

The Native

New Year 2026

The Parish Magazine for Brightlingsea



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COMMUNITY CORNER

At New Year we celebrate and thank our **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**, especially the Litter Pickers – First Responders – Brightlingsea in Bloom team – not forgetting the Yarn-Bombers and their post-box toppers.

We really do appreciate the time and effort you put into our town all through the year.

Special thanks to our **ADVERTISERS** whose support through the year keeps our parish magazine viable as outreach into the community. Please support them whenever you can.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING If you are signed up for a Brown Bin, Tendring District Council will accept your real tree (without charge) on the first collection date after New Year (15 Jan). Just leave it beside your brown wheelie. Otherwise, St Helena Hospice will collect in the previous week by arrangement for a donation.

28–31 Jan JACK AND THE BEANSTALK It's Panto Time again at the Community Centre Wed @ 6.30pm; Thurs & Fri 7.30pm; Saturday at 10.30 am, 2.00pm & 7.30pm. Tickets £5, now on sale at Spirals.

WELL-DONE AND CONGRATULATIONS to...

- Our excellent independent shops whose windows brighten our shopping centre all through the year.
- This year's winners of the Christmas Windows were: **1st** Little Boat Gifts; **2nd** Scarlett's Crafts; **3rd** Spirals. And many thanks to all the others who also made a real effort for the season.
- Women in Harmony's Christmas Concert raised £1460 for St Helena Hospice and MIND.
- Bright Voices raised £3,900 for the Hospice and Dementia UK the following week.

WINTER WILDLIFE

As a result of climate change, our prickly friends, the hedgehogs do not hibernate as deeply as they used to do and may be seen out and about on winter evenings unless the weather turns extremely cold. They still need food and really appreciate offerings of dry cat food - cheapest cat 'biscuits' are fine. Beware of some stuff claiming to be hedgehog food which may not be as nutritious as it appears.

Bird baths benefit from a regular scrub with a redundant washing-up brush, then refilling with clean water. This can help reduce infections being passed on from bird to bird. Bird flu is still wreaking havoc among our native colonies, and as the slogan goes – every little helps!

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CHURCH DIARY

SATURDAY COFFEE weekly in St James' 9.30am–noon.

Wed 7 Jan AFTERNOON TEA SERVICE at 3pm. Our theme is Epiphany.

Sun 11 Jan FOREST CHURCH 2.30pm in our usual space at the bottom of All Saints' churchyard. Newcomers always welcome - all ages. Hot drinks & toasted marshmallows.

Mon 12 Jan OPEN HOUSE at 38 High Street 10.30am. All welcome.

Sat 17 Jan BIG BREAKFAST 9–10.30am in St James' – full English or light-bites. Thanks to some younger volunteers, the Breakfast continues into 2026. There is still opportunity to join the team.

Sat 24 Jan BURNS LUNCHEON 1 for 1.30pm in St James'. Tickets £12 from Little Boat Gifts or Ticketsource. Haggis, neeps & tatties (veggie options available); Piper and dancing. See separate advert.

LOOKING AHEAD...

Sat 28 Feb ASSEMBLY BANGERS Rescheduled from autumn, come and sing your hearts out to favourite hymns and choruses from your schooldays. This activity was hugely popular at Glastonbury, and similar events during 2025. There will be food too! Details in our next issue.

PARKING AT ST JAMES'

The car park behind St James' church is provided for the **use of church-users only** and should not be used as a general car park for the town.

The PCC have noted the challenges that some church members have had in parking in the car park behind St James. They are asking church members to feed back to them with details about when they encounter problem to allow the PCC to monitor the situation and review any further action required.

2026 TOWER TOURS

10 Jan, 17 Jan, 31 Jan & 1st Feb – but they must be booked in advance. Usual start time 2pm £7 adult and £4.50 for children (only those over 8yrs allowed).

