ROLAND KING ROOM  
ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION  
W I REPORT**

## **FEBRUARY DIARY**

Sunday 2 February 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 4 February 10.00am Midweek Communion  
Sunday 9 February 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 11 February 10.00am Midweek Communion  
Sunday 16 February 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 18 February 10.00am Midweek Communion  
**Sat 22 February 10.00-12.00 Craft Church: free session for families, with refreshments**  
Sunday 23 February 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 25 February 10.00am Midweek Communion

## **MARCH DIARY**

Sunday 2 March 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 4 March 10.00am Midweek Communion  
Sunday 9 March 10.00am Holy Communion  
Tuesday 11 March 10.00am Midweek Communion  
Sunday 16 March 10.00am Holy Communion

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**[www.sandridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.sandridgechurch.org.uk)**

**The church is open daily from 10.00am until at least 3.00pm**

**Services: Sunday 10.00-11.15am and Tuesday 10.00-10.30am**

*Cover image: snowdrops in the House Lane churchyard (Peter Hyde)*

# Letter from our Vicar

Dear Friends in Christ

A belated Happy New Year to you all.

2025 has started rather badly it seems; with extreme weather, political unrest and no obvious sign of a more peaceful world. And that's without the general misery many of us feel, when the Christmas jollities are behind us and it seems like it's always dark and cold.



However, at St Leonard's we are optimistic about 2025. Here are some things that the church is hoping to look forward to this year:

- We are hoping to make the building watertight, as we currently have water coming into the building in at least three places.
- We are hoping to make some progress with a project to heat the church differently and better. Indeed, we are hoping and praying this might be the last winter when we need to get the blankets out at Sunday services.
- We are hoping to engage people in our stewardship campaign. It costs well over £1,500 to keep your church open each month and we have to raise this amount ourselves. This is just regular money in and out and in 2024 we unfortunately ran at a substantial loss. There will be lots more about this in the coming months.
- We are hoping to welcome many more people into our beautiful building with the Flower Festival moved to 6-8 June, a Heritage Day on 20 September and a Harvest Weekend on 18-19 October.

Our vision for St Leonard's is that it is a place where people from the whole parish and beyond feel welcome. We have some work to do on making sure the building matches that vision. We have many people who visit our building already – to attend services, to play in the children's corner, to sit quietly and pray, or to join in with one of our varied events.

We hope to welcome even more in 2025. And if it's been a while since you were at St Leonard's, why not make a resolution to visit during 2025? You really would be most welcome.

Every blessing for 2025.

*Revd Wendy*

## **Churchyard news**

Christmas tributes in both churchyards will be cleared from the beginning of February. Regular maintenance will also resume – the Community Payback Team worked really hard in 2024, for which we are most grateful, and we are hopeful they will continue into 2025. To allow us to carry out routine maintenance, the churchyards need to be safe spaces. This means items made of glass and other breakable materials are not allowed – most are not frost-proof and all can cause a hazard if they get broken. As ever, artificial flowers and plants are not allowed under the Regulations.

We have been aware for a while that some graves in House Lane have subsided and need levelling for safety reasons. Many graves are later used by families for an additional burial or for the burial of ashes, and the uneven ground might be a hazard to the funeral directors and to mourners. We have already levelled a few graves but in 2025 are hoping to do more of this with a large delivery of soil. We will start with graves which are already largely grassed over. This is routine maintenance and we will not be attempting to contact families, as in most cases we have only the record of who is buried, not who their family members are. Unlike in civic burial grounds, families do not ‘own’ a plot and the area remains the property of the church and therefore our responsibility.

### **If you have a family grave in the House Lane churchyard:**

- please do not place on it edging, stones, bark or objects of any kind.
- please let us know if you would like help with a grave – in particular if you would like it cleared, levelled and seeded with grass. Just use the contact form on our website to get in touch.

### **We would like to thank:**

- Sandridge Parish Council for their immense support across both churchyards.
- the Community Payback Team and gardener Rod, for all they’ve done this year.
- the families and friends who donate either time, money or both to help maintain our churchyards.
- especial thanks to Roger who does so much at House Lane and to both old and new teams of volunteer gardeners of the Garden of Rest.

## How can you help?

- You could donate money to help us pay for new planting, grave levelling, hedge-trimming, grass mowing and the other things that need doing. You can specify what you would like a donation spent on.
- You can contact us for help with maintaining a grave.
- You can volunteer to help with maintenance.
- You can continue to help us by following the Regulations – many of which assist us with making maintenance a bit easier.
- It's also really helpful if folk clear away any items such as plastic wrappings, dead flowers, flower pots and so on.

Thank you to everyone who cares for and about our two churchyards – both very special and holy places.

