

The parish magazine of
Hertford St Andrew

www.hertfordstandrews.co.uk

JULY/AUGUST 2026



Laughing Christ by Willis Wheatley

"Laughter...is a spiritual discipline; good for body and soul. It's a like a prayer that celebrates the joy, wit and craziness of life." Says Rev Alan Stewart

Here with you Here for you

HERTFORD ST ANDREW

Registered charity 1132540

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The Health and Safety Policy, and the Safeguarding Policy of Hertford St Andrew Parish Church can be found at www.hertfordstandrews.co.uk/safeguarding

Whilst every reasonable care has been taken in presenting the information in this magazine, no responsibility can be taken for any inaccuracies. The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Priests, Churchwardens or editor.

HOPE AND HUMOUR

During Lockdown, I heard about a young boy who, instead of selling lemonade, set up a driveby stand outside his house selling jokes!



Laughter, they say, is the best medicine, especially in an epidemic. And science

certainly backs that up. Laughter can help reduce stress, boost immunity and manage pain. It decreases stress hormones, and releases 'happy chemicals' like dopamine, serotonin and endorphins.

New research shows that laughter boosts child development by building healthy brain growth, emotional connection, improving memory and creating resilience.

Dr. Jacqueline Harding in her book 'The Brain That Loves to Laugh', says

"Hope and humour, it seems, are not just the seasoning of life, but foundational to a recipe for healthy development. When we see children laugh, we witness the brilliance of the brain in action: learning, connecting, and growing."

Hope and humour. In a world wracked with despair, these are two of the most powerful and necessary things.

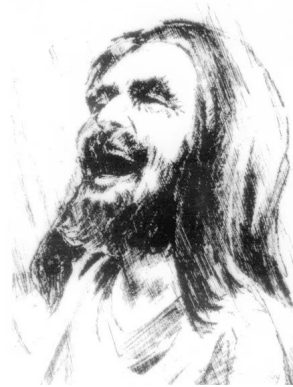
The Bible speaks a lot about hope but surprisingly few examples of humour or laughter made the final cut. That's not to say these early people, or Jesus, or God for that matter, didn't/don't have a sense of humour. I believe that Jesus had a twinkle in his eye on many occasions especially in his run-ins with the Pharisees. I believe in a God who laughs with us and perhaps sometimes at us! If he engineered human beings to need laughter, it follows that he's the original comedian!

Laughter, I think, is a spiritual discipline; good for body and soul. It's a like a prayer that celebrates the joy, wit and craziness of life.

WELCOME!

Welcome everyone to St Andrew's, and in particular visitors and newcomers. Details of services are given on the next couple of pages and the last page of this magazine. If you wish to know more about anything mentioned, please see the website or get in touch with any named contact person or speak with one of the churchwardens. For contact details, see the previous page.

The church is open during daylight hours, and there is a prayer space by the main door where there is an opportunity to post prayers on the prayer board and light a candle.



So, note to self:

Laugh daily.

Where possible, cause laughter.

When necessary, laugh at myself!

Alan

Laughing Christ by Willis Wheatley

How
to talk
to God



If you weren't able to come along to the 'How to Talk to God' sessions in June, or you'd like to read/hear the content again, you'll find the details on St Andrew's website. Across three weeks, Alan led us as we looked at **what prayer is and what it does; how God answers prayer and how we pray with all five of our senses; and the place of silence, meditation and the imagination has in our prayer.**



THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE **SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER** MAGAZINE IS **SUNDAY 23RD AUGUST**. Please send copy by email to hertfordsta@aol.co.uk

SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

Church Services

You will find a full list of church services at the end of this magazine and on the church website, with some additional information about certain services on this and the following pages.

Junior Church

Children are welcome to attend Junior Church which runs during the 10.30am Parish Communion service on most Sundays during school term time, except during an All-Age service (see below), when the children stay in church for the whole service.

ALL-AGE SERVICE

Joined by Hertford Children's Choir on
SUNDAY 12TH JULY at 10.30am
Also SUNDAY 9TH AUGUST at 10.30am
A shorter, child-friendly, interactive service with songs, prayers and surprises.

St Andrew's services on Zoom

Zoom codes for online access and access via a landline are available from the church office: standrew.hertford@btinternet.com or by calling 01992 504373.

Join us on Zoom for:

Service of the Word

every Sunday at 10.30am with praise, prayer and teaching. There is a communion service once a month. Please check the services on the last page of this magazine and the website for dates.

On Zoom at 7pm
Sundays 12th, 19th & 26th July
Compline takes a break in August



Compline is based on the Felgild Compline from the Northumbria Community and Night Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book.

IN THESE TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AND WORRY ABOUT EVENTS HERE IN THE UK, IN EUROPE AND FURTHER AFIELD YOU ARE VERY WELCOME TO JOIN THE REV ALAN STEWART AS HE LEADS US IN PRAYER AT OUR MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING CALLED:



on **Saturday 18th July**

at 8.30am

Breathe takes a break in August

Join us on Zoom or pop down to St Andrew's Church and join us in the Lady Chapel as we pray for ourselves, our churches and our world during these worrying times.

A different kind of service at St Andrew's called

Soul Sunday

★ Sunday 5th July ★
★ Sunday 6th September ★

Held in the

St Andrew's Centre

behind the church, this is an opportunity to join us for an informal hour of gentle discussion, songs and prayers, along with tea and biscuits.

Please join us at

6.45pm for refreshments

Service begins at 7pm

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

Mindfulness & Meditation

at St Andrew's Church, Hertford

Mindfulness can help with wellbeing & stress.
Explore alongside the riches of Christian meditation in a free 40-minute session.
Beginners especially welcome!

Wednesdays (usually twice a month) 7.30pm

15th July in church & on Zoom

22nd July on Zoom only

Takes a break in August.

Back on 9th September

For details, including the Zoom link, please see our website:

www.hertfordstandrews.co.uk



FREE Mindfulness

WHEN

Fortnightly on Mondays at

6TH JULY

20TH JULY

Takes a break in August.
Back on 9th September

Mindfulness can help with **wellbeing, stress** and **anxiety**. Come along and join the **FREE 30-min sessions**, followed by refreshments.

