

# CORNERSTONE NEWS

## December 2025 / January 2026



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**CORNERSTONE**  
Hythe United Reformed Church

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

To join our email distribution list please email Joy Funnell at [joy@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:joy@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)

For pastoral care offers or needs please contact one of the elders or email [pastoral@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:pastoral@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)

For church information please contact Richard Hall 023 8084 0191 [secretary@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk) or Craigmore, Roman Road, Dibden Purlieu SO45 4QJ

Please contact your home-group leader, Elders and Team Leaders or any trusted Christian for any spiritual support and guidance at this time.

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## **FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER**

**The deadline for the February issue is Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January**

The Editor would be very grateful to receive items and messages for the next issue of our newsletter, which will bless others in the church at this time, so please send such items to

E-mail: [newsletter@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)

Items can be sent by post to

Diana Sandy, 38 Knightwood Road, Hythe, Southampton, SO45 6JL

Telephone : 023 8084 2745

# THE CHRISTMAS POST BOX

will be in the foyer from

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December**  
**Until Mid-day on**  
**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

Your Christmas cards will be available  
for you to pick up on  
**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

Please only leave cards for those who  
come into our church building as any  
cards not collected on the Sunday will  
be put into the pigeonholes for  
collection.

We will not be able to post or deliver  
any cards not collected.

**Donations will be given to**



**bringinggoodnews**

[ changing lives + relieving poverty ]

# Letter from the Elders



It is that time of year when we think of the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. In John 3 v 16 we learn that God's love for the world was so great that he sent his only son, Jesus, to die for humanity. The verse continues by explaining that this was so that anyone who believes in him will not perish but receive eternal life. This is an amazing gift from God, a gift of love for us all, a gift that eventually becomes the ultimate gift at Easter time that will never need to be repeated again. This is so important to remember.

Let's go back roughly a year before the birth of Jesus and from the gospel we learn that God blessed Zechariah and Elizabeth with the promise of a child in their old age. Doubt and surprise, perhaps understandably, and Zechariah became dumb, but sure enough Elizabeth has her son at the appointed time with conditions (look them up in the first chapter of Luke). Now while this is happening, God chooses Mary to become the mother of Jesus. What an honour. In this year two boys have been born in very special circumstances. John grows up to prepare the way for Jesus and Jesus grows up to save the world, to bring the love of God to everybody who acknowledges and worships Him as their saviour. Jesus' ministry is packed with miracles that no human could do and He told us so many times what was going to happen. He was crucified and died but rose again after three days just as He said He would and now He stands in Glory with the Father.

Christmas is a time for the family, a time to count our blessings, a time to remember the things that Jesus did for us all those years ago and still does today. It is the same Jesus, just as it is the same God. He is waiting for us now to give our heart to Him. In the very last verse of Matthew 28 Jesus says: "*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*". If you haven't given your life to Jesus yet, do it now.

May Christmas be a time of peace and love for you all.

God bless, *Peter Blasby*



## WORSHIP AT CORNERSTONE

**Morning worship at Cornerstone starts at 10.30 am every Sunday and all are welcome.**

**Services are also streamed live via our YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/CornerstoneHytheURC> and the recording of the service will be available on YouTube afterwards.**

Most Sundays all parts of the service will be live, but occasionally the sermon will be a recording shown on the screen. Singing is a full part of our worship with a mix of songs and hymns accompanied mostly by videos shown on the big screens or by organ and piano or occasionally by a small worship band.

After the service, **Coffee and Tea** will be served in the main hall where people enjoy fellowship together.



