THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2026 £1.00



“Do not be afraid.” There is Good News

We have been blessed this Autumn with some amazing weather, yet as I write this I’m aware that the evenings are closing in and very soon the clocks will go back and we will enter the closing weeks of 2026. Those weeks will give us the season of Remembrance, Advent and Christmas. Weeks that will start with the poignancy of remembering those who have died, those close to us and those unknown, who have given their lives in conflicts throughout the world.

As Advent begins, we will enter a season of waiting and preparation. The shops are already filling with Christmas decorations, lights are appearing in our streets and homes! Yet, for many people, this is not necessarily a joyful time. The pressures of everyday life, worries about money, loneliness, illness and bereavement can make the approach of Christmas difficult. And beyond our own communities, the world continues to be troubled by conflict, hunger, displacement and uncertainty.

It is against this background that I find myself returning to the words of the angel on that first Christmas night:

“Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.”

What remarkable words to hear in a world that so often seems to have so much to fear.

The shepherds were not powerful or influential people. They were ordinary working men, going about their everyday business, keeping watch over their sheep in the darkness. Suddenly, an angel appeared, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. Luke tells us that they were terrified. And perhaps we should not be surprised. When the familiar world is suddenly interrupted by something extraordinary, fear is a natural response.

But the angel's first words were not a command to be brave or an instruction to stop worrying. They were an assurance: “Do not be afraid.” And the reason for those words was the good news that a Saviour had been born.

This is at the heart of the Christmas message. God does not wait for the world to become peaceful, for every injustice to be put right, or for every human problem to be solved before coming among us. God comes into the world as it is, with all its fragility, pain and uncertainty. Jesus was born into a world marked by political power, oppression and inequality. His family would soon become refugees, fleeing to Egypt to escape the threat of violence. From the very beginning, the Christmas story reminds us that God is found not only in places of comfort and security, but also alongside those who are frightened, displaced and vulnerable.

As we look at the world today, it is difficult not to think of families caught up in war, children growing up amid destruction, and people forced to leave their homes in search of safety. The suffering reminds us that the need for peace, compassion and justice is urgent. Behind every headline are individual people: mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, all with hopes, fears and dreams of their own.

It would be easy to feel overwhelmed by such suffering. We may wonder what difference our prayers can make, or whether there is

anything we can do in the face of such enormous problems. The angels' message does not pretend that there is nothing to fear, nor does it ask us to turn away from the world's pain. Rather, it invites us to discover a hope that is stronger than fear, and a love that refuses to give up on humanity.

The birth of Jesus is not a promise that life will always be easy. It is the promise that God has not abandoned us. In Jesus, God comes close to us, sharing our human life and showing us a different way to live: a way shaped by love rather than hatred, generosity rather than greed, forgiveness rather than revenge, and welcome rather than exclusion.

And this is where the Christmas story becomes a challenge to each one of us. The angels announced good news, but they did not leave the shepherds simply standing in the fields listening. The shepherds went to Bethlehem. They saw the child for themselves, and then they shared what they had heard and seen.

We, too, are called to carry that good news into the world around us. We may not be able to bring an end to a war or resolve a humanitarian crisis, but we can make a difference in the lives of those we encounter. We can notice the person who is lonely, offer practical help to someone who is struggling, welcome someone who feels excluded, listen to someone who needs to talk, or support those working to relieve suffering at home and abroad.

These acts may seem small in comparison with the problems of the world, but they are not insignificant. Each one is a small expression of the love revealed in Bethlehem. Each one helps to make God's kingdom a little more visible in our own corner of the world.

As Remembrance leads into Advent and Advent leads us towards Christmas, perhaps we should also ask ourselves what we are waiting

for. Are we simply waiting for the celebrations to begin, or are we preparing our hearts to welcome Christ afresh? Advent invites us to make room for God, to reflect on what really matters, and to consider how we might become people who bring hope rather than despair, kindness rather than indifference, and peace rather than division.

Perhaps that is the most important message we can take from the angels this Christmas. “Do not be afraid” does not mean that we will never feel anxious or that our troubles will magically disappear. It means that fear need not have the final word. We are not asked to face the future alone, and we are not powerless to make a difference.

At St Leonard's, we have the opportunity to be a community in which that message becomes real: a place where people are welcomed, where those who are struggling are supported, where questions and doubts are met with understanding, and where the love of Christ is shared through worship, friendship and service.

May we discover anew the joy of Christ's coming, and may we help to bring that joy, hope and peace to a world that so desperately needs it.

May the peace of Christ be with you this Christmas, and may His light guide us all through the New Year. **Amen**

Rev. Maggie



FROM THE EDITOR

Another year is only two months away, in fact where has this year gone. But the life of the church goes on.

In the next two months there will be a flurry of activity as we ready ourselves for the Memorial Service, Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas Market, then it is Advent as we begin to work towards our Christmas Services and festivities. Of course, we mustn't forget all the other things we do to bring our community together.

You will have seen that we are getting on with many of the jobs around the Church. The hall roof is the major ticket item, I was told by the contractor that in his view it was only the loose stone and moss preventing the roof from leaking even more; he believes they have removed over six tons of loose chippings and moss! The job will not take as long as the Church roof and use of the hall will only be disrupted for a couple of weeks.

Anyway, this edition will look at all the things that have carried out for the church and outside charities it supports.

