

Parish Life Magazine

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and Chesterton



£1

September 2026

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and St Lawrence (Chesterton)

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Parish Magazine articles (submitted by 16th day of previous month)

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Lead article

In the middle of last week's mild weather I found myself sitting comfortably in the middle of the garden enjoying the sun - It's been such a joy to have slightly lower temperatures to enjoy the sun in. I spent some time considering the lawn in which an average sided cat could simply disappear into some of the canyons that have opened up. That started me wondering if this grass will recover before the frosts come and it's time to stop cutting.



A similar moment came later that day when I took the children out to try and find blackberries. Where they had been the best last year none were to be found. Instead the hedgerow was made up of trees the leaves of which were dry and crumbling like an ice cream wafer.

It has in this respect been a remarkable year, notably extreme to even the longest memories. The sticking thing being that, as we come to a Harvest tide in which lament will surely be mixed with rejoicing, every prediction for next year is that it will be the same, if not worse.

Stark as it may be the physical condition of the landscape around us seems to me to speak to the spiritual reality of our nation. For a long time the truth and life of 'Living Water' has been lacking in our public sphere and common life. Like the ground all around us the fabric of our country maybe doesn't show that lack immediately. Over time, though, as drought persists, the realities of desecration become apparent, the lack overt.

God speaks to his own people in the imagery of wilderness and desert, being for them a much more common and relatable picture than it generally is for us. It is the setting of the 40 years where God's lesson is that nothing besides God's own provision and goodness is a reliable source of survival and strength.

Notably, too, the words, taken up as cogently by John the Baptist, remind us that out of wilderness God has shown a propensity to cry for repentance, a return to righteous and justice.

Isaiah tells us that for God's people such a return can be relied upon to bring restoration; rivers in desserts and the blooming of crocuses, that most joyful of flowers.

I find myself then hoping and praying for the crocuses planted in our lawn last year that God may bless us and grant us needful rain. More truly though I pray that we may return to the source of all being, pray for our nation to do the same and seek for the wells of living water in our society wherever they may be found.

Rev'd Luke



Thought for September

The Gift of Creation



September is a month of change. The long days of summer begin to shorten, the evenings draw in, and the countryside takes on the colours of autumn. For many of us, it is also a time of harvest — a season that naturally turns our thoughts towards thanksgiving.

The Church gives us a particularly rich opportunity for reflection at this time of year. From 1 September to 4 October, many Christians observe the Season of Creation, a period dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life.

It is easy to take the world around us for granted. We wake, breathe the air, drink water, eat food and enjoy the beauty of gardens, fields, rivers and woodland, often without stopping to consider just how extraordinary these gifts are. Yet the opening words of Genesis remind us that creation is not ours to possess absolutely: it is God's good creation, entrusted to our care.

The familiar words of Psalm 24 say:

“The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it.”

That simple statement changes our perspective. We are not merely consumers of the world; we are stewards of it. What we have is received as gift, and a gift calls forth gratitude as well as responsibility.

Harvest makes this especially clear. When we bring fruit, vegetables, flowers or other produce into church, we are doing more than decorating the building. We are making a visible act of thanksgiving. We acknowledge that, despite all our hard work and ingenuity, there are things we cannot create for ourselves. We can plant and cultivate, but we cannot command the seed to grow. We can work the soil, but we cannot make the rain fall or the sun shine.

Jesus frequently used the natural world to teach us about God. He spoke

of seeds, harvests, birds, lilies and vineyards. In the Sermon on the Mount he tells his listeners to “consider the lilies of the field” and to look at the birds of the air. Creation can therefore become a kind of classroom for faith, reminding us of God's generosity and inviting us to trust him.

But thanksgiving should also lead to generosity. If the earth is God's gift, then what we receive is not simply for ourselves. Harvest celebrations traditionally remind us of those who do not have enough, and churches rightly turn thanksgiving into practical action by sharing food and supporting those in need. The Diocese of Gloucester's Creationtide resources similarly connect harvest thanksgiving with using the fruits of the earth “for the relief of those in need.”

Perhaps this September, therefore, we could pause and ask three simple questions.

What can I give thanks for?

What can I share with others?

What can I do to care more faithfully for God's creation?

We do not need to do something dramatic. We might waste a little less, grow something, walk rather than drive when possible, support a local food project, or simply spend a few quiet moments noticing the beauty of the world around us.

Creation is God's gift. Harvest reminds us to say thank you. Christian discipleship asks us to turn that thankfulness into love — for God, for our neighbours and for the wonderful world which he has entrusted to our care.

As we enter September, may we learn again to receive the gifts of creation with gratitude, to share them generously, and to become better stewards of the earth.

“The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it.” — Psalm 24:1

Anon

Mother Teresa: September 5th



Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born in Skopje, Macedonia, on August 26, 1910. The Bojaxhiu family was of Albanian descent. When she turned 18 she entered the Sisters of Loreto of Ireland. She took the name Teresa after St. Therese of Lisieux. She taught in a missionary school in India until 1948. While traveling through India she felt God calling her to serve the poorest of the poor. She received permission to leave her order and began to help the poor with volunteers.

