Sandon Voice

Quarterly from St Andrew's 75p for non residents

March 2026



Pain to Gain



Andrew Harding

Many of you will remember Andrew when he ran The Crown pub on the Green. He is now involved in taking medical supplies to Ukraine.

I listened recently with some friends to him telling us about a trip he has made to Ukraine and another trip he is planning for on 15th April. He volunteers to help 'Mighty Convoy' to transport ambulances full of supplies to Lviv in Ukraine. Two drivers collected an ambulance on the outskirts of London. They then went across the channel, through Belgium, Germany and Poland to reach the Ukrainian border. It took more than 40 hours continuously driving, alternately resting and driving for 3 hours each. After a fair amount of waiting and negotiating, they entered Ukraine and set off to Lviv where they handed over their gift of ambulance and contents. Then they had a meal and a night's rest, (though there was a drone attack that night and many hotel guests moved to air raid shelters). Andrew was shown around a little of Lviv before being driven to Warsaw for a flight home. Lviv has a vast cemetery full of young Ukrainians killed in battle. He saw the amazing resilience of Ukraine and also the concern in Poland that Russia and Putin are a force



Andrew, second from left

determined to build a 'greater Russia' again. This is a threat not only to Ukraine, but also to Europe and perhaps we are not aware enough of the danger, though only 1250 miles separates us from Ukraine.

Andrew is an engaging, passionate and humorous speaker. We all learned a great deal more about the situation in Ukraine, and the brave and generous help he and his colleagues offer.

The following is from their Just Giving website page.

Help Us Send Two More Ambulances to Ukraine

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our supporters, we raised over £7,000 to purchase, equip, and deliver our first ambulance, which Andrew and Marco drove 1,250 miles across Europe to Ukraine in October 2025 as part of a volunteer convoy.

But the need remains urgent. We are now planning something even more ambitious: to deliver, in convoy, two fully equipped ambulances in spring 2026 as part of a follow-up convoy. Therefore we have expanded to a team of four, and we are aiming to raise a new total of £21,000.

These vehicles will once again be delivered in partnership with Mighty Convoy (www.mightyconvoy.org), a volunteer-run initiative that has now completed 19 humanitarian missions to Ukraine. Their local partner, the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA), will receive and deploy the ambulances where they are needed most.

All travel, accommodation, and personal costs are covered by the drivers themselves. 100% of your donation goes directly to the vehicles and the life-saving aid they carry.

Your support has already made one journey possible. With your help, we can make it two together. Go to Justgiving.com/page/essex-ukraine-mighty-convoy if you want to support Andrew and his team.

Judy Cecil

Sometimes

'To see the world in a grain of sand' From Auguries and Innocence by William Blake

Sometimes to dream of finding a
Retreat from all the worlds
endless woes
Away from the ever resounding news,
Cast adrift from wars and foes
To a world reduced in size
Yes, as big as I could now see
A land as big as I could cast my eye
A world blissful, troubled free
A land as far as the spreading oak
A sacred thing to me.

Perhaps an island with all mod cons
But no TV, or wireless there
A mobile phone for calls alone
A beach to lie on, when weather's fair.
To shrink the world, as hermits
would
A daily read and potter
Even some hideaway, sweet
Scotland bound
Now that the world is hotter.

To take a pleasure in the
mundane
To plant and see it grow
As monks have done for centuries
And be it ever so,
To return to a smaller life,
To get in touch with land
To change my view of everything;
To take the world reduced in size
Into a grain of sand.

Richard Simmonds
25th November 2025

Letter from the Wardens

As we approach the third year of vacancy in the Parish of St Andrew's Sandon we need to ask ourselves a few questions:
What does God have to do so that you hear him?
What does he do already?
What do you need to do so that you hear God?
Do you want to hear what God wants to say to you?
Last December an interview took place for a priest to be shared between Boreham and Sandon. There was preparation by both parties, and the interview took place. The candidate was offered the post but then expressed some reservations and after a day or so's consideration decided that their current position was preferable, so no appointment. The church wardens have since met with the Archdeacon, Jonathan Croucher, and the Area Dean, Simon Pearce. We discussed an overview of the situation in the area. The demography of the priesthood is not encouraging in terms of making an appointment. Many are relatively elderly and will be retiring in a few years' time. There are pages of advertisements for priests. The diocese has advertised for priests and in a significant number of occasions had no applicants. Hardly great value for the cost of the advertisement!
Bishop Adam is soon to host a breakfast to talk about supporting lay ministry. There is a growing recognition, we believe, that laity have a key part to play in the future of the church.
Within that meeting we discussed what priests we have had in the parish during the vacancy. We are greatly blessed to have had Revd Carol Ball twice a month on Tuesday mornings (at 9:30 am) and Revds Keith Anderson and Mark Pape on the other two Tuesdays of the month. Over the last 18 months we have been privileged to have Revd Hugh Dibbens, a highly experienced respected priest and also a learned man of God. In the coming months we look forward to welcoming the Revd Andrew Merchant, formerly of BBC Essex, on the third Sunday of each month. Over the coming quarter we are blessed to have a priest coming twice each month. Therefore there will be a Eucharist on the first and third Sundays of each month. On the first Sunday of March, the Archdeacon will be leading. The Revd Jonathan Holmes will be coming here in April, for Easter, and also on the first Sunday of May. We are most grateful to all of them. Jonathan Holmes was Dean of Queens' College in Cambridge. Queens' College are patrons of the parish of Sandon and over recent months have been most supportive. Jonathan is currently an active lecturer in the University department of Veterinary Medicine.
We can talk about a priest as the focus of a parish. That they might be, but as followers of Jesus we must surely focus on the person of Jesus. In the Bible we read that it is God who can forgive our sins, who can bring us healing. He will do so because of the work of Jesus and because of his great mercy and the 'mechanism' is set up because Jesus, himself the Son of God, died on the cross. It is of course, that which we mark on Good Friday. As for many years, Christians from different churches across Chelmsford plan to gather in the High Street on Good Friday. It would be wonderful if you chose to be there and to hear the speaker and their take on the Christian faith.
Early in the vacancy, we were asked if we were having success in appointing a new priest. There seem to be several questions with different success criteria. Measuring success is difficult. Is it actually the appointment of a priest? Is it in numbers in the congregation? Is it the quality of teaching? Is it the relationships that are supported? Is it the depth of trust in God? All - we would suggest. Obviously, barring the first measure of success, all are possible with or without the appointment of a priest.
We are open to feedback on this and other things in the parish and the church. The Annual meeting on 19th April at about 11:30 am is an opportunity for that as well as just picking up the phone or coming to the church