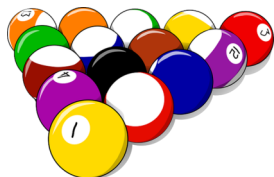
## WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

Date	Speaker	Theme:
7 <sup>th</sup>	Kevin Thatcher	Galatians 6 <b><i>Service includes Communion</i></b>
14 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Doug Barnett	Speakers Choice
21 <sup>st</sup>	A <sup>2</sup> Team	<b>NATIVITY</b> <b><i>All Age Service</i></b>
	Nick Tustian	<b>CAROL SERVICE</b>
25 <sup>th</sup>	Nick Tustian	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE</b>
28 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Eric Parker	A good New Year's Resolution

## WORSHIP IN JANUARY

Date	Speaker	Theme:
4 <sup>th</sup>	Nick Tustian	Serve one another <b><i>Service includes Communion</i></b>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Doug Barnett	Trust one another
18 <sup>th</sup>	The A <sup>2</sup> Team	Trust in Jesus <b><i>All Age Service</i></b>
25 <sup>th</sup>	Ian Thomson	Obey Jesus

## **YOUTH CLUB**



For 11 to 18 Year Olds

**7.30 pm to 9.00 pm  
alternate Fridays**



**Dec 5<sup>th</sup> - all youth invited at 7.00pm to help decorate  
and set up for the Christmas Fayre**

For further details and programmes please contact

Dave Symmonds

Email : [youthclub@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:youthclub@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)

**We will be meeting on Fridays 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December  
and 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January**

## **YOUTH BIBLE GROUP**



**7.00 pm to 9.00 pm - alternate Fridays**

We meet in the Youth Lounge for chat, Bible study  
and prayer. There's hot chocolate and slush  
puppies as well.

This is for young people 13 to 18, who want to learn more about  
being a Christian through studying God's word together in a  
relaxed and fun way.

**We will be meeting on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December  
and 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January**

**Christmas Holiday  
Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January**

**For more details please contact Dave Symmonds**



## WOMEN'S GUILD

You will be very welcome to join us at any of our meetings at Cornerstone on **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday afternoons** from 2.15 pm to 3.30 pm

### DEC/JAN PROGRAMME

**4<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Lunch at the Travellers Rest - 1.00 pm

**8<sup>th</sup> January** Welcome back - Pictures & fun, and a little bit of business

**22<sup>nd</sup> January** Favourite Hymns with Ray Richiardi and our Bring and Buy Table



For further information please contact Joy Funnell on 023 8084 3404 or e-mail [guild@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:guild@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)



## PICNIC LUNCH

**No Picnic Lunch in December**  
**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January**

On the second Sunday of each month there is a get-together picnic lunch in the hall, after worship and coffee for all who would like to stay and enjoy a time of fellowship together

# Christmas Fayre



Cornerstone Church Hythe

Saturday 6th December  
10am - 2pm



**A wide variety of stalls plus:**



**Father Christmas Grotto**



**Children's Crafts and Games for fun**



**Coffee and Light Lunches**

**All proceeds to our Building Repairs Fund**



Hythe United Reformed Church



**Cornerstone**



# Christmas Fayre

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December

Donations of items are needed for the Christmas Fayre stalls and some assistance will be needed on the day.

Please contact the Stallholders below if you can give an item or help in any way!

- ♦ **Cakes, Bakes & Preserves – Helen Roissetter**
- ♦ **Silk Flower baskets – Bev Hall & Maggie Troman**
- ♦ **Christmas Gifts & Jewelry – Sonia Gibbons**
- ♦ **Craft Goods – Agnes MacIntosh & Pins & Needles**
- ♦ **Art & Cards – Mary & Peter York**
- ♦ **Toys & Games – Gill Tabenor**
- ♦ **Fancy Goods – Daphne Aldridge**
- ♦ **Jig-saw Puzzles – Joan Shewry**
- ♦ **Bookstall & Cards – Oasis bookshop**
- ♦ **Games & Children's Craft – Dave Symmonds**

**Father Christmas hopes to see you soon!**

# Hythe Huddle

**Drop in support group for people  
living with dementia and their carers**

## Entertainment

**3<sup>rd</sup> December**

**Christmas Party**

**7<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Ocean Harmony**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Amanda Parson**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Easter Craft**

**Meet first Wednesday of each month**

**2 - 4 pm**

**Cornerstone United Reformed Church, Hythe**

Refreshments kindly donated by **TESCO**

**For more information contact us on:**

**023 8020 7623    [office@families-matter.org.uk](mailto:office@families-matter.org.uk)**



## A JANE AUSTEN CHRISTMAS

Join us as we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jane Austen's birth with an enchanting afternoon of Regency festive cheer. Taking place just days before her actual

birth date on 16<sup>th</sup> December, this event will pay tribute to one of England's most beloved authors in true Austen style.

