

# **St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News September 2025**

**St Thomas  
Trowbridge**

**St John's  
West Ashton**

**Kingfisher**



**Holy Trinity  
Trowbridge**

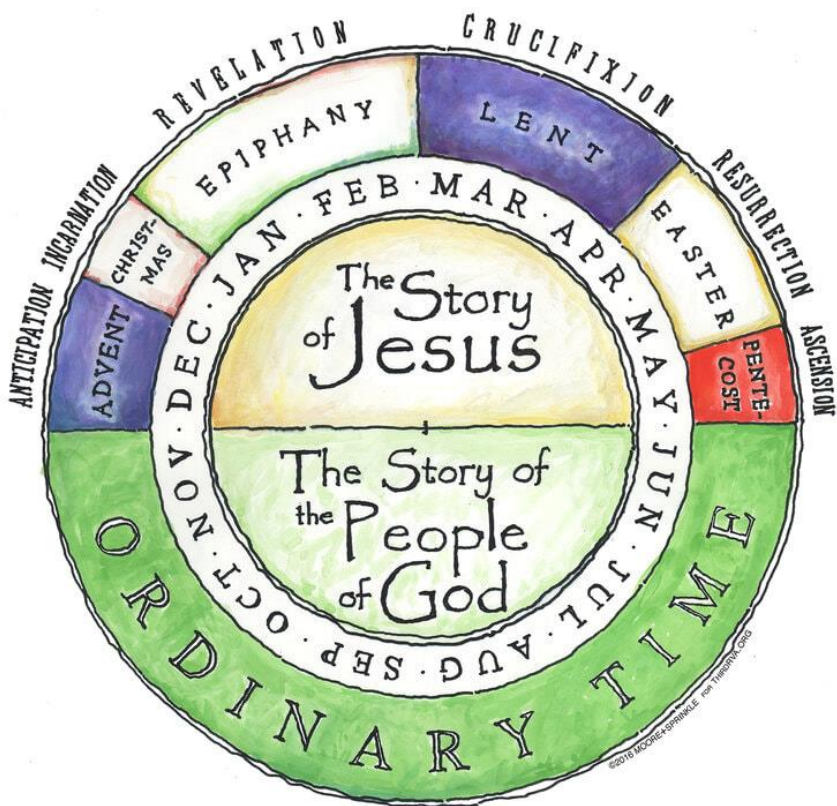


**"I loved autumn, the  
season of the year that  
God seemed to have put  
there just for the beauty  
of it."**

**Lee Maynard**

# September – New Beginnings

August passed in a flash, and here we are in September, often a time for new beginnings, or at least getting back into the normal swing of life, whatever that is for you.



I am always intrigued by the church calendar which has a swathe of 'ordinary time' – for something like half of the year. The liturgical colour for this ordinary time is green. We are somewhere in the middle of that now. It reminds me that most of what we are called to do as Christians is live out our faith in the ordinary. Our everyday faith lived out is so important, that half of the year is dedicated to it.

So, as you begin something new, or step back into the ordinary rhythm of life after the summer, remember that God is *always* with you. Step boldly yet lightly, remembering you are never alone. Your everyday life

is important to God, so don't forget to dedicate whatever you do to Him. Learning, working, recreation, serving, living with God is all an act of worship that He is interested in.

These words from Proverbs 3:5-6 spring to mind;

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

As my mind might naturally race now to Advent and Christmas (of course, they are important too!), I am also reminded to live in the moment. The Greek word often used in the New Testament (86 times!) for specific moments is *kairos*. *Kairos* is about the quality or significance of the moment, rather than *chronos*, a clock measured duration. A reminder to live in the moment, with the people we meet, the things we have now, and what God reveals today. Even the ordinary is significant to God, and it should be for us too.

May you see Him in your everyday.

Every blessing,

Simon.



Deadline for October's Magazine: Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>  
September