Andy and Richard
Church Wardens

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The Anatomy of a Deportation

I have chosen this title having listened to Katie Razell's recent radio series entitled The Anatomy of a Cancellation. I chose the title on 10th December whilst waiting at Chennai airport to be flown back home. Judy and I had been refused entry to India.
We decided to return to India in December, having visited several times before and as part of The Elizabeth-Ann charity which supports the village of Burlavaripalem in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Vinay and Benedicta Kumar run the project there and have become our friends.
We arrived at Chennai at around 6am after a flight from Stansted via Dubai.

At the immigration desk the officer asked why we wanted to go to India. To visit friends. What will you actually do? Visit friends. How do you know them? Have you any pictures of them? We showed them pictures of our visit at the start of the year. He began to ask a colleague.
We were walked down one side of the immigration desks which was 'not India' while the officer went on the other side to the end of the line and there we sat and prayed. We mused that the young woman who sat nearby was there as our minder. A little while later I heard a tune from the office. Thula Baba a distinctive ring tone on my phone. They had our phones and passports. A young man joined us and about an hour later told us that we were not to be admitted to India. The original officer led us back to his desk, us on one side of the gates, and him on the other. He scanned our passports and photographed us. I recall he could not make the camera point upward enough so I was asked to step back. We were then walked back, again on opposite sides of the line of desks, to the same chairs. We were then asked to make arrangement to rebook our flight home. But how? We had phones back but no passports so could not access the airport wi-fi and had no Indian data. The young man leant his phone and we were offered tickets home initially for £1300 but eventually for no extra cost. Our return tickets were brought forward.

We were given some bottled water and shown where the toilet in 'Not India' was. Wi-fi was arranged for 40 minutes allowing us to explain the situation to friends in India and family and friends in the UK. Our return flight was at 11 pm that night so we tried to lie down to rest. We were given boarding passes for the flight back to Dubai and were

flight back to Dubai and were concerned that we would arrive in Dubai and would be left to sort ourselves out from there. The day wore on and I began this story but was too tired to do more than the introduction.

We used a voucher we had been given to buy a biriyani each along with the tiniest cup of chai tea. Well received, but spicier than was readily comfortable! We noticed a KFC but enquiry revealed they were not open till 6 pm. We decided that we could spend the £6 of rupees that we had with us. We were able to top that up with the Wise card we had.



The banner that was prepared to welcome us.

We were grateful that the airline looked after our luggage. They invited one of us only to check they had the correct bags. While Judy was led away, I waited. I had my blackest moment then wondering if this was some sort of ruse to separate us. She was away for perhaps 10 minutes but it seemed much longer. She came back saying that they had not allowed her to touch the baggage and that even the airline staff had to be checked before they came back into the departure area. I am sure we should be comforted by that.
We were boarded on the plane like first class passengers, but not in first class seats! Led by a member of staff with our passports and other documents, we were handed over to the purser – I didn't know they had one! – and then to our seats.
Again in Dubai we were looked after and given a meal voucher and got Wi-Fi access. Sleep from about 2 am till 8 am should have been possible but largely eluded me. I got on better sleeping on the plane back to Stansted listening to a podcast about the history of AI!
As we exited the airport into a cool but pleasant December afternoon we realised we had not seen the sun or experienced fresh air since we entered the airport about 52 hours earlier.
We are now wondering if we should apply for another visa even with no intention of travelling to test the outcome.

Richard and Judy Cecil

Pamela Ann Norrington

16th May 1941 – 30th Dec 2025

Pam started her life on a farm in Warwickshire. It was at the age of 6 her family moved to Sandon and Pam attended school in Danbury, continuing her education at Moulsham School.