Everyone is welcome

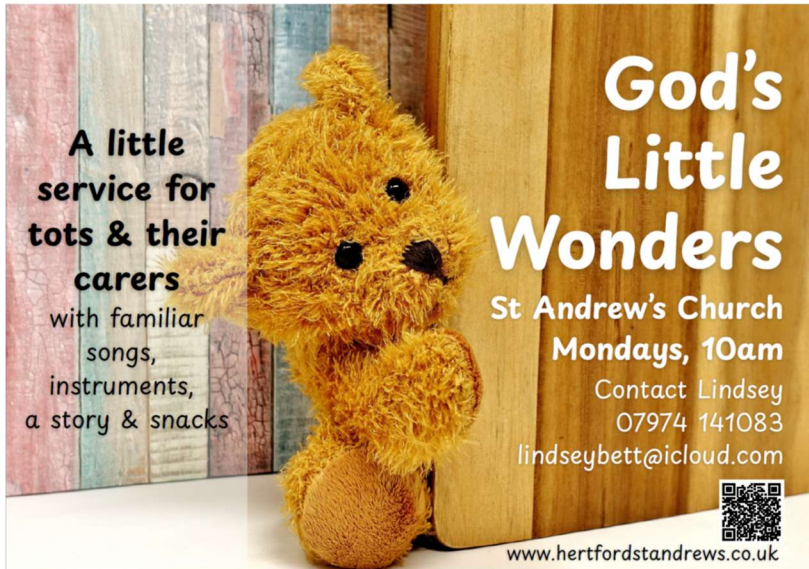
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St Andrew's Church
Mondays, 10am

Contact Lindsey
07974 141083
lindseybett@icloud.com



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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHURCHWARDENS

We are delighted to be able to let you know that Bishop Jane, the Bishop of Hertford, will be visiting the parish on **Sunday 20th September** for our 10.30am morning service. We wanted to give you plenty of notice so that you can note this date in your diaries if you particularly want to be present for the visit. Julie & Lesley

WEDNESDAY SERVICE IN AUGUST

Please note that on **Wednesday 26th August**, St Andrew's 10.30am Holy Communion service will be relocating just this once to St Mary's Hertingfordbury.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

CHURCH FAMILY

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERALS:

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of:

22nd May **Joan Lee** aged 96. Joan was a faithful member of St Andrew's congregation and usually known as a couple with Barry, who died in December. Joan was born in the Isle of Ely, trained as a teacher at the Froebel Institute in Roehampton and went on to have a career in teaching ending as head of St Paul's Infant School in Hoddesdon. She married Barry in 1958 and went with him to Dublin, Loughborough (where Ceinwen and Ronan were born) and finally Hertford. They enjoyed a long and active retirement together and when Joan became less fit, Barry cared wonderfully for her. Her last months were spent happily at Bentley House. We all miss them both.



A thank you from Alan

I wanted to express my sincerest thanks to everyone who helped arrange, cater for and attend the get-together to celebrate 20 years of being your vicar. It was a wonderful surprise. You are all amazing at keeping secrets!

I was also very humbled by your very generous gift of vouchers and money, so thank you so much. It continues to be my delight and privilege to serve as your vicar in these two wonderful parishes. With love, Alan.

May Marks Milestone

Congratulations to May Perkins who celebrated her 90th birthday in June. She has been a loyal member of St Andrew's for over 40 years.

The Self Family Welcomes New Generation



It has been a special time for our Churchwarden Lesley Self and her husband Paul who are celebrating the arrival of their first grandchild, Christopher William. He was born

on Friday 5th June at Princess Alexandra Hospital Harlow, weighing 8lb 4oz to their son Andrew and daughter-in-law Jenny. Congratulations to them all.



Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

CHURCH FAMILY

Edward the Eighth

Charles and Debbie Ledsam welcomed their eighth grandchild into the world on 5th April. He is called Edward and is the second son of their youngest son Alastair and his wife Becky and is a brother to George. The family live in Devon where Alastair practices as a GP and Becky as a dental surgeon.



SERVERS WITH A SMILE

You will see us at every 10.30 Sunday morning service working away in our white robes around the altar before and during the service. You may not know our names, but we are Sue and Jennie. We are called Servers. It is a role for anyone, male or female. You are never too young to think about becoming a Server.



We thoroughly enjoy our role and count it a privilege to serve in this way, but now we are in our mid-70s and would sometimes like to enjoy some time-off or cover for when we're unwell, we are looking for others to join us. We have no intention of retiring yet!

If you would like to know more about the role, or think you might like to try it out, please speak to Jennie, Sue or Alan. Training will be provided and it's very flexible!

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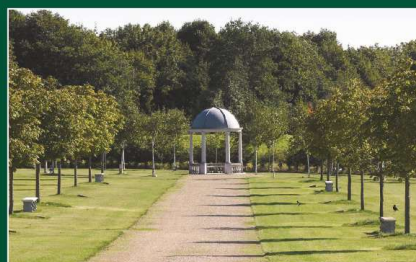
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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

A SUMMER TRIAL

Please don't be alarmed — we are not planning anything courageous! Rather, during July we will be trying a small change in how we use the audio-visual system at our 10.30am service.

What does this involve? One of the aims of our recent audio-visual upgrade was to give us greater flexibility in worship. At the moment, however, we only make limited use of the system — usually at the monthly All-Age service and occasionally for short courses — which means much of its potential remains unused. We also tend to rely on the same hymns, since updating hymn books is costly, and preparing printed copies of new material also takes both time and money. For that reason, the PCC has agreed to run a four-week pilot during July, using the AV system each week at the 10.30am service.

What will happen? During the trial, the screen will be used to project hymns, songs, and some parts of the liturgy. Congregation members will still receive a hymn book and the green service book and may use whichever they prefer. Some parts of the service — such as the Eucharistic Prayer — are still better suited to the book. We may also use the screen for other appropriate material, such as sermon slides, but no one leading or speaking at the service will be expected to prepare presentations unless they wish to do so. The aim is always that the AV supports worship, rather than becoming the focus of it.