We on the magazine editorial staff would like to wish you an early Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Mike.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER DIARY

SUNDAY 1st November - All Saints
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST
5:30pm Memorial Service

Tuesday 3rd November
11.30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

Wednesday 4th November
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 5th November
8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 7th November
8:30am Men's Breakfast

SUNDAY 8th November - Remembrance Sunday
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
10:55am Act of Remembrance at War Memorial
5.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Wednesday 11th November
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 12th November
8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 14th November
12:00pm Friendship Lunch

SUNDAY 15th November - 2nd Sunday before Advent
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST
3:00pm The Good Old Days Rehearsal in the hall

Monday 16th November
6:15pm Eucharist
7:00pm PCC Meeting

Tuesday 17th November
2:00pm Wreath Making Workshop
7:00pm Confirmation Rehearsals

Wednesday 18th November
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
7:00pm Bible Study Group

Thursday 19th November
8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 21st November
8.30am Women's Breakfast
10:30am Coffee Morning in aid of Children's Society

SUNDAY 22nd November - Christ the King
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
3:00pm SLYC in the Hall
3:30pm Confirmation Service

Wednesday 25th November
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall

Thursday 26th November
8:00am Eucharist
2:00pm Pop-Up Café in Church

Friday 27th November
10:00am Hall open to receive contributions to Christmas Market

Saturday 28th November
11:00am Christmas Market

SUNDAY 29th November - Advent Sunday
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST
3:00pm The Good Old Days Rehearsal in the hall
5:30pm Advent Carol Service

Tuesday 1st December
11:30am Holy Communion at Cheviot
7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary)

Wednesday 2nd December
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10:45am Holy Communion at Woodlands
7:00pm Compline and Reflection

Thursday 3rd December
8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 5th December
8:30am Men's Breakfast
7:30pm Wassail in the hall

SUNDAY 6th December - 2nd Sunday of Advent
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST
3:00pm Messy Nativity
3:00pm The Good Old Days Rehearsal in the hall

Wednesday 9th December
9:30am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Group in the hall
1:30pm Lexden Primary School Carol Concert
7:00pm Compline and Reflection

Thursday 10th December
8.00am Eucharist

Friday 11th December
12:00pm Women's Breakfast Eucharist followed by Christmas Celebration

Saturday 12th December
12:00pm Friendship Lunch

SUNDAY 13th December - 3rd Sunday of Advent
9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
3:00pm The Good Old Days Rehearsal in the hall
6.30pm Carols at the Crown

Monday 14th December
9:30am & 11:00am Home Farm School Carol Concerts

Wednesday 16th December
10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11:00am Baby & Toddler Christmas Service followed by party in the hall
7:00pm Compline and Reflection

Thursday 17th December
8:00am Eucharist
2:00pm Pop-Up Café in Church

SUNDAY 20th December - 4th Sunday of Advent
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9:45am PARISH EUCHARIST
3:00pm The Good Old Days Rehearsal in the hall
5.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

THURSDAY 24th December - Christmas Eve
2:30pm Crib Service
4:30pm Service of Light
6:30pm Service of Light
11:15pm Midnight Mass

FRIDAY 25th December - Christmas Day
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST

Sunday 27th December - 1st Sunday of Christmas
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST



Confirmations

The Confirmation service will be held on Sunday 22nd November at 3.30pm, at St Leonard's. Please hold in your prayers those being confirmed:

From St Leonard's Lexden
Jo Butler
Simon Eavery
Jon Helbing
Shirley Helbing
From All Saints, Shrub End
Harvey Parker

Crossword

Mousetails



After the excitement of the wedding all the mice returned from the Woods to their own homes in the Church and the Hall. All of them were looking forward to being in their own nests and, of course, were keen to see all the preparations for the Harvest Service and to see the fantastic floral arrangements in the Church.

On the eve of the Harvest the Church mice loved to see everything, little Carol made a beeline for the pumpkins used in many of the arrangements, only to discover that they were not real! Grandpa explained that whilst they had all been away the Church Wardens had discovered a problem with rats and didn't want to encourage them by using real vegetables. "Typical, said Mum, those wretched creatures have spoilt things for everyone yet again".

However, they all enjoyed their own Harvest service once all the humans had gone. Conducted by Grandad as usual and the mouse choir sang their favourite hymn; " We plough the fields and scatter". Grandad concluded the service by giving thanks for all the blessings that God had given them.



Everyone was gearing up for Christmas. All the mice loved this time of the year, starting with the Christmas Market held in the Hall and it didn't disappoint, there were wonderful food smells in the air and the mice watched carefully for any bits that were dropped on the floor and although the humans had a very thorough job of clearing up, there were always tiny bits of food that had rolled out of sight and bits of ribbon and crayons to be scavenged and enjoyed later or saved for their Christmas feast.





There had been Brick Club and Messy Church so again, there were little pieces that were scavenged and set aside for Christmas.

Rupert missed Molly on the lead up to Christmas, they had always made their cards and gifts together but now she was married and living with her husband Peter in their new nest in the woods he was making things without much enthusiasm. Mum noticed this and brought up her granddaughter Carol from below stairs, and told Rupert that she needed some help in making cards and gifts. Whilst he pretended that it was all a bit boring, he enjoyed showing her how to make the cards and as she could knit and sew she was busy making stripey scarfs and hats and sewing little hankies.



When the big day arrived, after all the humans had finished in the Church all the mice had enjoyed their own Service and sang along with the mouse choir to their favourite carols, one of which was 'o little town of Bethlehem'. They enjoyed looking at all the lovely flower arrangements, the Christmas tree and most especially, the Crib with baby Jesus cuddled in straw in the Manger.





After the Service they all paraded up to the Hall, as was traditional, to exchange cards and gifts, feast, dance and exchange news with all their family and friends.

