



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 187

January 2026

Are you new to St Jude's?

It's lovely to welcome you among us — in person or online. If you have any questions or requests for prayer or if you would like to come and talk more personally, please contact our Vicar on vicar@stjudeschurch.info

Open Church

In addition to service times, St Jude's Church will be open between 2.00pm and 4.00pm on Saturday 10th January (tea and coffee available). Do come along.

Fourth Sunday at Four

Our next Fourth Sunday at Four service is on Sunday 25th January at 4.00pm. Refreshments are served in the Monsell Room from 3.15pm and this service lasts only about 30 minutes. Do come and join us!

Food Bank

Donations of non-perishable food and other items keep finding their way to our crate in the Monsell Room! Thank you all so much and thank you especially for your generosity at Christmas time. Please keep your gifts coming — they are hugely appreciated.

Putting your stamp on it

We are grateful to all who continue to pass on their used postage stamps to us. They are sent on to a charity and put to very good use! Thank you to Joan who so kindly manages this collection for us.

From the Registers

Funerals: (1st December) Donald Norman Edward Maughan;

(8th December) Baden John Greenaway.

Marriage: (19th December) Rory Bryce Blair Morrison and Veronica Catalina Mellado Navarro.

Coffee Morning

Saturday 17th January

10.00–11.30am

Cakes, preserves
marmalade, etc

Do come along for coffee
and a chat

An Everlasting Light

I owe to Diana Bendall the reminder that these days in which I am writing this article is sometimes called "Betwixtmas" — the days between Christmas and New Year when things slow down a little and there's time for some reflection before the New Year is upon us! At least — that's the theory — and I hope it may have been true for you in the closing days of 2025.

This is a time for saying "thank you". For me, that includes my great gratitude for Christmas messages and gifts. But my thanks also to everyone who helped us to make Christmas at St Jude's both special and memorable. It was great to welcome so many to worship with us as the echoes of Christmas joy will remain with us for a long time. Whenever you joined us, whatever you did, please consider yourself truly thanked. You have been a great blessing to us all.

My favourite Christmas celebrations are those which involve the participation of children, not least our Crib Service, ably led for us by the Tubb family. One of the highlights of that service is the release of the helium star! This year it went stratospheric and is nestled high up in the rafters of St Jude's so that you'd hardly know it's there!

To me, the Star of Bethlehem has always represented the perfect wisdom, constant presence and gentle guidance of Almighty God Himself. Through the millennia, many wise men, women and children have found Jesus by the guidance of that star. And to those who seek him, God is always there to be found.

So perhaps the St Jude's Star of 2025 has its own message for 2026. There may be times when God seems far away, times of sadness when life no longer seems to make sense, times when the darkness of loneliness and loss clouds the starlight. And significantly too, times when the world seems an especially fearful, conflict-ridden place, the future ever more uncertain.

Please pray with me for those whose New Year is already shadowed by sorrow. Most especially, please pray for our dear friend and colleague, the Revd Lansford Penn-Timothy, following the tragic and untimely loss of his beloved sister, Emilia. Please remember Lansford, Grace and all Emilia's family in the weeks ahead.

Yet, as I crane my neck to find the star among those dark beams, I'm reminded that God is never far away. He is eternally present. But sometimes I must look hard to find him. And, as with those wise men so long ago, the joy of discovery will surely far outweigh the cost of the search.

May the star of light that reveals the wonder of God's love shine brightly at the dawn of this New Year. Whatever 2026 may hold for you, I pray that God will be more real to you than ever before.

Judith Allford

The Valerie Ward Organ Scholarship

Among our many Christmas Services, we were privileged to host again at St Jude's, Lodge Brothers Funeral Services Annual Christmas Service of Remembrance for this area. Lodge Brothers kindly agreed to support us in launching our Valerie Ward Organ Scholarship, which will be the means of supporting Joshua Davies, our current organ scholar who is a student at RHUL. It has been such a joy to welcome Joshua and we are thrilled that the scholarship will enable us to support him, and, we hope, many other students in the future.

The Christmas Service of Remembrance raised £297 for our appeal. If you would like to know how you can give to this exciting new project, please contact our treasurer, Brian Hooker, email brian.hooker@stjudeschurch.info. Thank you!

Easyfundraising.co.uk

We are very grateful to all those who are supporting us when buying things through Amazon, John Lewis by using easyfundraising.co.uk. You have raised well over £1500 (so far) for us through this scheme and that is without any cost to you.

The New Year

And I said to the one who stood at the gate of the year "Give me a light that I may walk safely into the unknown." And the reply came back: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That will be better for you than a light and safer than a known way."

