The Native



December 2026

The Parish Magazine for Brightlingsea

£1 suggested donation

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COMMUNITY CORNER

Fri 4 Dec BRIGHTLINGSEA LATE NIGHT SHOPPING in Victoria Place and around the High Street from 3:00pm – 8.30pm. A packed programme during the evening, with live music around town, and ending with the illuminated parade.
Please keep in mind that High Street will be closed to all traffic (except buses and emergency vehicles) from 12noon - 8pm.

29 Nov – 20 Dec ART & ARTISAN CRAFTS @ The Museum. Displays & Sales. Weekends only 10.30 – 4.30pm; also Late Night Shopping night.

Sat 5 Dec CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA & SINGALONG for over 50s. 2.30 – 4.30pm. Community Centre. Tickets: £5 members: £6 non-members. Festive Dress optional.

Sat 5 Dec BRIGHT VOICES WINTER CONCERT 7.30pm in St James'. Doors open 6.45pm. Featuring the Andy Brush Quintet. Tickets: £12 from Little Boat Gifts, or phone 07833 099386.

Sat 5 Dec & Sun 6 Dec GREAT BENTLEY CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, St Mary's Church. Theme: 'Christmas No. 1 Hits'. Sat 10am – 4 pm; Sun 10 am – 3pm. Cakes, Gift stall, Raffle, Tombola, light lunches & refreshments.

Sat 5 Dec & Sun 6 Dec CHRISTMAS IN SPRINGMEAD GARDEN Event 4 – 7pm, Lights, Stalls, Refreshments & Santa!

Thu 10 Dec WINTER READY EVENT 10am – 12noon @ United Church. Public information & helpful advice for coping with colder weather.

Sat 12 Dec CHRISTMAS FAYRE & CRAFT MARKET @ Community Centre, 9.30 am – 1pm. Kids Lunch with Santa 12 – 1pm £3.50.

Sat 12 & 19 Dec BREAKFAST WITH SANTA @ Colne Yacht Club. £12 each – includes a toy for children, or all-you-can-eat for adults.

Sun 13 Dec FREE WILDLIFE WALK, Brightlingsea Marshes Book on ***www.birdaware.org/essex***

Sat 19 Dec Bright Stars **CHRISTMAS FAYRE** 2.30–6.30pm, Community Centre. Festive event. Music. Sweet treats. Stalls. Mr & Mrs Christmas.

22 Dec CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT ON THE HARD 6 pm @ Colne Yacht Club. Also – as part of this event, we're inviting everyone to light a candle in memory of a loved one, creating a wonderful display of light, love and remembrance along the waterfront.

Candles are £5 each, with proceeds going to Brightlingsea Stroke Services & Deputy's Gift Fund for Community Christmas Lunch.
To reserve your candle jar before the 4th just email ***hospitality@colneyachtclub.org.uk*** and they'll make sure one is put aside for you.

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St James'

THE CHURCH AT THE 'HEART' OF THE HIGH STREET

DECEMBER : WORSHIP AND PRAYER

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

Sun 6 Dec **9am** All-age Service
12noon Online service (Zoom)
4:30pm Christingle Service

Sun 13 Dec **8am** Morning Prayer
10am Holy Communion **12noon** Online service (Zoom)

Sun 20 Dec **8am** BCP Holy Communion ***in All Saints'***
10am Holy Communion ***in All Saints'***
10am Sparklers Sunday School Group ***in St James'***
12noon Online service (Zoom)
6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Mon 21 Dec **7:30pm** 'Blue Christmas Service' a quiet, contemplative service to celebrate Jesus' birth

Wed 23 Dec **10am** 'Blue Christmas Communion' a quiet, contemplative service to celebrate Jesus' birth

Thu 24 Dec **5:30pm** Children's Nativity Performance
11:30am Midnight Mass

Fri 25 Dec **10am** Christmas Family Worship with communion

Sun 27 Dec **8am** Morning Prayer
10am Holy Communion
12noon Online service (Zoom)

Wednesdays **10am** Holy Communion



NOTABLE DATES: December

6 Dec	**St Nicholas**
25 Dec	**Christmas Day**
26 Dec	**St Stephen**
31 Dec	**New Year's Eve**

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THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT



November always seems such a serious month, with remembering loved ones who have died (All Saints and All Souls) remembering 'gunpowder, treason and plot' (5th November) and remembering those who died in war (11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). December, by contrast, is less about remembering and more about anticipating: a countdown to Christmas.

