

St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News October 2025

**St Thomas
Trowbridge**

**St John's
West Ashton**

Kingfisher



**Holy Trinity
Trowbridge**



**"Autumn is the mellower
season, and what we lose
in flowers we more than
gain in fruits."
Samuel Butler**

October - Autumn

Well, the weather is turning, the trees are showing some stunning colours, and there is quite a chill in the air in the mornings now. It is officially autumn, and its soup weather again!



In preparing for a school harvest celebration, I picked a few seeds on a walk we went on last week. The first was a glorious conker – the seed of a horse chestnut, then a quintessentially British tree -acorns from an oak, and finally we spotted a stunning

walnut tree full of fruit. These are all very large seeds and when you hold them you feel the size of plant that comes from them – these big seeds make gloriously big trees, given time and the right conditions.

Next, I went to our spice rack, have you ever compared a conker to a mustard seed? Comparatively a mustard seed is absolutely tiny!

Matthew 13:31-32 (New Living Translation)

³¹ Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

There are debates about what type of mustard seed Jesus was referring to, but the one I like the most is the *salvadora persica* whose seeds have a pungent flavour and grows swiftly into a tree. Pliny the Elder (a Roman naturalist) noted that it was 'extremely beneficial for the health. It grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted: but on the other hand when it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once' (Natural History 19:170).

I like this picture because we can think that the Kingdom of God, from a tiny start point, can grow freely without need of our intervention. Once grown it can provide housing and shelter for others, and the growth does not depend on us. Also, it is extremely beneficial for health!

Where do you look for the signs of the kingdom growing?

Remembering the ineradicable nature of the *salvadora persica* seed, the theologian Paula Gooder says, the kingdom is here to stay and will grow and grow, no matter what we do.

Like every seed, its very nature is to grow, all we should do is look to give it the conditions. Space in our heart, the light and hope of Jesus' love, and perhaps the watering of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God.

Perhaps this autumn we should look to give the kingdom seed **space**, **light**, and **presence**.

To help this we have a worship evening coming up on 5th October called Encounter. An opportunity to soak in the Holy Spirit's presence and worship joyfully. Come along and see!

Every blessing,

Simon.

November magazine deadline:
Tuesday 28th October.

St John's Update

Hello Autumn - the changing from green to warm colours on the trees; a profusion of coloured berries and an abundance of apples. Chilly nights; dark mornings and the low lying early mists, all heralds that the transition from summer to the autumn is upon us. After the heat and lack of water making the lawns brown and unrecognisable - it was true what the weathermen had said, that once the rain had returned, the lawns would regenerate and become green again. Green grass appeared like overnight magic and the lawn mower came out from its store. Early September a PCC meeting was held, planning for the autumn/winter season, chaired for the first time by Revd. Simon - he was warmly welcomed. A vote of thanks was given to Peter Holland who as vice chairman had done a sterling job heading these meetings while awaiting a new vicar. The Annual Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride event took place on 13 September and St John's was open from 10-5 offering encouragement and refreshment to anyone who was taking part in this event. St John's had five visitors - no dog this year but we had a couple visiting on a tandem - unfortunately no picture was taken - may be next year. A big thank you goes to all the stewards that were on duty that day - your help was greatly appreciated. A local tree surgeon quoted to pollard the churchyard trees, a requirement for the five yearly Quinquennial Inspection which is due in 2026. The vault and entrance gates were repainted, as were the handrail, field gates and seat - all ready for the winter weather. At the end of the month St John's held a christening of a baby boy - Arley-James Noad. He was extremely well behaved and Revd. Simon seemed at ease in spite of this being his first baptism at St John's. (see separate picture). The month of September will be remembered by the passing of a loyal and committed lady - Daphne Peat who died on the 11 September after a short illness. She was 93. The funeral will be on the 7th October at St John's. She will be greatly missed by many.

At the end of the month, the usual invasion of ladybirds had started - the collective name for a quantity of ladybirds is a "loveliness" of ladybirds.(see separate picture). They are hibernating in every nook and cranny.

We now head into the Harvest Festival season - see separate poster. Dates for your diary of St John's services are : Sunday, 5 October - Harvest Festival and 19 October - Holy Communion. Hope to see you there.

"With every seed we gently plant, faith's foundation, firm and grant.
As roots dig deep and stems grow tall, God's love nourishes, through it all.

Rain or shine, through storm or calm, His guidance serves as a soothing balm. Just as crops need time to grow, our faith in Him, will only glow. Patience, trust and loving care, in His name embrace, nothing to bear. For in every harvest, in every birth, we see the miracles of His earth.