The celebration will be held at **Abbey Hall, Romsey, at 4.00 pm on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. Guests will be treated to a delightful programme of Christmas carols, classical music, poetry and readings inspired by Jane Austen's life and works. Seasonal refreshments will include mince pies, Yule log, and the traditional Twelfth Cake - it will be a feast for all the senses!

Regency finery and period costume are optional - though not required, as we gather to honour Jane Austen's enduring legacy.

**Tickets are £10 for adults and £6 for under 16s**; with all proceeds going to church funds. Please book your ticket with Carole Cox [carole.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:carole.cox@btinternet.com) or telephone 07787 630297.

We look forward to welcoming a goodly number of kindred spirits to this Yuletide Celebration of Jane Austen — a most agreeable occasion indeed!

Merry.  
Christmas



## FLOWERS AT CORNERSTONE

Thank you very much for all your support for the flower rota in 2025. It will be a pleasure to organise the church flowers for another year and I hope that everyone will be able to enjoy them.

I am now taking names for the 2026 rota. People donate the flowers for many reasons: in memory of a loved one, a birthday or anniversary, a celebration, or just to give thanks.

The average cost is £25 to £30 but please do not be put off by this amount. You can always share with someone else. Just contact me and I will help you.

I can be contacted at church in person, by telephone on 023 8084 3249, or e-mail: [pamela@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:pamela@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk).

**I would welcome your donations for the flowers  
for the Christmas services**

### FLOWER ROTA FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

- 7<sup>th</sup> December - Sue Ruddock in memory of her Mother
- 14<sup>th</sup> December - Donations
- 21<sup>st</sup> December - Christmas Donations
- 28<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Donations
- 4<sup>th</sup> January - Barbara Moth in memory of Tim
- 11<sup>th</sup> January - Jane Wood in memory of Parents.
- 18<sup>th</sup> January - Donation
- 25<sup>th</sup> January - Joan Shewry in memory of Parents.

Thank you and take care,  
*Pamela Bridge*

## PRAYER POINTERS FOR DEC/JAN



**During the week there are opportunities  
to pray with others**

Before the service on Sunday  
in Room 1 at 10.15 am

After the service on Sundays  
an opportunity to receive prayer

On Monday mornings in Meeting Room 1  
from 10.00 am to 11.00 am

On Wednesday mornings  
in the Foyer from  
8.30 am to 9.30 am

At Homegroup meetings fortnightly



## DECEMBER/JANUARY PRAYERS

### **1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> December**

- ♦ Pray for our Homegroups that they may be blessed as they continue with the Bible Course.
- ♦ Pray for our Christmas Fayre and all those who make it possible. Pray that all those who attend will feel God's love and blessing surrounding them as they come into our building.
- ♦ Pray for our Women's Guild members as they share their Christmas lunch out together this week.

### **8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> December**

- ♦ Pray for our Elders meeting this week. Pray for wisdom in all decisions they make.
- ♦ Pray for the Toddler Group. May the families that attend experience the love and joy that Christmas brings.
- ♦ Pray for Pins and Needles that their talk of Christmas things may be a blessing to them all.
- ♦ Pray for the Men's Breakfast.

### **15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> December**

- ♦ Pray for the Nativity and Carol Concert.
- ♦ Pray for families as schools break up this week, especially those who will find the school holidays difficult for whatever reason.
- ♦ Pray for the war-torn areas of our world and the people who are homeless there, that they will know something of the love and peace that knowing Jesus brings.
- ♦ Pray for those who come in to The Crossings this week that their needs of homes and support may be met.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December**

- ◆ Pray for the Carol Service that those who don't regularly attend on Sundays will be especially blessed.
- ◆ Pray that the true message of Christmas will be known throughout the Waterside.
- ◆ Pray for those who will be on their own for Christmas.
- ◆ Pray for the New Year Party and Buffet.



## **1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

- ◆ Pray for the New Year Walk.
- ◆ Pray for our Women's Well-being group that meet on Fridays.
- ◆ Pray that this New Year may bring peace to more countries in our world.

