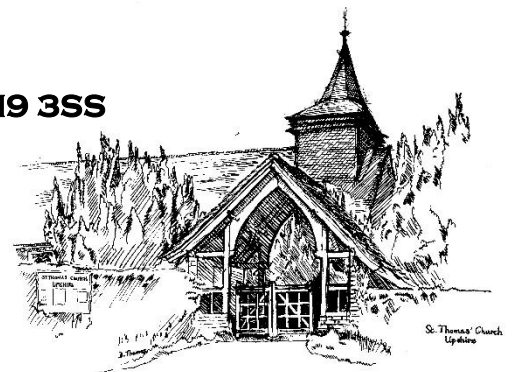


# ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

## NEWSLETTER

*January 2026*



Rector: Revd Peter Smith, 01992 767897  
Team Vicar: Revd Jane Yeadon, 07960 604416. Email [janeyeadon@gmail.com](mailto:janeyeadon@gmail.com)  
Benefice Office: Abbey Church Centre, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1XQ. 01992 767897  
Church address: Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3SS.  
Website: <https://stthomaschurchupshire.com>  
Email: [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk)

This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for February Newsletter: 14<sup>th</sup> January

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

### SERVICES AND DIARY FOR JANUARY

Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3pm-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Epiphany 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6	Matthew 1:1-12
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Baptism of Christ 9.15 am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 42:1-9	Matthew 3:13-end
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Epiphany 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7	John 1:29-42
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> :	Conversion of St Paul 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Jeremiah 1:4-10	Matthew 19:27-end
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	Presentation of Christ in the Temple 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Malachi 3:1-5	Luke 2:22-40

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY, HEALTHY & PEACEFUL NEW YEAR

### PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy. First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk)

This month we pray for Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Rosalind, Doreen, Maureen, Carol & George, Beverly, Terry, Jackie, Andrea & her Mum & Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, Nigel, Lola, Pearl, Susan & Alan, Jackie & Linda, Graham, Christine, Chris, Izzie, Pennie, Tim and Mike

## **THE VICAR WRITES**

On January 25th, the Church keeps the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, a moment in the calendar that often passes quietly but nevertheless has a powerful witness.

Paul's encounter on the Damascus Road (told in chapter 9 of the Book of Acts) was dramatic: blinding light, a voice from heaven, a sudden overturning of everything he thought he knew. Most of us will never experience conversion in quite such spectacular fashion. And yet the heart of Paul's story is something that touches every one of us: the message that the transforming grace of God is something that meets us where we are, no matter where that is, and calls us into something new.

What has always struck me about Paul is not simply that he changed his beliefs, but that he surrendered totally which enabled God to reshape him entirely. His past was complicated, even painful. His convictions had been fierce, and not always for the good. Yet when he heard his name spoken, Paul discovered that God's grace was bigger than his mistakes, deeper than his assumptions, and stronger than his fears. And surely that is a truth worth carrying with us into a new year.

The Feast of the Conversion of St Paul reminds us that God speaks personally as well as collectively. God calls each of us by name, inviting us into a life shaped by grace, service, and trust. That calling may take many forms: quiet acts of compassion, faithful prayer, using our gifts in new ways, or simply allowing God to work gently within us. However small or hidden these steps may seem, they matter deeply to God, and they help weave the fabric of Christian witness in our daily lives.

And just as each of us has a calling, so too does a community. As a church, we are called to imitate Paul's courage: to be open to change, to be willing to grow, and to trust that God can do extraordinary things through ordinary people. After all it's we, ordinary people, who are the ones now tasked with carrying God's Good News into the places we live, work, and serve, so that others too might discover the surprising joy of being met by God on their own "Damascus Roads."

My prayers are with you all as we enter into this new year of 2026.

May it provide rich blessings as we journey together through it.

Revd Jane Yeadon,

Team Vicar St Thomas, Upshire and Holy Innocents, High Beech

Benefice Youth Missioner MB 07960 604416

## **ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER**

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version of the Newsletter is now in excess of 100 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to Kate at [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com) or phone 02085083942. We are looking to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies – your contribution will help. Thank you.