The Epiphany

The Western Church began celebrating the Epiphany in the 4th century where it was, and still is, associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus. According to Matthew 2:11 they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Readings at Communion

Sunday 4th January (Epiphany)	Isaiah 60. 1-6 Psalm 72. 10-15 Ephesians 3. 1-12 Matthew 2. 1-12
Sunday 11th January (Baptism of Christ)	Isaiah 42. 1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10. 34-43 Matthew 3. 13-end
Sunday 18th January (2nd Sunday of Epiphany)	Isaiah 49. 1-7 Psalm 40. 1-12 1 Corinthians 1. 1-9 John 1. 29-42
Sunday 25th January (Conversion of Paul)	Jeremiah 1. 4-10 Psalm 67 Acts 9. 1-22 Matthew 19. 27-end

Bereavement Coffee Morning

Thursday 29th January at 10.15am
at the Jurgens Centre,
Church of the Assumption of our Lady,
Harvest Road
Everyone is welcome

We have an open invitation to join our neighbours at the Church of the Assumption of our Lady, Harvest Road, TW20 0QR, on the last Thursday in each month, for their regular Coffee Morning in the Jurgens Centre beside the Church.

You may have been recently bereaved, or your loss may be further back in time. Whatever your circumstances, you will find a quiet and welcoming space to talk or simply to listen and to be amongst friends. The invitation is to everyone; you may or may not be a church goer. You may drop in and out as you wish. We shall be very glad to see you.

Diary for January

- 4 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30am Informal Holy Communion
- 6 Tuesday 7.30pm Standing Committee meets
- 7 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 10 Saturday 2.00-4.00pm Church open
- 11 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Sung Eucharist 6.00pm Compline (Zoom)
- 14 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 17 Saturday 10.00-11.30am Coffee Morning
- 18 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Sung Eucharist
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins
- 19 Monday 7.30pm Church Council meets
- 21 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 25 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Sung Eucharist 4.00pm Fourth Sunday at Four service
- 28 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion (said)

Please note that our 9.30am service each Sunday is always live-streamed on our YouTube Channel. If you are unable to join us in church we warmly invite you to tune in.

The Village Centre

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manager@villagecentre.org.uk

<https://www.villagecentre.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/villagecentreenglefieldgreen>

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A short report for January as, at the time of writing, our wonderful team of staff and volunteers are still enjoying a thoroughly well-deserved Christmas holiday! We look forward to seeing them on their return.

Our Café re-opens on Monday 5th January at 9am. Our Community lunch will resume from 12th January at 12 noon — don't forget to book! Our Community Bus will be taking a trip again on Tuesday 13th January — again, booking ahead is requested. Thank you.

And special thanks to Helen and others for the lovely Christmas events which many of us were able to enjoy. Those included an amazing Christmas lunch, and a trip to the Fairmont Hotel at which a generous and delicious brunch was provided.

Our regular projects and events will all resume in January. Please check our website or our Facebook page for further details.

And if you're still thinking about your New Year resolutions — why not consider becoming a Village Centre volunteer? Our centre manager, Helen Hallett, would be delighted to discuss some options with you. Please contact her on 01784 471110.

**Happy 2026 to all our customers, hirers,
staff and volunteers!**

From our archives

50 years ago — January 1976 Mr Leigh retires

Not even fog and frost could prevent a large number of his past and present colleagues, former pupils and friends from coming to wish Mr Leigh well. The Vicar presented him with a canteen of cutlery from the managers, and Mr S.H. Froome (headmaster for many years) spoke for his colleagues in presenting a nest of tables and a cheque. Many tributes were paid to Mr Leigh for his twenty-eight years' teaching in the school. Later in the week the school held its own party, and the present pupils and their parents gave him a clock. Among the messages Mr Leigh received was one from Miss Stanley, Diocesan Director of Education.

Mr Leigh taught the 11-plus form in St Jude's School and is certainly well remembered by the current producer of this monthly newsletter.



St Jude's Church of England Schools Federation

"Excellence in Education,
Kindness in Community,
Courage through Faith"



2025 was a busy year for our schools, and one of the things which has been occupying our attention has been the proposed move towards academisation. At the forefront of that discussion has always been our shared desire to do the absolute best by our children and our staff team, and to preserve the Christian distinctiveness of our schools. The discussion has been long, and intense, but has ultimately led to a clear decision. This decision is outlined below in an end-of-term letter sent by our Chair of Governors, Juan Pemberton, to our parents and carers.

At this season of Epiphany, we ponder how the wise men were deflected from their original intention by God's guidance. We give thanks for the guidance we have received on this critical issue and rejoice in the exciting possibilities that lie ahead.

In the meantime — Happy New Year to our wonderful team of parents, carers, children, senior leaders, teachers, staff and governors. God bless you all.

