



**St Thomas', Trowbridge and
St John's, West Ashton,
with Holy Trinity**

Monthly News August 2026



Matthew 9:37-38: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Restored in the Summer

There's something about summer that invites us to slow down. The days stretch out, the evenings linger, and even if life remains busy, the season itself seems to whisper, "Take a breath." After months of activity, planning, and keeping pace, August offers a gentler rhythm — a chance to pause, to notice, and to be renewed.

Psalms 23 speaks beautifully into this moment:

"He makes me lie down in green pastures,

He leads me beside quiet waters,

He restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:2–3)

These verses paint a picture of God not as a distant observer, but as a tender Shepherd who knows exactly what we need. Rest isn't an optional extra in the Christian life; it's part of God's care for us. He *makes* us lie down — not forcefully, but lovingly — because He knows our souls cannot flourish at full speed. He leads us to quiet waters, not noisy demands. And in that stillness, He restores us.

For many of us, the year so far has carried weight: responsibilities, worries, decisions, the relentless hum of life that never quite switches off. Summer gives us permission to loosen our grip and let God hold what we cannot. Restoration often begins in small ways — a slow morning, a walk in the sunshine, a moment of prayer without hurry, a conversation that brings life rather than pressure.

As a church family, we can help one another find these green pastures and quiet waters. We can encourage gentler rhythms, offer listening ears, and create spaces where people can breathe deeply and meet with God. You will find a prayer later in this newsletter, perhaps use that to slow down and reflect upon.

These seasons are crucial, especially for those that know September brings change. Summer is a time to draw on God's deep wells, knowing He will lead us in right paths for His glory.

So, this summer, may you know the Shepherd who leads you kindly and restores you fully. May your soul find rest, your heart find peace, and your days carry the quiet assurance that God is guiding you with love. And may St Thomas' Church continue to be a place where weary people find renewal, hope, and the gentle presence of God.

Every blessing,

Simon

St John's Update

Well the lawn mower has either been made redundant or gone on holiday, as not been used for a month - leaves are falling and the rowan trees in the churchyard have berries which are turning to autumnal colour. The farmers have harvested their corn/barley early and no doubt the maize will be cut before Harvest Festival time. Autumn will be early this year.

The cleaning of St J's walls was completed in three weeks ahead of schedule; definitely made the church brighter. All items returned from storage and replaced/condensed down. Thanks go to those who helped with this project and a special thanks to a villager, Paul Pursey who helped with some tricky heavy items. It has been a costly exercise and not every wall is pristine as the West wall. We trust that folk will understand this and the PCC thank the congregation for their patience with this project.

The church was functional for the School End of Term Service on 17 July and the Holy Communion Service on 19th July.

In April, St J's congregation took part in a competition of growing the best flowering sunflower - Teddy Bear variety which grows to 16-24" high. By June they had definitely started to grow. By the time the church reopened on 19 July, flowers had appeared with a clear winner this being Elle P. She was awarded with a small gift. Everyone who took part gaily took their plant home to enjoy the sunflowers in their own garden. (A tiny bit of playful rivalry took place on that day !).

On Sunday, 19th July after the service, refreshments were handed out to celebrate the reopening of the church; Revd. Simon's first year at St John's and to recognise St J's 180th birthday with a birthday cake; (plus the sunflower contest winner); a jolly time of fellowship was had by all.