St Thomas Church, Upshire Bank details

St Thomas Church Upshire PCC

HSBC Bank

Sort Code 40 45 20

Account number 00724505

Any queries regarding setting up a Standing Order, giving a donation to the church, Gift Aid or about joining the Parish Giving Scheme please contact our Treasurer, Ruth Moore on 07852 668633

[Ruth4366@gmail.com](mailto:Ruth4366@gmail.com)

If you are able to Gift Aid donations this increases your gift without any extra cost to yourself.

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

Thank you to those who helped create the Festive Flowers in December.

Each month we can create memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers - Contact Kate

Dale email: [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com) or 02085083942

## **GROWER'S CORNER**

A new year begins and lots of plans are being made. The seed catalogues are out and I am checking what I already have. So much promise in just a handful of seeds.

It's an exciting time prepping and planning before the realisation of how many seedlings you have and you are juggling indoors as it's too cold to send them to the unheated Greenhouse/Polytunnel. Note to self!... be sensible and don't go too early with the sowings.

### **New year, new vegetable!**

At the Christmas bazaar Sue McKinley kindly gave me a Chayote... It's a veg that I've never eaten or attempt to cook. So I'd thought I share what I've found out about it.

Chayote, also known as mirliton and choko, is an edible plant that belong in the gourd family Cucurbitaceae along with pumpkins and squash. Although most people are familiar only with the fruit as being edible, the root, stem, seeds and leaves are edible as well. The tubers of the plant are eaten like potatoes and other root vegetables, while the shoots and leaves are often consumed in salads and stir fries, especially in Asia.

Chayotes do not always succeed in the UK but buying a fruit grown here does seem to be at least part of the answer. The whole fruit is usually planted to produce a new plant. This is usually done in the new year (inside in a pot of compost in a light, cool spot) and until then the fruit is kept in the dark in a cool, frost-free place or alternatively, especially if sprouting, potted up but into completely dry compost not watering until about mid-January. Keep the plant growing steadily, prune if necessary, and finally plant out when the risk of frost has passed. A sheltered spot is advised – or in a greenhouse or polytunnel (if you can let the shoot out through a gap it won't take up all the space and will be better for being cooler). Flowering will hopefully occur in later summer and once both male and female flowers have appeared and wasps have had a chance to pollinate you should get fruits. It is a perennial plant but not frost-hardy but it is worth protecting the roots in winter to see if it will survive the cold and wet – older plants can give more fruit.

The fruit is light green with deep ridges and the skin is dimpled with prickles all over.

The flesh is hard but once cooked is soft and bland in taste, but this is where it is underrated. It takes up flavours and is excellent in so many dishes.

Cooking suggestions. As chips, baked with garlic, salt and pepper sprinkled on top. Once peeled it can be boiled, stuffed, mashed, pickled, or in curries, stir fries, soup. It can be used to bulk up stewed fruit without losing its texture. It can also be used as a base for relish. Or grate it in salad or put on pizza, it's seems the ideas are endless.

Will you try growing a Chayote this year?

Update on the plots:

The bare root roses have been dug in, under planted with spring bulbs. The new fruit trees are in their new positions to form a boundary.

We've continued battling with the perennial weeds and clearing rubbish as we find it. Resulting in another dump run.

We have more tidying/organising to do but have struggled getting to get to the plot as frequently as the weather hasn't allowed us.

January to do:

- \* Clean and sharpen garden tools
- \* Organise the shed(s)
- \* Chit early potatoes
- \* Dig in green manures before they flower to enrich the soil
- \* Order seeds

January sowings:

- \* Sow onions and leeks undercover

Flowers/shrubs/trees

- \* Sow hardy annuals like calendula and cornflowers undercover
- \* If you forgotten any spring bulbs plant them now
- \* Apple/pear trees can have their winter prune
- \* Prune autumn fruiting raspberries down to the ground
- \* Check stored tubers- dahlias

Tip: Protect young perennial herbs such Rosemary or sage from cold weather with straw/leaf mould around the base of the plant

Wishing everyone a successful growing season ahead. Love Louise.



## ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays of each month (unless otherwise stated)**

A free Stay and Play church group for children and those who care for them  
Join us Saturdays 3-4pm for messy craft, play, songs and stories along with a welcome cuppa  
St Thomas' Church, Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, EN9 3SS



### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Thank you to the people who have sent in articles to be included in the Newsletter. Please keep them coming! Anything: maybe a poem you have written, what you have been doing in the garden, childhood memories, something that happened to make you smile, it all makes for interesting reading.