Letter sent by the Chair of the Governors in December 2025

Hello Parents & Carers

As a governing board and alongside the senior leadership team, we've been exploring the feasibility of joining Enlighten Learning Trust (ELT) Academy. This complex work started a number of years ago, triggered in the main by the Conservative government's policy that every school should academise by 2030. The Labour government's position was different when it came into power in 2024 and today, its position remains unclear. It is certainly evolving.

At a governing board meeting on 2nd December 2025, it was unanimously decided that the process to join ELT should be stopped. Much has changed over these past few years and as the processes of 'discovery' and 'due diligence' have gathered pace, it was agreed that ELT is no longer the right academy for us to join.

We remain committed to identifying a new Academy for St Jude's to join; being part of a 'group' will bring with it very necessary benefits.

My board and I will make ourselves available should anyone wish to understand our position in more detail.

In the meantime, I send you my very best wishes for the Christmas season and the year ahead.

Juan Pemberton
Chair

Memorial Matters

Cecily Mary Caroline Somerset

This month we will focus on one of the two 'very curious little brick Gothic gabled mausolea' (as Pevsner described them), to the right of the main cemetery gate. These were constructed about thirty years apart, for female members of the same family, who both died young.

The older mausoleum, which is set further back from St Jude's Road, has a memorial inscription now only partially legible. It runs along one of the long sides and originally extended out onto the buttresses, but the carving on the softer stone at the sides has almost completely disappeared, so we are left with gaps. The inscription begins: '[illegible] MARY CAROLINE SOMERSET. ONLY AND BELOVED DAUGHTER OF COLONEL POULETT ...'

The full name of the little girl commemorated here was Cecily Mary Caroline Somerset. She had aristocratic ancestry: her father Poulett was grandson of both the 5th Duke of Beaufort and the 4th Earl Poulett, while her mother Barbara came from the Shropshire landed gentry. Cecily was born on 29 November 1852, in her parents' house on Piccadilly, and baptised at St George's Hanover Square the following month.

Poulett Somerset was a colourful and important figure in mid-Victorian England. He had fought with distinction in the Crimean War and was also Conservative M.P. for Monmouthshire. (Less impressively, he had served a short prison sentence in 1851 after horsewhipping a policeman who tried to stop him from driving dangerously in a prohibited place.) Poulett adored foxhunting, and led his young officers in hunts while serving in Gibraltar (the local farmers were less enthusiastic).

The Somersets owned a Jacobean-style manor house in Bishopsgate, called Heath Lodge. (Later, this was bought and significantly extended by the Schröder family, and it changed hands numerous times before ending up as a hotel — today, the Fairmont Windsor.) The Somersets were not based there all the time, however. Poulett was often abroad with his regiment, and Barbara spent a lot of time in her home county, staying with her sister Harriet and family at Moss Fields, their big house near Whitchurch. This is where Cecily's younger brother Vere was born in 1854 (a second brother, Henry, was born at Heath Lodge in 1860), and we can find mother and children at Moss Fields in the 1861 census. (Cecily was 8 and her occupation was given as 'Scholar (private)'). In August 1862, the Somersets were back at Heath Lodge, entertaining the Duke of Cambridge (Queen Victoria's cousin), but by the end of the year they must have travelled to Gibraltar, because that is where Cecily died — of diphtheria, on 30 December 1862. She was just 10 years old. The death of the 'dearly beloved and only daughter of Col. Poulett Somerset' — which is almost exactly the same wording as that still legible on her memorial in Englefield Green — was reported in newspapers across Britain.

Poulett applied for permission to build Cecily's memorial almost immediately. The application went before the Burial Board in April 1863, and a report in the Windsor and Eton Express comments that 'this structure will doubtless prove a very great ornament to the cemetery'. According to the paper, it was due to be completed by the beginning of May! The original design involved a 'dwarf fence and flower border', but these no longer survive. There were apparently difficulties about Poulett's plan to have his daughter's body interred in the mausoleum (the Burial Board had to meet again), and it's worth noting that the parish register contains no record of Cecily's burial.

Cecily's mother Barbara died in June 1870, aged just 47. (Her final address was 26 Bruton Street, Mayfair — later famous as the HQ of the Queen's dressmaker Norman Hartnell.) The Windsor and Eton Express reported that the Colonel was 'in a very precarious state' after his wife's death, but nevertheless in September of the same year, in Dublin, he married a second time. His new bride, Emily, was only 24 and a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry. She gave birth to a daughter exactly a year later, and the baby was named Cecily, like her lost sister. Poulett would not live to see this daughter grow up, however. He died in Dublin in 1875, aged 53.

The first Cecily is commemorated by her mausoleum, but we can no longer see her first name — and we don't know what she looked like, either. It is her father Poulett whose face was recorded for posterity in both a portrait and a photograph, the latter of which survives at the National Portrait Gallery: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp102013/poulett-george-henry-somerset>