Yet between November 25th and December 10th we also mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, remembering that what are times of anticipation and celebration to some can be times of fear and stress to others.

This year's statistics make difficult reading: only 23% of women experiencing physical or sexual violence seek help of any kind, only 7% seek help from the police and of them only a tiny fraction see a case in court. In 2025, worldwide, 5 women were killed per hour by a partner or close relative.

In Church, we place a red chair to represent all those missing women who should still be alive. At the same time, this year we are also celebrating 150 years of the work of the Mothers' Union - and the difference it makes in the lives of women worldwide.

What's Christmassy about all this?

Well, actually quite a lot if you consider that in our Christmas story Zechariah still treasures his wife Elizabeth even though she has reached old age and given him no children (before she has John the Baptist) and Joseph, when he finds out his young fiancée Mary is mysteriously pregnant, doesn't have her stoned to death, or publicly humiliated, as the law of that time demanded - in fact, he doesn't even end their relationship, but believes and stays with her.

He protects her and takes her to his family home - Bethlehem - and so Jesus is born in the right place at the right time to a good and courageous mother and father.

Why did God come in such a precarious fashion? So much could have gone wrong. Why choose the young and helpless, and the old and barren? Because God wasn't just changing the women in the story, but the men too.

Zechariah is silenced by God until the birth of his child because he doesn't believe the miracle and in that time, he learns to listen and be humble. Joseph goes from the quiet compassion of deciding to divorce Mary quietly to publicly believing and standing by her.

Violence done to women, mistreatment of women and the overburdening of women is not a women's issue - it's humanity's issue. This Christmas, there will be an increase in women's workload as they try to make Christmas wonderful, often in difficult circumstances and while juggling many needs and tasks. There will also, with alcohol and money and stress in the mix and family tensions bubbling up, be an increase in violence - physical and emotional - in domestic settings. Yes, it happens to men too, but statistically a much higher number of women.

Here at St. James', we offer support to anyone at risk, information about organisations that can help, a listening ear, help with the most pressing struggles and the reassurance that a person is not alone - or does not have to cope alone. We offer our youthwork and our support free to take the pressure off families. We stay open as a safe public space from 9:00 to 5:00 each day, offering toilets and baby changing to all who need them and free Wi-Fi for all who need that.

We want to keep doing that, and all the other things we offer to the community. Please consider donating to help us in the work we do that we can't talk about, as well as the work we can. Christmas should be a time of peace, love and joy for all. So, let's look out for one another this season. As we celebrate light, let's be light to those who need it most!

Every Blessing, Caroline

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CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRIGHTLINGSEA

EXTRA SERVICES IN BRIGHTLINGSEA FOR CHRISTMAS 2026

SUN 6 DEC

St James'	4:30pm Christingle Service

TUE 8 DEC

United Church	2.30 pm Annual Town Carol Service followed by tea

SUN 20 DEC

St James'	6.30pm Service of Lessons and Carols

MON 21 DEC

The Kings Head	6.30pm Carols in the High Street at The Kings Head
St James'	7:30pm 'Blue Christmas Service' a quiet, contemplative service to celebrate Jesus' birth

TUE 22 DEC

Colne Yacht Club	6pm Carols on the Hard, outside Colne Yacht Club featuring Brightlingsea's first Light Up the Hard remembrance display

WED 23 DEC

St James'	10am 'Blue Christmas Communion' a quiet, contemplative service to celebrate Jesus' birth
Town pubs	6-8pm A group of young church wassailers visit local hostelries to 'spread the joy'

CHRISTMAS EVE, THU 24

St James'	5.30pm Children's Nativity performance
St Sabina's	8.30pm Carol Service
St Sabina's	9pm Christmas Vigil Mass
St James'	11:30am Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY, FRI 25

St Sabina's	9am Christmas Mass
United Church	9:30am United Christmas Service
St James'	10am Christmas Family Worship with communion

WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER BRIGHTLINGSEA

Fri 4 Dec SOUP LUNCH 12.30 pm @ St James' £4-00 for the usual choice of three soups, roll, butter, two types of cheese, tea or coffee, biscuit. Next lunch Fri 8 Jan.
Note: If these soup lunches are to continue into 2027, we will need more volunteers to come forward by the end of March, either to make soups or to help serve and clear up. Please contact Vivien if you are willing. Currently we raise about £60 each month for Christian Aid projects.