In 1950, she was given permission from the Vatican to start the order "The Missionaries of Charity". In 1979, Mother Teresa received the Nobel peace prize for her tireless work for the poor.

Her order rapidly spread around the world to care for the poor, sick and marginalized in over 120 countries. She spoke of this ministry in her own words, "I once picked up a woman from a garbage dump and she was burning with fever; she was in her last days and her only lament was:

‘My son did this to me.’ I begged her: You must forgive your son. In a moment of madness, when he was not himself, he did a thing he regrets. Be a mother to him, forgive him. It took me a long time to make her say: ‘I forgive my son.’ Just before she died in my arms, she was able to say that with a real forgiveness. She was not concerned that she was dying. The breaking of the heart was that her son did not want her. This is something you and I can understand."

She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Mother died in 1997 when her order had 610 institutions in 123 countries worldwide. Mother Teresa was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2003. Her 100th birthday was celebrated around the world by many with special tributes. India has created a stamp with her image. Mother Teresa was Canonized as a Saint by Pope Francis on September 5, 2016 at the Vatican.

Catholic News World



Confirmation preparation.

For any who might be considering confirmation, Canon Graham will be running an introductory course that prepares candidates for Confirmation in the Church of England. The course is designed around those who are seeking to deepen their faith, and in a friendly way attempts to address questions around 'believing and belonging'. **7th September at 7.30p.m.** meeting at the Vicarage 41 Rendcomb Drive.

Ride and Stride



We are supporting the annual **Ride+Stride** event on **Saturday 12th September** to raise funds for the **Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT)** and to support the fabric of our churches. Canon Graham, John Lawrence and Mark Dennis will be cycling to visit local churches, and others are very welcome to participate too. GHCT has helped the PCC in the past, most recently with a grant toward the St John Baptist Project. We would be very grateful for your donations, as well as any sharing and promotion of our JustGiving page: <https://justgiving.com/page/cirenparish-rideandstride2026>.

Cirencester Beer Festival 2026



Cirencester Beer Festival 2026 will be hosted by the PCC and Cirencester & District Roundtable at St John Baptist on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd October. All proceeds will support the ongoing work of the church and the local charitable activity of the Round Table. Further details about sponsorship of the beers and ciders to follow. Meanwhile further information is available from Bill O'Connell (07834 363486 or villagevicar@hotmail.co.uk) or Peter Ewart (07748 760519 or peter@ewart.uk.com).

Harvest Supper



Save the date: The Harvest Supper in the Parish Hall on Saturday 3rd October.



Save the Date for Cirencester Hospital Family Fun Day



Join us at
Cirencester Hospital

on
Saturday 12th September 2026
from
2pm to 4pm

Lots of family fun, including.....

Games / Face Painting / Jumble Sale / Tombola / Cake Stall /
Craft Stall / Plant a Seed / Hospital Radio / And Much More!



In aid of Cirencester Hospital League of Friends



Cirencester Hospital Family Fun Day



List of Raffle / Tombola / Silent Auction Prizes
(followed by the company who kindly donated)

- 
- * Dyson Supersonic - Dyson Malmesbury
 - * £150 Voucher - Haine & Smith
 - * £75 Voucher - The Bell at Sapperton
 - * Race Day for 2 - Cheltenham Racecourse
 - * Afternoon Tea for 2 - Cowley Manor Experimental
 - * £50 Voucher for The Orangery - Rangeford Villages
 - * Breakfast for 2 - The Pig in the Cotswolds
 - * £50 Amazon Voucher - CIA Fire & Security
 - * Voucher for 2 - Scenic Sauna
 - * £20 Voucher - Lynwood & Co Café
 - * Fish & Chips for 2 - South Cerney Fish & Chip Shop
 - * £20 Voucher for The Dragonfly Café - Softener Salts
 - * 3 Month Subscription - Whizz Pop Bang!
 - * Family Ticket - Woodchester Mansion
 - * Voucher for Tea & Cake for 2 - Diversitea
 - * £15 Voucher - 7a Coffee Shop
 - * Voucher for 2 - Flyup 417 Bike Park
 - * Voucher for Kiln Dried Hardwood Logs - Walker's Logs
 - * Voucher for a Seasonal Veg Box - The Organic Farm Shop
 - * Voucher 2 Children for a Lead-Rein Lesson - Rein and Shine
 - * Day Ticket 1 Adult & 1 Child - Farmer Gow's
 - * Round of Golf for 4 People - Cirencester Golf Club
 - * £10 Voucher - Jessie Smith
 - * Voucher for 2 - Funhouse Comedy Club
 - * Try a Dive Session - Cirencester Dolphin
 - * Family Ticket - Little Centurions
 - * Entry for 2 - Adventure Cinema
 - * Voucher for 6 Cupcakes - The Cotswold Baker
 - * Bensons Juice Hamper - Benson's the Juicer
- 
- 