Mum was especially happy to see Molly and ask her how she was enjoying married life and living in the woods. Molly said that, whilst she was very happy with Peter and her new family, she did miss Mum, Dad and Rupert and the comfort of their warm Balcony home.



Peter heard this conversation and waylaid Dad to ask if there were any spaces in the Church where they could perhaps move into as he wanted his lovely new wife to be happy. Dad was very moved by this and was grateful to have such a caring son-in-law. He said that now there was only the 3 of them living in the Balcony the couple were welcome to have a space of their own with them.



Peter asked Molly what she thought and she clapped her paws and with a big, happy smile said she would love it. Mum was overjoyed and said it was the best Christmas gift she could have!





All in all, the mouse families had a wonderful time and celebrated until the early hours.

Written by CT
Produced by AI ChatGPT

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On Friday 23rd October a team of volunteers braved Storm Austen to tackle the (very overgrown) Rectory garden, something we are required to do during a vacancy.

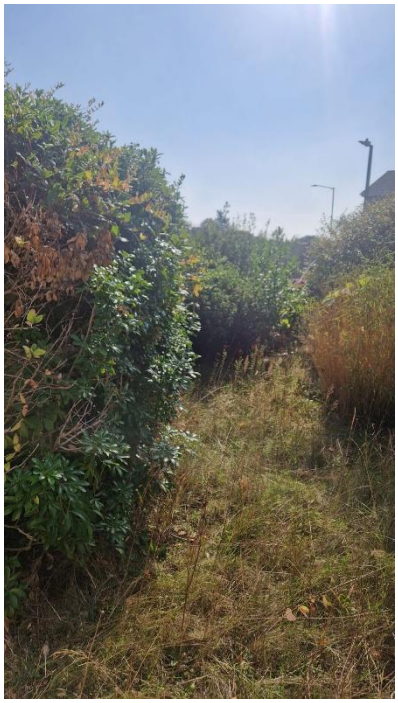
You can see from the before and after photos that an amazing amount was achieved despite driving rain and gale-force winds. We have heard tell that certain members of the team were so wet when they got home that they stripped to their underwear before going inside! Thank you Nick and the team for all they did.



















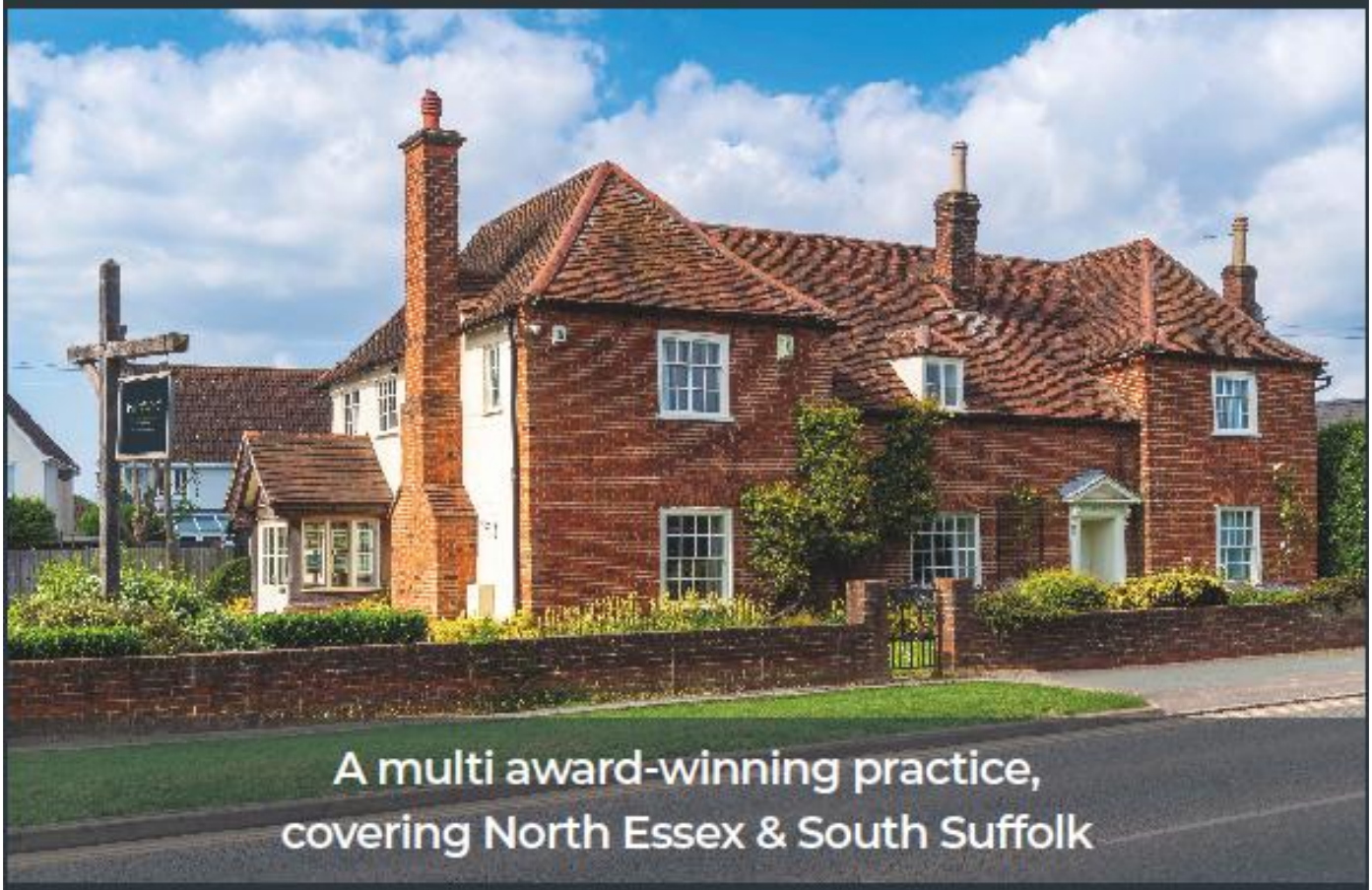




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From the Church Wardens

A Churchwarden's work is never done; here's a short update on what we have been up to.