Please be confident you can comfortably meet the access requirements of the tower before making a booking. Full details can be found at www.friendsofallsaintsbrightlingsea.com/tower-tours/

Bookings taken via email AllSaints_Activities_Brightlingsea@outlook.com by messenger or calling the church office on **01206 302738**

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St James'

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JANUARY: WORSHIP AND PRAYER

St. James' will be open for personal prayer Mon to Fri. 8am - 2pm

Wed 31 Dec 10am *Gate of the Year* service with Holy Communion

Sun 4 Jan 8am Holy Communion
10am All-Age service 11:30am Online service (Zoom)

Sun 11 Jan 8am Morning Prayer
10am Holy Communion 11:30am Online service (Zoom)

Sun 18 Jan 8am BCP Holy Communion *in All Saints'*
10am Holy Communion *in All Saints'*
10am Sparklers Sunday School Group
in St James'
11:30am Online service (Zoom)

Sun 25 Jan 8am Morning Prayer
10am Holy Communion
11:30am Online service (Zoom)

Tue 9-9:30am Parish Prayers
in St James'

Wed 10am Holy Communion

NOTABLE DATES: January

1 **New Year's Day: The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus**

6 **Epiphany**

25 **Conversion of St Paul**

18 -26 Jan WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

We plan to mark the opening and ending of this Week at the Sunday services on 18th & 25th, also at 10 o'clock Communion at St James' on Weds 21 Jan.

At a time when Christian Unity becomes so essential, please hold this event in your prayers.





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FROM THE VICAR

TELL ME A STORY

Christmas blessings to you all, and a blessed New Year!

I write this in the thick of Christmas festivals, parties, carol singing, charity fundraising and rather too many mince pies, aware that most of you will be reading it after your Christmas Day is complete.

For some of us, Christmas is chaotic; for some, peaceful; for some, bittersweet, sorrowful or lonely; for some, magical and beautiful and meaningful... and for some, all of the above! Amid relationships breaking, mending and starting, bank accounts fluctuating wildly and plans going well or awry, it is worth remembering that the first Christmas was 'all of the above' too.

This year, our Late-Night Shopping theme was Narnia. As a child, I received a set of C. S. Lewis's Narnia books as a gift and they quickly became favourites. Aslan the great Lion was one of my early pictures of what God is like: there when he is needed, sacrificing himself for love, overturning everything grey, bleak, cold and oppressive in joy and celebration, dance and song. The magic of Narnia has not left me all these years later.

It is often through stories (and these days also in very clever and well-made TV adverts at Christmastime) that the deepest and wisest truths can make their home in us.

The right kind of stories can take us to places we would not otherwise reach, give us experiences beyond our own and fill us with something greater, kinder, stronger and wiser than what was in us before.

The Christmas story is such a story: a story of God squashing down, small and vulnerable, into our world in order to be with us without our fear getting in the way of his love. The adult Jesus was not easy company: challenging oppression and injustice, bringing hope to the sick, the poor, the marginalised and the despairing and speaking truth to power.

One of my favourite Narnia quotes comes from a conversation about Aslan between two characters. One is fearful about meeting him and asks if he is safe. "Who said anything about safe?" the other replies. "Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."



God is not safe. Nor does God promise safety. God doesn't lie to us. Bad things happen to good people in this life. They won't in the next, but we're not there yet. Right now, we live in a world that is broken, but which was first beautiful and good and will be again.

We are called to believe in life BEFORE death as well as life AFTER it – to follow a God who is not safe into acts of bravery that seem beyond us - but will not be when it comes to it because God is with us. That's the literal translation of the name 'Emmanuel' we give him at Christmastime in our carols.

Most of us can recognise evil in its obvious forms, but how are we at choosing between safe and good where we can have one or the other? This New Year will bring its challenges and its choices.

What stories will we give our time to? What stories will we tell? Read the Narnia books if you can – I really recommend them – and consider daring to follow the God who is not safe - but is good and will make us part of the great story of love that he has been telling since the beginning of all things.