## **5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> January**

- ◆ Pray for our Homegroups coming together after the Christmas and New Year break.
- ◆ Pray for the HytheActive Exercise Group.
- ◆ Pray for all who come into our building this year, for whatever reason, that they may meet with our Lord Jesus.

## **12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> January**

- ◆ Pray for those sharing lunch after the Sunday service.
- ◆ Pray for the countries most affected by climate change.
- ◆ Help us Lord to right the wrongs we have caused in the world.

## 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> January

- ♦ Pray for our Toddler Group, children and parents.
- ♦ Ask God to guide us and Southbourne, in our search for a new minister.
- ♦ Pray that the URC nationally will seek our Father's will in all decisions.

## 26<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> January

- ♦ Thank God for each of our Elders and ask Him to bless them.
- ♦ This is what we are told in John 5 v 14-15: *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God that if we ask anything according to his will He hears us"*. May we all go forward in this confidence.
- ♦ Pray for peace in our world and the end of hunger.



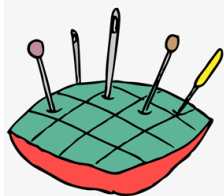
### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 8.30 am**

More information in the Weekly Notice Sheets.

For details please contact Dave Symmonds -  
call/text 07747698910 or e-mail:

[mensbreakfast@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:mensbreakfast@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)



### **PINS AND NEEDLES**

**10.00 am to 12 noon**

**Every Friday morning in the Foyer**

We are a friendly group who meet for two hours on a Friday morning in the Foyer as we knit, sew and crochet. Tea, coffee and pleasant conversation are always available.



## BIRTHDAYS IN DEC/JAN

**\*\*\* Happy Birthday \*\*\***

**To: Grace Axton  
who will be 15 on the 31<sup>st</sup> January**

### **Congratulations to:**

Carole Wicks who will be 89 on the 16<sup>th</sup> December  
Cynthia Wheeler who will be 96 on the 27<sup>th</sup> December  
Heather Bowers who will be 80 on the 31<sup>st</sup> December  
Maggie Troman who will be 86 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January  
Molly Goatley who will be 93 on the 8<sup>th</sup> January  
Marion Brodie who will be 83 on the 13<sup>th</sup> January

If you are over 80, or turning 80 in 2026 and are not already included on the newsletter birthday page, but would like to be, please let Joy Funnel know. She is in church on most Sunday mornings or you can send her an e-mail:

[joy@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk](mailto:joy@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk)

## **HYTHE ACTIVE EXERCISE GROUP**



**We meet on Thursdays at 10.00 am in the Hall at  
Cornerstone for exercise and fellowship.**

**Last session before Christmas - 11<sup>th</sup> December  
Start again - 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Why not come along and try? You can do as much or as little of the exercises as you choose, and some attendees remain seated. It's an enjoyable time, and there is good evidence that strength and balance exercises reduce the risk of falls in older age.



## THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, WESSEX SYNOD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

### ***Net Zero Lead***

Champion the Synod's response to the climate crisis, guiding our journey towards Net Zero

and helping churches care for God's creation through practical action and shared inspiration.

### ***Mission Lead***

Inspire and resource mission and evangelism across the Synod, supporting churches as they reach out to their communities and discover fresh ways of sharing God's love.

### ***New Christian Communities Lead***

Encourage and support the creation of new Christian communities and fresh expressions of church, helping to identify and nurture pioneering mission across the Synod.

### ***Racial Justice Advocate***

Promote racial justice and inclusion throughout the Synod, raising awareness, supporting local churches in good practice, and keeping equality central to our shared life.

### ***Rural Advocate***

Champion and support the life of rural churches, ensuring their voices are heard, their needs understood, and their ministry celebrated and strengthened.

### ***Trustees of the United Reformed Church Wessex Trust Ltd***

Serve as a trustee to help oversee Synod resources and property in line with charity and company law: we seek people who understand local church situations and needs, and care about the URC's mission in Wessex.

### ***Convener of Synod Executive***

Chair meetings and guide the work of the Synod Executive, ensuring good communication, clear follow-through on decisions, and a spirit of collaboration and encouragement in Synod leadership.