Update on Hall Roof Repairs

Work on replacing the hall roof has begun, to date around 6 tonnes of stone and moss have been swept off the roof to allow the new roof to be installed. Mandy has risk assessed the job and Building Regulatory Control have been contacted to sign-off the work. It is hoped to have the work completed in early November but given the weather forecast this might have to be flexible.

Another Grant Secured

Huge thanks to David Burrows who has managed to secure a grant of £25,400 from Historic England towards the work on the nave roof. This is a wonderful result and will free up some of the restricted funds we had used for the Church roof for other purposes.

Electronic Payment Options

There is now a new Sum up facility at the back of the Church, this is very simple to use and seems to stay connected; we have this on loan from the Diocese but we intend to purchase our own in time for Christmas. Esther has produced some stickers with a QR code on them which will be placed on the back of service books to make it easier for people who don't carry cash to donate. Regular giving is significantly down on previous years and we are looking for initiatives to improve this.

Church Cleaning

We have arranged for a cleaning contractor to come in and vacuum the high areas of the Church (beams and windowsills) and extension to remove all the dust and debris remaining from the work on the roof. This will be completed over 2 afternoons in November in time for the Christmas services.

Nick and Mike

ST.LEONARD'S CHURCH, LEXDEN

Christmas Market

Saturday 28th November

11:00 to 14:00



VARIETY OF CHRISTMAS STALLS INCLUDING

TOMBOLA

RAFFLE

CAFÉ

GIFTS

CAKES

JIGSAWS

BOOKS

FATHER CHRISTMAS WILL ARRIVE WITH HIS HELPERS AT 11:15AM

ANY ENQUIRIES PLEASE E-MAIL MIKE@STLEONARDSLEXDEN.ORG.UK

Proud Sponsor

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Escape from the Choir Vestry!



On Sunday 25th October a number of the Choir members found themselves locked in the Choir vestry when the door handle failed and wouldn't open.



As can be seen from the photos it took a team of people to extricate them and left us with a badly damaged door frame. The Choir entertained themselves and onlookers with a song or two while they were waiting to be rescued.



One Choir member noted "Actually it was quite a fun and bonding moment for us all in the room although it was pretty sad to see the door afterwards" ☹

The Churchwardens would like to assure everyone that the damage will be repaired and door handles changed to prevent a reoccurrence.



Many thanks to Nick, Peter, Simon and Andrew for their assistance.





SAVE THE DATE!



Come and be Creative! We are holding a Christmas Wreath making workshop on Tuesday 17th November starting at 2:00pm in Church. Why not come along and create some lovely Christmas crafts? Cost £20, light refreshments will be provided. Sign up at the back of Church or speak to Julie or Rachel.

Wednesday, 18th November 2024



Our monthly Bible Study Group is usually held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Please contact Maggie for further details.

The Children's Society

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING

The Children's Society Box Opening this year is being combined with a coffee morning on Saturday 21st November, starting at 10:30am. All monies raised will help towards the Society's work to protect hopes of children threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect. If you would like to know about the work of the Children's Society or would like a donations box please speak to Julie, Linda or Rachel.



At a…
"LOOSE END"?

Just drop in to our "pop-up" cafe on the last Thursday of every month starting @ 2:00pm



You are warmly invited to come and prepare for Christmas with a candle-lit service of Compline and simple reflection at 7.00pm every Wednesday during Advent.



St Leonards Church Lexden

CHRISTMAS MARKET

2026

Saturday 28th November
In the Church Hall
11:00am to 2:00pm

Come and join us for our Annual Market
All the usual stalls plus some new stalls, including
Refreshments, Gifts, Christmas Fare, Cakes,
Kiddies Corner, Tombola, Raffle and Father Christmas



Our friends at All Saints with St Cedd's are holding a Christmas Afternoon Tea at St Cedd's on Saturday 12th December @2:30pm tickets are £10:00 per head, a £5 deposit required.
Any more information please contact Rev Nikki on 01206 765145 option 1, or Brenda Pettit on 01206 765145 option 2.

Carols at the Crown



Join St. Leonard's Carol Singers from 6:30pm on Sunday December 13th at The Lexden Crown in the marquee and sing along to some great traditional carols. All welcome, the bar will be open!



Here we come A-Wassailing

The Comrie Singers invite you to join us for a Wassail on 5th December at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.
We will be raising funds for Lexden Church and its charities; entry on the door will be £10 for adults and free for children and anyone in full-time education. Cash only please. The hall will be arranged with chairs around tables, and audience participation in the well-known carols will be greatly encouraged! You are welcome to bring your own refreshments; please ensure you take your rubbish away with you when you leave.

Coffee Morning

Mike and Linda will be hosting a coffee morning in aid of Prostate Cancer UK on Saturday 23rd January starting at 10:30am.

1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer, we all know someone who has been treated for this disease. Prostate Cancer UK help fund the research that will improve the odds of catching prostate cancer earlier, saving thousands of lives. They are also there for sufferers and their families; to talk through any questions or concerns with Specialist Nurses over the phone, via email, or on online chat. They also provide volunteers who people can speak to and share experiences via their online community.