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms". 1 Peter 4:9-10

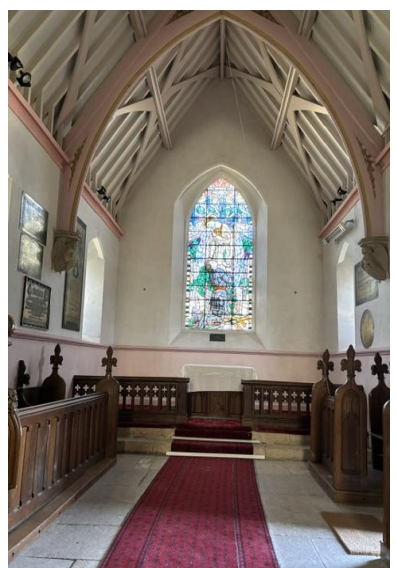
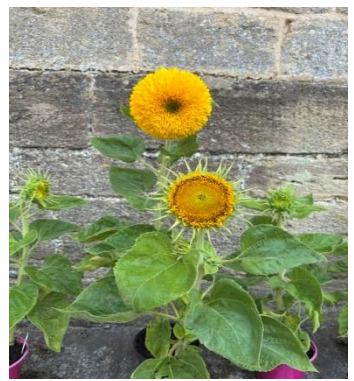
"But if we walk in the light, as Christ is in the light, we have fellowship with one another" 1 John 1:7

We are now in August; school uniforms are on sale with all the necessary school paraphernalia. Exam results are eagerly awaited - a tense time for all.

Holidays to be enjoyed and still we await the rain !

St John's next Services will be : Holy Communion on 16th August. Then Service of the Word on 6 September. Hope to see you there.

Take care and enjoy the many fruits that August can bring.



Deanery Synod Report 11.06

Our latest Deanery Synod meeting was hosted by Rev. Jake Eggertsen at St James', making it a short journey for us. Jake welcomed everyone before handing over to Rev. Jenny Nelson, Assistant Rural Dean. Marjory, Chris and I first met Jenny at the Keevil Synod last year, shortly after she became Vicar of the Holy Trinity, Bradford on Avon Benefice.

Jenny reflected on our diocesan vision, **"Making Jesus Known,"** with a reading from Acts. We thought about the faith and courage of the early Church and our faith and fear, opposition and sharing the Gospel.

ChurchSuite was one of the main topics. We realised St Thomas' is already well ahead, thanks to the excellent work of our churchwarden, Paul E. His patient guidance has made the system easy to use, and we were able to share our experience with representatives from other churches.

Charlie Thomson, Team Rector in Melksham, compared ChurchSuite to a filing cabinet with different drawers, including useful things such as calendars and rotas. He also asked, *"Why is a church like a helicopter? ... Because if you get too close, you'll be sucked into a rota!"*

After refreshments, Anne Pinner was thanked as she stepped down as Deanery Synod Secretary. Some of you will know Anne from Morning Break, with her friends Pauline and Barbara Webb.

We also received the latest Kadugli report. Bradford Deanery was given a special mention for the generosity of its churches in raising funds to support the war-torn Diocese in Sudan, which we continue to support beyond our own communities.

It was encouraging to hear news from around the Deanery. Rev. Andrew Evans shared how their youth work connects with young mums, the church had been prayer walking around the village and they were off to Lee Abbey for their church weekend.

Charlie's church celebrated its APCM with a pig roast cooked by a Fijian family from the congregation. Hmm, what do you think about that for our next APCM, Social team?!

Jenny also shared the commissioning of 3 new Lay Worship Leaders and a St James LWL is enjoying serving as Chaplain at Erlestoke Prison.

It was good to end by hearing about the many ways God is at work across our Deanery.

Ruth Chettleburgh.

St Thomas' Hardship Fund

Caring for one another as the early church did

In Acts 2 and 4, we read that the early believers shared what they had so that "there was no needy person among them." The Hardship Fund at St Thomas' is our way of living out that same spirit of generosity and compassion today.

It exists to help members of our church family and their households who are facing financial hardship, ensuring that no one is excluded from everyday life or fellowship because of money worries.

Who can receive support?

The Fund is available to:

- Members of St Thomas' Church
- Those who regularly worship with us
- Household members of church members
- Others with a pastoral connection

It's designed for our church family, while wider community needs continue to be met through our outreach and mission work.

What kind of help can it offer?

Support is offered for needs that would reasonably be considered essential, such as:

- Food, heating, rent, and household bills
- Clothing or school uniforms
- Travel or equipment needed for work
- Participation in church activities or events
- Children's essentials and school costs
- Basic household appliances
- Internet or phone access
- Occasional rest
- Christian events and holidays

The Fund provides short-term help—one-off or occasional grants—rather than ongoing financial support.