ANAGRAM Unscramble this 9 letter anagram: CONFINEIT. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

### **ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHES 2025**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 11.30 for 12noon start

#### **NO LUNCH IN JANUARY**

18<sup>th</sup> February, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June

Please book your place to confirm attendance: 07899 846711

If after booking you are unable to come, please phone to cancel,  
we can then offer a place to people on the waiting list.

### COPPER JAR

Thank you to everyone who donated their loose change to the 'copper jar' in the church. Together you have raised £135 which has been used to support WaterAid.

WaterAid works to provide clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to areas of the world where these are absent, areas such as Taranty Bas in the far south of Madagascar.

13 year-old Angeline lives there. She collects water 2 or 3 times a day from the Taranty River, walking down a steep, narrow path with jagged cactus spines pressing on either side. Every step risks a slip on loose rocks or a painful stab from the cactus. She collects the water in a 20 litre jerry can and then has to climb back up the hill to her home. The water she collects is dirty and dangerous, often infested with cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid or polio. As a result, she and her family are often unwell.

The money you have donated helps to install a borehole and taps and provide water testing equipment to villages like Angeline's. WaterAid has already enabled 800,000 people across Madagascar to access clean water and continues to work to enable even more people to have something we take for granted. Once again thank you for your donations of loose change. Please continue to give in 2026.

## **ENFIELD BRASS BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Once again Enfield Brass Band provided a wonderful afternoon of joyous music which was enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to the Band, also the ladies who provided and served the refreshments during the interval. After all expenses we raised £433.50 which will go towards the upkeep of our lovely little church.

## **UPSHIRE MOTHERS' UNION**

In November Elizabeth Marshall, a previous trustee for English for Women (EfW) project, joined us for the afternoon to talk about the project. The project was setup in 2015 by Heike Prentice, an Ordinand at Chelmsford Cathedral, after noticing 2 ladies in Chelmsford High Street. Heike invited them into the Cathedral. The ladies were from 3 families that had had to flee from trouble in Afghanistan. From talking to these ladies, it was realised there was a big issue in the area, resulting in the EfW project being setup to make a difference to those in the community who encounter language barriers in their everyday lives. EfW sessions brings together individuals from across the city and surrounding areas to provide a friendly and welcoming environment for women with little or no English, to improve their conversational skills, gain an understanding of British culture so they can integrate into their local community. At the time of setting up EfW the MU Prison project had just come to an end and had surplus money. It was agreed this money would be transferred to help setup the EfW project. The finances are in a good position at present, having been awarded an 100k, over 5 years, grant from the Lottery Fund. It costs approx. £30k a year to run the project. One of the MU ladies, Suzanna, that helped setup the project is still working on it today and has 2 assistants. These 3 are the only paid workers on the project. There are currently 65 Chelmsford Learner support volunteers and 6 Project support volunteers (steering group, IT, fundraising). There are currently 290 Women, 50 Men and 75 Child learners. Initially the sessions took place in the Cathedral, then Rev Edward Carter managed to secure use of the local YMCA hall during the day time, when it was not in use. The EfW project now uses the hall Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. It was soon realised there was a need to teach men English too, so English for All, (EfA) was setup. English for All also use the YMCA hall, on a Monday afternoon which is for all, men, women and children. The Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday sessions are for women only, they do have a nursery, so women can take along young children. There are 3 different levels of learning at each session, Beginners, Intermediate and More Fluent. EfW also have a session in church in Goodmayes on a Thursday afternoon and online sessions, setup during covid, continue. During June 2024 and May 2025 214 sessions were delivered, 108 (3 a week) EfW in Chelmsford, 34 EfA in Chelmsford, 36 EfW in Goodmayes and 36 EfA Online. As a result of the EfW and EfA sessions, learners have reported increased confidence and improved communication skills, enabling them to engage more fully with their local communities. Learners from 34 nationalities responded to feedback requests over the last year, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Jordan, Korea, Libya, Myanmar, Peru, Philippines, Sudan, Ukraine. Over the past year, EfW have undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen connections between their learners and the wider community. One was taking part in a local Christmas market, where learners and volunteers worked side by side to host a community stall. This provided an opportunity to practise English in a real-world setting, share information about their work, and take part in local celebrations. The highlight for EfW this year was in February when they welcomed the new patron of MU, HRH the Duchess of Edinburgh, and the new Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow, to an EfW session in the Cathedral followed by lunch with them. English for Women is a Mother's Union project that the Upshire branch supports, we donated £100 in 2023 and £150 in 2024. We were able to do this by people supporting our Cream Tea and Just Desserts afternoon events. Thank you to all who come to our events.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January, our AGM in the Village Hall followed by tea and cake. All are welcome. Tea Hostesses: Gill Negus and Lyn Wackett. Raffle: Sue McKinley.