She met her husband Roger cycling to and from school and romance blossomed from there. Having never driven, Pam travelled everywhere by bus and then ended up working for the Eastern National Bus Company. Roger and Pam spent their married life in Margaretting and there they attended church as faith was important to Pam. Pam was a big part of her church community in the village and she particularly enjoyed bell ringing. She would even go to other churches to ring bells.

Roger and Pam had two boys, Mark and Stuart, and in turn Mark married Alison. They provided them both with grandchildren and great grandchildren, with another great grandchild due in March this year.

They moved back towards Sandon, living on Molrams Lane. St Andrew's became a large part of Pam's life, especially after Roger's death.



Pam loved animals and particularly dogs. As well as having her own, she enjoyed looking after other people's dogs and welcomed it when asked to help.

Pam had many friends including church friends. She loved staying with her family afar, outings and day trips. At her funeral there were wonderful photographs which showed many of these.

Pam's funeral was taken by her brother-in-law, Rev. Paul Norrington on 5th February.

Along with others, we had the privilege to be able to visit Pam when she moved into St Joseph's Care Home. Quite often, if we visited just the two of us, she would ask why did we not bring my dog Hugo along. Alison and I always laughed – it wasn't us she wanted to see so much, but the dog! We knew our place. After that, Hugo always came to visit. We loved our visits there and we would always end with singing hymns, with the three of us singing out heartily for all to hear. Pam always had a smile on her face and had such a cheerful disposition. This is one of the beautiful legacies she will leave us with. Whenever, we think of Pam, we remember that lovely smile.

Thank you, Pam for sharing your life with us and being such a lovely friend. We will miss you greatly.

Claire Jefferies and Alison Read

Pam's parents were Ann and Frank Bloomfield who lived near the Police Dog centre for many years. For many years Ann organised the Befrienders who arranged week long coach outings for many in Sandon.

How God works

A grandmother was taking her young grandson for a walk in the park. The daffodils were in bloom, and it was a beautiful Spring day. Wanting to encourage her grandson's spiritual understanding of the world, she said: "Doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God did all this?"

Her grandson replied: "Oh yes, and God did it left-handed, too." In astonishment, the grandmother asked what he meant. "Well, He must have done," said her grandson, "because we learned at church last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand."

David Farrar

David was born on 5th August 1941 and lived for 84 years. He kept a journal from age 10 and that helped his family to write his story. He says he got his character traits from his mother who gave him a lot of religious guidance and was sporty playing tennis, table tennis and swimming. She insisted he stay at school to 17 and she took him to the local church (St. Andrews in Ilford) where he joined the choir, youth club and badminton team. He learned to play the piano and was keen on photography from a young age. Throughout his life he had a huge collection of pictures. He often contributed photos of church events for the church website and magazine.
He found time to play cricket to a very high standard representing both Essex and London boys.

He did well in science at school and worked for EEV, at first in research, later in sales and then became a director.

He met Christine when he was 24 and they married on 28th September 1968 in Writtle. They moved to Gilmore Way, Great Baddow, Karen and Amanda were born in 1971 and 1973 and then the family moved to Gablefields.

David and Christine made friends through church and the local community, which they developed over many years. Friends for life. David was always willing to help where possible. They arranged fancy dress parties and dinner parties, barn dances and sports days as well as car treasure hunts. They had a lot of fun.

They were regular attendees at St Andrew's and the church was a big part of their lives. David has been church warden, secretary, secretary of the friends of St Andrews, has organised many events including fetes, BBQs, the annual bike ride, the annual village walk, has been Father Christmas and regularly cut churchyard grass.

David loved holidays, camping in UK, progressing to caravans in France and then USA with the family. Later travelling to Spain, Egypt, Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia with Christine and later Portugal again with family. After Christine died, David enjoyed spending time with and travelling with Valerie. They visited Canada together.

David and Christine loved their family and enjoyed being grandparents, often looking after Imi, Madi and Joshua, having fun together.



David with his two daughters, Amanda and Karen

David loved golf, playing regularly and keeping all his scores. Also walking - he was active right up until he went into hospital walking up to 3 km a day and people would often see him walking around the village.

The last thing he wrote in his diary for the top 10 places he would like to visit on his bucket list said, 'nowhere else as I have seen enough!", which both his children thought was comforting to know.

Both friends and family will miss him, the large number of people who attended his funeral is a testament to his full and generous life.



Farming Update

Lambing has started early this year with the first lamb arriving three days early.
It was born on 26th January, the expected start date was 29th January.
The night lamber was due to start on Monday, 9th February so it was 'all hands on deck' from the full-time staff and family.

There is 900 metres of hedging being planted in the parish of Sandon, with 50 native trees planted within the hedge line. Did you know that hedges are planted with 5 plants in a metre?

Calibration of the fertilizer spreader will take place this week by a third party to ensure accurate spreading is achieved.

The Bi-annual Health and Safety meeting is taking place with the NFU. We review near misses in our February meeting with family and full-time staff, then in the summer we hold our second meeting with all the above and our seasonal staff.

A farm assurance inspection will also take place in February to ensure we keep in Red Tractor status.