Please come along and support if you can.



The Good Old Days"

A Variety Show for all Ages

Saturday 16th January at 2:30pm in the hall.

Join us for a fun evening of entertainment and singing.

Audience Participation Encouraged.

Tickets £15.00 per adult (incl supper)
£10.00 under 18's
Available from Sarah or Mandy

Harvest 2026

At the beginning of October, we held our Harvest Festival service which was well attended. It also saw the church and its congregation provide 105kg of goods to the food bank.

Huge conratulations to Liz Adams and her team for the fantastic Harvest flower display. I think one of the best things I heard was a new member of the congregation walking in and just standing there and saying “Wow”. To me that sums up the skill that our flower team bring to the Church as they continue the long tradition of flower arranging that has continued over the years. Many of you are possibly not aware that the for the most part the arrangers provide flowers out of their own pockets; if you would like to donate towards the cost of flowers speak to Liz or the Churchwardens.

Our Harvest supper was held on October 4th in the back of the Church. It was very successful and raised £538 towards Church funds; our thanks go to all of those who provided the music and the meal which was enjoyed by all.





Harvest Flowers

As ever we were treated to an amazing display of Harvest flowers
















Holy
Bible









Thank you so much to Liz and her team



St Leonard's, Lexden

for supporting Colchester Foodbank.

We are extremely grateful for your amazing and generous

Harvest 2026 donation
Of 105 kgs.

This will make a BIG difference to local individuals, children and families who face food and financial crisis at this time and will be of great help in the forthcoming months.

Colchester Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's UK wide foodbank network.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

My sincere thanks to all who Baked, Brewed and Bought for the MacMillan coffee morning. I have paid in a fantastic sum of £710.00 to which we can add £65.00 in Gift aid.

So thank you to everyone and what a lovely time we had admiring the flowers and drinking tea and coffee and eating delicious cakes. **Julie.**

CROSSWORD ANSWERS FROM SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER MAGAZINE

What's on for Children and Families in November and December

The Baby and Toddler Group runs in the hall every Wednesday in term time at 9.30am or 11.00am. These sessions are identical. Just turn up! We break up on 16th December. We are back again on 6th January.
1st November All Age Service 9.45am
8th November Junior Church 9.45am Remembrance Sunday
22nd November Junior Church 9.45am Also SLYC (St Leonard's Youth Club, from Year 4) 3-5pm in the hall Please let us know if you are coming at juniorchurch@stleonardslexden.org.uk
Saturday 28th November 11am -2pm CHRISTMAS MARKET in the hall with children's activities and Father Christmas!
6th December All Age Service 9.45am Also MESSY CHRISTMAS! 3pm Please let us know if you are coming at juniorchurch@stleonardslexden.org.uk
13th December Junior Church 9.45am Card making for those church members who are no longer able to attend
Thursday 24th December Crib Service 2.30pm Children are welcome to come dressed as an angel, a shepherd or a king
27th December Junior Church are taking a break and will be back on 10th January

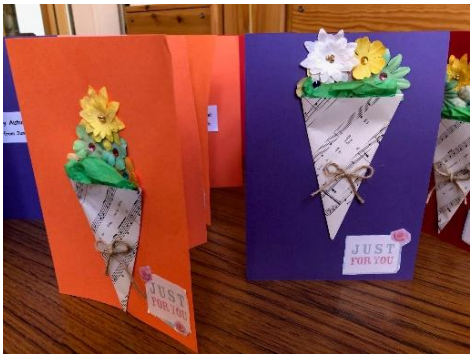
CATCHING UP WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We have all been really busy, from the babies and toddlers to the SLYC youth group. This half term has had a real autumnal focus.



After the hot dry summer, we have been rewarded with a warm, slightly wetter autumn and the trees have hung onto their beautiful colours for longer than usual. The Baby and Toddler group have had great fun exploring the sensory tray filled with leaves and fir cones, looking for the hidden woodland creatures. We used the leaves to make hedgehog collages and then curled up with the teddies inside our hibernation pod tents when we got tired. We don't seem to get very tired!





Junior Church children have recently been thinking about our church members who now find it difficult to attend services. Suzanne and Joyce helped them to make some amazing cards with small bouquets of flowers on the front. The flowers were wrapped in paper which had hymn music printed on it, tied up with string. The detail was lovely and fifteen cards were delivered or posted to our friends at home. We had a great time discovering that pumpkins are actually not scary at all! They have a flickering light inside them that glows brighter the more they help and show love to the people around them. Let's hope that our light burns brightly too in the darkness. Well done Junior Church!



Messy Church got off to a noisy start this term with Messy Harvest! We learned about The Sower and the Seeds. We raced up and down the chancel having potato collecting races which became very competitive with adults joining in too. We planted seeds and printed sweet corn with our fingers and hands. We made colourful pots of flowers and made birds to stand in flowerpots and scarecrows to frighten them away! To finish our worship we said parachute prayers, sending our seeds (balls) up into the sky to spread seeds of Love, Sharing and Caring around the world. We finished the session with a well deserved meal of baked potatoes and cheese. Perfect!





We followed that with Messy Loaves and Fishes when we tried to make our five loaves and two fishes feed five thousand but realised that only Jesus could do that. But that didn't stop us from having big ambitions to make the world a better place by blowing up our balloons and attaching our hopes for the future and blessing them at prayer time.