£1 per ticket - all proceeds go to
Cirencester Hospital League of Friends



Cirencester Hospital Family Fun Day

List of Raffle / Tombola / Silent Auction Prizes
(followed by the company who kindly donated)

- * Day Ticket 2 Adults & 2 Children - Aerospace Bristol
- * Family Ticket - Birdland
- * £20 Voucher - Burford Garden Co
- * Christmas Door Wreath - Corky & Prince
- * Day Ticket 1 Adult & 1 Child - Cotswold Wildlife Park
- * Day Ticket 1 Adult & 1 Child - Crocodiles of the World
- * 1 Month Membership - F360 Cirencester
- * Day Ticket 2 Adults & 2 Children - Fairytale Farm
- * Jack Daniels & Gordons Pink - Rectory Farm Arena
- * £10 Voucher - Knead Bakery
- * 2 Baseball Caps - O'Neill Racing
- * Plant or Arrangement - Oops A Daisy
- * Cookbook - Overtown Manor
- * Ticket 2 Adults & 4 Children - Painswick Rococo Garden
- * £20 Voucher - Spikes Diner
- * Private Lesson with a Junior Instructor - Talland
- * 6 Bottles of Prosecco - Tanners Solicitors LLP
- * Sunday Lunch for 2 - The Bull Hotel
- * 2 Nights Camping - The T Barn
- * 6 Pairs of Tickets to the Cheltenham Christmas Fair - UK Grand Sales
- * £10 Voucher - The Wild Fig
- * 2 Adult Tickets for the Autumn Show - Three Counties
- * 200 Ice Lollies to be distributed free on the day - Walls Ice Cream
- * 12 Boxes of Luxury Matches - The Matchbox Maker
- * Family Ticket - Cotswold Falconry Centre
- * Bottle of Port - Geotechnical Investigations
- * 2 Bottles of Prosecco - The Steadings
- * Chocolates & Wine - A+ Cleaning Services
- * Pair of Shoe Clips - Crimson Pink Shoe Clips

..... and lots more to come ♥♥♥♥♥

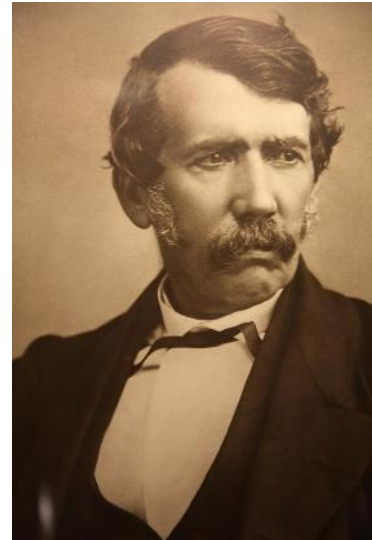
£1 per ticket - all proceeds go to
Cirencester Hospital League of Friends

Missionary of the Month

David Livingstone – Missionary and Pioneer

Did you know?

When Livingstone died, his African companions buried his heart beneath a tree in Africa. They then carried his body to the coast so that it could be returned to Britain. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.



David Livingstone was born in 1813 in Blantyre, Scotland, into a poor but deeply Christian family. From an early age he knew hardship. At the age of ten he began working twelve-hour days in a cotton mill, but continued to educate himself in the evenings. His Christian faith grew alongside his determination to improve his circumstances.

Livingstone originally trained as a doctor, but his real calling was to Christian mission. Inspired by the missionary Robert Moffat, he volunteered to go to Africa. In 1841 he arrived in what is now Botswana, beginning a remarkable life of missionary work, exploration and opposition to the slave trade.

Livingstone believed that Christianity should be accompanied by practical compassion. He treated the sick, taught people to read, preached the Christian faith and sought to establish mission stations. He also became convinced that the future of Africa depended upon legitimate trade replacing the slave trade. His famous vision was to open what he called the “three Cs”: Christianity, commerce and civilisation.

His missionary journeys took him vast distances across southern and central Africa. He endured illness, hunger, attacks from wild animals and the loss of his wife, Mary, who died of malaria in 1862. Yet he repeatedly returned to the African interior.

Livingstone became increasingly concerned with the slave trade, which involved the violent capture and transportation of Africans. He documented what he witnessed and campaigned vigorously against it. His writings and lectures helped bring the reality of the trade to public attention in Britain and contributed to growing opposition to it.

Yet Livingstone's effectiveness as a missionary is not straightforward. He did not establish a large Christian church in Africa, and relatively few people were converted directly through his preaching. Some of his missionary ventures failed, and his later expeditions were plagued by illness and practical difficulties.