All milling wheat (wheat for bread making) has been sold and left the farm. Another ongoing contract has been secured with Warburtons for 1500 tonne for harvest 2027. This goes to show just how far farmers must think ahead with the uncertainty of grain markets.

All fields have had rotational soil sampling to ensure potash and phosphate levels are maintained. Fields are lime tested annually. If lime levels are too low this increases the acidity which leads to low crop yields. Soil needs to have a pH level of 6.5-7, where neutral is pH7 and lower pH is acid and higher is alkali.

Gillian, Richard & Charlotte.

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Sandon WI

It was a refreshing change to arrive at the hall in Sandon without the wind howling and leaves flying about.

Our newsletter had informed members of the upcoming events for the November meeting, and the one on everyone's lips was "Murder at the WI" — a murder mystery written by Sandon WI's secretary, Karen West. The hall looked the same as always, but a few members were missing. We began, as usual, with singing "Jerusalem," but our singing was soon interrupted by a scream echoing from behind the curtains on the stage. The mystery had started! The unfortunate victim was Ivy Climber, who had been the guest speaker for that afternoon's meeting, but I suspect someone cut her presentation short.

Characters
Donna Trump (President of WI): Donna is a well-groomed, mature woman who has been President of the WI for several years. She is strong-willed and brooks no opposition on the Committee. Ambitious and competitive, she hates being beaten at anything. (Played by Kay Lodge)

Anne Agenda (Secretary of WI): Anne is an attractive woman of indeterminate age. Quiet and softly spoken, she is very well organised and keeps a firm eye on the WI's records—sometimes overlapping others' responsibilities. (Played by Pat Farrell)

Jean Counter (Treasurer): Jean used to hold a very responsible job in the City, and the WI feels lucky to have her as their Treasurer. She is a devoted family person and is very loyal, both to them and to the WI. (Played by Iris Watts)

TiAna Biscuit (Refreshments): The WI's youngest member, TiAna, is quite feisty and a bit scatterbrained. She often forgets to buy biscuits and is a hopeless romantic who dreams of settling down one day. TiAna originally joined the WI with her mum. (Played by Gill Reed)

Dale E. Bread: Dale is a vicar who recently served in the local parish that the WI is part of. He often attends meetings to keep up with village groups. A gifted academic, Dale is very shy and lacks confidence. (Played by Fran Luke)

Inspector Calls: Heading up a crack team gathering evidence, Inspector Calls exudes an air of tough control. Though he delivers advice quietly, it comes across as hard and straightforward. Anyone in the interrogation room would likely experience the fear of being found out. He doesn't beat around the bush—he goes straight to the facts. (Played by Karen West)

The mystery included incriminating texts, an autopsy report from the Chelmsford Coroner's Office, and other evidence to help us solve the murder. It was a brilliant afternoon, and all members were intrigued to find out who the culprit was. After the killer was revealed, we all settled down to enjoy tea, cakes, and the normal business of the WI.

Sandon's guest speaker was Jan Curtis who informed all members of the importance of members taking over the officers jobs and the best way to keep running your WI, very informative.

Julie Fisher

Our Church is open!

The church is open for quiet contemplation and prayer every day from about 8:30am to 5:00pm (exact times will vary).

For Pete's Sake

For years our son wondered, to himself, why God is called Peter. After all we regularly say, "Thanks Peter God." (Thanks be to God)



Church Services — St. Andrew's, Sandon

Services currently planned online via Zoom are shown in italics.
Also, we hope to say Morning Prayer in church at 8:30 am each morning.

March

Sunday 1st	**Lent 2**	
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Archdeacon Jonathan
Tuesday 3rd	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 4th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 8th	**Lent 3**	
	10:00 am	Worship Together
Tuesday 10th	9:30 am	Said Communion Mark Pape
Wednesday 11th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 15th	**Mothering Sunday**	
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Andrew Merchant
	3:00 pm	Afternoon Worship at Howe Green URC Chapel
Tuesday 17th	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 18th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 22nd	**Lent 5**	
	10:00 am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 24th	9:30 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday 25th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 29th	**Palm Sunday**	
	10:00 am	Songs of Praise with Passion reading
Tuesday 31st	**Tuesday of Holy Week**	
	9:30 am	Stations of the Cross
April		
Wednesday 1st	**Wednesday of Holy Week**	
	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Thursday 2nd	**Maundy Thursday**	
	7:00 pm	Passover Meal
Friday 3rd	**Good Friday**	
	11:00 am	Collective Worship Chelmsford High Street
	2:00 pm	Last Hour at the Cross
Sunday 5th	**Easter Day**	
	7:00 am	Sunrise Service
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Jonathan Holmes

Tuesday 7th	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 8th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 12th	**Easter 2**	
	10:00 am	Worship Together
Tuesday 14th	9:30 am	Said Communion Mark Pape
Wednesday 15th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 19th	**Easter 3**	
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Andrew Merchant
	3:00 pm	Afternoon Worship at Howe Green URC Chapel
Tuesday 21st	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 22nd	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 26th	**Easter 4**	
	10:00 am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 28th	9:30 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday 29th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
May		
Sunday 3rd	**Easter 5**	
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Jonathan Holmes
Tuesday 5th	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 6th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 10th	**Easter 6**	
	10:00 am	Worship Together
Tuesday 12th	9:30 am	Said Communion Mark Pape
Wednesday 13th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 17th	**Easter 7**	
	10:00 am	Sung Eucharist Andrew Merchant
	3:00 pm	Afternoon Worship at Howe Green URC Chapel
Tuesday 19th	9:30 am	Said Communion Carol Ball
Wednesday 20th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 24th	**Pentecost**	
	10:00 am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 26th	9:30 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday 27th	8:30 pm	*Night Prayer*
Sunday 31st	**Trinity Sunday**	
	10:00 am	Songs of Praise