### ***Local church file sorting***

We have a number of local church files inherited from District Councils which now need to be weeded and sorted before they are scanned and

digitized. This can be done from home or from the Synod Office. This needs to be a URC member with enough awareness to know what to keep and what can be destroyed.

*All volunteers work within the context of a supportive staff team, a collaborative team on the Synod Executive, and full expenses reimbursed. All roles are open to ministers and lay people, and there are no age restrictions (except legal requirements for the Trust). Volunteer roles are normally for a maximum term of four years, which can be renewed if all parties wish. The Synod will follow a Safer Recruitment process for everyone wishing to serve, and the Synod reserves the right not to appoint every applicant.*

To express interest email Deborah Walker on [office@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:office@urcwessex.org.uk)  
To ask for more information, or to suggest possible candidates, please email Michael Hopkins on [moderator@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:moderator@urcwessex.org.uk)

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE – we are hoping to have a team in place by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.



**Table Top will be open on Tuesdays  
December 9<sup>th</sup>  
January 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>  
9.30 am-12.00 noon**

**Books on sale in the foyer every day  
Everyone welcome to come in and look around,  
relax and enjoy a coffee or tea**



## DRAMA LLAMAS

**Hello dear friends**, I am delighted to be able to say for the first time this year, "Happy Christmas". Before we move on to my favourite time of year I would just like to reflect on our November service which was on Remembrance Day. I feel deeply honoured to

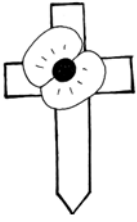
have been able to lead the service as it has a very special meaning for me as I'm sure it does for many of you. Initially, I was not sure whether or not I would be able to lead the service and had asked if the A<sup>2</sup> (All Age) team would be able to take over. I had planned to help in the background but not to appear on stage and definitely not to lead the service. However, as you will have seen things turned out very differently.

We started by recording a few of our dear friends talking about their experience of war which we used as part of the introduction leading into the two-minute silence. I would love to have been able to share all of the video clips with you as I was blown away by the stories that I heard. However, we did have a very strict time frame to work to, in order to be ready for the silence at 11.00 am. I'm very grateful to Bobby and Ben, who both helped edit the clips that I had recorded and the final result was very moving, reminding us why we were there on Remembrance Sunday.



I would like to say a huge thank you to Andy Hall who led the worship music in such a powerful manner. I really felt that his input brought our service to life. There was a lot of planning behind the scenes to get everything on track to be ready at 11 o'clock for The Silence and even with that we were a little bit ahead of schedule. Thankfully, Andy was able to step up and ensure that the music finished at the right time. I'm not sure whether or not anyone noticed that Ben and Bobby, who were responsible for time management, kept indicating to myself and Andy when it was time to wrap things up ready for the Silence.

I felt the service flowed well, from the poignant stories that were shared, then moving through to God's message which I think Ray delivered beautifully. Then to top it all off we had a thought provoking poem as a summary for the whole service. Michael was unsure if he would find the inspiration he needed to write the poem, however his doubts were unfounded as I personally felt it was absolutely perfect and a beautiful tribute to those who fought for us.



One of the reasons I was unsure whether or not I would be able to lead the service was because I have connections with people who have fought for our freedom. I didn't want to let them down, or for our service to be as chaotic as our previous one. The day before, we met with Ben and Margaret who helped us with a run through of the first part of the service to see that everything was on track. Audrey joined us to have a run through of 'The Last Post' to ensure that we had our two-minute silence as close to 11 o'clock as possible. Thank you all for your commitment and hard work with this as Sunday wouldn't have been possible without you.

I am aware how different our Remembrance Sunday was to our previous A<sup>2</sup> services and not just because of the subject. I think one of the main differences was the preparation. Not just the 'behind the scenes' working that we did but also for me on a very personal level. When I arrived at church checked that everything was in place and then took myself to a quiet place for time with God. Usually I would have been nattering and organising everything which meant that I was focusing on everyone else rather than God. How can I carry God's message if I'm not focusing on Him? I am aware I have often said that I feel as if I am God's channel and it's Him working through me throughout all of the work I've done with both Drama Llamas and the A<sup>2</sup> team. Yet this time was different as I genuinely 100% handed it over to God. One of my main concerns was that I would be in tears throughout the service as this is what normally happens to me on Remembrance Sunday.