**STAMPS** Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins as the charities we support can use them to raise funds. At present we collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and The British Legion and stamps for British Heart Foundation. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road – please leave in the porch if no reply. Please leave about ½“ of envelope around the stamps. Thank you.

## **50/50 CLUB**

Congratulations to the winners of the 50/50 Club Draw in November who were:

1 <sup>st</sup> :	£35	No. 43	Alice Edge of Upshire
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	£25	No. 30	Sue McKinley of Upshire
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	£15	No. 18	Joyce Polzin of Waltham Abbey

It is now time to begin Draw 17 of St Thomas' 50/50 Club.

There will still be monthly draws and the entry fee is £12.00 every six months (or £2 for every month of membership). Each member is entitled to a maximum of two entries, couples can have four. Please complete the form below and return it to me; payment by Bank Transfer is preferred or alternatively you may pay by cheque or cash to the address stated. Please let me know if you pay by Bank Transfer so I can include your number in the Draw (email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01992 711573).

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas' Church. Good luck to everyone who enters.

### **St Thomas' Church 50/50 Club Draw 17**

**January to June 2026**

I wish to become a member of St Thomas' 50/50 Club and have paid by Bank Transfer to HSBC Bank, A/c St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort Code 404520, A/c No: 00724505.

**OR** I enclose cash/cheque of £12 per entry (maximum 2 per person). Please make cheques payable to St Thomas' Church Upshire PCC and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name: .....  
Address: .....  
Telephone: .....

## **UPSHIRE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB**

Held in Upshire Village Hall, Mondays 2.00-4.30pm, Tuesdays 7.00-9.30pm No experience necessary. Tuition and bowls available. It's fun to play! Contact Fred on 01992 711720 or Jean on 07733 084815.

## **PUDDING BASINS**

Please remember to save your plastic pudding basins and give them to me to recycle so that I can keep the costs down this year. Thank you, Lyn.

**ANAGRAM** The answer to the anagram is INFECTION.

At **HOME INSTEAD** Epping Forest we recognise that as we get older, you may need help to be able to stay living in your own home. We Tailor our care packages to meet your needs making it possible for you to stay living in your own home where you are happiest.

Our services include Dementia Care, Personal Care, Home Help, Companionship and much more.

Our monthly Memory Lane and Singing for the Brain Sessions are held at Theydon Bois Village Hall providing lots of fun complimented with refreshments served by our lovely Team. Why not contact us to find out more and to get a copy of our What's on Where Guide (WOW Guide) and future newsletters.

Telephone 01992 666777 or email: [Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk)

## **The sun has got his hat on, hip, hip hurrah.**

You wait for a London bus and three come along together (although with modern GPS it happens less these days) which is a bit like coincidences. I recently had three happen in as many days: I was listening to an interview with a retired engineer who had started studying metrological data; why he was asked and he replied that his grandchildren 'knew' all there was to know about climate change but nothing about why we have seasons; the second was a friend who remarked during one of the hot days last summer that she felt the sun had become hotter which I rather poopooed but more of that later and the third was listening to a lecture about the sun and its effects on our climate by an ex-professor of oceanology.