How will we do this? For the trial period, we will be using a specialist Christian worship program called SongPro. It includes a large library of more than 3,000 hymns and songs, along with 22 Bible translations, and also allows new material to be added when needed. SongPro was developed by a UK Christian organisation and is already



used by many churches across the country. I was involved in introducing it at Hertford Baptist Church in the late 1990s and continued running it there until I came to St Andrew's in 2020.

What are the possible benefits? This trial could offer a practical and cost-effective way of introducing new songs and using different versions of the liturgy, without the expense of buying additional books or the time involved in preparing printed sheets. It will also make it easier to support services such as All-Age worship, since songs and Bible readings can be displayed directly without having to be added manually to presentations. Another helpful feature is that the software can adjust quickly if the order of a song changes during the service. In addition, it keeps a record of what has been sung throughout the year, which will make our annual copyright return much simpler to prepare.

What if I have concerns? There will no doubt be questions and practical details to work through, but that is exactly why we are running this as a pilot. At the end of the four weeks, we will invite feedback by means of a questionnaire so that everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts and suggestions. In the meantime, we simply ask that you approach these Sundays in July with an open mind, and uphold those involved in the trial in your prayers.

Adrian Walter, Lay Leader of Worship

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CHURCH MATTERS

Here is an opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about the Christian faith or has unanswered questions. It is led by Rev Alan Stewart on Saturday mornings from 10am starting on 4th July. Don't worry if you miss the first session or cannot make them all. Contact details for Alan are set out opposite.

'This is a course for those who, like me, feel self-conscious about discussing their faith and embarrassed about their ignorance. You quickly discover that you are not alone and you are soon interacting with the rest of the group in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere under Alan's expert guidance. I enjoyed it very much and learned a lot!'

'Is there more to life than this?'
'Who was Jesus and why did he die?'
'Why pray?'
'How do I read the Bible?'



Exploring Faith

A short informal discussion course exploring the Christian faith.
An opportunity to think through the big questions of life.

10am on Saturdays 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th July & 1st, 8th August
at The Brace Room, St Mary's Church Hertingfordbury

Contact Alan: h.alanstewart1@gmail.com 01992 582726

CELEBRATING GOLD: well done St Andrew's

Peter Ruffles writes: We've been Bronze; we've been Silver; but in 2025 we really achieved!! St Andrew's is a Gold Award winner and we have a certificate to prove it!



The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust is for all Christian places of worship, not just CoFE. At its heart is national heritage. Its point and purpose is to assist worshipping congregations, often very small village churches and chapels which because of their place and story are of wider and local historic interest. Of value to all.

However, in this country, upkeep and maintenance of buildings, perhaps many hundreds of years old, falls entirely on worshipping Christian congregations in those chapels and churches, with no routine help from national government or church headquarters except for the often vain hope of a grant award at a critical time. National government has recently removed its earlier VAT concession and full tax payment on all church repairs is now required.

So, our wonderful earnings through the September 2025 Bike and Hike of over £2,000, are chiefly to help those small Christian congregations facing big repair bills in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. At least, I hope that is our over-riding thought.

The trust has set things up so that the helper of others also helps themselves. Half of the earnings of each St Andrew's walker or rider goes to our own building fund, and half to the big local trust pot, to assist others in their building upkeep responsibilities.

"Thank you, St Andrew's, for £1,000! We'll also be popping £1,000 into your St Andrew's Hertford building account shortly".

I'll be encouraging you to become involved in the 2026 Saturday event before long (it's on 12th September – put it in your diary) but for now, let's celebrate!

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Christopher THE LOCKSMITH

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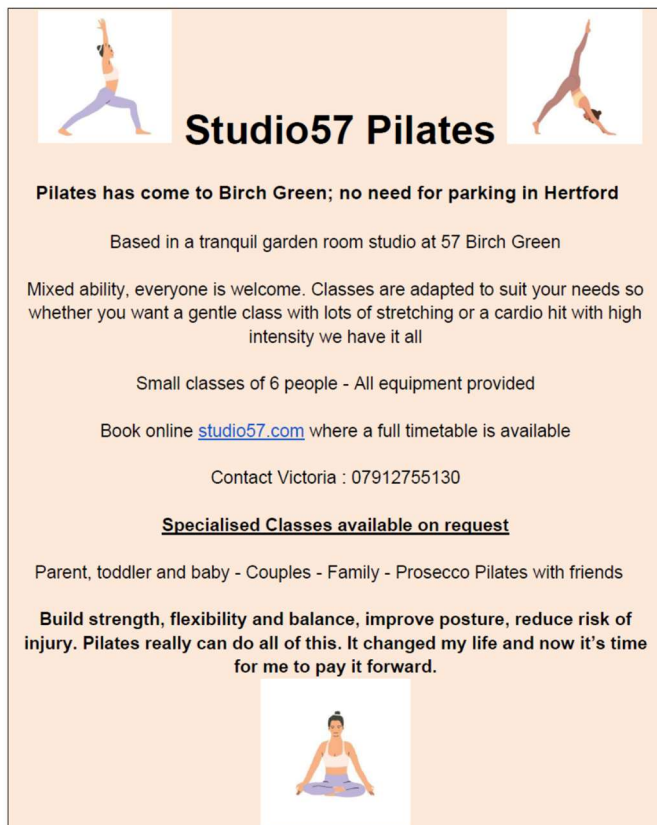



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EVENTS AT ST ANDREW'S CHURCH



Vikki Clayton: Thursday 2nd July at 7.30pm

Vikki's UK tour takes in St Andrew's Church as part of her popular "Folk at the Church" series. The setting provides an ideal acoustic backdrop for her style, allowing audiences to fully appreciate the nuance of her performance. For local folk fans, it promises an evening of high-quality musicianship and timeless song.

Tickets are £15.00 + £1.13 booking fee www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-andrews-church

For upcoming folk events in the autumn see our website.