During the service I shared how I have been affected by people who have fought for our country and how I have seen the lasting impact this has on their mental well-being. I am very grateful that I cannot imagine what it would be like to live through a war let alone fighting one. There are numerous references in the Bible about how Jesus healed people on the inside not just on the outside. Maybe we need to find a way to help people to heal on the inside just as Jesus did.

We are rapidly heading towards Christmas, one of my favourite times of the year. I am quite excited about our next A<sup>2</sup> service which will be the Nativity. That said, it's on the same day as our Carol Service so if Drama Llamas are going to perform in both it's going to be a very busy day. I am sure the Drama Llama team will be up to it.

Ryley came up with a really good idea for the theme as she wanted to focus on the shepherds. I'm not quite sure if we could fill a whole service around the shepherds so I'm expanding it slightly, taking up Kevin's concept of bit- parts. We have already covered Mary and Joseph in our prequel series so for the Nativity we will focus on everyone else. I can't really say much more than that at the moment because we are very much in the planning stages. However I am very excited and hope that we will be able to bring the Nativity story to life for you.



I will end on a very personal note. As you may recall, back in May we had a new addition to our family, our gorgeous little dog Woody. I had not been looking forward to winter as I've thought this would be a really horrible time to be walking a dog. How wrong I was. Instead I've actually for the first time been slightly annoyed that the clocks went back. I have been really enjoying walking Woody first thing in the morning, leaving the house with our torches and his illuminated collar to go exploring in the forest. I cannot describe how beautiful it is to go out and watch the sunrise, bringing the world to life. It fills me with a real sense of peace and quite often I come home feeling inspired by God's word. Unfortunately I can't include a picture as it's too dark so they don't come out very well. You'll need to trust me on this and maybe go exploring for yourself.

Merry Christmas my dear friends and I will see you next year.

*All my love, Emma and*

**The A<sup>2</sup> Team**





## ADVENT MESSAGE 2025

Advent begins in darkness, not to discourage us, but to help us recognise the light when it comes. This year, the darkness feels real enough. We live in a world still marked by significant uncertainty. Conflicts uproot lives and destabilise nations. The climate emergency intensifies. Many people are burdened by economic pressure, political fatigue, or the experience of loneliness. Public discourse is often sharp and divisive. It can feel as though the world is holding its breath.

Advent speaks into precisely this kind of moment. The Scriptures remind us that God steps into human history not when everything is peaceful or predictable, but when people are longing for direction and hope. Isaiah's visions of peace were spoken into anxious times. John the Baptist's cry rang out in an occupied land. Mary received the angel's message in a world on edge. The Christ-child was born amid upheaval and fear. Advent is the story of God choosing to draw near precisely when life feels unsettled. God's faithfulness is not dependent on our stability, and divine presence is not restricted to times of ease. God comes to us even when we are still searching for our way.

Across Wessex Synod, I continue to see this living hope embodied in many small but significant ways: in congregations offering hospitality to neighbours; in communities supporting those struggling with the cost of living; in acts of care for creation; in people standing alongside refugees, the isolated, and the overlooked; and in the faithful rhythm of worship and prayer that sustains us week by week. These actions may not attract headlines, but they are unmistakable signs of light, and they matter.

Advent is not simply about waiting; it is about preparation. Preparing room for Christ in our priorities and relationships. Preparing space for peace in a world accustomed to conflict. Preparing space for generosity in a culture anxious about scarcity. Preparing space for hope when despair feels easier. This preparation is both spiritual and practical. It asks us to be honest about the world as it is, and courageous about the world as it could be.

Advent also invites us to resist the temptations that accompany difficult times: cynicism, apathy, and the belief that nothing can change. The child in the manger is God's declaration that even the most unpromising situations can become places of divine possibility. Hope does not deny reality; it transforms how we respond to it. The light of Christ does not erase the world's pain, but it reveals that darkness is not the whole story.