Saint Andrew's Parish Church Contacts

Rector	Vacancy	
Church Wardens	Richard Cecil*+ Andy Horne*+	224747 475279
PCC Secretary	Judy Cecil*+	224747
PCC Treasurer	Nick Bobeldijk*+	471756
Safeguarding Officer	Alison Read*	474858
Electoral Roll	Liz Bobeldijk	471756
Bell Ringing	Mike Worboys	224612
Tiny Tots	Alison Read*	474858
Flower Arranging	Lesley Worboys	224612
Organist	Cathie Horne*	475279
Choir	Gill Haddington	529305
Magazine Editor	Richard Cecil*+	224747
Parochial Church Council Members	as * above and Colin Bryan+, Christine Mennie+, Janet Terry+ and Lisa Wiseman	

Authorised to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion
As + above and Valerie Grimwood, Gill Hodge and Michael Puffett

Regular Events see pages 16 & 17 for full details of worship.

Sundays	10:00 am	Morning Worship/Communion
Tuesdays	9:30 am 7:45 pm	Morning Worship/Communion Ringing Practice
Wednesday (Zoom) sandon-church.info	8:30 pm	Night Prayer
Thursday (Zoom) compasschurches.org.uk	8:30 am	Compass Churches Morning Prayer

Zoom services links can be found at the websites just prior to the service.

St Andrew's, Sandon

www.sandon-church.info

Editor Richard Cecil
Advertising Claire Jefferies
Distribution Manager Alison Read

Copy for May's magazine by
10th May 2026 please.
magazine@sandon-church.info



We commend to God's care at their funerals:
15th January
David Malcolm Farrar

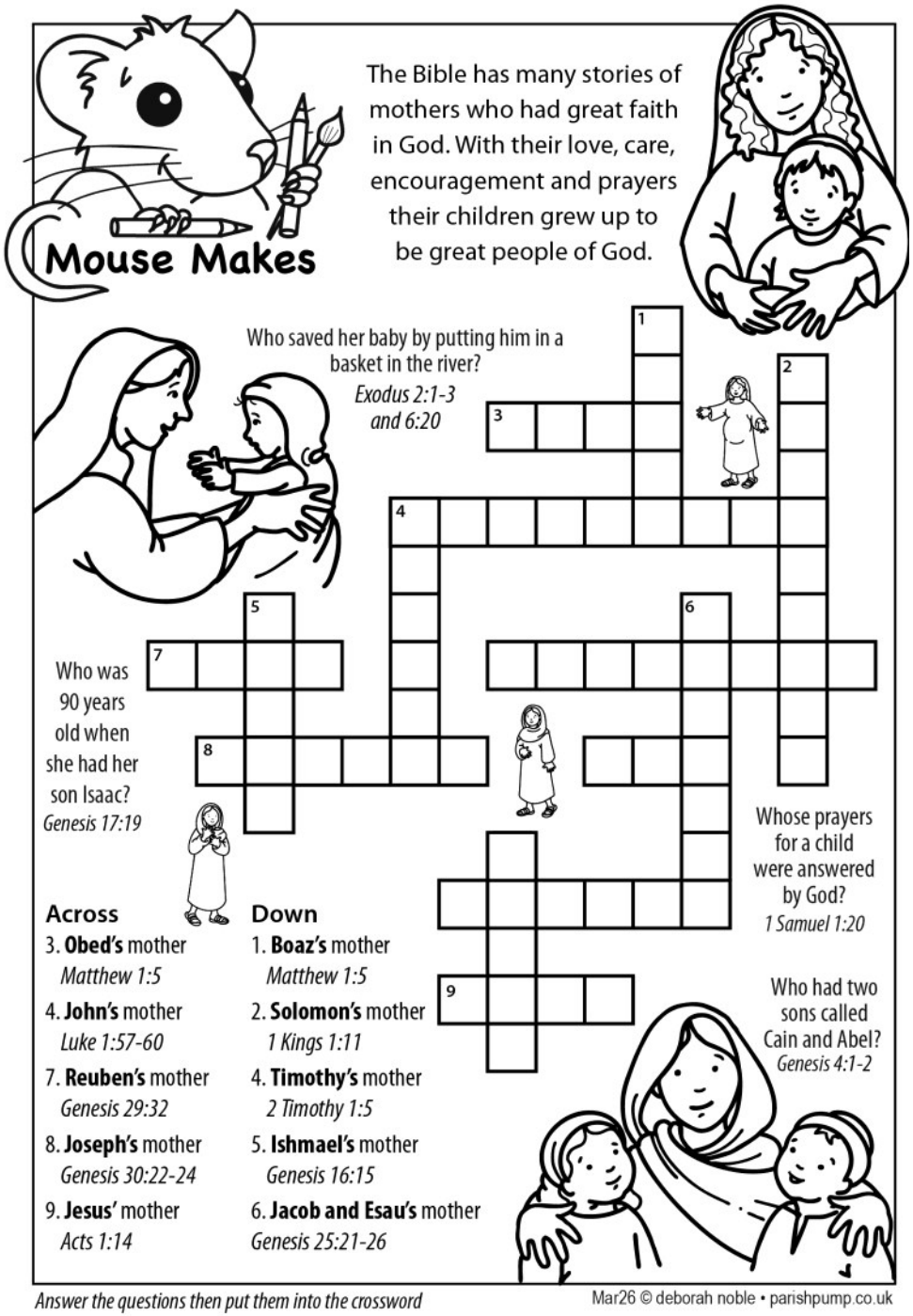
And at the interment of ashes of:
20th November Derek Hollows
21st November
Jay Colin Anthony Fisher