His greatest influence was perhaps indirect. His journeys opened the interior of Africa to European knowledge, his reports exposed the horrors of slavery, and his determination inspired a new generation of missionaries. Other Christians followed the routes he had pioneered and established missions that eventually became much more successful.

Livingstone died in Africa in 1873, kneeling beside his bed in prayer. His African servants buried his heart beneath a tree, while his body was carried thousands of miles to the coast and eventually returned to Britain. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Livingstone's life reminds us that effectiveness in Christian mission cannot always be measured in numbers. He spent much of his life working without seeing the results he hoped for. Yet he remained faithful to what he believed God had called him to do.

Perhaps that is one of the most valuable lessons of his life. We may not see the ultimate results of our own Christian witness. We are nevertheless called to be faithful, to serve others, to speak for justice and to trust that God can use even our smallest efforts for purposes beyond our own sight.



TOURS OF CIRENCESTER PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN BAPTIST



September 2026

There will be guided tours of the Church at the times listed below

Tuesday 1st September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Thursday 3rd September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Friday 4th September at 10.30am

Monday 7th September at 2.30pm
Tuesday 8th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Wednesday 9th September at 10.30am
Thursday 10th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Friday 11th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Saturday 12th September at 10.30am
Sunday 13th September at 2.30pm

Monday 14th September at 2.30pm
Tuesday 15th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Wednesday 16th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Thursday 17th September at 10.30am
Friday 18th September at 10.30am

Wednesday 23rd September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Thursday 24th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm
Friday 25th September at 10.30am & 2.30pm

Tuesday 29th September at 10.30am

There is no charge for the tour but a voluntary donation would be appreciated towards the upkeep of the Church

Tourist Groups by arrangement Tel: 01285 659317

Highlights from the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC last met on the 17th of July 2026, which was our last meeting for the summer. Our next Standing Committee meeting is scheduled for the 16th of September 2026. Some highlights of recent PCC business include:

The St John Baptist Project to install seven toilets, a servery, and storage cupboards is progressing well. We very much appreciate everyone's patience, and the ability to coordinate and work together while this major and at times noisy project is underway. We hope you agree that the storage cupboards under the tower look splendid. Most of the major work on the four toilets in the South Porch is complete, and some are now functional. Work on the three toilets in St John's Chapel is underway. Much of the work has been taking place offsite, including preparation of the catering station. We expect the project to be finished in September.

Ros Ivison has settled into her new role as the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), and we are very grateful for her hard work and achievements. She provided an update to the PCC at our last meeting. She and Revd Luke are working on the Safeguarding Action Plan Level 2 and developing SMART targets for areas that need improvement. The parish website has been updated to make safeguarding easier to find, with links moved higher up for better visibility. Policies have been reviewed, and training and DBS requirements are being rechecked. The PSO has a new email address for safeguarding matters: safeguarding@cirenparish.co.uk.

There is a vacancy for a member of the Personnel Committee, and we are seeking a volunteer to fill this role. The committee handles personnel matters and related legal requirements on behalf of the PCC. It ensures that the PCC manages its employees (currently 10) and volunteers effectively while maintaining the safe and efficient running of the parish. The role involves about five meetings a year and occasional business by email. If you are interested, please contact Pauline Samengo-Turner or Canon Graham.

As Canon Graham is our incumbent, it was decided that the chair of the Personnel Committee should be handed over to someone else. We are

delighted that Pauline Samengo-Turner has graciously taken over this role in addition to being churchwarden. She will lead the committee in its very important work. Canon Graham remains an ex-officio member of the committee.

Fundraising through commercial events is ongoing. Planning continues for the Cirencester Beer Festival at St John Baptist on the 2nd and 3rd of October 2026. We are hosting the event alongside the Cirencester & District Round Table. We have developed an informal partnership with them for this and future beer festivals, as well as for other events where we need assistance or stewards.

A concert by the renowned Côr Meibion De Cymru (The South Wales Male Choir) on 20 November 2026 should be another good fundraiser for the parish. At the concert, they will be joined by a combined Military Wives Choir with members from the UK Defence Academy (who recently came first in the Swindon Music Festival Choirs competition) and Brize Norton.

Tickets for these events, and others, can be purchased via TicketSource at the following link:

<https://www.ticketsource.com/pcc-of-cirencester>.

Claire Pearson, one of your Deanery Synod representatives and Cirencester Deanery Synod Secretary, updated the PCC on recent business. She reported that at the last Cirencester Deanery Synod on 7 July 2026, the focus of the meeting was climate change, with the Letters from the Global South Exhibition featuring strongly. There were powerful presentations by seven local children sharing their perspectives. These were followed by refreshments, a chance to view the exhibition, and an opportunity to discuss practical next steps.

The Deanery is placing a strong emphasis on shifting church culture regarding climate change and encouraging even small actions. The Synod was apprised that a recent Sustainable Flowers workshop had been a great success. Canon Graham added that he was delighted to report to the PCC that all the flowers from a recent wedding on Saturday 11 July 2026 were indeed sustainable.