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VIKKI CLAYTON
THURSDAY 2 JULY 2026
Licensed bar available

7.30pm at St Andrew's Church
Hertford SG14 1HZ

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coffee morning

**SATURDAY
4TH JULY**
10.30AM - 12.30PM
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HERTFORD SG14 1HZ

- Model railways
- Live music
- Sausage & bacon
butties
- Fairtrade coffee
& home-baked cakes

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RAILWAYCHILDREN AND
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COFFEE AND CAKE AS WELL

Saturday 4th July: 10.30am to 12.30pm

The July Coffee Morning is going to be a lot of fun, so don't miss it. There's going to be something for everyone, whatever your age. There will be model railways to see and railway-themed stalls to browse selling books, CDs, jigsaws and greetings cards. Half of what is raised will go to a charity called Railway Children which works in India, Tanzania and the UK, saving and changing the lives of vulnerable children at risk of a life on the streets. There will be live music to entertain you while you enjoy good coffee and a delicious selection of homemade cakes and bakes with

the bonus offering this month of bacon and sausage butties. It's only on from 10.30 until 12.30. We look forward to seeing you.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

Think about...The Parable of the Talents

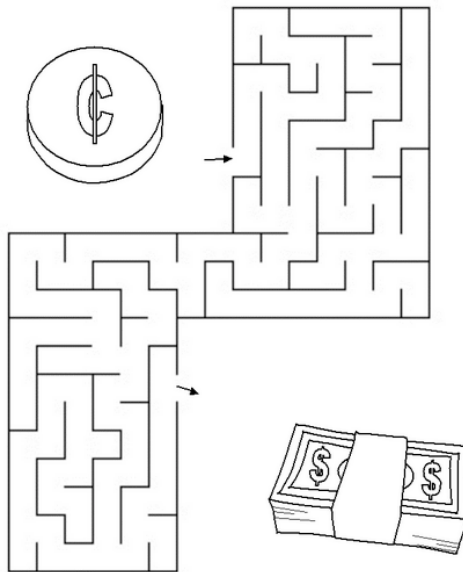
Jesus told us many parables (short stories that teach us something). One of them is called The Parable of the Talents. You can read about it in the Bible, in the book of Matthew (chapter 25) or in the book of Luke (chapter 19).

In The Parable of the Talents, God is the master and we are his servants. The talents that the master gave to his servants in this story was a form of money. But God has given us many talents, too, and he's created each of us with special gifts - he wants us to use those gifts for the purpose for which he gave them to us.

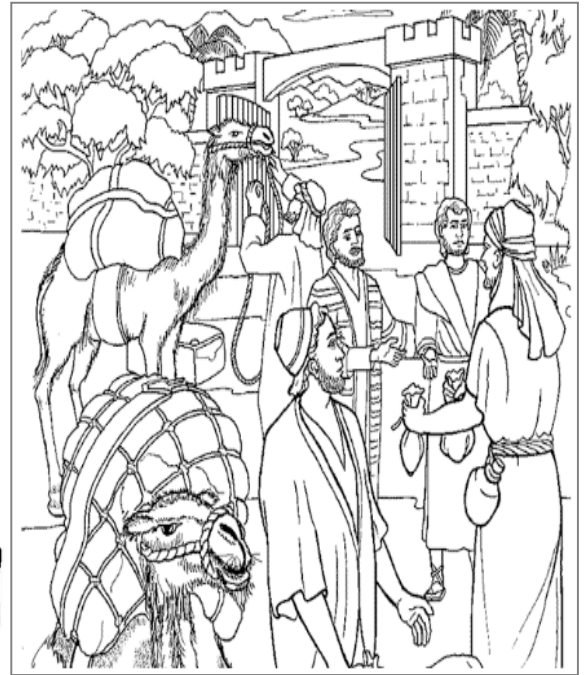
*Dear Father, help us to use the talents that you have given us to be what you intended for us to be.
Amen*

MAZE

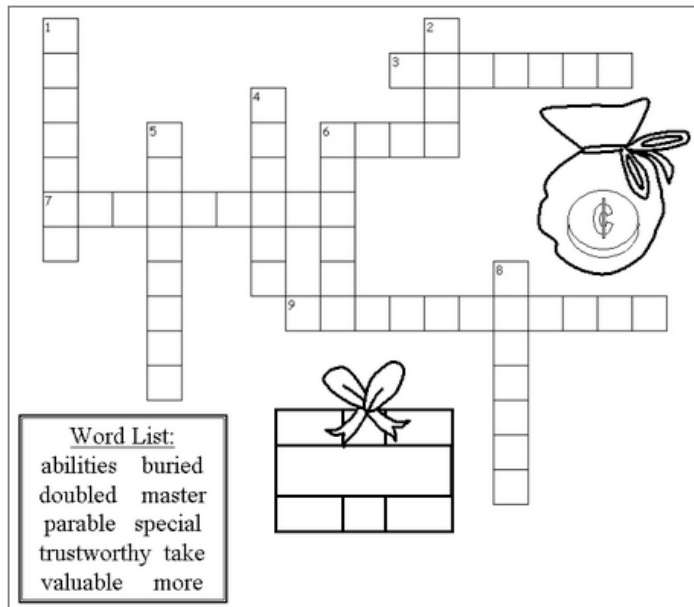
Help the servant take his one talent and get more talents ...



Colour and keep...



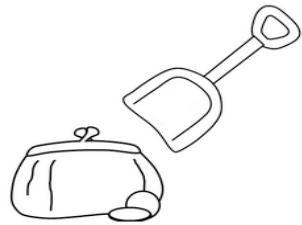
Parable of the Talents Wordsearch



Word List:
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parable special
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- Across**
- The type of story Jesus told about the talents is called this.
 - The master rewarded the servant who increased his talents by giving them ____.
 - The master gave to each servant according to their ____.
 - If you are ____ with a few things God will give you more responsibility.
- Down**
- We are each given a ____ ability that no one else has.
 - If we don't use our special gift God will ____ it away.
 - The servant who received one talent did this with it.
 - Our abilities are very ____ to God, he wants us to use them wisely.
 - This person in the story is used to describe God.
 - The first two servants did this with their talents.