*Revd Wendy Sellers*

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## The Roland King Room

As regular readers will know, the enclosed space at the back of the church, formerly known as the Parish Room, was designated the Roland King Room on 6 May 2023, Coronation Day, in tribute to our much loved and missed late Churchwarden of almost 60 years, Roland King.



Above is the dedication plaque, now installed on the wall above the kitchen hatch.

The photograph to the left was taken at the celebration of Roland's 50 years as Churchwarden on - rather aptly - 6 May 2007: 16 years to the day before the Parish Room was dedicated to his memory.

## Electoral Roll revision 2025

The Electoral Roll of any church has to be completely revised every six years and for St Leonard's church that means in Spring 2025. If you wish to be entered on the electoral roll, paper forms will be available in the church, or you can access the form via this online link to the Parish Resources website, where you can find a fillable pdf (Form 1):

[https://parishresources.org.uk/the-pcc-as-a-charity/apcms-and-electoral-roll/#Electoral\\_roll](https://parishresources.org.uk/the-pcc-as-a-charity/apcms-and-electoral-roll/#Electoral_roll)

### Why join the electoral roll?

It is our parish's register of electors. In the same way as being on a civic electoral roll, which allows you to vote in parliamentary and local elections, being on the church's electoral roll means you can vote on church matters, attend the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting, usually held in April) and stand for election to the PCC (Parochial Church Council).

The size of the electoral roll also affects the number of PCC lay (non-clergy) members we can have. If our roll is not representative of the size of our parish, it may mean that the PCC is too small for the workload and that puts extra strain on the members of the PCC.

Finally, it is a way of ensuring that people at every level can be in touch with their church and play their part in decision making. It doesn't make you a 'member' of the church - simply regarding St Leonard's church as your spiritual home does that.

### How to join the electoral roll

Under the Church Representation Rules, any lay person is entitled to have their name entered on the roll if that person fulfils **all** the following:

- (a) is baptised,
- (b) is aged 16 or over, and
- (c) has made **one** of the following three declarations and duly applied for enrolment:

The first declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England, or of a church in communion with it, and is resident in the parish.

## Electoral Roll revision 2025 (cont)

The second declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England, or of a church in communion with it, is not resident in the parish, but has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

The third declaration is that the person is a member in good standing of a church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and is also a member of the Church of England and has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

Once completed, please hand your paper form to Carolynn Boucher, or the Vicar, or either of our Churchwardens: Kathy Tilney or Catherine Bailey.

Alternatively, please complete the online form and email it to: [news.stleonards@gmail.com](mailto:news.stleonards@gmail.com)

Completed forms must be submitted by **31 March 2025** please.

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### W I report

At our Christmas meeting in December, we greatly enjoyed our festive refreshments, some of which were home-made, and were then royally entertained by the Alban Duo on the piano, who also gave a concert in church on 15 December (see page 8).

A selection of fun games and a fierce quiz of anagrams of Christmas songs added to the entertainment!

*Christine Nutton, Vice President*



### ERIC DARBY RIP

We are sorry to report that Eric Darby, of Darby's Stores, sadly died on Tuesday 14 January. Eric's funeral is to be held in St Leonard's church on **Friday 21 February at 11.00am**, followed by burial in the House Lane churchyard, which he lovingly tended for many years.

## *Dance into Christmas with Alban Duo*

On **Sunday 15 December** a large audience enjoyed a selection of dance music for four hands on one piano, expertly played by Emma and Steph - the Alban Duo. The concert also included various Christmas favourites, with refreshments served in the Roland King Room afterwards.



Including Gift Aid, the girls' concert raised more than £850 in donations from a generous and appreciative audience, to be divided equally between MIND and St Leonard's church.

Their finale was a rendition of *Sleigh Ride*, with added percussion provided by family members (below) and enthusiastic audience participation, enabled by the appearance of a set of sleigh bells for everyone there!





## An afternoon with Jane Austen



On a chilly Sunday in January, a packed Village Hall thoroughly enjoyed an entertaining afternoon in the company of 'Jane Austen', also known as Sarah Finch, actress and member of our congregation.



*Yours Ever, Jane* was devised by Sarah herself and she brought the author to life through words and music, expertly accompanied by Scilla Stewart on piano. Portraying

not just Jane herself but a whole selection of her well-known characters from her novels, Sarah/Jane's witty and sharp observations were a delight and were born of a fascination with Jane Austen after playing her in a BBC adaptation of Fay Weldon's book *Letters to Alice*.

Sarah generously donated the performance to church funds and a total of £377 was raised, including donations towards refreshments and the sale of raffle tickets for a magnificent hamper.