Howe Green URC

Howe Green is celebrating the fact that we now have a new Minister who will be able to come to us. We are not sure how it will work out as we have to share, and being small we will possibly only get a small share, but we look forward to welcoming Jo in the near future.
We had our first coffee morning of the year where the church was full and we were able to share fellowship with friends and neighbours.
Our up and coming services at the chapel will be at 3 pm on:
Sunday 15th March
Sunday 19th April, when we share with Trevor Andrews
Sunday 17th May, which is our anniversary service.
Please feel free to join with us, everyone is welcome.
We also have coffee mornings planned for Saturday 21st March and 25th April both at 10:30 am when we welcome anyone from to village to come and join in fellowship and cake with us!
Many thanks.

Jane Clark, Secretary



St Andrew's Quiz

We held a successful quiz night in January with 9 tables having fun together and raising £350 for church funds/Christian Aid/ Marsabit Diocese.

Thank you to all who contributed and to all who came along.

The winners were the table of ringers, including Mike and Lesley Worboys, Max Clubb, Smurf and Keith Boyle. Very close behind in second place was the table with David and Paul Norman, David and Gill Parker and Sasha, Nataliia and Alisa Heldash.

Here is a photographic summary.

Judy Cecil



















On Sunday, 1st February 2026 in 43 minutes
Sandon, Essex
St Andrew
1260 Plain Bob Doubles
1 John Everett
2 Sandra Murphy
3 Daniel Howell
4 Philip Saunders
5 Mike Worboys (C)
6 Amanda Owens
Rung in memory of David Malcolm Farrar, 5th August 1941 to 30th November 2025, who gave so much to the church and community of Sandon.

On Sunday, 8th February 2026 in 43 minutes
Sandon, Essex
St Andrew
1280 Plain Bob Doubles
1 Sandra Murphy
2 Wendy Godden
3 John Steed
4 Philip Saunders
5 Colin Chapman (C)
6 Mike Worboys
In memory of John Wood, 8th Feb 1942 - 18th Jan 2026, ringer at Sandon.
Rung on what would have been his 84th birthday.





How many words does it take?

Pythagorean Theorem	24 words
Lord's Prayer	66 words
Archimedes' Principle	67 words
Ten Commandments	179 words
Shakespeare's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy	260 words
Churchill's speech 'We Shall Fight on the Beaches'	308 words
US Constitution with all 27 Amendments	7,818 words
EU regulations on the sale of cabbages	26,911 words

Puts things into perspective, doesn't it?

Seasons of Change

There is something quietly reassuring about the rhythm of village life. While the wider world seems to move ever faster, our own small corner of Essex continues to follow a gentler pace, marked not by headlines but by hedgerows, harvests, and the steady chime of church bells. Each season brings its own character, and with it fresh reminders of why community matters.

Winter, though often grey, has its own particular beauty here. The fields lie resting, their furrows silvered by frost in the early morning light. Smoke curls from chimneys, and the lanes feel hushed beneath bare branches. It is a time when neighbours check in on one another, when simple acts of kindness—collecting a prescription, sharing a lift, delivering a homemade pie—carry special weight. In these quieter months, the warmth of fellowship shines brightest.

As spring approaches, subtle changes begin to appear. Snowdrops gather along banks, lambs dot distant fields, and daylight stretches into the evening. Gardens stir with renewed life, and conversations turn once again to planting plans and hopeful forecasts. There is something deeply uplifting about witnessing the land awaken. It reminds us that renewal is woven into the fabric of creation, and that patience through darker days is always rewarded.

The churchyard, too, tells its own seasonal story. Moss softens ancient stones, and blossoms drift down like confetti when the trees are in flower. Visitors pause to read familiar names, reflecting on lives once lived in the same lanes we walk today. In doing so, we sense continuity—a thread linking

past generations to our own. We are caretakers not only of buildings and paths, but of memory and tradition.

Summer brings a livelier energy. Windows are flung open to catch warm breezes, and gardens hum with bees. Footpaths fill with walkers enjoying the countryside, while local events draw residents together in celebration. Whether it is a fête on the green, a shared picnic, or simply a chat over the garden gate, these moments knit us closer. There is laughter, music, and the comfortable ease that comes from recognising familiar faces.