CHILDREN AT ST ANDREW'S

ALL CHILDREN ARE WELCOME

Children are never too young to come to church. You and your children are very welcome at St Andrew's. The Children's Corner at the front of church (to the right of the altar) is equipped with toys, books, craft materials and a space to call their own.

Junior Church

During the 10.30am Parish Communion on Sundays in term time (except when there is an All Age service) there are activities for children in the St Andrew's Centre. The children will begin the service with the congregation and then, after the first hymn, they leave to join Junior Church.

AND THEN THERE IS



Dive DEEPER into some of life's Big Questions!

FUN - GAMES - DISCUSSION – SNACKS

A twice-monthly Sunday morning group for those in Year 6 and above called Deeper

Usually on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in term time, during the 10.30am service, we'll meet upstairs in the St Andrew's Centre (behind the church) and explore questions like...

- 'What happens when we die?'
- 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'
- 'How can I feel less anxious?'
- 'How does prayer work?'

...or whatever you want to ask, because you set the questions!

There'll be time to chat, talk through some questions, play a game, enjoy some snacks and just hang out!

All-Age Services

These are monthly, shorter, child-friendly, interactive communion services with songs and prayers which are held once a month: usually but not always on the second Sunday of the month. Children stay in church for the whole of the service.

Hertford Children's Choir



Hertford Children's Choir

8-13 yrs



"An amazing experience."



Fridays 5:30-6:45pm @St Andrew's Church

JOIN US! | www.tinyurl.com/hertfordchildrenschoir

BEAM - Hertford Castle - St Andrew's - EcoFest - St Paul's Cathedral

A choir led by Rachel and Sam Chaplin for anyone aged 8-13 who loves singing and wants to develop their musicianship. Rehearsals are on Fridays 5.30-6.45pm at St Andrew's Church, Hertford and there are termly performances. See the church website for more information.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

ZOOM CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH BIRTHDAY

NICK HOYLE PROVIDES THE STORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF OUR SUNDAY MORNING ZOOM SERVICE

Sunday, 20th June 2021: the day Zoom Church held its first service in its current format. A service of morning worship with a mix of hymns and worship songs, Bible readings, a sermon or reflection (often, but not always the same as the one being heard in the buildings), plus a few other distinctive features. So we've now reached our fifth birthday!

But let's scroll back a little further.

I'm sure we all remember those strange lockdown times when church services – and much else suddenly needed to take place on Zoom. Like everyone else, we had to learn the hard way. All those functions to master, acoustic feedback, the trials and tribulations of sharing screens, and music that sounded quite frankly weird! Kath Oates and myself attended lots of webinars during lockdown to try and work out how to understand the tech side and especially to learn how to "do" music and videos on Zoom. By winter 2020 we were getting the hang of things but when our then-curate, Rev Wendy, moved on and took charge at Sandridge in June 2021 we simply didn't have the personnel to continue with regular online communion services. So I got together with Kath and Geoff Oates to put together a service of the word that could be led by lay members: the Sunday Morning Worship that we've been offering ever since.

We felt it was important to let a standalone Zoom service find its own identity. It was neither possible nor desirable simply to imitate the in-building worship services, so we tried to identify what the strengths of this online medium were. We wanted our new

service to be visually appealing, keep participants involved, use the innovations made possible by the medium, but also offer reassuringly familiar elements of liturgy. The result was a "bright and clear" look and feel that needs no further explanation, and a mood that shifts with the natural and liturgical seasons.

"When in-person worship resumed I continued engaging online, recognising that the online service is not a duplicate experience but a distinct and valuable form of worship with its own identity."

Our format has gradually evolved over the years but it's basically the same service we created five years ago. Each week Kath and I take turns to lead the service. Beyond a small core of regulars, we never know who is going to join us on a Sunday and we continue to welcome new faces from near and far. We've had people join us from hospital beds and car parks, holiday homes and hotels, sometimes they are unwell or convalescing, or the weather is awful and it's just nicer to stay at home and join our service. People have joined us from France, Italy, Australia, India, Canada, Nigeria and the USA. And that's just the ones we know about! Because another distinctive feature of our Zoom service is you can be as visible or invisible as you want. You're welcome to have a front-row seat if you wish, and we'll extend a friendly hello. Or if you prefer anonymity (who knows, you might still be in your pyjamas!), you just keep your camera off. And you can join in with the responses at home and sing along at the top of your voice if you

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

ZOOM CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH BIRTHDAY

NICK HOYLE PROVIDES THE STORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF OUR SUNDAY MORNING ZOOM SERVICE
want, or just listen in. It's entirely up to you.

"I'm so glad you're there. I really needed that this morning."

There are many familiar features in our service: for our three hymns or contemporary worship songs we generally use recordings supplied by the Church of England, with vocals and music by St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Royal School of Church Music. When the sermon or reflection is recorded for us by one of our Ministry Team, it's the same one that people at St Andrew's and St Mary's are hearing, and in fact you wouldn't know from their videos that they aren't actually with us live. But we've also recently had access to some fantastic reflections on the day's Bible readings provided by the churches network HeartEdge, including from the pen of Revd Dr Sam Wells.

Another unique feature of our Zoom service is our visual reflection with music. This comes straight after the sermon, when we show a picture (art or photography) that picks up on the sermon theme, with a couple of minutes of instrumental music. We like to think of it as a few precious word-free moments.

"This service offers a sense of community and family, as well as support, friendship, comfort, and opportunities for prayer, sermons, and hymns wherever I am."

To keep the service visually engaging we developed a set of icons to guide us through our intercessions, which follow

the traditional pattern: for the Church, the world, our society and those closer to home in need of prayer. We always remember St Andrew's and St Mary's in our prayers, so please do also remember us wherever you are worshipping. Ever since Ukraine was invaded in early 2022 we've been using the Archbishops' prayer for Ukraine and are committed to continue doing so for as long as necessary.