Every Blessing, Caroline



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NEVER TOO OLD TO HAVE FUN

During the annual Late Night Shopping event, the town centre was alive with lights, music, delicious odours and many people taking the opportunity to find unusual gifts for family and friends.

We were very busy inside St James, where free activities for all the family were in full flow.

Children and adults enjoyed some mindful crafting and had immense fun dressing up as figures in our Living Nativity.



Marys, Josephs, shepherds, angels, wise men, camels and sheep of all ages were photographed sitting or kneeling by the manger under a star spangled 'sky', something that is becoming an annual tradition in some families.

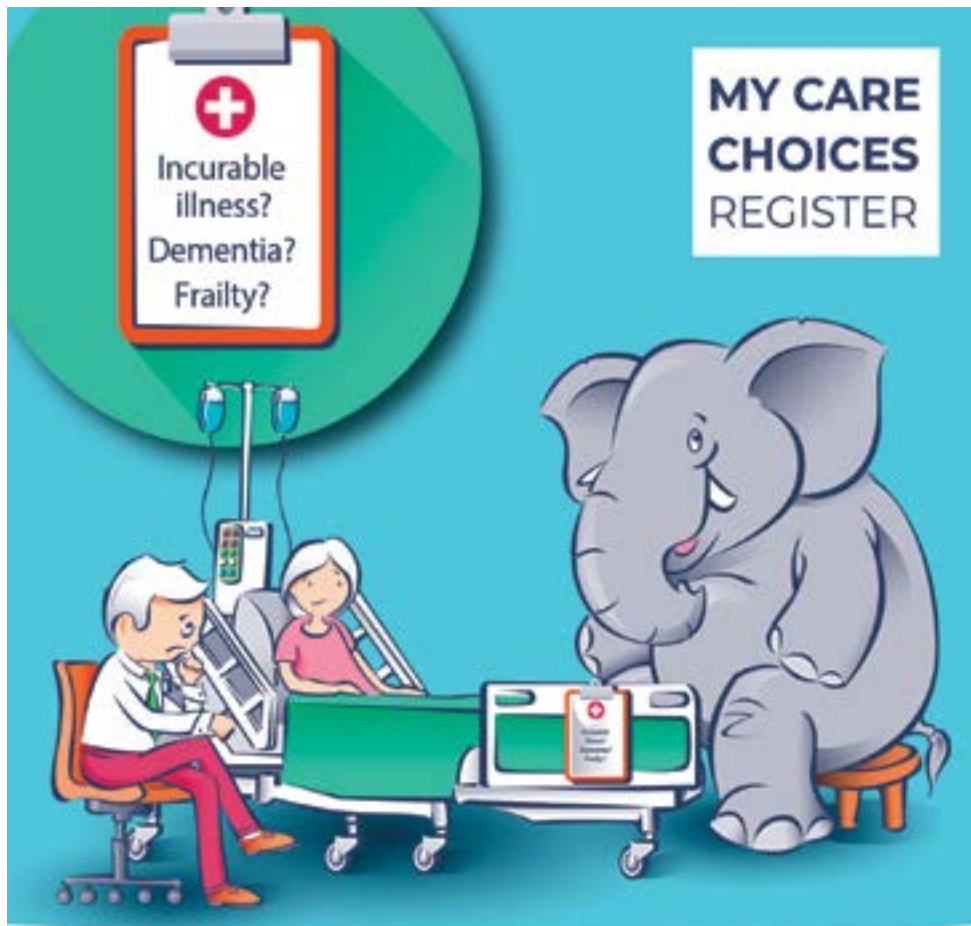
It was wonderful to hear so much laughter and relaxed conversation as people enjoyed the warmth offered by the church building and its community. The tea and coffee bar was kept busy too.



We were also delighted to hear Women in Harmony singing beautifully, as always, up in the church gallery, to the great enjoyment of a nearly packed house.

We look forward to next year (4 December) and meanwhile will continue to expand our collection of costumes so that we have something for everyone.

Judith Gibbons, Curate



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FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE...