Amen

Jean R





Ride and Stride refreshments on offer at St John's on 13 September



Autumn is on its way as the annual invasion of ladybirds has commenced in every nook and cranny at St J's. They congregate and hibernate until the spring.



A majestic tree overlooking St John's.

Summary of PCC Meeting

9th September 2025 (the full minutes will be available once approved at the next meeting on 11th November)

Simon Pope gave thanks for all involved in the summer services at Holy Trinity and asked PCC members to gather feedback from the congregation. Please do speak to your elected PCC representatives with your feedback on this or any other area of church life. A PCC day is planned for January to allow more time to focus on the wider vision of the church.

A steering team has been set up to plan the teaching programme, to involve more people in the decision making, comprising Simon, Alison Farnell (small group coordinator), Martyn Whittock (LLM and youth and children lead) and Angela Grist (LLM and Pastoral lead). Please feed back to them any comments.

Thanks was given to our pastoral team, led by Liz Atkins, who are doing excellent work but remains short-staffed, especially with regards to visits to care homes.

Small groups have responded positively to the spiritual gifts theme. Gathering for prayer before services is making a big difference with more people are also seeking prayer ministry at the end of services.

In youth and children's ministry, a new sixth form small group has started meeting at the Vicarage led by Simon and Elle. There remains a need for a paid youth/children's worker, with discussion around whether to appoint one full-time role or separate positions. Options of partnering with other organisations to assist with funding are being considered. The church is encouraged to pray over this decision and this will be included in our next prayer meeting. If anyone has any suggestions with regards to funding etc please let us know.

We are assigning PCC representatives to be links to our various outreach groups so they can report back to the PCC but we also encourage all church members to report back to PCC members any concerns or ideas so that the whole church family feels supported and included in decision making.

Harriet H (PCC Secretary)

Guide Dog Update

A few church members have said how much they miss the Guide Dog update – so here goes:

We now have Aaliyah (we always seem to get the strange names!!)



Aaliyah is a 'named puppy'. In Guide Dog language that means that somebody/somebodies have paid to name a puppy (the minimum amount is £2,500 which may be just a one off gift from an individual or the result of fundraising events). For that amount of money the sponsor(s) receive personalised updates and photos through the first year – I understand that we are meant to provide the updates but we haven't been asked

for any as yet. Aaliyah's name is evidently Arabic and means sublime (quite a name to live up to!!)

We have had Aaliyah for 5 months and the tiny 8 week old pup that arrived has grown in to quite a beautiful Golden Retriever. She is a little bit darker than most retrievers. Some of you may have seen her when we had her in St Ts back at the beginning of September.



She is very good (on the whole!) and is progressing very well – loves the car which is better than the last retriever we had, Esselle. Aaliyah is currently listed as a possible dog to breed from – but there were 9 pups in the litter and all have that as a possibility and they are unlikely to use more than one or two, if any, for breeding.

She is doing really well walking on the lead and loves free running. She responds very well to her name and to the whistle – as long as treats are available - even when other dogs are around (well most of the time!) but she really likes people and is likely to go charging up to people and jumping up then when she off the lead – she looks so cute and gorgeous that most of them don't mind but it is something that she shouldn't do, especially now that she is 20kgs. One of our favourite walks is up on Lyth Hill from where you get a beautiful view for miles and miles across the hills and beautiful countryside of Shropshire.



On one of our walks up there two ladies were enjoying the morning, sitting chatting on a bench up there with coffees – Aaliyah decide to pay them a visit – she went haring across the field and ended up knocking their coffees over – fortunately for us their reaction was ‘ oh she is only a puppy, isn't she beautiful’!!

Our other favourite walk is just a few minutes from home walking above the River Severn – with the recent heavy rain the river has been about twice the size that it normally is but hasn't spread to the flood plains and I don't think the town has flooded which is very good.

An update on us: while missing all our friends in Trowbridge and West Ashton it is lovely being back in Shrewsbury and attending our old church. There is a significant number of folk that we knew when we lived here previously (just a few we recognise and struggle to put a name to!) but a large number who we don't know. We have just started going to a homegroup – unfortunately most of the groups in Trinity Churches only meet fortnightly which is difficult - if you can't attend one week it is a month before you meet again. Unfortunately, since we have been here a good friend who we shared homegroup leading with has died – and the thanksgiving service last week was a very special occasion when the church was completely full and the tributes to Mike from family, friends and colleagues was great – and the congregation included his dog!.