There is a vacancy for a Foundation Governor at Watermoor Church of

England Primary School, and the PCC is looking for a volunteer to nominate for the role. Foundation Governors are expected to bring an informed regard for the Christian character and foundation of the school to the governing body, ensuring this is preserved and developed, and that religious worship reflects the tradition of the Church of England. Nominated individuals should also have the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Governors and trustees have a general responsibility for effective strategic oversight, financial probity, efficiency, and outcomes for all pupils, though governors are not expected to take detailed decisions about the day-to-day running of the school. If you are interested in becoming a Foundation Governor, please contact Revd Luke or Canon Graham.

Finally, as mentioned in our last magazine article, we are fundraising for the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT) by taking part in the annual Ride+Stride on Saturday 12 September 2026: <https://ghct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/take-part>. Fifty per cent of the funds raised will be donated to the GHCT, and the remainder will go to the PCC to support the fabric of our churches.

The GHCT is an independent non-profit organisation that raises funds and provides grants to help over 620 historic churches, chapels, and meeting houses in Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, and North Bristol. The GHCT has funded the PCC in the past, and most recently with a grant award toward the cost of the St John Baptist Project. During Ride+Stride, cyclists, walkers, and horse riders raise sponsorship money by visiting churches and chapels on a route of their choice.

Our Finance Officer, Hannah, has kindly created a JustGiving page to support our fundraising: <https://justgiving.com/page/cirenparish-rideandstride2026>. We would be very grateful for your donations, as well as any sharing and promotion of the page. Canon Graham, John Lawrence, and Mark Dennis will be cycling to visit churches in the local area, and others are very welcome to participate too. Also, Holy Trinity Church and St John Baptist will be open to receive visitors taking part on the day (with the exception of 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm at St John Baptist due to a wedding).

As a regular reminder, for further details about PCC business, please visit our website. In particular, minutes of PCC meetings are available there but are password protected. Parishioners on the Electoral Roll may obtain the password from a Churchwarden or the Parish Office. Others are welcome to request a specific copy by contacting me at PCCsecretary@cirenparish.co.uk.

Mark Dennis, Secretary



Following our Bible course, I wanted to know how the gospels in the New Testament were compiled and agreed upon by the early church fathers.



So I ‘googled’ and then summarised it and this is what came out. I found it interesting. See what you think.....

The short answer to my question was: the four Gospels were not simply selected by a single council or “voted on” by the early Church. They emerged through a long process in which churches copied, read, taught, quoted, and gradually recognized certain writings as authoritative. By the late 2nd century, the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were already being treated very differently from most alternative writings.

The Gospels were written first. The traditional dating places the canonical Gospels roughly in the 1st century: Mark, often dated around 65–75 AD; Matthew, often around 70–90 AD ; Luke, around 70–90 AD and John from around 90–100 AD. The authors weren't writing four independent theological textbooks from scratch. They were preserving traditions about Jesus regarding his teachings, miracles, death and resurrection and arranging them for particular Christian communities.

The early Christians initially possessed oral apostolic teaching, letters such as Paul's, and eventually written accounts of Jesus' life.

The Church did not wait until the 4th century to decide which books were authoritative. Paul's letters were already being collected and circulated among churches during the 1st century. The Gospel traditions were also circulating widely. By the early 2nd century, Christian writers were explicitly referring to written Gospel material as authoritative. For example, Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–108 AD) and Polycarp (c. 69–155 AD) quote or allude to material found in the New Testament.

Irenaeus of Lyons is a major turning point, for around 180 AD he wrote *Against Heresies* in which he explicitly defended the existence of four, and only four, Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. His argument is interesting because he doesn't present this as a brand-new decision. He treats the four-Gospel tradition as something already received by the churches. This is evidence that by the late 2nd century, the four Gospels had achieved a remarkably strong position across mainstream Christianity.

But there were competing Gospels: This is where the story gets more interesting. There were writings such as: Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Judas, Gospel of Mary, Gospel of the Hebrews and Gospel of the Egyptians to name just a few. Some of these were probably written in the 2nd century, although dating is debated for some texts. They weren't necessarily all treated identically. Some were regarded as heretical; others were simply considered useful but *not apostolic Scripture* – which is the vital point.

The major question became: Which writings authentically represented the apostolic faith handed down from the earliest Christian communities and how did the Church judge them? There wasn't one single criterion, but several factors mattered.

Judgement was made as to whether the work was associated with an apostle or someone closely connected to the apostles. Matthew and John were traditionally associated directly with apostles. Mark was

associated with Peter, and Luke with Paul.

Was the writing genuinely early, going back to the apostolic period? A document appearing generations after the apostles had a serious disadvantage.

Was it being read across many churches, rather than belonging to one isolated group? This was extremely important. A book used throughout churches from different regions had much stronger standing.

Did its teaching agree with what churches believed they had received from the apostles? A text presenting a radically different Jesus or salvation theology could be rejected on this basis.