Tue 15 Dec CTB FRIENDLY LUNCH at the Victoria Café, Churches Together lunches continue to take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 12.15 pm for 12.30 pm. Newcomers welcome.

Thu 10 Dec COLNE COMMUNITY FRIENDSHIP GROUP at the United Church Hall, Chapel Rd. 10.30am - 12.30pm. £2.50 per session,This will be their Christmas Party, and the final meeting for 2026. Back in January.

CHURCH DIARY

SATURDAY COFFEE weekly in St James' 9.30am–noon. No coffee on 26 Dec, coffee on 2 Jan to be confirmed - check pew sheet.

Fri 4 Dec Don't forget our popular **LIVING NATIVITY** in St James' from 3.30pm to 7.30pm. Activity tables around the church while the centrepiece offers the photo-opportunity for individuals and groups to dress in provided costumes for a short while and step into the Stable scene in the chancel.

Toasties and hot drinks available through the evening. Music from Women in Harmony around 5.30pm. If you can volunteer half an hour of your time to help guide visitors and assist in small ways, please speak with Rev Caroline.

Sun 6 Dec CHRISTINGLE SERVICE 4:30pm in St. James'. All Age - family friendly. Everyone will have the opportunity to hold a prepared Christingle orange with a lighted candle for a short time.

We therefore ask that long hair be tied back, for safety reasons.

Wed 9 Dec 3pm **AFTERNOON TEA SERVICE** in St James' Theme: Remembrance. Short service of bible readings, prayer and songs, with tea, cake and fellowship. Dementia-friendly.

Sat 12 Dec PRIZE BINGO AFTERNOON 1 – 3.30pm in St James'. Doors open 12.30pm. Raising funds for our Teens to Twenties youth services, activities & opportunities. £5 each person, includes bingo cards, dabber & free refreshments

Sun 13 Dec FOREST CHURCH 2.30pm in our usual corner at the bottom of the main path.

Mon 14 Dec OPEN HOUSE at 38 High Street 10.30am. All welcome.

Sat 19 Dec CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST 9 – 11.30 am Christmas Special: Festive Turkey bacon with home-made sausage stuffing sandwiches, and cranberry sauce on the side. The usual full English on offer too.

FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE...

Mondays STEPPING STONES/ TOY LIBRARY 9:15-11:15 am last 2026 meeting on 14 Dec. Back in January.

Tue 3 & 17 Dec BRIGHTLINGSEA BEARS 10am – 11.15am Warm welcome to toddlers and mums/carers. Last 2026 meeting on 15 Dec, back on 5 Jan 2027.

Wednesdays TEENS2TWENTIES 7 – 9pm in St James' (ages 14 -29)

Thursdays LEGO CHURCH for 9 – 13-year-olds meets weekly at 5-7pm in St James'. Last 2026 meeting 17 Dec.

Fridays CHURCH LADS & GIRLS BRIGADE Last 2026 meeting 18 Dec.

Sun 20 Dec SPARKLERS Sunday group for children meets on the third Sundays in St James' from 10 -11 am. Bible stories, songs, prayer and crafts. New members always welcome.



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Delights of the Christmas Bazaar bring in the crowds

Special mention for everyone who gave their time preparing and serving on their stalls and chatting to the many visitors who came.

Not to mention all who came and spent their money in a good cause.

Once again Santa with his bell and his Elf stood outside St James' to welcome one and all to our Christmas Bazaar.



Our Teens to Twenties group also had an outside stall, as a taster before people ventured inside to enjoy the wealth of stalls with tempting goods. There were cakes, gifts, bric-a-brac and raffles to be entered with a range of great prizes.

Bacon butties and hot drinks encouraged folk to linger for a chat with friends and share a bit of the Christmas Spirit.