11 Jan FOREST CHURCH will be held every 2nd Sunday in the month, all at 2.30pm, in our special corner down All Saints' churchyard, except in June (Blessing of the Waters) and November (Remembrance Sunday) when people are invited instead to attend those outside services.

Future Dates: **8 Feb, 8 Mar, 12 Apr, 10 May, 12 Jul, 9 Aug, 13 Sep, 11 Oct, 13 Dec**

STEPPING STONES/ TOY LIBRARY in St James' starts again on Mon 12 Jan, new time 9.15 – 11.15am.

13 & 27 Jan 2026 BRIGHTLINGSEA BEARS meets in St James' 10am till 11.15. Warm welcome to toddlers and mums/carers.

Thu 15 Jan LEGO CHURCH starts again for 9 – 13-year-olds at 5.30pm in St James', meeting weekly.

Sun 18 Jan SPARKLERS Sunday group meets on the third Sundays in St James' from 10 -11 am

● **EVERYDAY FAITH** is the new daily devotional app from the Church of England designed to inspire, equip and encourage you in your faith every day of the week, not just on Sundays. Sign up on the CofE website.

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13 ELM DRIVE BRIGHTLINGSEA ESSEX CO7 0LA

Thousands flock to enjoy the magic of the trees

The traditional Christmas Tree Festival at All Saints' Church over the weekend of 13th/14th December was yet again a resounding success.

Thousands of local residents flocked to the church to admire over 60 imaginatively decorated trees created by local families, community groups and local businesses,

enjoying music and some festive treats while raising money for our local churches.

Visitors were able to vote for their favourite tree. It was very hard to choose from so many beautiful entries but in the end the winners were:

Adult: 1st Mother Christmas from Springmead Garden; **2nd** Holy Cow from Mending Matters.

Child Group: 1st Chrittermas Tree from 4th Brightlingsea 'Ottawa' Beavers; **2nd** Brightlingsea Gingerbread

Tree from The Colne Community School.

Child Individual: 1st I'm dreaming of a White Christmas from Amy Carter; **2nd** Tree of Art from Connie Brown.

Well done and thank you to all those who entered their Christmas Tree, we couldn't have the festival without you.

*Wishing you a
Happy New Year from the
Christmas Tree Festival team.*





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CHURCHES TOGETHER BRIGHTLINGSEA

Fri 2 Jan SOUP LUNCH 12.30–1.30pm Choice of home-made soups with roll and cheese, tea & coffee. These lunches continue to raise money for Christian Aid. Next Soup Lunch Fri 6 Feb.

Thu 12 & 26 Jan COLNE COMMUNITY FRIENDSHIP GROUP at the United Church Hall, Chapel Rd. Now runs on the second and fourth Thursdays 10.30am - 12.30pm. £2.50 per session, includes coffee & cake, board games, speakers, community support.

Tue 20 Jan CTB FRIENDLY LUNCH @ Victoria Café, 12 for 12:15 pm. 12 for 12:15 pm. If you plan to come along, please let Alison know so there is enough table space. These lunches are held in the Victoria Cafe, always on the third Tuesday of the month at 12 noon for 12.15 pm.

The **TOWN CAROL SERVICE** as always, offered a time of comfort, stillness and peace during the busy preparations for the festive season ahead. The new Deputy and Rev Judith Gibbons were present along with the Thursday Morning Singers who led the carol singing as well as performing two carols.

Rev Luke Smith guided the service and offered a short reflection. Many people stayed to enjoy mince pies and hot drinks afterwards.

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SHINING LIGHT ON YOUR SPECIAL MEMORIES

Have you ever looked up at All Saints' Church and wondered why it sometimes lit up at night? Many of us feel connected to our lovely 'old' Church: standing proudly at the top of the hill, it has welcomed us, and many others before us, as we follow the winding road into Brightlingsea. But it always feels like a special night when the Church is floodlit and glowing in the dark.