But first some science. I apologise if I am teaching grandmothers to suck eggs but bear with me, please. Ancient civilisations believed that the sun circled the Earth, a supposition the early Church adhered to for many years. Those wise men who knew better often came to a sticky end for trying to show that our little planet actually circles the sun. Whilst the Church had been convinced that we were the centre of the universe in fact our planet is a rather insignificant one circling a minor sun in a not especially remarkable galaxy. Indeed, our planet is not even the largest in our solar system being only the fourth in size. The sun, though, dwarfs all our system's planets and is 109 times larger than us with a diameter of 864,000 miles. Being ninety-six million miles from us means that its light speeding along at 186,000 miles per second takes about nine minutes to reach us. Basically, the sun is a nuclear fission reactor in which hydrogen is being converted into helium and in so doing produces electromagnetic radiation. Some is in the visible spectrum which allows us to see but most is invisible to us. Some insects and birds are receptive to ultraviolet radiation, invisible to our eyes, which enables the insects to find pollen and nectar whilst some birds can see urine trails which show up under ultraviolet light, and which enable the birds to track their prey. At the other end of the spectrum is infrared which can be felt as heat but the electromagnetic radiation also contains things like microwaves, useful for communications and cooking quick meals, and some rather nasty radiation such as gamma rays. Thankfully, our atmosphere, in particular the ozone layer, filters most of this nasty stuff out which explains why scientists became somewhat alarmed when it was noticed some years ago that the ozone layer was disappearing, thankfully it has since begun to return.

So, we are being bombarded every day with light and warmth but why do we have times of the year when it is cold and other times when it is hot? This is down to the fact that we are leaning at an angle of about 23 degrees, the axial tilt, which means that at times of the year we here in the UK are pointing towards the sun and other times we point away giving either longer days and shorter nights or shorter days and longer nights. Coupled with this is either a thicker or thinner atmosphere for the radiation to get through depending on whether we are pointing towards the sun or away – the two conditions added together give us the hot days in summer and the cold in winter. But nature is never straightforward and just to make things slightly more convoluted is the added situation that Earth does not go around the sun in a circle but in an elliptical orbit. Then to compound this even more is a situation called the Milankovitch effect. Mr. Milankovitch's research in the 1920's found that the Earth wobbles slightly on its axis meaning that when pointing at the sun we could be closer or further away depending on the wobble. And if that were not enough, he also found that our elliptical orbit changes back and forwards, all of which can influence our climate.

But back to my lady friend who posited that the sun had become hotter. I have to admit that although I rather decried her supposition, I felt that on some days the sun did in fact appear hotter. Being that the sun cannot alter its generation of heat in such a short time scale it was puzzling. But then I came across some recently published research into this phenomenon. Stand out in the sun and you feel its heat but get a passing cloud that obscures the sun you immediately feel a chill, however slight. This was the basis of the research and quite simply it's all down to the fact that we have been cleaning up our air over the past hundred years or so. We no longer burn coal in our homes, vehicles' engines have become cleaner and we don't use aerosol containers so much, in fact most squirty things are now pumps rather than a gas propelling whatever out of the tin. Hence the air does not carry so much particulate matter which means we are not obscuring the sun so much, yes, the sun has got hotter, or rather its power is felt more now. That leaves the lecture about the sun and its effects on our climate I listened to recently given by the oceanographer.

Apart from mentioning the Milankovitch effect he also referred to research that has been undertaken using ice core samples from the Antarctic. Evidently the researchers were able to extrapolate information about the temperature of the world at different stages throughout the past four hundred thousand of years. Over that time the temperature fluctuated reasonably evenly from warm periods to colder periods, hence the ice ages that the earth experienced, the last being the Little Ice Age which occurred between 1300 and about 1850 with significant cold periods in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Conversely at the time of the Vikings, Greenland now a snowy land, was in fact green, and further back in time to the land of the Pharaohs Lake Chad was considerably larger and the Sahara Desert was a lush landscape. However, one interesting point that has come out of this research is that rather than the temperatures responding to fluctuations in carbon dioxide levels it appeared that the carbon dioxide levels followed the temperature. At present the 'settled science' about climate change decrees that temperatures are rising because CO<sub>2</sub> levels are rising whereas the research appears to show the reverse. Our oceanographer finished his lecture by stating that it would appear that climate change is still very much a mystery, despite what some scientists say, and that we need more climate scientists, not less, who are willing to research further with an objective view into these mysteries rather than just going along with the prevailing view. Adrian J Liddle

## **ABBEY CHURCH**

**Music for Lunch** – Saturdays at 12 noon, restarting on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Refreshments available from 11.30am. Free admission with retiring collection.