Harvest time is especially meaningful in rural communities. Fields turn golden, and the steady work of gathering crops reflects both effort and gratitude. The harvest festival service remains a cherished occasion, as gifts of produce line the aisle and hymns of thanksgiving rise to the rafters. Such traditions ground us. They remind us that sustenance comes not only from soil and sunshine, but from cooperation, stewardship, and faith.

Autumn follows with its tapestry of colour. Leaves blaze briefly before falling, and the air carries a crispness that sharpens the senses. It is a reflective season, inviting us to consider what we have gathered—both literally and figuratively—through the year. Clubs and groups resume their meetings, children return to school with fresh ambitions, and plans are made for the months ahead. Change, we realise, is not something to resist but to embrace thoughtfully.

In reflecting on the seasons and stories that shape our corner of Essex, we are reminded that significance does not depend on size. A small village can hold immense richness—of history, friendship, faith, and hope. The lanes may be narrow, but the sense of connection is broad. And as long as we continue to greet one another with warmth, to care for our surroundings, and to uphold traditions while welcoming change, the heart of our community will remain strong.

So as the months unfold once more, let us take time to notice the familiar beauty around us: the play of light across fields, the steady toll of bells, the reassuring sight of neighbours at work and at rest. In these simple, enduring rhythms, we find not only comfort, but purpose.

Images from the Christmas Fayre











Thank you

Bishop Guli, the Bishop's Leadership team and I would like to express a heartfelt thank you for all you have done to support parish ministry through your Parish Share contributions for 2025. Your generosity enables ministry in every community across Essex and East London, and we are deeply grateful for the sacrifices made by clergy, PCCs and congregations.

Yours sincerely,
Canon Michaela Southworth
Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer

Thank you

Neil Arnold kindly turned a piece of wood on his lathe to repurpose a lovely wooden flower stand donated by Henry Harvey some years ago into a stand for the Pascal Candle.

The old stand for the Pascal Candle has been repurposed as a thurible stand and the original thurible stand is being used by Ascension with All Saints in Maltese Road Chelmsford. They regularly burn incense there, which is the use of a thurible.





I Want to Own Me A Star

I want to own me a star
From some galaxy, far
In my bedroom to keep;
When nights they are lonely
Comp'ny when I sleep.

At night it will shine
But I can turn down its light
It will only be mine
I shall read in the night.

Stars are for dreaming
I wonder at stars
Their light forever beaming
To wherever you are.

From millions miles distant
To infinite space
Stars without ending
So many untraced
Each star it is named
When at last it is seen
But it has always existed
It has always just been.

So space would not miss one
To keep in my home
To sleep on my bedroom
And call it my own.

I shall say my goodbyes
To you all now
It's getting quite late
And I'm sleepy, and how,
In dreams, my star, she is weary
She's been up all night
So we will say our goodbyes
As she turns out the light.

Richard Simmonds 15th March 2025

Is This Quiet?

In colder air, on gravel do I tread
Crunching softly, in my head
The birds chirp and sing their notes
A passing car
The mobile phone, it rings, remote.

The slight creek of wooden door,
That felt the hands of those before
Enter I the silent world, within the stones
I there stand, cold, upright, all alone;
Light through stained glass hits the floor
The aisle is brightened and will be more
As the sun illuminates the quiet, the peace
All sits as quiet, as ground beneath

Only the sound of my coldest breath
Do I hear in my failing ears
Silence opens its arms in sweet caress
And quiet washes away life's noisy fears;

My heart now slowly beats
Its rhythm slows
The silence, as felt with fallen snow
As noise sounds hasten a silent retreat.

Quietness, a quality not easily found
A place with absence of cars and sound
But I within these old stone walls
Find a silence to repel life's noise, life's squall.

Richard Simmonds 17/12/2025

A Week in St David's

We decided we needed a break from the day-to-day activities of St Andrew's and Chestnut Cottage. We had tried to have 10 days in India in December but were refused entry and so had to fly home again. Not exactly a restful break.

So, we headed to St David's by bus and train after Andy dropped us at the Park and Ride at 7:45 am. Thank you Andy.
All the transport joined up though there were some long waits! We finally arrived at our Air B'n'B at 6 pm, in time for a quick walk round the outside of the cathedral and a meal at the local Indian restaurant.
We enjoyed sharing Morning Prayer and communion at the cathedral the next day before a delicious breakfast at the Mill and setting off to walk on the Pembroke coastal path. Richard said it was terrifying being close to the cliff edge in a howling gale but we survived and relaxed with a cream tea afterwards to celebrate. There were some tremendous views of the sea and a wonderful time watching seagulls gliding and wheeling round in the wind and updraughts. Next day was less energetic, breakfast in the cathedral café, taking a bus to Solva a small village, probably heaving with visitors in the summer, but so quiet that we were surprised to find our lunch was all half price, presumably to encourage business. We chatted to an extraordinary man who had successfully owned a local seafood restaurant but was selling up to go to Greece for a new life.

The next day was forecast as wet, so we set off to Fishguard on the bus to see the 'Last Invasion Tapestry' and find some lunch. Both very successful.