When the lights are on it really does convey a special message. That might be about remembering someone on their birthday, or celebrating the date of a wedding or another notable event. The occasion can be whatever is important to you.

The floodlighting has a deeper symbolism far beyond the simple fact that the church lights are turned to 'on'. It is a 2-way exchange of light: a prayer from us to God, which is then reflected back to us, reminding us that 'Jesus is the light'. It is both a comfort and an expression of joy.

For a small donation of at least £8 you can experience the connection that happens and be blessed with it (full details of how and when to do this are on the Floodlights page). This magazine, The Native, prints the monthly list of those remembered in that way, together with a brief message commemorating the person or event dedicated.

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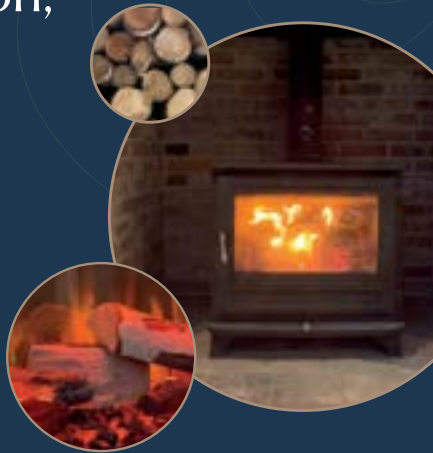


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A MESSAGE FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON FROM THE RIGHT REV DR GULI FRANCIS-DEHQANI, BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD:

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOPE

It was a joy to meet Pope Leo in Rome in November of last year. The occasion was the declaration of Cardinal Newman as a Doctor of The Church, made all the more meaningful in the Jubilee Year, themed “Pilgrims of Hope”.

It seems to me that as we stand on the threshold of a New Year, we are called to travel this path of Hope together. It’s always a temptation to be drawn towards despair.

A febrile political environment, the diminished standing of the Church, even our own weariness can lead us to forget that we are called to be people of Hope. Those whose Hope is in the Word made Flesh - the message that’s been proclaimed in churches throughout our Diocese this Christmas period and because of which we can journey confidently into a new year. And Hope abounds not just when all is well, not just in life’s joys and successes.

In his November message for World Day of the Poor, the Pope urges us to recognise those experiencing poverty as “witnesses to a strong and steadfast hope, precisely because they embody it in the midst of uncertainty, poverty, instability and marginalisation”. That is not how a secular society usually measures Hope.

Christian Hope has nothing to do with whether a successful outcome can be predicted but everything to do with the conviction of things not seen and the determination to travel well in times of uncertainty, for our Hope is in the one who renews all things.

In my Persian childhood we celebrated New Year on 21 March - a time of new life bursting forth at the Spring Equinox. Joyful though that remembrance is, I’ve also come to see the blessing of the western tradition - of the New Year coming at a time of darkness and even a certain bleakness.

Every morning in the small chapel at Bishops court I see the words of St. John engraved on the stain glass window: Light Shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Now that is Hope, and that is what I wish for you, your loved ones and your communities. May you have a happy and Hope-filled 2026.



Guli Chelmsford

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*'Tis winter now; the fallen snow
Has left the heavens all coldly clear;
Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,
And all the earth lies dead and drear.*

*And yet God's love is not withdrawn;
His life within the keen air breathes;
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,
And clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths.*

*And though abroad the sharp winds blow,
And skies are chill, and frosts are keen,
Home closer draws her circle now,
And warmer glows her light within.*

*O God! Who giv'st the winter's cold,
As well as summer's joyous rays,
Us warmly in thy love enfold,*

And keep us through life's wintry days.

Samuel Longfellow 1819 - 92

MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE

Here at St. James' we are celebrating the arrival of a new-to-us organ. Given by Weeley Crematorium and kindly delivered to us, it will replace our existing organ which is becoming harder to play. The original organ will be removed in the New Year and parts of it will be reused where possible to repair others of the same type. The space will be repurposed as a new scarcity in our building project to store the things needed for services. The new organ is already proving its worth and has a lovely sound.