We also made baskets which we filled with loaves and fish, decorated yummy gingerbread biscuits, potato printed the story and then tried to find the right number of loaves and fish hidden in the shredded paper . We certainly deserved our hash browns and fish finger meal ! Phew!





Our youth group SLYC has already met twice and continues to provide a friendly space for our young people to chat about the things that are important to them whilst they play games and challenge themselves to learn new skills and to make new friends.
Our absolute favourite game at the moment is the card game FLIP 7. If you are stuck for a Christmas gift this game is great fun for children and adults. Our famous retro tuck shop is of course ever popular!

And our Brick Club is always popular too, especially as we head towards the winter months when it's great to have a mega building morning with friends during the school holidays.

The Children's Team





At a… "LOOSE END?

Just drop in to our "pop-up" cafe on the

last Thursday of every month @ 2:00pm

Further details from:
maggiew234@gmail.com
or
admin@stleonardslexden.org.uk


Come and Make your own
Christmas Wreath /
Table Decoration
At St Leonard's Church
Lexden Road
Colchester
Cost £20-00 Cash to Julie or
on the day
Including light refreshments
Tuesday 17th November
at 2pm
Please Book via
admin@stleonardslexden.org.uk


Friendship
Lunches
St Leonard's Church
Lexden welcomes you to its
Friendship Lunches
Join us for delicious
homemade soup and cake.
Every month on the 2nd
Saturday from September to
March at 12pm
Please book by emailing
admin@stleonardslexden.org.uk
or phoning the Parish Office on 01206
575565 or use the sign up sheet in
Church.
Donations welcome on the day.

St Leonard's are delighted to present

The Good Old Days

A Variety Show for all ages

Saturday 16th January at 2:30pm

Tickets £15 including supper
£10 for under 18's
Available from Sarah (01206-543280)
or Mandy (07717-197188)

Audience Participation Encouraged



St Leonard's
Lexden

Women's Breakfast Update

The Women's Breakfast group continue to meet on the third Saturday of every month (except August and December), and we sit down to freshly baked pastries, fresh fruit, yogurt and cereals, not forgetting cafetieres of coffee and pots of tea. Breakfast lasts for about an hour and takes different formats - sometimes we will discuss a specific subject, share personal stories, listen to a speaker, or just chat to one another. Clearing and washing up is also very sociable!

At our November meeting Vicky from Beacon House will be joining us and talking to us about the work they do there.

Our December meeting takes the form of a Christmas lunch; this year we are meeting on Friday 11th December; we will start with a Eucharist in Church at 12:00pm them make our way up to the Lexden Crown for lunch. If you would like to join us please sign-up on the sheet at the back of Church or speak to Maggie or Esther.

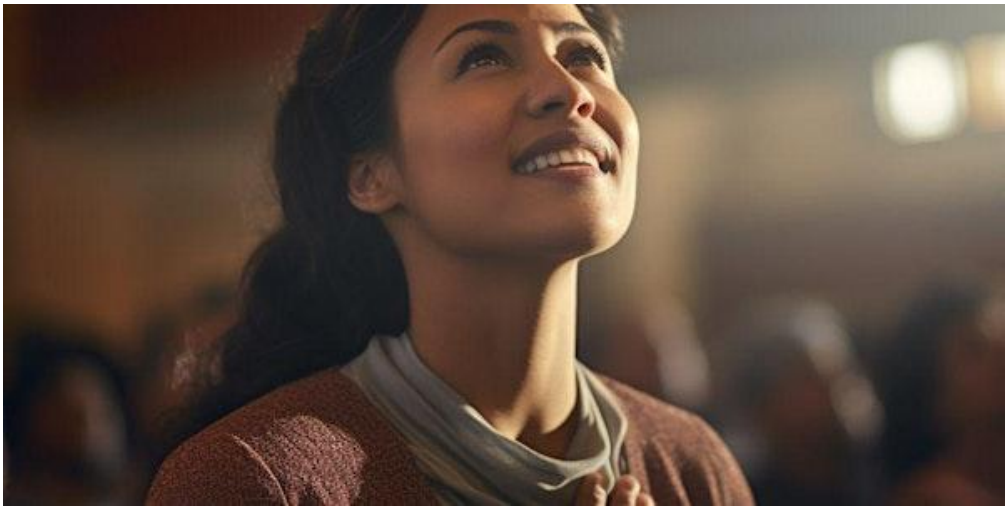
There is no charge and any donations we receive are given to a different charity every month which is agreed in advance by the group. The group is very friendly and relaxed, and we have welcomed many new people.

What's our aim? To build up the fellowship of the church, to be there for one another and to enjoy each other's company. Our next meeting is on Saturday, November 21st at 8:30 a.m. so if you have nothing else planned come and join us - you will be so very welcome.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

What is God calling you to?



You are invited to a morning to hear, discuss, explore and ponder what God is calling you to.

Maybe you are feeling a nudge, a yearning or a prompt? And are wondering

'Could I do that?'

This in-person event is a fantastic opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and discover more about how your unique gifts and talents can be used in God's service. Whether you are considering ordained ministry or simply curious about the many lay vocational paths, this event is for you. Come ready to engage in discussions, workshops, and reflection.

Saturday 7th November 2025, 9.30am – 1pm. Venue: The Church in Great Notley, Bridge End Lane, Great Notley, Braintree CM77 7GN.

Coffee will be available from 9.00am ready for a prompt 9.30am start.