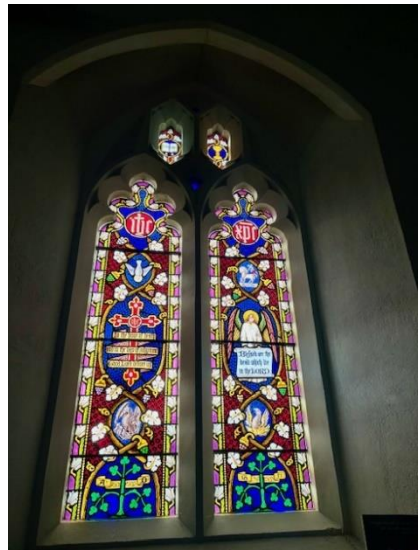
# St John's Update

Here we are in the meteorological autumn (1<sup>st</sup> September). The astronomical autumn starts with the autumn equinox on 22 September. In any case, autumn has come early, trees and flowers struggled with the summer heat (as we all did) and lack of water, which made survival difficult. The early autumnal colour, an abundance of berries and shedding of leaves is their way to stay alive. St John's Harvest Festival is usually held late September/early October, the church is suitably decorated and a kind farmer allows us to cut some maize from his fields as decoration - well not this year - the harvest was six weeks early, it has been harvested and fields tilled. Just one instance of how the seasons are changing earlier than normal. The churchyard needed little grass cutting during August and even though we had no rain, the field brambles and ivy would attempt to encroach over the perimeter wall, so attention was given to keeping them at bay. White safety lines were repainted on all external steps. We unfortunately have had three of St John's "family" in hospital, so our prayers went out to them for a speedy recovery and to return home. We had two excellent services in August, (one by Revd. Ivor Hughes and one by Revd. Simon) both meaningful and uplifting. Things start to speed up from September, school returns from their summer break; the church will be open for the Annual Wiltshire Historic Churches Ride and Stride Event - St Johns will be open from 10am to 5pm with stewards providing refreshment to all who visit; we have a PCC meeting; a christening; Harvest Festival (see separate article); then Remembrance Day, heading into Christingle and all the Christmas festivities, concert and carol service. Final details to follow. So August was the quiet before the storm. St John's next service will be: Service of the Word on 7<sup>th</sup> September with Holy Communion on 21<sup>st</sup> September. It would be wonderful to see you, a warm welcome awaits.

Happy Autumn - Autumn shows us the beauty in change; a time of harvest and perhaps a time to reflect on what we can release in our lives to make room for new growth. Our personal lives are like the seasons. It is up to us how we grow, how do we feed and nurture our faith. How do we harvest this amazing power of God and how do we share his word.

“For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven” Amen. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Jean





# Afternoon Tea at St Thomas'

Friday 15 August saw the Church transformed with chairs removed and tables dressed with white tablecloths elegantly set with delicate flower arrangements, vintage china and brightly coloured napkins all ready for our Annual Afternoon Tea.



At 2.45 our guests started arriving and were delighted with the welcoming sight and the gentle live music playing in the background. We were again fortunate to welcome Helen and Philip S and this year

Charis who combined to entertain us with a good selection of light music played on the piano, flute and cello.

Sixty-four guests (aged between 2 and 94!) sat down together and enjoyed a delicious tea of dainty sandwiches, scones with strawberries and clotted cream and, of



course homemade cakes. The frequently replenished teapots lubricated the vocal cords and there was a happy buzz of conversation.



A Hungarian family of 6 were holidaying in West Ashton and it was good to share an English tradition with them. The father kindly said Grace for us in Hungarian and although none of us understood what he said we all joined in with an enthusiastic "Amen"!

We also had twelve guests who came either as a result of the Invitation drop in the roads around the church or who are known to us through the Morning Break. Two people for whom the Tea was their first contact with St.



Thomas' have since been to the Morning Break. Hand delivering invitations has proved to be a very successful way of reaching our neighbours and letting them know that the church is there for them. We are extremely grateful to Richard Urwin who delivered most of the Invitations, but it would be good to spread the load and increase the number of roads covered. So, if you could spare half an hour before our next event to pop a few invitations into letterboxes just imagine how many people would come through our door and experience friendship offered in Jesus' name. Big oak trees from little acorns grow.

Some of our usual helpers were unable to be there this year so it was good to have some "new" faces joining us and the church owes a big debt of gratitude to all who helped, ladies and gents, in any way both front of house and behind the scenes. Thank you to you all for making such a happy occasion possible.

A big thank you goes to those who loaned us the lovely china, prepared the hall, donated the food and served us right royally – and washed up afterwards!



As our guests bade us goodbye, they all said they were looking forward to next year!!







# Mercy Ships

St Thomas' Church mission focus for September and October is Mercy Ships.

Mercy Ships is a global Christian Charity following Jesus's example of bringing hope and healing to those suffering from disability, disfigurement and disease. This is achieved through the provision of hospital ships and partnering with African nations to help improve their healthcare and provide free surgery to those most in need.



Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 55 countries, providing services valued at more than £1.3 billion.

There are two hospital ships, the Africa Mercy and Global Mercy. The Mercy Ships crew of the Africa Mercy is led by a team of volunteers from up to 40 nations, all of whom give their time and expertise for free.

The Global Mercy has been in Sierra Leone undertaking surgery since August 2023, with the ship then in dry dock in Cadiz for its annual maintenance from 1st July to 3rd August this year. The Global Mercy is now back in Sierra Leone and will restart surgeries in the coming weeks.