The 'last hurrah' of the old organ will be in the first week of January. We are in discussion over whether we will be able to retain some of its pipes for interested locals to have as a souvenir in exchange for a donation to our redevelopment fund.

John J. Smith

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MISSION OF THE MONTH:

WINTERFEST



WINTERFEST returns in February to brighten the winter days and help chase away depression. The theme for 2026's month-long programme is about Inclusivity.

The team that won a highly-commended in last year's BBC Make a Difference awards, brings us another full programme with plenty for all, young or old – music – dancing – writing – art and more, in various venues around town.

This year's 'Music by Candlelight' will break new ground with St James' church dressed up to look like a prohibition era jazz club.

Music from Katie Bingham Best, Loxley's Corner and Swing Express. Doors 6.30pm for a 7pm start.

Look out for the leaflets with all details. Read more on their website: brightlingseawinterfest.co.uk and while you're there enjoy the short video of Bagheera the cat.

CRADLE ROLL

Hope Ann Lusher-Moss

Want to brighten up
January?
Don't fancy going out in
the dark evenings?

BURN'S LUNCHEON

ST JAMES' CHURCH
BRIGHTLINGSEA

24 JANUARY

2026

1 FOR 1:30P.M.



Everyone
welcome

Tickets £12 from Spirals,
Little Boat Gifts or
Ticketsource.



HAGGIS, NEEPS AND
TATTIES
PIPER AND DANCING

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ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/stjamesevents>

What's On

At

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
BRIGHTLINGSEA

This Winter?

January

Half a Yard and a Yarn A chance to chat over a cuppa and discover new skills Tue 20, 2:30-4pm
Forest Church An outdoor church service, all welcome Sun 11th at 2:30pm

February

As part of WinterFest – **Open day** with drop-in crafts for all Sun 1st, 10am-4pm
Family activity morning – Activities for all, everyone welcome Mon 16, 10am-12pm
Forest Church – An outdoor church service, all welcome Sun 8 at 2:30pm

Note: Tower Tours run regularly throughout the year and are advertised separately.
 For more info, email: AllSaints_activities_Brightlingsea@outlook.com or call: 01206 302378



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Mobile 07786332150

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ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

FLOODLIGHTING THE TOWER AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

JAN

- 1 Remembering Dr Tony Morris as we go into a new year. Rest in peace.
- 2 Alan, remembering your 91st Birthday on this day. With all my love always, Linda
- 6 In memory of Malcolm MacGregor on his birthday. Loved and missed every day. Lilian, Caroline and Alison
- 15 Remembering our dear Son and Brother, Mark Whitfield, on his 32nd anniversary. Sadly missed.
- 15 In loving memory of David Salmon, Husband, Father and Grandpa. A light to shine for you as you will always shine in our hearts.
- 16 Remembering our lovely Mum, Sheila Mortlock – gone but never forgotten by us all.
- 22 For my darling wife, Jennifer, remembering you on this day. Richard
- 25 Happy birthday Pete, love always, Ivy.
- 26 In loving memory of Denis Calver, loving Husband, Father and Grandad, who left us seven years ago today. Loved and missed.
- 26 In loving memory of Linda Field, loved for ever.
- 31 For my husband and soul mate, Steve, who I have loved and missed since I lost you. Hope you are happy in Heaven, until we meet again. Love, God Bless, Yvonne xx

To light the tower at All Saints' Church, please get your request in by the 6th of the previous month. Minimum donation £8 per entry.

Requests for this special form of remembrance should be directed to Claudia Campbell via the Church Office at St James' Church, or by email: claudiacampbell@hotmail.co.uk; or by mobile: 07753 660 779

Payment to be made either by cash or cheque payable to "The Friends of All Saints' Church, Brightlingsea" addressed to Claudia Campbell, c/o The Church Office, St James' Church, Victoria Place, CO7 0AB.