Coffee and tea cakes at Mannings was followed by viewing the tapestry. We then found a pub for lunch. The attempted invasion in 1797 by the French about 3 miles from Fishguard was not successful. It was documented in 1997 by 80 ladies from in and around Fishguard who embroidered the 100 ft long tapestry which is now displayed in the Town Hall. They are hoping it will compare favourably with the more famous Bayeux tapestry but will need much more publicity if people outside Wales are to hear about it. At lunch we met 2 ladies planning the local Eisteddfod at the end of February. Seemed a bit like the Sandon Youth festival of the past but on a much grander scale. We were rather sorry we would not be there.

Feeling rather full we decided to buy some soup for our supper.
We attended a beautiful Choral Evensong led by the choir of men and girls and enjoyed the peaceful surroundings of the cathedral building.
West Wales seemed really friendly, everything happening at a slightly slower pace than Essex, just right for a holiday with the bonus of St David's Cathedral so close to where we stayed.

Richard and Judy Cecil



Sandon Handbells

We are hoping that we can continue to have fun and ring the handbells together again.
The ringing in the Crown went well at Beer and Carols.
If you would like to join us, please contact Judy: judy@cecil.family.clara.net
Come along on Tuesday evenings at 6:45 pm to the St Andrew's Room starting on Tuesday 10th March.
Beginners welcome.
Perhaps start an afternoon group, depending on interest.

Sunset - The Last Of The Year

The sun sets westwards behind the trees
As rooks caw loudly, glide the breeze,
Light drops fast upon the scene
Sudden all shadows leave, run loose
They scattered, lost amongst the spruce;
No longer they, as though never been;

The light, it changes all so fast
As sun now fades on our
Fiery red, terracotta tower
To a beauty, Church that lasts,
Now sunburnt passed, as day is done
All colour swallowed by a setting sun.

A lorry spreading winter grit
Passes on its dieseled way
Portending: a cold night ahead
The end of old years final day

Richard Simmonds
31st December 2025

Tiny Tots Pre School

We meet in the St Andrew's Room on the second Wednesday of the month 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm so come along.
Further information
Contact: Alison 01245 474858 or e-mail: tots@sandon-church.info

A New Book

Awaiting there, clean untouched
Its spine ramrod straight, I touch;
The slight apprehension expands
Before my eyes, my expectant hands
Of a pleasure that awaits
Of the bridal snow-white pages
There unbent under my fingers
There the pleasure lingers,
To tell a story of the ages.

Richard Simmonds
8th November 2025

At The Door, Spring Stands

At the door, Spring stands proudly, ready awaits
At Winters dark, cold icy gates
As day grow lighter, sun shines just
And early nights turn into dusk
Onto the stage Springs return will show
As bulbs, a harbinger, break soil from dark below,

Soon, soon the first glorious brush
Of beautiful verdant green buds will rush
Onto the theatre, new life arrives
And the drama set from its sleep, arise.

Richard Simmonds
4th February 2026

St John the Baptist Church, Danbury

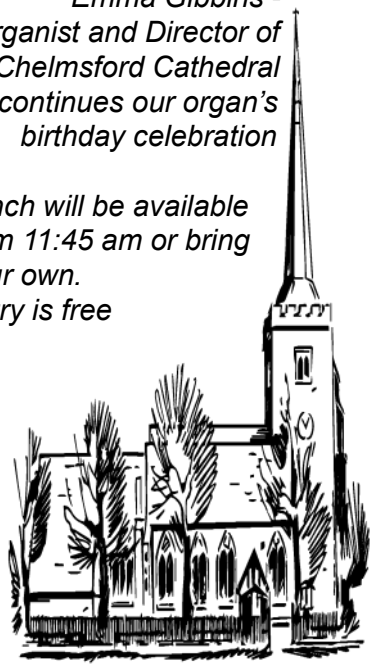
2026 Monthly lunchtime concerts in the church
Fridays at 12.15pm

13th March
Kiyomi Seed – Graduate of The Juilliard School in Music Performance in New York with a solo programme for Percussion/ Marimba

10th April
The Whirlwind Ensemble. Virtuosic woodwind quintet return with an exciting and energetic programme

8th May
Emma Gibbins - Organist and Director of Chelmsford Cathedral continues our organ's birthday celebration

Lunch will be available from 11:45 am or bring your own.
Entry is free



Baked Custard Cake

125g butter
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
4 free range eggs
125g plain flour
175g golden caster sugar
500ml full cream milk
Icing sugar for dusting
Serves 6 people

Melt the butter in a small pan. Generously brush a deep 20 x 26 cm ovenproof dish with a little of the melted butter then set the rest aside to cool slightly.

Separate the eggs and beat the yolks together with 175g of caster sugar until pale and creamy. Gradually whisk in the melted butter and vanilla paste. Sift the flour over the surface and fold in. Heat the milk until lukewarm, then gradually stir into the egg yolk mixture until combined. Whisk the egg whites in a clean mixing bowl until standing in soft peaks and then fold in.

Bake at 170°C/gas mark 3 for 30 minutes until the top is golden and the custard is just set.

Dust with icing sugar and serve. Delicious with stewed plums.

Narelle Arnold

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