Was it being publicly read in Christian worship? This helped establish which writings were regarded as Scripture rather than merely interesting Christian literature.

There was still disagreement : For example, books such as Hebrews, Revelation, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude had varying degrees of acceptance in different places. The four Gospels, however, were on much firmer ground relatively early and this distinction is important: the canon developed unevenly. It wasn't as though every Christian community had a complete New Testament sitting on a table and then bishops suddenly voted on all 27 books.

The councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) are sometimes mistakenly said to have chosen the New Testament. They didn't. Nicaea was primarily concerned with the Arian controversy (one that arose in the early 4th century when Arius, a priest from Alexandria, taught that Jesus Christ, though the Son of God, was a created being and not coeternal with God the Father) and the relationship between the Father and Son. The process of identifying the canonical books had already been underway for centuries.

A very important milestone came with Athanasius of Alexandria's Festal Letter of AD 367. Athanasius listed exactly the 27 books that

constitute the New Testament today, including the four Gospels.

Other influential lists followed, including those associated with councils/synods at Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD and 419 AD) in the Latin-speaking Church. These weren't so much inventing a canon as formally confirming a collection that had already gained widespread recognition.

Historically, the safest description is: The canon was recognized through a gradual process of reception by Christian communities, bishops, theologians, and liturgical practice, rather than created by one central committee. The bishops and councils eventually gave formal expression to what had become the dominant consensus.

And there's an important theological distinction: Christians traditionally speak of the Church recognizing Scripture rather than the Church making Scripture authoritative. In other words, the Church didn't believe that Matthew became inspired because a council voted "yes" on Matthew. Rather, the Church believed Matthew was already apostolic Scripture and that the Church's responsibility was to recognize it correctly.

A useful timeline

30-60s AD: Jesus' teachings and apostolic traditions circulate orally

50-90s AD: Paul's letters and Gospel writings circulate

Late 1st Century: Four canonical gospel traditions become established

Early 2nd Century : Early Christian writers increasingly quote Gospel material as authoritative

c.180 AD: Irenaeus explicitly defends the four Gospels

3rd Century: Increasing agreement, though some NT books remain disputed.

367 AD: Athanasius gives the first surviving list exactly matching today's 27-book NT

Howard



The God of Love

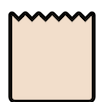
God in his love looked down
and saw a lost and wandering soul
who didn't know which way he'd been
or where would be his goal.

The spirit of God, in love,
spoke unto that man's heart
and led him to a cross,
wherein lay a brand new start.

The son of God, in love,
said: 'I am the way take me
and I will give you lasting peace;
from your sins I'll set you free.'

The man looked in those loving eyes
and said: 'I give my life to thee,'
and God said: 'come you now are mine!'
I know; that man was me.

John Mockett



Give Food

We've found a new list of items requested **by South Cotswolds Foodbank**. They are...

Angel Delight
Cat Food
Chocolate
Cold Tinned Meat
Cup-A-Soup
Deodorant
Hot Tinned Meat
Household Cleaner
Instant Coffee
Jam
Long-Life Juice
Peanut Butter
Shower Gel
Snacks (E.G. Crisps, Cereal Bars, Etc)
Sponge Puddings
Squash
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Rice Pudding
Tinned Spaghetti
Tinned Tomatoes
Tinned Vegetables
Toilet Cleaner
Washing Powder



South Cotswolds Foodbank currently doesn't need anymore of these items: Baked Beans, Cereal, Dog Food, Incontinence Products, Pasta Sauce, Tinned Custard, Tinned Fish, Tinned Pulses.

Give Food is a registered charity in England & Wales 1188192
Give Food, 61 Bridge Street, Kington, HR5 3DJ

Cobalt Medical Charity



As the days turn cooler, we're looking ahead to some exciting events later in the year.

Friday 11 September – Coffee Morning at Linton House, 10am–12 noon

Please join us for our annual coffee morning at Linton House, where you can also buy our Cobalt Christmas cards. No booking required. Please note, there is no parking at Linton House.

Cobalt Christmas Cards are available online, at Linton House and later on in the year at normal Cobalt Card stockists.

Sunday 6 December – Reindeer Run

Join us at **Reeves Field, Cheltenham**, on **Sunday 6 December 2026 at 10:30am** for a festive, family-friendly 2.5K fun run. Run, jog or walk at your own pace and get into the Christmas spirit together. Book online for early bird tickets.

Monday 21 December – Christmas Concert at Cheltenham College Chapel at 6.30pm.

Enjoy a magical evening of festive music, readings and community spirit in the beautiful Cheltenham College Chapel. Meet live reindeer on arrival before enjoying performances from the Churchdown Male Vocal Choir, musical interludes and Christmas readings. The evening will be hosted by BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Nicky Price.