## Christmas at St Leonard's



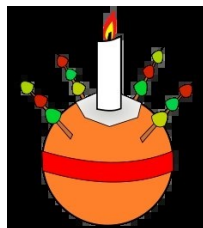
It was a joy to welcome so many over the Christmas period. Christmas started early – on **Saturday 30 November** – with our Christmas Fair. This was very busy, buzzing with lots of visitors keen to win prizes, snap up some bargains, enjoy the homemade refreshments and admire the newly decorated church. We don't count how many people come, but it certainly felt busier than previous years and we made the biggest amount ever at a Christmas Fair: over £1,700. Every pound raised goes towards maintaining the church.

On **Monday 16 December** Sandridge School walked to church for their Christmas service. The weather was dry, unlike their visit in October, and we squeezed the whole school into the church to hear the Christmas story and sing to God. It is always an absolute joy to spend time with the wonderful children and the amazing staff of our village school. The children are a credit to everyone - great fun and yet also so well-behaved.

We have two care homes in the village and understandably the church goes to them, rather than the other way around. On **16 December** Tara's Retreat enjoyed two carol services, packed with residents, with the music provided by a group of musicians from various local churches. Each resident was gifted a sheep ornament made by crafters from churches across St Albans.

Then on **24 December** musicians from St Leonard's visited Lyndon House for a beautiful carol service and again each resident was given a sheep.

The Tara's carol service is well established, but it was the first time we had led a carol service at Lyndon. It was such a success that it's already in the calendar for Christmas Eve 2025.



On **Saturday 21 December** about 60 people joined us for Craft Church and our Christingle service. This is always a really happy morning and we raised around £140 for the Children's Society. Please do look out for dates in 2025 and join us at Craft Church. It is a free, informal session and much enjoyed by those who come.

On **Sunday 22 December** we held our Family Carol service – so called because it is suitable for all ages. About 100 people sang familiar carols, carefully held candles and put the figures in the stable as we heard the Christmas story, and then drank hot chocolate and ate homemade gingerbread.

The busiest day of the year is **Christmas Eve**, with not just the Lyndon service but three services in church too. Around 100 people came along to our Crib Service. This was slightly below last year's figure and meant the church was comfortably full rather than bursting. I suspect some families chose instead to enjoy the Abbey nativity trail featuring real animals. We did, however, have a real baby! This service is intended to be especially suitable for small people (and the young at heart), with an interactive retelling of the Christmas story. By the end of the service all the children had added an animal to the stable scene, including sheep, donkeys, crocodiles and lions!

This was followed by a repeat of Family Carols, attended by around 250 people, so the church was absolutely packed! It looked wonderful in the candlelight and people were just everywhere.

Midnight Mass on **Christmas Eve** is mainly candlelit too, which poses a few challenges to your visually impaired vicar. This beautiful reflective service was about 50% busier than last year, while **Christmas morning** was very quiet in comparison. We have no way, of course, of knowing why people choose to come to any particular service. Indeed, I guess that changes each year, depending on people's commitments.

By lunchtime on Christmas Day, your vicar had very little voice left but a heart full of happiness. Whichever service you came to, it was lovely to see you. If you didn't make it in 2024, we hope to see you in 2025. If you have any feedback, we'd love to hear from you. St Leonard's is your church and that is especially true at Christmastime.

*Revd Wendy Sellers*

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For anyone unable to obtain a copy in either way, please contact  
Peter Hyde via the church website for a copy to be delivered.

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## Church Directory

**Vicar:** Revd Wendy Sellers 01727 301542  
(Wendy usually works Saturday through to Tuesday lunchtime)

**Churchwardens:** Kathy Tilney and Catherine Bailey

We are in the process of setting up a new church email account, so please be patient with us. In the meantime, the contact form on the website is the easiest way to get in touch.

**Website:** [www.sandrledgechurch.org.uk](http://www.sandrledgechurch.org.uk)

We welcome enquiries about our services including weddings, funerals and baptisms. We can also help with other enquiries; for example, about bell ringing, flower arranging, Young Church and our church music.

For enquiries about the parish magazine please contact

**Magazine Editor:** Rosamund Adlard on [news.stleonards@gmail.com](mailto:news.stleonards@gmail.com)

**Our Safeguarding Team** can also be contacted via the website contact form or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser directly on: 01727 818107 or 07867350886 or: [safeguarding@stalbens.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@stalbens.anglican.org)

### Publication notes

The magazine is edited by Rosamund Adlard, with many thanks to all our contributors.

Please send contributions or photographs for the next issue by

**14 March at the latest please**

to:

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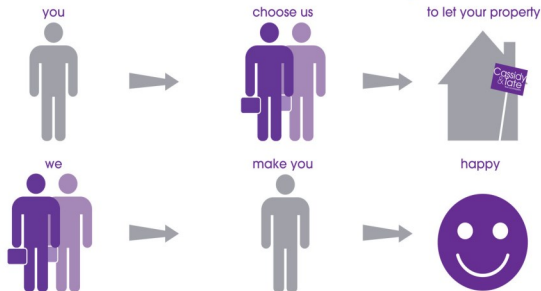


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