We've found our own way of marking certain occasions with special services. Our version of Lessons and Carols blends familiar readings and seasonal music with thought-provoking poetry and images in a way that we hope provides fresh insights into a familiar story. On Palm Sunday we follow the tradition of telling the entire Passion story from Palm Sunday through to Good Friday, again with engaging pictures and music. We also mark major events such as the death of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

On a lighter note, our post-service chats have enabled us to forge wider friendships with people both within and beyond our physical parishes. And we had one power cut, amid a howling gale! That was interesting. The Zoom leader and host both disappeared, leaving most participants to sit tight until our connections were back up and running. Gratifyingly, everyone was still there. Rather like our Zoom service, in fact. Still here, five years on!

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

OUR WORLD

CLIMATE CHANGE – JENNY MUTCH TELLS US WHY IT MATTERS IN HERTFORD

As I write this, we are preparing for our second heatwave of the year. Even someone like me who enjoys warm weather thinks temperatures reaching the mid-30°C this early in the year are unusual and worrying. But what are organisations doing about climate change and nature loss, and what can we do ourselves? With those questions in mind, St Andrew's recently hosted an event about nature, with another important climate-focused event coming later this year.

An Inspiring Visit from Tony Juniper

On 21st May, St Andrew's Church welcomed Tony Juniper (below left), Chair of Natural England, to share his thoughts on the natural world. His message was positive, hopeful and inspiring. He spoke about the work being done across the country to support nature, improve our rivers and create more space for wildlife.

Earlier that day, I was fortunate enough to join Tony, with representatives from the Wild Trout Trust, Tarmac (owner of Panshanger Park) and our local Wildlife Trust on a river walk on the Mimram in Panshanger Park. We saw trout rising to



feed and others resting in pools and hollows, supported by a rich mosaic of



habitats. It was a wonderful reminder that we have some fantastic wildlife habitats right on our doorstep here in Hertford.

Tony encouraged us all to think about what we can do. By joining together with our neighbours, we can make the most of our gardens and outdoor spaces, to create wildlife corridors and small sanctuaries that support birds, insects and other species. Every little action can help.

One audience member raised an important question: is all this happening quickly enough? Can we reverse the damage humanity has caused before we reach irreversible environmental tipping points?

It is a fair question and one that nobody can answer with certainty. Tony explained that environmental organisations across the UK are working together on a huge range of projects to improve biodiversity and build resilience to climate change. However, the wider climate and nature crisis also involves major political, economic and social challenges.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

OUR WORLD

CLIMATE CHANGE – JENNY MUTCH TELLS US WHY IT MATTERS IN HERTFORD

The Climate and Nature Crisis Film

These issues are explored in *The People's Emergency Briefing on the Climate and Nature Crisis*, a film that is being shown around the country and will be coming to St Andrew's in October.

Curious to learn more, I attended a screening at Hertford Methodist Church on 8th June. Nearly 80 people came along.

The film brings together nine leading UK scientists and experts who explain the latest evidence on climate change and nature loss. Topics include extreme weather, food security, health, the cost of living and what these changes could mean for everyday life in the UK.

Featuring contributions from Chris Packham, Deborah Meaden and a range of voices from across the country, the film is highly accessible. At times it is light-hearted; at others it is challenging, thought-provoking and deeply moving.

The film lasts around 50 minutes and is followed by an opportunity for discussion. It covers a remarkable amount of information in a short time. In fact, according to Charles Ledsam, who attended the June screening, it is worth

watching a second – or even third – time.

Upcoming Screenings

Friday 10th July – Simon Balle School – 7.00pm

Thursday 1st October – St Andrew's Church – 7.00pm

If you would like to learn more about what is happening to our climate and natural environment, why not come along to one of the screenings?

For further information:

<https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film> or have a chat with Jenny Mutch.

Footnote: *The event on 21st May which included amazing natural world art from Clay Thompson (https://www.instagram.com/humming_bears) and music from Craig Joiner (<https://craigjoinermusic.com>) made a profit of £600. £300 of this will be donated to the Wild Trout Trust who will use the money specifically to support environmental work on the River Mimram in Panshanger Park. Thank you to all who attended and supported the event.*



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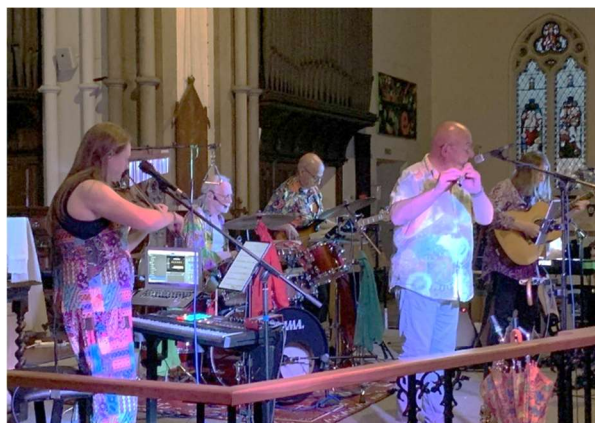
FOLK AT ST ANDREW'S returns in style

Forbes Mutch reviews folk-rock band Gryphon's concert in June, the first of this year's folk music events at St Andrew's

There was an air of excitement in the lead-up to the gig. Apart from folk singer Craig Joiner's stellar contribution to our Celebrating the Countryside event in May this was the first concert of our 2026 folk music programme. On the day, Roy the sound man arrived first and got plugged in. As the band assembled during the afternoon, the church events team slipped into action, everyone knowing their role and what to do. The audience began to gather. The bar started doing a good trade. Raffle tickets were being sold. And, just after 7.30pm, the component members of the band filed out of the vestry, took up their instruments and stormed into the first number of their distinctive blend of medieval, Renaissance and contemporary music. Legendary folk-rock and progressive folk band Gryphon were back at St Andrew's!

Churches have long complemented Gryphon's music, and the resonant acoustics of St Andrew's enhanced their performance beautifully. The stone interior and vaulted ceiling allowed recorder passages, bassoon melodies and acoustic guitar lines to carry effortlessly throughout the building, creating an atmospheric and immersive listening experience for near-capacity crowd.