We are delighted to have made a magnificent £1,674 which goes into Church funds to help us to continue to do all the things that we do for the community at no cost to those in need.









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MISSION OF THE MONTH

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Teenhood today is tougher than ever. Teens are facing unprecedented challenges – poverty, abuse, bullying, and what feels like relentless demands from school and peers – and the systems that are meant to support them are failing.

Teenhood should be a time to discover who you are, build confidence and imagine your future. Instead, too many of Britain's teens are in crisis – in fact, they're the unhappiest in Europe.

By opening more drop-in services, providing lasting support, and fighting for the rights and protections that will transform young lives across the UK, we can make sure every teen has a safe place to go, and an expert to talk to, whenever they need it. Together, we can Save Teenhood.

Please note: The collection at our own **CHRISTINGLE** service will go to the Children's Society vital outreach work. If you can't make the service, you can still donate. There are collecting boxes in St James' that can be handed in until the end of December.

SHOP LOCAL FOR CHRISTMAS

How lucky we are to have a great range of mostly independent retail outlets offering an interesting selection of goods as well as personal service, often commended by visitors. We must be grateful to these businesses who give year-round support to local charities and organisations, displaying posters, and generously donating raffle prizes. Many also brighten the High Street with lovely seasonal window displays.

Shopping locally and buying locally produced food and other products allows us to reduce our carbon footprint. We don't have to travel so far – we might even be able to walk or ride a bike (or mobility scooter!) to the shops. And the goods we buy won't have been transported over too may miles, or from overseas. Therefore, we are also contributing to the reduction in CO2 emissions.

So please support our town's businesses. Here is our opportunity to thank them with our custom for seasonal shopping.

WEDDING

Sat 31 Oct **Tom Beckett-Martin and Leighlou Morningstar** *at All Saints*

TOWER TOURS

Dec 6 Full details can be found at ***www.friendsofallsaintsbrightlingsea.com/tower-tours/*** Bookings via email and phone.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
BRIGHTLINGSEA

ALL SAINTS' CHRISTMAS FAMILY MORNING

MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER 10AM-12PM

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VISITING THE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 December 2026 All Saints' Church - 10am till 6pm on both days.

This year there are quieter sessions on Friday 5 - 7pm and again on Sunday 9 - 10am, perfect for those who prefer a calmer atmosphere.

Our popular half-hour Carol Singalong with Chris at 6pm on Sunday rounds off the festival.

Free shuttle bus as there is limited Parking at the Church. Visitors are strongly encouraged to use the minibus leaving from, and returning to St James' in High Street, calling at the Colne Community School car park where there is plenty of free parking.

Admission £4.00 for adults, children under 16 free, raising valuable funds to help maintain both All Saints' and St James' churches.

Check our website ***www.brightlingseachristmastreefestival.co.uk*** for more info, or follow us on Facebook (search Brightlingsea Christmas Tree Festival). Or email us at ***christmastreefestival21@gmail.com***

Thank you from the Christmas Tree Festival team.



Tiny Advent Poems

Advent is...
The hush in the theatre
Between the house lights going down
And the curtain going up.

The conductor raises his baton
The orchestra takes
A collective breath.

Unseen bulbs asleep in frozen earth.
Handwritten markers
Hold promises
Of Spring colours.

Open the blind.
Sunrise:
The sky is all the colours.
Darkness shrugs away.

Jigsaw bits, still scattered
But you've pieced together
the frame; ground and sky.

Refugees
in a sinking raft
Spy the lights of the lifeboat.

Waking in a cold house
Hear the heating click
And hum into life.
Warmth is on the way.

A. Lawrence Vaincourt



WE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER THEM

REMEMBRANCE was marked at services by the War Memorial, held on Sunday 8 Nov and on Armistice Day, with a respectable turnout by people of all ages.

The town's veterans formed a guard of honour along with students from the Colne School. The breadth of Brightlingsea organisations laid wreaths to pay their respects, watched by a generous crowd of townspeople.





THANKS FOR A GUIDING HAND OVER THE WATER

Our LAYING UP SERVICE was a fitting maritime-themed act of worship, praying for the many who 'go down to the sea in ships' (or boats!) and providing thanks for a safe conclusion to the sailing season.