As we journey through Advent, may we allow ourselves moments of stillness amid urgency. May we look for the small signs of grace that break through the noise. May we let the promise of Emmanuel steady our steps. And may we find the courage to live as people of the light, not because the world is simple, but because God is faithful.

With every blessing for Advent and Christmas,

***Revd Dr Michael Hopkins***, Moderator, Wessex Synod



**Audrey Edmonds** writes: "I would like to thank my friends at Cornerstone for the birthday flowers, delivered with a lovely smile by Bev. It's always wonderful to be given flowers! As it happened, I was leaving, just after Bev came, to visit family in Somerset, so decided to take them with me so that we could all enjoy them!"

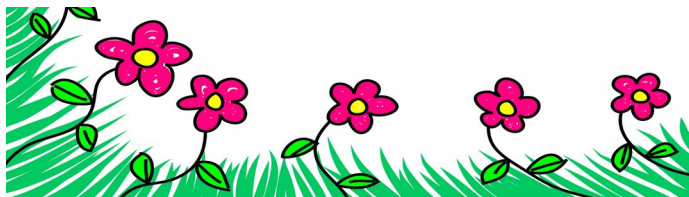
**Eira and Gerry McCaughey** say: "Thank you to all of you for the lovely flowers you sent to us. The array of colours added brightness to our house. Gerry adds, I miss coming to Cornerstone so these are a nice reminder. I hope, please God, one day to come to Cornerstone again."

**Jytta James** writes: "Many grateful thanks for the beautiful flowers Bev gave me. What a lovely surprise. The Alstroemeria lasted for well over two weeks. Wonderful."

**Pat Dudley** says: "Thank you for the birthday flowers I received from church and apologies to Marion that we were not at home when she delivered them. They were tucked safely by our front door, a lovely surprise to come home to. So again thank you."

**Sylvia and Mike Burman** would like to thank all their friends at Cornerstone for the beautiful flowers they received recently. Thanks also to Steffie for delivering them and sorry we missed you. They were a lovely surprise.

**Heather Bowers** would like to say a big "thank you" for the flowers delivered recently by Marion Brodie. I am sorry I was not at home at the time. They are in my lounge and are bright with their yellow and white flowers mixed with shiny green foliage. They have cheered me up each time I go into the lounge. Thank you all very much, Bless you all.



# Families Matter

at Hythe URC

## THANKS FROM FAMILIES MATTER

Peter Blasby, on behalf of Families Matter, would like to thank George and Diane for suggesting donating money to Families Matter instead of buying them wedding gifts. **The total including gift aid was £859.** A big “thank you” to everyone who made a donation.



### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM HEATHER BOWERS



Please excuse me from writing Christmas Cards again this year but since having my Covid injection I have been left with painful pins and needles from my shoulders to my finger tips. This makes it difficult for me to write as my fingers will not bend enough to hold a pen. I wish you all a very pleasant Christmas, maybe sharing with family or other friends, just enjoying some chosen films or other happy programmes on your television. May The Lord Bless you all throughout this coming season.

Take Care everyone, especially if it gets frosty and slippery.

Christian love, *Heather*



## **NEW YEAR PARTY**

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December**

**6.00pm - 8.00pm**

**BRING AND SHARE SUPPER**

**in the hall at Cornerstone**

**Bring your friends, some food  
to share and join in with fun  
and games as we look forward  
to the New Year.**



## **NEW YEAR WALK**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2026**

**Come and join us on New Year's Day for a walk  
around the forest followed by lunch at  
a Pub/Café.**

**Location to be finalised at a later date which will  
be in the Notice Sheet nearer the time.**

# DECEMBER 2025 CALENDAR

**Cornerstone Cuppa is closed from Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Dec to Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Jan inclusive**