Formed in London in 1972, Gryphon emerged during the golden era of progressive rock but quickly established a musical identity all of their own. Drawing on English folk traditions, classical influences and medieval instrumentation, they created a sound unlike that of any of their contemporaries. Albums such as *Midnight Mushrumps* and *Red Queen to Gryphon Three*, both released in 1974,



St Andrew's provides the perfect setting for Gryphon's distinctive blend of folk and progressive rock

became landmarks of progressive folk music. Following their original split in 1977, the band remained dormant for many years before reforming in the 2000s and returning to recording and touring with renewed enthusiasm. They played at St Andrew's last year and were returning by popular demand.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the 2026 line-up is the continued presence of three musicians from Gryphon's classic era. Brian Gulland, whose bassoon, crumhorn and keyboard playing has long been central to the band's sound, was joined by guitarist Graeme Taylor and drummer-vocalist Dave Oberlé. Together they provide a direct link to Gryphon's formative years while demonstrating that their musicianship and creativity remains undiminished. They are supported by Andy Findon, Rob Levy and Clare Taylor, who have become integral members of the modern incarnation of the band.

The evening's programme showcased material spanning more than five decades. Among the highlights were the epic *Midnight Mushrumps*, one of the defining works of the band's catalogue, and *Opening Move*, from the acclaimed instrumental suite *Red Queen to Gryphon*

CONTINUED 

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LATIN LINK & ANGEL TREE CENTRE

Jenny Aitken brings us an update from Julie Noble in Oruro, Bolivia on life in the country and her work for the charity which St Andrew's supports.

The news from Julie Noble in Bolivia tells of the many problems and hardships in Oruro where she works caused by industrial unrest. She writes, 'The second round of elections for regional governors passed quietly a few weeks ago. We await the swearing in of the new governor and mayor soon which will be accompanied by all the subsequent chaos as they install the people who helped them get elected in any and every job.

In Oruro there were two days of transport strikes about contaminated petrol and the damage it has caused. The affected vehicles were only covered for one incident: if they were damaged a second time there was no compensation. Thirty eight places in the city were blocked. The men's discipleship team was able to get to San Pedro prison on both days either on foot or using motorbike taxis. The women's team only managed to visit on one day (pushbike and motorbike taxi) as La Merced prison is much further from the town centre. An agreement was reached between drivers and government on the second day for better control of petrol and improved compensation.

Then public health workers blocked the corners of the main square and called for the government to respect their rights and explain recent sackings in hospitals and health centres.

Recently dental students protesting funding issues, filled the road with pop-up tents outside the university administrative centre, just round the corner from my flat. This caused massive traffic jams and frustration from shop owners. The students wanted their fees and income from the dental clinic to be reinvested in the dental

school and their fees lowered.

Last week one of the Angel Tree staff was forced to join protests two days running (there is a fine for not attending) relating to her children's schools. Rebuilding work on her daughter's school has ground to a halt so the parents closed all access routes to the municipal offices and main square calling for money to be made available to finish the work. The next day she attended a parents' protest march from her son's school as authorities want to reduce staffing levels.

More recently the public workers' hospitals have held a national strike to protest at the lack of medicines and reagents for the laboratories, the long queues to obtain appointments, excessive bureaucracy, administrative problems and lack of specialised staff.'

We are hoping for more cheerful news in Julie's next letter!

FOLK AT ST ANDREW'S CONTINUED

➡ *Three.* The audience of mostly die-hard fans reacted warmly to the melodic *Spring Song*, the lively Renaissance-inspired *Kemp's Jig*, and *Get Out of My Father's Car!* whose humour and energy demonstrated that Gryphon's more recent compositions sit comfortably alongside their classic material.

The concert demonstrated why Gryphon continue to enjoy such affection among progressive-rock and folk audiences. Combining exceptional musicianship, originality and a deep connection to English musical traditions, they delivered a memorable evening in a setting perfectly suited to their distinctive and timeless sound. And they paved the way for more concerts to come later in the year.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

LIGHTING UP THE WORLD WITH MUSIC

THEO'S STORY ON THE LONG ROAD FROM DAMASCUS

If you come to St Andrew's coffee mornings the chances are you have heard the music of Theodor Ioakeim. Theo frequently plays the piano to entertain us at those monthly events. I asked him about his music and the journey which brought him to St Andrew's.

"Music has always been my way of speaking—before I found the words, I found the notes. I began singing on stage at six, and by eight, I was at the piano, already sensing that this would be a lifelong companion.

I was born and brought up in Damascus. My paternal grandparents came from the island of Rhodes which they fled during WW2 to escape Nazi invading forces. They reached Turkey by boat with about 25 others and then made a treacherous and challenging journey on foot to Syria. My parents were born there.

I studied computer and electronic engineering in Damascus after which I went to Germany to study Digital Film Production at a university college in Munich. On completing my studies I worked for a while before running my own businesses. Meanwhile I had met my wife, who is Polish, and there came a point after 10 years in Germany when we decided to relocate to the UK. That was in 2010 when Britain was part of the EU.

We settled in north London and I retrained in IT and joined a London company where I worked and made my way up to become Head of Infrastructure - Technology and Cyber Security. I appear in the Definitive List of IT Innovators & Changemakers 2026. My



wife and I have three children and we moved to Welwyn Garden City in 2019. I left the company this year to pursue a new career in technology but with the desire to combine it with the creative industry.

In 2013 I began composing my own music, letting my emotions guide the keys. A few years later, I stepped into the world of film, learning how to write music that supports stories, scenes, and silence. In

recent times, my focus has gently turned back to live performance where music is shared in the moment, felt together.

Improvisation is at the heart of how I connect with the piano. Each performance is an open space, shaped by feeling, shaped by now. This sense of freedom is something I treasure—an honest, living part of my musical voice.

I've had the chance to learn from brilliant top Hollywood composers such as Conrad Pope, Nan Schwartz, Joe Kraemer, Óscar Senén, and TJ Lindgren—each one helping shape my craft and the way I listen. I've also taken part in many online studies, private lessons, and masterclasses over the years. Every year, I travel to Vienna to attend master classes and continue learning composition and orchestration.