The centrepiece was a cross-like mast with leading lights, arranged as a maritime Pilot, reflecting on God's guiding power.

It also featuring a miniature Blessing of the Waters boat crocheted by Brightlingsea's own 'Banksea'.

The Motley Crew sang some less familiar shanties, and the congregation joined in reciting the sailors' version of the 23rd Psalm.



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ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

FLOODLIGHTING THE TOWER AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

DECEMBER

4 In loving memory of Rachel Revett, a dear Wife and Mother, sadly missed.

7 George Prowse: with many loving memories on your birthday – a wonderful Husband, Dad, Grandpa and Great Grandpa. We think of you every day xxx

14 Steve, my hubby and soul mate, today would have been your 83rd birthday. Still love and miss you. Till we meet again. God bless, Yvonne x

16 In loving memory of Catherine Vondora Francis on her birthday.

19 In loving memory of Stafford and Linda Finbow. Thinking of you, as always. Love Amy, Ben, Hannah, Hannah, and your Granddaughters, Ada, Grace, Freya and Nell xx

21 David Dixon: forever loved and missed every day by his family and all those whose lives he touched in the town he loved and served so dearly.

22 Remembering my dear Mummy, Beryl Ross, on her birthday

24 Remembered at Christmas time, Dr Tony Morris: missed & loved every day

25 In loving memory remembering our dear Sister and Auntie, Diane (Di) Rowland at Christmas

25 Remembering my dear Husband, John Bryan, at Christmas time

29 Thinking of Sheila Mortlock on her birthday, loved and missed every day.

29 In loving memory of Neil Turner, missed by Mum, Dad, Sister and Son. Thinking of him always

31 In loving memory of my dear Husband, Ben van Rijn, on his birthday

31 In loving memory of Florence March on her birthday

31 Christine Bye, greatly missed on her birthday. Thinking of you, lots of love Frank, Eve, Thomas & Christopher

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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December Recipe

CHILLI SMOKED SALMON SLICES

Christmas time is when we often have family and friends around, whether for sit-down meals or just drinks & snacks. Here is a delicious terrine-type dish that can be a starter or just a snack. Serve with crackers or brown toast. Of course you can always double the amounts, by using a bigger loaf tin (900gm/2 lb) if you are expecting more guests.

Ingredients

200 g smoked salmon

120ml crème fraiche

70 g soft herby cheese (e.g. Boursin)

2 tsp horseradish sauce

Piece of cucumber 10cm long

2 tsp small, preserved chilli-in-oil slices or rings

Method

1. Line a small loaf tin (450gm/1 lb) with cling film, leaving enough to cover as well.
2. Peel the cucumber and slice lengthways, empty out seeds, & cut into very fine lengthwise slices.
3. Line the base and sides with smoked salmon.
4. Lay a third of the cucumber slices over the salmon base.
5. Mix together the crème fraiche, herby cheese & horseradish and spread half the mixture over the cucumber slices.
6. Top with tiny chilli slices or rings sparingly, then cover with smoked salmon.
7. Lay another third of the cucumber slices over the salmon.
8. Spread other half of crème fraiche mixture over cucumber slices.
9. Finish with remaining third of cucumber slices.
10. Use the rest of the salmon to cover and tuck in all round edges.
11. Cover with cling film, weight down top and chill for at least 6 hours.
12. Turn out and unwrap, serve in slices (makes about 6-8 slices).

Recipe supplied by Elizabeth Foss-Smith

THE NATIVE

Copies of The Native are available at Spar, Spirals, SJ Family Mart, 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: Father Christmas and helper by Imogen Maytum

Deadline for January issue – please submit items by **14 December**

Please send any articles of future interest to Carole Maytum via the Church Office. Email: ***saintjames2024allsaints@gmail.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.)*

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

Church Warden Jane Girdlestone Tel: 01206 307730

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 ***salewit47@gmail.com***

Electoral Roll Elizabeth Foss-Smith Tel: 01206 305120

Sparklers & Bears Ruby Summers Tel: 01206 304481

Church Lads & Girls Brigade Facebook: @brightlingsea.brigade

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