Shrewsbury Town has a real buzz about it – which Mandi Archer and her friend were impressed with when they visited the town a few weeks ago and we were able to meet up for coffee. Unfortunately, the football team is not quite so buzzy – having been relegated to League 2 at the end of last season they haven't started this season very well. Languishing second from bottom of league 2 with just 5 points from 9 matches – and this is despite the local footbridge being painted (officially) in the club colours of blue and amber (although I think it looks more gold than amber).

House-wise we bought a new house so as not to have too much to do but we seem to have been doing something or other to it since arriving – we have done some work on the garden and have a water feature which we used some of the gift that I was given from church for and I have bought lots of large daffodil bulbs – but more work will happen on the (small) garden next year. Geoff is currently working on fitted wardrobes.

Anyway, I would say if anybody who is passing do come and see us but Shrewsbury isn't really a place that people pass through to get somewhere else – unless it is north Wales! – more a place that they come to visit – but either way we would love to see any of you.

God bless you all

Pat K

A Final Update

Firstly, thank you for your continued prayers, interest and support. I am hoping that this is the final article like this that I'll write. I meant to write this in time for the September magazine but failed – although that now appears to have been a good thing. October makes two years on from receiving my initial treatment.

I do genuinely feel much better, and although not back to me old self, pretty happy with where I am. This in part down to the fact that I started a new medication (both new to me and genuinely a new medication) that I started over the summer, is having the effect that the consultants in Leeds were hoping for. I now have two of the main components of my blood in the normal range – at the low end but normal - most of the time, which is great.

I still have to be a bit carefully as my main medication keeps me immunosuppressed, but we are also now looking at very slowly reducing the amount of this I take, in part following a concern with my kidneys over the summer. This again is a big moment although it will be a very slow progress and I don't think currently we'll get it to a situation where I no longer need to take it, but we will see. They are also still keeping a close eye on me generally as I have blood tests every three weeks and regular consultations, and still have the two separate teams of consultants – Bath and Leeds. Although most of the medication I take is tablet based, I do have one injection every eight weeks, which is most likely a permanent situation.

I am working three days a week, and two days can be consecutive, I would like to go up to four days but am very aware that my body would still not cope with this on a regular basis currently. My employer remains very supportive for which I am truly thankful. It was also great last month to return to the intersession's rota.

So that's it, this has been and continues to be a learning experience from which I do feel blessed in many ways. And now its time to sort out what I do next. Thank you again for your prayers and support.

Martin B

Kadugli Newsletter and Prayer Diary

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

Recent News on Sudan.

News from Sudan continues to be mostly general rather than specific, but it seems the SAF is consolidating its hold on the area through which the road from Khartoum towards Dilling and on towards Kadugli, but it is still being fiercely resisted by the RSF.

Every day in the UK we see news and protests about the situation in Gaza, and the humanitarian crisis there is indeed horrific. Yet we hear and see practically nothing about Sudan, which is the location of what the UN continues to describe as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with Kadugli being mentioned as one of the areas most affected by famine.

Last month UNICEF reported that a humanitarian aid convoy had reached Dilling in South Kordofan province, This marked the first substantial delivery to this area by any UN agency since October 2024, and the convoy was expected to proceed to the provincial capital Kadugli. This, though welcome, would have been a drop in the ocean of need, but we have been unable to find any reports that the convoy reached Kadugli.

Sudan’s Prime Minister Kamil El Tayeb Idris addressed the 80th session of the UN General Assembly recently to warn that his country faces “existential dangers” from war, genocide, and foreign mercenaries. “Sudan has bled,” he declared. “Our villages and cities have fallen silent under the shadow of unprecedented war, unprecedented invasion,” while accusing the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of mass displacement, plunder, and demographic engineering. (It should be noted that it is the SAF, not the RSF which is part of the legitimate government of Sudan.)

Idris urged the UN to classify the RSF as a terror group and halt arms flows fuelling their campaign. He criticised the Security Council’s inaction, asking: “Imagine: it was adopted a year ago, and nothing has happened. Is this plausible?”

Sadly, listening to a broadcast by Al Jazeera, it seems as though there is little will among the combatant parties for a serious diplomatic resolution to the conflict. The civilian population continues to suffer.

What about Kadugli Diocese?

Kadugli, as already mentioned, is in a publicly designated famine area. This emphasises the importance of whatever aid we can give.

How is the church there doing among all this? Last month we reported three confirmation services, each with over a hundred candidates. Now the Diocesan Communications Officer reports “The Church in Nuba Mountain is at a very important a season of spiritual revival through Bible Course annually! We request for your prayers that God will use His servants for this revival. Many thanks for your prayers.”