It was during the Covid19 pandemic that I decided to take a walk in Hertford where I met Rosemary Willis as she worked in the churchyard at St Andrew's on one of the displays she and others created. This was 2021. I noticed the open sign and asked if I might go into the church, which Rosemary invited me to do. I asked Rosemary about the piano. She was happy for me to play it

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

LIGHTING UP THE WORLD WITH MUSIC

THEO'S STORY ON THE LONG ROAD FROM DAMASCUS



and later mentioned the opportunity to come along to one of the monthly coffee mornings at St Andrew's to play.

As a pianist, I've performed in London, Greece, Germany, Vienna, and the Middle East—sharing music that speaks to something deeper than words. I write across many styles—cinematic, classical, world music, and the heartfelt soul of pop ballads. But no matter the genre, my aim is always the same: to tell stories that move people.

My musical path has been inspired by great artists—Hans Zimmer's bold worlds, John Williams' timeless themes, Ennio Morricone's haunting beauty, Yanni's passion, and Richard Clayderman's gentle lyricism. Each one has shaped my own voice in some way.

Above all, I see music as a form of service—an offering to the world."

Theo is a man of many talents: an expert on cyber security, speaks Greek, English, German and Arabic, and from being a self-taught pianist now offers his musical services through his business MUSIC2CONNECT. His website is music2connect.com

At St Andrew's we are grateful that you found your way here all the way from Damascus and that you continue to play for the enjoyment of those attending our monthly coffee mornings when your time allows. Richard Taylor

chapter79.

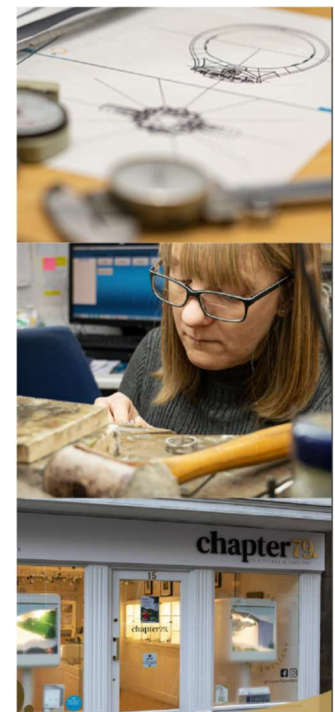
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A NEW MAP OF HERTFORD

THE STORY OF HERTFORD

ON A NEW MAP



Extract showing Cambridge Castle on our *Historical Map of Cambridge*. Above: Hertford Castle, watercolour by Irene Hawkins c. 1940.

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See our website: [historictownstrust.uk](https://www.historictownstrust.uk) or email comms@historictownstrust.uk to learn more.

A new historical map of Hertford will be published in 2027, supported by Hertford Town Council and the University of Hertfordshire.

Exploring the town's long and layered development, from its earliest origins to the beginning of the 20th century, our multi-period *Historical Map of Hertford* will include lost medieval and later buildings, cemeteries, earthworks and other sites of interest, as well as those that remain.

A comprehensive gazetteer on the reverse, complete with many illustrations, will explain all the significant features of Hertford's more than 1,000-year history, forming the basis of local heritage-themed events.

The map will be published alongside our local primary schools programme, *Place Detectives*, which offers free curriculum-linked education packs rooted in the students' own community history.



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Services at St Andrew's

August 2026



To attend a Zoom service please email the Parish Office at:- standrew.hertford@btinternet.com

	Date	Time	Service	Celebrant	Preacher
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 9</i>	2	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Alan Stewart	Maria Henriksson-Bell
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Kath Oates	HeartEdge Sermon
		7.00 pm	No Soul Sunday today		
Monday	3	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	5	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Alan Stewart	
Thursday	6	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Calton Court Communion Service	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 10</i>	9	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Bill Church	
		10.30 am	All Age Service	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Nick Hoyle	HeartEdge Sermon
Monday	10	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	12	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Bill Church	
Thursday	13	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 11</i>	16	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Scott Martin	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Scott Martin	Geoff Oates
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Nick Hoyle	Geoff Oates
Monday	17	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	19	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Scott Martin	
Thursday	20	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Calton Court Communion Service	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 12</i>	23	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	No Zoom service today		
		6.30 pm	Evening Prayer at St Mary's Hertingfordbury	Rev Bill Church	
Monday	24	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	26	10.30 am	Holy Communion - <u>At St Mary's</u>	Rev Alan Stewart	
Thursday	27	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 13</i>	30	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Bill Church	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion with Junior Church	Rev Scott Martin	Adrian Walter
		10.30 am	No Zoom service today		
Monday	31	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
	31	10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		

Services at St Andrew's

July 2026



To attend a Zoom service please email the Parish Office at:- standrew.hertford@parish.org

	Date	Time	Service	Celebrant	Preacher
Wednesday	1	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Alan Stewart	
Thursday	2	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Calton Court Communion Service	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY	5	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Scott Martin	
<i>Trinity 5</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion with Junior Church	Rev Alan Stewart	Rev Scott Martin
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Kath Oates	HeartEdge Sermon
		7.00 pm	Soul Sunday in St Andrew's Centre		
Monday	6	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	8	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Alan Stewart	Forbes Mutch
Thursday	9	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY	12	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Bill Church	
<i>Trinity 6</i>		10.30 am	All Age Service	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Kath Oates	HeartEdge Sermon
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	13	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	15	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Bill Church	
Thursday	16	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Calton Court Communion Service	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY	19	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	
<i>Trinity 7</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion with Junior Church	Rev Alan Stewart	Geoff Oates
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Kath Oates	Geoff Oates
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	20	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	22	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Alan Stewart	
Thursday	23	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY	26	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	
<i>Trinity 8</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion with Junior Church	Rev Scott Martin	Rev Alan Stewart
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Nick Hoyle	Rev Alan Stewart
		6.30 pm	Evening Prayer at St Mary's Hertingfordbury	Rev Bill Church	
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	27	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
		10.00am	God's Little Wonders service for tots and carers		
Wednesday	29	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Scott Martin	
Thursday	30	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		