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Great Bentley, Essex CO7 8LG
Telephone: 07972 813437

Email: rbarlowmemorials@hotmail.co.uk



Stepping Stones

Toy Library



At St James Church

Term-time Mondays

9am till 12 noon

All welcome

£2.50 for the first two children

(additional children £1)

For more information email

stepping-stonesgroup1@outlook.com

JANUARY RECIPE

ALTOGETHER TARTS

These tarts combine several ingredients altogether because they use up the sort of leftovers from the Christmas kitchen (vegetables, cheese & nuts) and are a good way of remembering the usefulness of friendship and delight of working together, as in the week of Christian Unity (around mid-January). A contrast of ingredients forming a delicious outcome is a great analogy for us to co-operate with fellow-Christians.

Ingredients

- 320 g of ready-rolled puff pastry
- 40 g margarine
- 2 eggs
- 400 g leeks
- 2 tbps tartare sauce
- 1 tbps chopped parsley
- 120 g Stilton cheese
- 60 g chopped walnuts
- seasoning to taste

Method

1. Turn oven to pre-heat to 180° (Gas mark 4).
2. Trim the leeks, wash and slice thinly, drain well.
3. Unroll pastry, keep on baking paper wrap and roll out to 4mm thick.
4. Cut into 8 rectangles – score (but don't cut through) an inner square inside each rectangle, leaving at least 15mm space at edge. Beat the eggs and brush each shape, saving unused mixture.
5. Bake on paper in oven for 10 mins, then with care remove the top layers of the inner square, leaving a well to be filled.
6. Melt margarine and fry leeks in covered pan until soft (about 10 mins.)
7. Put together the rest of the egg mixture, the tartare sauce, parsley & seasoning, beat well then add cooked leeks. Use this to fill each tart generously.
8. Crumble the Stilton on top of each tart, then sprinkle chopped walnuts over.
9. Bake again for 10-15 mins, until golden and cheese has melted.
10. Serve hot or cold.

Recipe supplied by Elizabeth Foss-Smith

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THE NATIVE

Copies of The Native are available at Spar, Spirals, Wine Well, Little Boat Gifts, Flo's Flowers and Lucas Estate Agents, as well as St James' Church.

Also available by subscription - contact the Parish Office for details.

Cover: Mother Christmas - Tree festival winner by Springmead Garden

Deadline for February issue – please submit items by **18 January**

Please send any articles of future interest to Carole Maytum via the Church Office. Email: brightlingseaparish@btconnect.com

PARISH CONTACTS

Parish Administrator: Fiona Hunter will be in the Office at the following times: **Mon, Wed, Fri from 9am – 12pm**

Church Office Victoria Place, Brightlingsea, CO7 0AB Tel: 302378

Email: saintjames2024allsaints@gmail.com

**Parish Website: www.allsaintswithstjamesb-sea.co.uk
and www.facebook.com/CofEBrightlingsea**

If you wish to seek confidential advice, request prayer for the sick or infirm, or receive the sacraments, please contact:

Rev Caroline Beckett, The Vicarage, Richard Avenue, Brightlingsea
CO7 0LP Tel: **07454 244914** Email: revcarolinebeckett@gmail.com

Vicar's Day Off Friday (*Please respect this – Caroline needs time to recharge.*)

Curate Rev Judith Gibbons (Non-working days Mon & Thu)
Email: revjudithgibbons@outlook.com

Churchwarden Peter Talmev 07809 713392 (not Tuesdays please)

Sacristan Mary Bugbee Tel: 01206 302629

Baptisms Catherine Graham Mob: 07484 112600

Weddings Linda Salmon salmonlinda978@gmail.com

Funeral Enquiries The Church Office

Churchyard Records Sally Goodenough Tel: 01206 303749

Electoral Roll Elizabeth Foss-Smith Tel: 01206 305120

Sparklers & Bears Ruby Summers Tel: 01206 304481

Church Lads & Girls Brigade Facebook: [@brightlingsea.brigade](https://www.facebook.com/@brightlingsea.brigade)