How does it work?

Requests can be made directly or through someone trusted. A small team (two of; the Vicar, Churchwardens, or Treasurer) handles applications confidentially and prayerfully. Payments may be made directly to suppliers where appropriate, and safeguarding is always considered.



How can I give?

The Fund is sustained by:

- Designated giving
- Special offerings
- PCC-allocated funds

Every gift helps ensure that no one in our fellowship is left in need. It's a tangible way of expressing our shared life in Christ.

Our hope

That St Thomas' continues to be a generous, compassionate church family—one where dignity is protected, needs are met, and love is made visible.

If you'd like to give, or if you need support, please speak confidentially to a member of the clergy or the Hardship Fund team (Vicar, Churchwardens, or Treasurer).

New Wine 2026

Well, what a week it was. Blue 10 became our home away from home for the week. We had other friends join us which meant we were over 30 camping for the week. A few of us were on "team" either village hosting, heading up the Arts workshops, working on the kids team, prayer Ministry team or being part of the Media team. We had people join us on the Wednesday day trip, which was fab. Simon counted 58 people eating our biggest yet. Carrie said we should go for 70 next year!!!

Here are a few quotes from those that experienced New Wine this year." Morning worship for Everyone... Roller skates: 2 Corinthians 5:7 walk by faith and not by sight. There will be times when God asks us to do things that we don't feel ready to do. He's holding our hand the whole way" (Stephen)

"I love New Wine, I love worshipping our Lord with hundreds of other people and spending time with my Christian intergenerational family and the fun." (Jane)

“Pete Greig challenges about discipleship, prayer and readiness (10 bridesmaid). Seminar about creating a culture for mission... Church is not a bunker from the world but a base to be deployed into the world. Being on stage in the Big Top as Spotter for the mobile cameraman” (Geoff)

“ New Wine over the years has played a pivotal role in my discipleship as a Christian and this year it didn’t disappoint. I found I had a word from God talking to me about the type of Treasurer He wants me to be. I love the worship and really enjoyed the extra sessions that happened in the evening. The morning Bible teaching about Moses from Amy Orr-Ewing was fab. Simon and I always enjoy the fellowship that goes along with New Wine meeting up with new and old friends having time to discuss what God is doing in our lives and encouraging us for the future” (Lyndsey)

“Pete Greig’s talk particularly spoke to me this year, it was the story of the Bridesmaids and their oil lamps.

The worship in the Big Top was outstanding” (Simon)

“Meeting up with friends I hadn’t seen for a year and being able to easily spend time with them throughout the week” (Malachi)

“We were both on the Prayer Ministry team and had the privilege of praying with people who came forward. We both prayed for some quite challenging situations that people were in and felt that God gave us words to say which were relevant and helpful to the people we prayed for. The worship (and dancing and flag waving) was great to” (Alice and Stephen)

New Wine dates for 2027 are 27th July to 1st August. They have a super early price if you book and pay before 30th September. So go on their website and have a look.





Lord, our Shepherd,
in this slower stretch of summer days,
lead us again to Your green pastures
and Your quiet waters.

Where our minds feel crowded,
bring stillness.

Where our hearts feel tired,
bring rest.

Where our souls feel stretched thin,
restore us with Your gentle presence.

Teach us to breathe more deeply,
to walk more lightly,
to notice the gifts You scatter through each day —
sunlight, friendship, beauty, kindness, hope.

In the spaces where we pause,
meet us.

In the moments where we let go,
hold us.

In the places where we seek renewal,
restore us.

May this summer be a season
where Your peace settles in us,
Your joy rises within us,
and Your guiding love leads us forward.

Amen.

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, I spent my career travelling around a bit. I met many fascinating people, from backgrounds more diverse and different from my own than sometimes it was possible to imagine; and while between us we espoused many religions and belief frameworks, there were three human characteristics common to us all. Truthfulness. Compassion. Tolerance.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." So reads Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet there are many who face persecution, whether for their ethnicity, their faith, their politics or simply because of how they choose to express themselves. So I composed a piano concerto, as an expression of solidarity with persecuted people. It was inspired by the painting *Golden Lotus* by Daci Shen, whose depiction of a mother and child became the emotional catalyst for the music.