The Africa Mercy is in Madagascar until the end of the year. Then she will have a maintenance period in South Africa for a few months at the beginning of 2026.

Among the countries Mercy Ships serves, which lies on the lower third of the World Health Organisation's Human Development Index, access to safe, affordable and timely surgery is extremely limited. As a result, countless people suffer and die from "diseases of poverty" that can easily be cured.

One of those benefiting from medical care is Selina.

Selina was born with a painful umbilical hernia, a condition that occurs when part of the intestine sticks out through the muscles near the belly button.

It kept growing every day. When she started walking, her mum took her to a hospital. Sadly, the hospital said she was too young for surgery. With no hope of treatment in sight, Selina continued to grow up with the hernia.

Hidden under her t-shirt, Selina's hernia had grown to a large 6cm lump. Hernia pains for adults can be devastating, and the same was true for two-year-old Selina.

Mariama fought to give Selina a happy childhood. But it was a struggle, because every time they left the house, Mariama was afraid of what people would say about her daughter. "Most times, I used a bandage to cover the hernia when she went out, to stop people from mocking us," said Mariama. Despite her efforts, she continued to hear harsh comments from people around them.

Dr John Zwiacher, the Volunteer Surgeon who later operated on the toddler on board the *Global Mercy*, added that it's common for children with umbilical hernias to face social stigma.

Thankfully, Selina was given free surgery on board the *Global Mercy*. With the risks of an untreated hernia out of the way, her mum could look forward to a healthier and safer future for Selina.

As well as completing thousands of urgent operations in every country we visit, Mercy Ships also works closely with host nations to improve the way healthcare is delivered across the country, by training and mentoring local medical staff, and renovating hospitals and clinics.

More information on the above can be found on the Mercy Ships website [mercyships.org.uk](http://mercyships.org.uk) and there will be a talk given by Stephanie Elcock, a visiting speaker on 21st September during the morning service. Your support is appreciated to this life changing cause and we hope you can join us for this service.

Many thanks Caroline F

# Sunday Prayers 31<sup>st</sup> August

Father God, I ask that You would increase Your presence, peace and joy, as we pray and worship You here today.

I like to personalise scriptures and pray them using I or we.

A personalised Proverbs 3:5&6 says - We trust in the Lord with all our hearts and we don't lean on our own understanding. In all our ways we acknowledge You and You will direct our paths.

(Here is another one) Father in Heaven, You are a Mighty God, and as **Psalms 100 4&5** says - We choose to enter Your gates with thanksgiving and Your courts with praise. We are eternally thankful to You and we bless Your name. For You are good; Your mercy is everlasting, and Your truth endures forever. Lord, thank You for the life changing power of Your Word.

Thank You Holy Spirit that You have given us the gift of faith, and we thank You that You have been showing Yourself to us in a new way. Open our eyes, ears and heart to You afresh today. Help us to give up our own ways, get to know You better and trust Your ways, because **Your** ways are infinitely greater than our ways, and **Your** thoughts are so much greater than our thoughts.

Jesus, thank You that You have been with us in a special way as we have had these meetings at Holy Trinity church. Father God, guide us by Your Spirit in how we can use this wonderful building, and space on the roundabout to draw more people to You. Teach us how to build Your Kingdom here, at St Thomas', and in Trowbridge. Make us beacons of love and light that will be attractive to this town and area.

Holy Spirit, we pray that our church family would be a source of healing, restoration and discipleship in Jesus to all. Give us courage to persevere in building relationships, praying for each other and making love our priority.



Lord God, reveal to us how we can build on the ministries we have that are thriving, and full of Your Spirit. Show us the changes we need to make and give us the courage to move more fully into Your perfect will.

Lord of the Harvest, we pray that Your Holy Spirit would move mightily at the Trowbridge Country Fayre, in the park on the 6<sup>th</sup> September. Saturate the CATA stall with Your love and presence and give all Your people there, words of life and healing for the lost that You are calling.

Father, we ask that Your kingdom would come, and Your will be done in the Ukraine Russia conflict and also in Israel and the Middle East. God of Compassion and Love, we ask that You would heal people traumatised from war and give them hope for the future.

Lastly Father, help us to be the people that You planned for us to be, before the world was created. Grant us according to Your endless power to be strengthened with might, through Your Spirit in our hearts, so that we may know the full love of Christ, and His power that works in us. Amen.

Jesus said "Your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him." So, lets all pray the way He taught us, believing and trusting that he will answer our prayers.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread, forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!

Robert J

# Kadugli Newsletter and Prayer Diary

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

## **Recent News on Sudan.**

News from Sudan is mostly general rather than specific, but it seems the SAF is advancing towards the west of the country, but still fiercely resisted by the RSF. As the SAF controls more ground, refugees have begun to return home, to places such as Khartoum, Al Jazira and White Nile in the East of Sudan. It is estimated that over 1.5 million of these have returned from other parts of Sudan, and another half million from abroad. Where fighting continues, however, people continue to flee their homes, bringing down the overall figure.