Book your free place:
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=tLacKbPGS0CZl1Unt1qNzFj78w1Ar61LtjsUhEUiPI9UQUxZVVJOTlpKREZaUlRFT0RHSEVDUVFKTi4u&route=shorturl

Men's Breakfast



1st Saturday of the month in Church.
All Welcome, we look forward to seeing you there…
If you have any questions please contact
davidw@stleonardslexden.org.uk

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Final day for items for the JANUARY-FEBRUARY edition:

SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER

Please submit items to the Editor
email: magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Please include your name with any submission
and limit text to 500-600 words maximum.
Longer articles may be edited. Thank you.

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Vacancy Update

As you may already we aware, one candidate applied for the role of Priest in Charge at St Leonard's when the position was last advertised in August. The wardens met with the Archdeacon, the Area Dean and the Lay chair to discuss the application but unfortunately it was felt that candidate did not meet the criteria we had set. Therefore, our advert has once again been placed in the Church Times and on the Diocesan website; please pray the right person will see our advert this time. The wardens will endeavour, within the realms of confidentiality, to keep you updated on progress.

Nick and Mike

Deanery Day

This took place at St Johns Church on the 11th of October and was attended by a number of members of our Congregation who listened to various speakers talking about the mission of the Church.

During the Lunch break there was a meeting of the Deanery Synod, this meeting went on to elect the Standing Committee for the next three years. We are pleased to announce that Mrs Linda Firth, of our congregation, was one of those people appointed to the Standing Committee. Congratulations Linda.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

14th September

Jane Collier



'Rest in peace and rise in glory.'



CHRISTMAS MARKET

In order to make this a successful (and profitable) event we are looking for donations of the following items

- Cakes, mince pies, sausage rolls etc. for the cake stall and cafeteria
- Bottles (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) for the tombola
- Gifts and fancy goods
- Christmas tree decorations
- Jigsaws (complete)
- Board games
- Raffle prizes

Thanks in advance for your help and generosity. Donations can be brought to the hall on Friday 27th November from 10:00am. Looking forward to seeing you on the day.

Mike mike@stleonardslexden.org.uk


St Leonard's Church Choir Presents
Carols at The Crown
Sunday 13th December
at 6:30pm
Come along & sing
great traditional
Christmas Carols
The bar will be open!
The Lexden Crown, Lexden Road, Colchester, CO3 4DA
2026 Carol services at St Leonard's Church
20th December – 5:30pm, Nine Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve – 4:30pm and 6:30pm



From the Archives

Church Font

Over 61 years ago, on the 10th January 10th, 1965 to be precise, the Font that now stands in St Leonards Church was dedicated to the memory of the Beattie and Morton Families. Perhaps the first thing to say is that it is movable. unlike the Medieval Font it replaced. I will return to this important point later.

The new font was constructed from 76 pieces of oak that was harvested from oak trees found in Essex. The internal structure is made from an African hardwood called idigbo. The font looks like an octagonal wine glass and the set in bowl is made from copper with a heavy silver plating. The rim of the font is inscribed in Roman letters ‘To the memory of the Beattie and Morton families A.D. 1965’

The font cover is made of eight carved panels that represent an angel for St Mattew, the badge of the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment, an eagle for St John the Evangelist, the crest of the Morton family, a winged ox for St Luke, the badge of the Northamptonshire Regiment, A winged lion for St Mark and finally the crest of the Beattie family.

When I first started to get interested in the history of the church the then Priest in charge, Matthew Simpkins, said what he wanted to know was what had happened to the old stone font. It is now over a year since Matt left and I can begin to put together a credible story of that font. Yet to do this I have to go back to the beginning with the old St Leonards.

When St Leonards was rebuilt in the 1820's several items were moved from the medieval church into the new building. These included the clock, old silver alters pieces, the memorial to Richard Hewitt, the Bishops Chair and, in some documents, it is mentioned the medieval font. I can't confirm that as the stone font is long gone. Yet through careful research and old photographic evidence I can confirm that an octagonal font appears in several photos of the rebuilt St Leonards.

It must be remembered that St Leonards has gone through several changes since it was built. If it is true that the medieval font was moved to the 1822 build then we have some evidence of what it looked like. According to the plaque at the rear of the church, it was stated that the congregation to be accommodated would be 600. But in those days only the rich and wealthy would sit whilst everyone else stood, people in those days were a lot smaller.

A photograph of the church taken pre 1896 shows three rows of pews with two narrow walkways with the outline of the font in the middle. In photos post 1896 the inside of the church had changed with two rows of pews and the font moved towards the south door.

I have seen the font in St Albrights and in style and shape it is the same design, the only difference being the carvings. The St Albrights font has a wooden cover something that would have been over the medieval St Leonards font.

I have been talking to people who are still around and can remember the font and were told what happened to it. It seems that the old stone font was removed so the movable wooden one could replace it.

I cannot be sure but from my research the Benefice and the Advowson were under the control of David Papillon, a local solicitor and in theory the last Lord of the Manor although that true honour went to another

Papillon who lived in Kent. David Papillon, the last of his line, (his brother had died of wounds in the D Day landings) died in the late 70's and the Benefice and advowson then came under the control of Chelmsford. Lords of the Manor were not controlled by faculties and strict rules so in theory they could do what they wanted. Did he and the last Rector appointed by the Papillons decide 'out with old and in with new' and have the stone font broken up. I don't know but you can imagine the furore today if such a thing were to happen! It is said that it is buried somewhere in the churchyard.

There is however a saving grace; which was pointed out by a former Warden and someone who has kept both of the new wardens on their toes. As Tom Scrimonger said to me 'if the stone font had still been there it is unlikely that we would ever have got permission to create an open space at the back of the Church for events'.