- Truthfulness has a price and usually it is the purveyor of such truthfulness who ends up paying that price. Such a person may go through hell in upholding the principle of truthfulness but will never sacrifice that principle. In the end it is one's very life that is sacrificed; but not before truthfulness itself asserts its victory.
- The person sleeps: but this is no "ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep" (in the words of Alfred Tennyson). This is a sleep in which the sleeper is comforted by the compassion that she extended to others before her sacrifice. Her sleep is filled with dreams that initially are darkened by her life's experiences but gradually become illumined by dance-like flashes of inspiration, a trance-like prayer that through her sacrifice in the name of truthfulness, the world may become a more tolerant place. Yet beneath this vision of serenity lies an irrevocable truth: her life was taken from her.
- And so the rest of the world awakens to the realisation that tolerance can indeed triumph in the context even of the society that condemned that woman. Never for one moment did she sacrifice either her principles or her individuality yet through the triumph of tolerance, her legacy lives on.

As I look at the way Jesus conducted himself while here on earth, I have to conclude that his was the ultimate expression of solidarity

with repressed and persecuted people, whoever they were: and I like to think that in some small way, my music might be a reflection of that.

You can find my piano concerto on YouTube, at <https://youtu.be/xTEsBFymmo0> (allow yourself just under 25 minutes for the whole experience).

Blessings,
Stuart B

Kadugli Newsletter and Prayer Diary

**“Please do not grow tired of praying for Sudan” (Archbishop Ezekiel)
News Across Sudan.**

One of our national characteristics is that we talk about the weather, and recently the prolonged hot spell has given us a ready source of conversation. Would you be surprised, however, to learn that Africa is also enduring a heatwave? “Surely,” you will protest, “Africa is hot anyway!” Yes, but what they are experiencing now is exceptional, so much so that in Sudan’s neighbour Ethiopia, camels are developing blisters on their feet, and they are reproducing less and also producing less milk, which humans also use.

In Sudan, on approximately the same degree of latitude, camels are also common, so we may reasonably expect the same problems to arise. Nature is adding to the economic hardship. All this is happening apart from the civil war.

Ah yes, the war. How is that affecting things in Sudan, especially as regards food? A devastating recent report says Sudan is basically a fertile land, one of the most fertile and productive in Africa, capable of growing much food.

The prolonged civil conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has severely devastated Sudan's agricultural capacity, plunging the nation into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis by weaponising and exploiting the food system. Both sides have done this, and have decimated domestic food production.

This has caused widespread Famine and Acute Hunger. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), ongoing sieges and blockades have caused active famine conditions in various places including Kadugli (South Kordofan). These shortages have led to severe acute malnutrition. Both military factions have seized control of produce such as livestock, wheat, and gum arabic), and have extracted profits to fund war operations rather than reinvesting in agricultural production.

Agricultural production has collapsed, partly because of active fighting, and disruptions to the supply chain from the Red Sea have choked off access to essential agricultural products, including certified seeds, fertiliser, machinery, and fuel. A longer term problem is that critical irrigation canals have been destroyed.

Besides all this, the workforce has been displaced. Over 9 million people have been internally displaced, but because two-thirds of Sudan’s population relies on agriculture for their livelihood, this mass displacement has emptied rural areas,

leaving millions of acres of highly fertile land uncultivated.

The war drags on but there may be a significant development; it is too soon to say. The main road from Khartoum to Kadugli is known as the Export Road. It passes through the North Kordofan city of El Obeid, and is an important highway for communication and trade. For some time the RSF has been trying to seize El Obeid, but very recent reports indicate the SAF claim to have captured the towns of Barah, Jabra El Sheikh, and Um Sayala in North Kordofan, just to the North of El Obeid, and this gives it full control of the Export Road, secures several supply routes to the state capital of El Obeid, and prevents any attempt by the RSF to regain a foothold in the area. One wonders if the road will be free from the attentions of drones. Also, will control of this area become permanent, and what will it mean for Kadugli?