A poster for a recent course is shown below



Photographs show many young people present, and if the next photo is anything to go by, there seems to have been plenty of rejoicing!



We continue to support the people of Kadugli in their search for desperately needed food and other essentials, and in addition, we have been supporting Hassan’s son Yassa with help for his fees for his course at a university in Uganda. Our latest news is that he is doing well. For administrative and other reasons any money given for Hassan’s son Yassa would need to be kept distinct from other funds, so anyone wishing to donate for Yassa can use the same payment details as for other funds for Kadugli, but with the reference “Yassa” instead of “Kadugli.”

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. Or, as mentioned above, Yassa. (N.B. This is important)

Please also consider ways of raising funds for Kadugli.

And as always, we ask you to pray.

Prayer Diary

“Please do not grow tired of praying for Sudan”

(Archbishop Ezekiel)

Bishop Hassan rightly says the present conflict and its attendant troubles need God’s intervention.

- Let us pray for the nation of Sudan, that God will bring about a will for peace and unity, stability and healing, and that he will give the church wisdom in handling the present crisis. Above all, we pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts and minds of the people there and bring them to a saving knowledge of God in Christ Jesus.
- Pray for food and medicine to be supplied, and for shelter for those made homeless.
- We pray God will build his church and sustain it, and bless in particular the leadership as they seek under God to guide his church.
- Remember before God the families, especially of Bishop Hassan, and pray for their protection and provision and strengthening in their faith.

WORDSEARCH

Look up, down, forwards, backwards and diagonally on the grid to find these words associated with peace

D	B	X	W	L	S	E	C	A	L	O	S	P	Z	Z	L	J	M
B	D	Q	G	H	U	Q	P	B	X	G	D	Z	L	G	Y	J	R
S	F	G	W	K	Z	B	A	Q	A	M	I	T	Y	F	R	Q	E
A	N	R	F	P	Q	D	X	T	F	I	Z	F	R	S	Z	X	T
K	Y	S	I	Q	R	U	O	V	Z	E	C	B	X	R	B	K	I
Q	Q	U	I	E	T	Q	B	P	T	J	X	U	Q	Q	M	Q	P
D	D	Q	X	Q	N	R	J	Z	G	R	Q	D	C	N	C	L	S
D	K	B	G	U	E	D	Q	S	W	Z	U	B	O	Q	N	P	E
M	J	F	C	L	M	V	S	Z	V	Y	T	I	N	U	Z	B	R
L	S	Y	I	Z	T	E	Q	H	W	Q	T	L	C	Z	B	W	M
L	R	E	C	O	N	C	I	L	I	A	T	I	O	N	B	W	N
H	F	S	R	M	E	U	P	F	C	P	Z	U	R	V	S	Z	F
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K	Q	A	N	C	N	T	F	P	H	D	Y	N	O	M	R	A	H
Q	C	E	P	D	O	I	F	N	S	P	H	A	H	W	V	S	C
P	C	L	V	Q	C	E	T	R	W	Q	Z	R	X	G	C	E	G
M	Q	S	E	A	Q	Z	R	Y	F	R	T	T	N	Q	L	R	S
R	Y	H	P	J	N	P	T	M	M	X	B	P	I	Y	F	F	H

AMITY

CALMNESS

CONCORD

CONTENTMENT

EASE

FRIENDSHIP

HARMONY

LOVE

PACIFICATION

QUIET

RECONCILIATION

RELIEF

RESPITE

SERENITY

SOLACE

TRANQUIL

TRUCE

UNITY



St John's Parish Church, West Ashton

Warmly Invite You To

HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICE

SUNDAY, 5 OCTOBER, 2025 - 10.30am

Whilst it is easy as a trip to the supermarket to buy any type of food imaginable at practically any time of the year; it is important to remember where our food comes from and to give thanks for it.

Harvest is a special time when the Church takes a moment to thank God for his creation; the earth, the sun, the sea, the rain, the farmers and everything that goes into providing the food we all eat day by day. Why not join us this autumn to thank God for all the good things He gives us ?

If you would like to donate any tinned or packet food, this will be given to Trowbridge Foodbank for distribution to the needy.

Thank the Lord for Harvest - He Provides You With Plenty Of Food And Fills Your Heart With Joy : Acts :14 - 176



Please Note - Storehouse/Foodbank Have requested the following :

Tinned Meals, Tinned Hot Dogs, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Meat. Tinned Puddings. Toiletries, Toilet Rolls. Thank You For Your Kindness.