Monday	1	<b>HOMEGROUP WEEK</b> 10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group : 2.00pm Hythe Huddle Christmas Party
Thursday	4	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group 1.00pm Women's Guild Christmas Lunch at the Travellers Rest
Friday	5	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.00pm All youth invited to help decorate and set-up for Christmas Fayre
Saturday	6	10.00am to 2.00pm Christmas Fayre
<b>SUNDAY</b>	7	10.30am Morning Worship
Monday	8	10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	9	9.30am Table Top
Wednesday	10	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group : 7.30pm Elders Mtg.
Thursday	11	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group
Friday	12	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.00pm Youth Bible Group
Saturday	13	8.30am Men's Breakfast
<b>SUNDAY</b>	14	10.30am Morning Worship
Monday	15	10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	16	
Wednesday	17	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group
Thursday	18	
Friday	19	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.30pm Youth Club
Saturday	20	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	21	10.30am Nativity Service : 6.30pm Carol Service
Monday	22	10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	23	
Wednesday	24	
Thursday	25	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> 10.30am Christmas Day Service
Friday	26	<b>BOXING DAY</b>
Saturday	27	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	28	10.30am Morning Worship
Monday	29	
Tuesday	30	
Wednesday	31	6.00pm Bring and Share Supper

# JANUARY 2026 CALENDAR

Cornerstone Cuppa is open Monday to Saturday - 10.00 am - 12 noon  
except New Years Day

Thursday	1	<b>NEW YEARS DAY</b> Walk in the Forest and Pub Lunch
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	4	10.30am Morning Worship with Communion
Monday	5	<b>HOMEGROUP WEEK</b> 10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	6	
Wednesday	7	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group : 2.00pm Hythe Huddle
Thursday	8	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group : 2.15pm Women's Guild
Friday	9	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.30pm Youth Club
Saturday	10	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	11	10.30am Morning Worship followed by Picnic Lunch
Monday	12	10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	13	9.30am Table Top
Wednesday	14	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group
Thursday	15	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group
Friday	16	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.00pm Youth Bible Group
Saturday	17	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	18	<b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> 10.30am Morning Worship
Monday	19	<b>HOMEGROUP WEEK</b> 10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group
Thursday	22	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group : 2.15pm Women's Guild
Friday	23	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.30pm Youth Club
Saturday	24	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	25	10.30am Morning Worship
Monday	26	10.00am Daytime Prayers
Tuesday	27	9.30am Table Top
Wednesday	28	8.30am Early Morning Prayer : 10.00am Toddler Group : 7.30pm Elders Meeting
Thursday	29	10.00am HytheActive Exercise Group
Friday	30	10.00am Pins and Needles : 7.00pm Youth Bible Group
Saturday	31	

# REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

**Cornerstone Cuppa is open Monday to Saturday  
from 10.00am-12.00 noon except Bank Holidays**

## SUNDAY

- 10.30am Morning Worship with  
Light Years (4-11 years) and Grid (11-18 years)
- 10.30am Holy Communion:  
(1<sup>st</sup> Sunday usually - see Worship notice)

## MONDAY

- 10.00-11.00am Prayer Time at Cornerstone

## TUESDAY

- 9.30am-12noon Table Top Sale (Alternate weeks as advertised)

## WEDNESDAY

- 8.30-9.30am Early Morning Prayer
- 10.00-11.30am Toddler Group\*\*
- 7.30pm Church Meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday quarterly)

## THURSDAY

- 10.00am-12noon Hythe Active Exercise Group
- 2.15-3.30pm Women's Guild (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays)

## FRIDAY

- 10.00am-12noon Pins & Needles Group
- 7.00-9.00pm Youth Bible Group\*\* (Alternate weeks) (13-18 years)
- 7.30-9.00pm Youth Club\*\* (Alternate weeks) (11-18 years)

## SATURDAY

- 08.30-10.30am Men's Breakfast (as announced)

**HOMEGROUPS** meet twice a month on various days, at various times, and various venues.

\*\* Except School Holidays & Bank Holidays



### STANDING AT THE PORTAL

Standing at the portal of the opening year,  
words of comfort meet us hushing every fear,  
spoken through the silence by God's loving voice,  
tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.

Refrain:

Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day,  
for God's word shall never, never pass away.

"I, your God, am with you: do not be afraid;  
I will help and strengthen; do not be dismayed,  
for I will uphold you with my own right hand;  
you are called and chosen in my sight to stand."

Refrain

God will not forsake us and will never fail;  
God's eternal covenant ever will prevail.  
Resting on this promise, what have we to fear?  
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.

Refrain