STOP PRESS! Since writing this, the BBC reports that there are warnings the RSF is preparing to attack El Obeid, a key town strongly defended by the SAF. There are already many displaced people in the town, and more are coming.

The BBC says "The UN and G7 foreign ministers have now issued warnings that the RSF may be preparing to attack the city, raising fears that atrocities akin to those seen during the massacre in el-Fasher could be repeated. Thousands of people were killed in mass executions after the paramilitary overran SAF troops defending the city last October, in one of the worst atrocities since the civil war began in 2023.

Fears of similar reprisals occurring in el-Obeid have grown for weeks and verified footage now shows dozens of heavily armed RSF troops in armoured trucks stationed in Nyala*, a key nearby stronghold, vowing to "liberate" the city."

**Nyala is a town to the West of El Obeid*

Please pray for El Obeid.

Kadugli.

Kadugli, it should be noted, is in an area controlled by the RSF and its allies. While the opening of the road from El Obeid to Khartoum may ease the provision of food and other supplies to El Obeid, it remains to be seen whether Kadugli will benefit at all.

We don't have a detailed up-to-date report on conditions in Kadugli. A month ago Bishop Hassan said "the humanitarian situation in Sudan; every day gets worse."

He is reticent about the details, and it is likely conditions are deteriorating.

Significantly, however, he adds "but our Lord is present", and that is an indicator that in this time of severe hardship Christians are being thrown on the Lord.

This picture is of displaced people gathering under trees. They have lost

their relatives and their current situation is very difficult. They are encouraged to understand that our Lord is there to support them, and it is not the end of life. There is hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, the Church often gathers beneath mango trees, as here. This is not by choice. Years of conflict have damaged buildings and made large gatherings risky. Drone threats mean that worship sometimes has to take place away



from visible structures. However, on a recent Sunday, around two hundred believers met together in the shade of the trees to sing, pray, and hear the Word of God. This quiet act of worship captures something important about the Church in the Nuba Mountains today. There is resilience, faith, and a determination to continue sharing the Gospel even in the midst of hardship.

The level of commitment among Christians in Kadugli is striking. In all the hardship and suffering Bishop Hassan says “We thank God for protecting us in the midst of very harsh circumstances with a number of death and destruction that we are experiencing with the loss of the servant of the Lord among the priests, but the hand of the Lord supports us and takes care of us, for he is the Lord, and the writer of Psalm 23 affirms that the Lord is my shepherd, so I lack nothing, and He leads to what is better for the glory of His holy name, despite a number of very difficult circumstances, except that you believe in the presence of God with us, for He is firm certainty. With the number of darkness and death, only faith confirms that the light will be near. Your brother in the Lord, Bishop Hassan James.”

Education continues, despite the difficulties and lack of funding. We should like to be able to contribute to the children’s schooling, but food and medicine are higher priorities, and while we send money to Kadugli, its allocation is best decided locally. Across Bradford Deanery there has been a continuous warm and generous response to this need; thank you all. The church in Kadugli is intensely grateful for our support, both financial and in prayer. Please continue to give via your church if you can, or directly. The account details are:

Bank:	Lloyds Bank Trowbridge
Name of Account:	Bradford Deanery
Sort Code:	30-98-75
Account No.	00710285
Reference	Kadugli. (N.B. This is important)

Please also consider ways of raising funds for Kadugli.

Let us join with our brothers and sisters in Kadugli in prayer.

Prayer Diary

“Please do not grow tired of praying for Sudan” (Archbishop Ezekiel)

Please pray:

- for an end to the fighting and the displacement of civilians, including children and women, especially in the areas of the Nuba Mountains.
- for peace and stability in our country, Sudan.
- for the church and its mission in the midst of harsh circumstances to proclaim God’s love for every human being.

On a personal note, Bishop Hassan adds “Please pray for my son Jesse, for his journey returning to Uganda to study at university there.”

To these prayers we add “please protect the people in El Obeid”

Deadline for September Monthly News is 25 August