There is other encouraging news. UNICEF report that a humanitarian aid convoy has reached Dilling in South Kordofan province, This marks the first substantial delivery to this area by any UN agency since October 2024, and the convoy now will proceed to the provincial capital Kadugli. UNICEF reports that “The supplies are expected to benefit about 120,000 where humanitarian needs have reached catastrophic levels and communities have been under siege for months”.

Encouraging though this is, we must remember future deliveries are not guaranteed, and that even what has been provided is only one delivery; many more will be needed. **The Church in Sudan.**

The church in Sudan has to live with the destruction of many of its buildings. A photo was posted on Facebook recently, showing the ruins of a church, and with the message “Here I came to Jesus and talked and cried ..... My church is destroyed, but Christ will not be destroyed.”

This is by no means an isolated instance. Many churches have been damaged or destroyed, and their members and clergy scattered. Talking about this recently, Archbishop Ezekiel cited his own family as an example, staying in three different places. He knew of families scattered even more widely, and some who had lost contact with each other. Separation was a form of trauma needing healing. He recognised that the church needed people skilled in dealing with these issues.

Archbishop Ezekiel has been able to bring support and encouragement by visiting and ministering to the church in different parts of the country, including Dongola in the Northern State, Khartoum and Omdurman, and also

the Nuba Mountains. He called for action to bring peace and unity, and prayed God would give the church the vision to handle the present crisis.

### **What about Kadugli Diocese?**

News of the UNICEF humanitarian aid convoy is too fresh to be able to confirm it has reached Kadugli. When it arrives it will be welcome. It is expected to benefit 120,000 people, so much more is needed and regularly. Our own contributions are very important and are gratefully received, as are our prayers.

Accounts of specific acts of violence are few, but the worry and the danger is always present, as may be inferred from the prayer requests. Let us remember our suffering brothers and sisters also have families for whom they care. This comes through in messages from Archbishop Ezekiel and Bishop Hassan, and will be true for many others.

Conditions make it difficult for the church in Kadugli to witness, but it is evident the church continues to thrive amongst all the turmoil. There have been three confirmation services around the end of June/beginning of July,

each with over 100 candidates; photos are attached.

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 peace and unity, stability and healing, and that he will give the church vision 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.
- Pray for those made homeless.
- We pray God will enable the church to overcome the many difficulties and to bear witness to him with love, joy and confidence, and to serve one another and their neighbours.
- Remember before God the families, especially of Archbishop Ezekiel and of Bishop Hassan, for their protection and provision and strengthening in their faith.





## **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.**


Dear Friends,

We are so excited to invite you to join us this October for another *Encountering the Father's Love School* — a week set apart to experience the freedom, healing, and joy that come from knowing God as Father.

Many of you have journeyed with us before and seen how powerfully Father God meets us in these times. If your own heart was touched, would you consider inviting a friend, family member, or someone in your church community who might also be longing for His love? These schools have changed lives, and your invitation could open the door for someone else's breakthrough.

 **Dates:** 13–17 October 2025

 **Location:** St Philip and St James Church, 35 Frome Road, Odd Down, Bath, BA2 2QF

 **Cost:** £120 per person | £210 per couple  
(Help may be available for those in financial difficulties.)

Tea and coffee will be provided — please bring your own packed lunch.

We can't wait to gather again and see what God will do. Please do prayerfully consider who you might bring along — it could be the most important invitation they receive this year.

To register and find out more, visit: [encounteringthefatherslove.org](https://encounteringthefatherslove.org)

With love,

David & Faith Dalley  
and the Bath EFL Team

## **ABIDE IN ME**

**Abide in Me, My precious child  
Come tell Me what you've done  
Whatever fear that grips you tight  
By Me, can be undone  
I will forgive your every sin  
Through what My Jesus did  
No matter what the gravity  
Please let Me lift the lid.**

**Abide in Me, My precious child  
I've washed clean all your grime  
It's only you who's suffering  
Recalling all your crimes  
Believe that I have set you free  
From all the devil holds  
You are My child and not a slave  
Believe what you've been told.**

**Mike B**

The Church is full of people in the Autumn of their years.

Some have led colourful lives, leaves bronzed and golden through exposure to the elements, their appearance the centre of attention.



Others have been exposed to more extreme conditions, branches bowed and scarred.



Some go unnoticed, yet stand tall and steadfast against wind and rain.



All have a story to tell, all can offer support and shelter for saplings which grow beneath their leafy canopy.