Every cloud has a silver lining

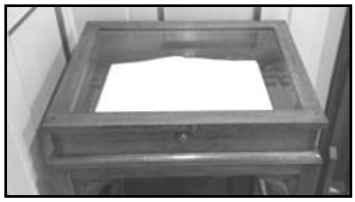
Merry Christmas

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE
NOVEMBER

Crook, Mills William	15th February 1918 - 14th November 1998
Frost, Alan John True	22nd July 1927 - 20th November 1996
Cooke, Nancy Irene	18th January 1908 - 13th November 2003
Hunt, Derrick Edward	24th November 1930 - 15th November 1995
Shepherd, Raymond Hubert	12th May 1926 - 25th November 1989
Ellis, Jennifer Mary	14th July 1935 - 24th November 2004
Bedford, Janet Iris	1st January 1939 - 28th November 2004
Gilham, Gwendoline	19th October 1908 - 7th November 1995
Gilham, Albert Henry	17th July 1917 - 18th November 2005
Nicholls, Betty	11th September 1927 - 25th November 2005
Carter, Alfred Richard (Dick)	9th April 1927 - 5th November 2006
Large, Charles Arthur	18th January 1918 - 19th November 1986
Jarvis, Robin Lloyd	27th August 1941 - 4th November 2007
Kite, Graham John	17th September 1943 - 20th November 2007
Gosling, Elsie Leonora	12th January 1926 – 18th November 2008
Leggett, Jean Mary Helen	4th May 1931 – 2nd November 2009
Marchington, Phyllis May	11th November 1922 – 14th November 2010
Dean, Christine Mary	15th September 1921 – 29th November 2010
Claydon, Margaret Joan	4th November 1912 – 4th November 2013
Pike, Rosemary Ann	20th April 1941 – 22nd November 2012
Calvert, Vera	29th March 1914 – 26th November 2012
Hudson, Jean	18th May 1946 – 4th November 2017
Hoult, Joan Holly	23rd January 1918 – 22nd November 1991
Hallett, John Edward George	11th July 1937 – 8th November 2014
Loxley, Jean	10th January 1928 – 28th November 2019
Benko, Borbola (Bori)	12th January 1997 – 21st November 2021

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE
DECEMBER

Long, Ernest Walter	6th June 1894 – 12th December 1961
Scrimgeour, David Iain Cameron	8th June 1969 – 1st December 1989
Birbeck, Florence	13th October 1934 – 20th December 1996
Farren, Frank William Campbell	9th November 1911 – 30th December 1999
Beck, Margaret Neal	29th December 1921 – 1st December 2003
Marshall, Laurence Geoffrey Walrond	8th August 1913 – 14th December 2001
Partner, George Cecil	23rd August 1913 – 14th December 2004
Drake, Kenneth	18th March 1922 – 20th December 2005
Baker, Jack	8th July 1905 – 12th December 1997
Breens, Anne	25th March 1912 – 25th December 2009
Burrage, Eric David	15th April 1917 – 10th December 2014
Reed, Richard 'Ba'	29th August 1940 – 17th December 2015
Newton, Keith Henry	8th June 1929 – 26th December 2020



If you would like the name of a relative added to the Book of Remembrance, you will find forms with instructions on the bookcase beside the north door.



LEXDEN BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Losing someone we love can change life completely.

Whether your loss is recent or happened some time ago, grief can sometimes feel lonely, confusing and difficult to talk about.

Lexden Bereavement Support Group will offer a warm, friendly and confidential space where you can meet with others who have experienced bereavement.

There will be an opportunity to:

- Talk about your loss, if you would like to.
- Listen to others.
- Share memories and experiences.
- Explore some of the feelings and challenges that accompany bereavement.
- Find friendship, encouragement and support

There is **no expectation that you have to talk**.

You are welcome simply to come along, listen and be among others.

Our aim is to show care & support.

Our first meeting:
Thursday 14th January 2027
2.00pm–4.00pm
The Nicholls Room
St Leonard's Church, Lexden

This will be a relaxed and informal setting, with refreshments available.
For more information, please contact:

Rev. Maggie Whiteman
Mobile: 07968958145
Email: maggiew234@gmail.com
St Leonard's Church, Lexden

Regular Services

Sunday	**8.00am 1662 BCP Holy Communion** (1st & 3rd Sundays)
	9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church on 2nd & 4th Sundays
	***Or* All Age Eucharist** (1st Sunday of the month)
	5.30pm Evensong and Sermon (2nd Sunday)
	5.30pm Eucharist for Wholeness & Healing (4th Sunday)
Monday	8:45am Morning Prayer
Tuesday	8:45am Morning Prayer
Wednesday	10.00am Eucharist
Thursday	8.00am Eucharist

Christmas 2026

SUNDAY 29th NOVEMBER
5:30pm Advent Carol Service
SUNDAY 6th DECEMBER
3.00pm Messy NATIVITY
Mess! Fun! Food! FREE Kids crafts, activities, games, stories, & songs! Children must be accompanied by an adult. This event is free, please email to let us know you're coming: juniorchurch@stleonardslexden.org.uk
SUNDAY 13th DECEMBER
6:30pm Carols at the Crown
SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER
5:30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
- a service of traditional carols and readings



THURSDAY 24th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE
2:30pm Crib Service – especially for small children
(Children are invited to come dressed as shepherds or angels)
4:30pm* The Service of Light - a candlelit carol service for all ages
6:30pm* The Service of Light - a candlelit carol service for all ages
***These two services are identical**
11:15pm Midnight Mass, with the blessing of the crib
FRIDAY 25th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY
8:00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
9:45am Christmas Eucharist