Book online for early bird tickets:

<https://www.cobalthhealth.co.uk/fundraising/supporter-events/>



Cirencester History Festival

PRESENTS

**ORCHESTRA
OF THE AGE OF
ENLIGHTENMENT**

THE BACH DYNASTY

FROM BAROQUE TO THE CLASSICAL AGE

— PERFORMED BY REAL CANDLELIGHT —

CIRENCESTER PARISH CHURCH

23 OCT, 7–8:15PM

TICKETS ON SALE 4 SEPT

CIRENCESTERHISTORYFESTIVAL.ORG

**Cirencester
History Festival**

Cirencester History Festival

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

23 OCT - 1 NOV '26

ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE

PHILIPPA LANGLEY

BEN MACINTYRE

ROBERT HARRIS

KATE WILLIAMS

ALICE LOXTON

RONALD HUTTON

INCLUDES THE
WINSTONE TALK

...PLUS WALKS, MUSIC, FILM, WORKSHOPS,
FEASTING & MORE FOR OCTOBER HALF TERM!

Tickets on sale from 4 Sept at
cirencesterhistoryfestival.org.uk



Cirencester
History Festival

CHART TOPPING SOPRANO AND STAR OF THE VOICE UK

NADIA EIDE

PRESENTS

Christmas AT THE Musicals

ST JOHN BAPTIST CIRENCESTER
NOVEMBER 18TH 7PM

FEATURING SONGS FROM PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, SOUND OF
MUSIC, WIZARD OF OZ AND MORE IN THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION
OF SONGS FROM STAGE AND SCREEN.

STUNNING VOICE WITH
CAPTIVATING STAGE PRESENCE
- THE YORK PRESS

'A SPELLBINDING,
FESTIVE TREAT!'
- BBC RADIO OXFORD

★★★★★

 eventbrite

★★★★★

Christmas at the Musicals at St John Baptist Cirencester

(See adjoining poster)

No 1 selling classical soprano and star of The Voice UK, **Nadia Eide** is touring her brand new Christmas concert tour **Christmas At The Musicals** in November and December 2026.

Featuring songs from Phantom of the Opera, Sound of Music, Matilda, Home Alone, Wizard of Oz and many more in the ultimate celebration of well-loved songs from stage and screen. Featuring special guests. Suitable for all ages.

"A spellbinding, festive treat!" -BBC Radio Oxford

"Five stars. Stunning voice with captivation stage presence." - The York Press

"Nadia is a goddess. From where she starts to where she finishes is mind-blowing!" -will.i.am

"You hit notes that only we mortals can dream of! " - Sir Tom Jones

"She's a superstar! I love the operatic sound." - Anne-Marie

"When you combine talent with emotion and passion like that, magic can happen. Nadia has a God-given gift." - Danny O' Donoghue, Lead Singer of The Script

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

The ticket link is:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1982781208971?aff=oddtcreator>

And Finally - A Bargain

Janice had a keen eye for a bargain, especially at the supermarket. Anything ‘on offer’ was to be considered. Reduced products showing a yellow price tag would be top of her list. As a result she would often buy items she didn’t really need.



Her husband, Wilbur, was more selective. Yes, he would consider the reduced price against the need for the item but he usually gave in to Janice’s insistence that it was good economics to buy items when they were reduced.

Janice always prepared a shopping list of what they needed, which Wilbur thought an excellent idea, except Janice would often amend a prospective product with an ‘if on offer’ suffix.

One Sunday in June, Janice fell on the steps leading from the church and twisted her ankle badly. ‘You’ll have to go shopping on your own, I’m afraid,’ she told Wilbur the following day. ‘I can hardly walk.’

Wilbur didn’t mind at all. He enjoyed shopping and greeting friends at the Deli counter without Janice making remarks about those they met. He especially looked forward to meeting Suzi Caswell, the attractive widow from two doors down. So, armed with Janice’s shopping list, suitably amended, he drove to the supermarket, put his empty shopping bags into a trolley and set off down the aisles. One item perplexed him. Surely Janice didn’t need *that* many eggs. But there it was in her spidery handwriting. *One hundred eggs.*

On his return, Janice looked at the pile of boxes stacked up on the kitchen worktop and asked whatever had possessed him to buy so many.

‘You’ve written it here quite clearly, dear,’ Wilbur pointed out, feeling unjustly criticized, ‘Eggs, 100.’

Janice gave a sigh of exasperation. ‘No, dear,’ she said emphatically. ‘That’s my shorthand. ‘It means ‘Eggs – If On Offer.’’

HG

Dates for September



Weekdays

9 – 9:30am	Morning Prayer	St John Baptist
12 – 1pm	Eucharist - Catherine Chapel	St John Baptist

Saturdays

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel	St John Baptist
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Monday, Wednesday & Friday

5 – 5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist
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Weekdays

9am – 10am	Wednesdays Drop In at St Lawrence	
10am – 12pm	The Parish Forum Open (except Tuesday & Wednesday)	
10am – 12pm	Thursdays Drop In at The Parish Forum	

1 Sep, Tue

6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	St John Baptist
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2 Sep, Wed

10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
1:10 – 1:50pm	Organ Recital	St John Baptist
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity

3 Sep, Thu

4 Sep, Fri

3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
5 – 5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist

5 Sep, Sat

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
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6 Sep, Sun

8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Non-Eucharist Family Service	Holy Trinity
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
4 – 5pm	Eucharist	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Restore@4	St Lawrence

7 Sep, Mon		
9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
5 – 5:30pm	Organ Vespers	St John Baptist
5:30 – 6:30pm	Vicars Open Office	Parish Forum
8 Sep, Tue		
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity
9 Sep, Wed		
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 Sep, Thu		
9:15 – 10:45am	Seedlings	St Lawrence
11 Sep, Fri		
10:30 – 11:30am	Heritage Open Day Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Heritage Open Day Guided Tour	St John Baptist
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
4 – 5pm	Heritage Open Day Organ Talk (Thomas Hawkes)	St John Baptist
12 Sep, Sat		
10am – 12pm	Tower Tours	St John Baptist
10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Heritage Open Day Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2 – 3pm	Wedding	St John Baptist
13 Sep, Sun		
8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Service of the Word	St Lawrence
2:30 – 3:30pm	Heritage Open Day Guided Tour	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist
14 Sep, Mon		
9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
15 Sep, Tue		
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity

16 Sep, Wed		
7 – 9pm	Standing Committee	St Lawrence
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
17 Sep, Thu		
3:30 – 4:30pm	Wedding	St John Baptist
18 Sep, Fri		
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
19 Sep, Sat		
10am – 12pm	Tower Tours	St John Baptist
10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
1:30 – 2:30pm	Wedding	St John Baptist
20 Sep, Sun		
8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
1:30 – 2:30pm	Baptism	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Choral Evensong	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Restore @4	St Lawrence
21 Sep, Mon		
9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
7:30 – 9pm	Quarter Peal	St John Baptist
22 Sep, Tue		
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity
23 Sep, Wed		
7 – 8pm	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
24 Sep, Thu		
9:15 – 10:45am	Seedlings	St Lawrence
12 – 1pm	Mothers' Union Corporate Communion	St John Baptist
25 Sep, Fri		
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
5 – 5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist

26 Sep, Sat

10 – 10:30am

Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,
WeddingSt John Baptist
St John Baptist

2:30 – 3:30pm

27 Sep, Sun

8 – 9am

Eucharist

Holy Trinity

8 – 9am

Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel

St John Baptist

10 – 11:30am

Eucharist

Holy Trinity

10 – 11:30am

Eucharist

St John Baptist

10:30 – 11:30am

Eucharist

St Lawrence

1 – 2pm

Baptism

Holy Trinity

4 – 5pm

Evening Worship

St John Baptist

28 Sep, Mon

9:45 – 11am

Little Angels

St John Baptist

5:30 – 6:30pm

Vicars Open Office

Parish Forum

29 Sep, Tue

6:30 – 9pm

Bell Ringing

St John Baptist

30 Sep, Wed

7 – 9pm

Beer Festival - Sponsors Tasting Evening

St John Baptist

7 – 8pm

Eucharist

Holy Trinity

Extracted from Parish Calendar 17/08/2026

Climb the Parish Church Tower dates

Opening Times 10am - 4pm unless noted below

Saturdays: 12th & 19th September 10am-12 noon

£5 per person

Children between the ages of 12 and 16: £3

Under 12 are not permitted up the tower.





St John Baptist Church, Cirencester are raising funds for restoration works and are proud to announce that a concert has been arranged with the below mentioned choirs to help raise funds.

CÔR MEIBION DE CYMRU

The South Wales Male Choir

Patron : HM King Charles III



Friday 20th November 2026, 7.30pm

St John Baptist Church, Cirencester



And our own Thomas Hawkes (Church organist)

Tickets £25.00 (plus £1.95 online booking fee)

Tickets available via Cirenparish.co.uk, QR Code below,

Cirencester Tourist Information Office , Cirencester Museum

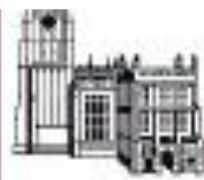


Restore @ 4

*1st and 3rd
Sunday
of each month
4pm*

*A time of contemporary, refreshing worship, prayer,
bible study, a cup of tea and a chance to chat,
all relevant to today*

*St Lawrence Church Centre, Countess Lilias Road,
Chesterton*



CHURCH SHOP



Open Monday to Saturday 10am ~ 4pm

Why not take a look at our Parish Church Shop, there's more than you expect!

Books
CDs

Gifts
Cards

Souvenirs
Bibles

Diaries
Calendars

Maps
Pictures

Icons
Prayer Books



Website: <http://www.cirenparish.co.uk>

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Tel: 01285 659317