



JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM 2025

On Tuesday 2nd December the Open the Book team with friends set off to Blackmore Farm to reenact the very first Christmas. This year we had little ones from five schools coming to walk through the journey; Enmore, Stogumber, Stogursey, Otterhampton and Cannington. Their coaches were funded by a generous donation - how kind.

Each group of children were greeted by a band of rugged shepherds who were very excited about the experience that they had recently had and wanted to share this with the children. They had seen a group of angels in the sky who told them the good news about a very special King being born in Bethlehem!

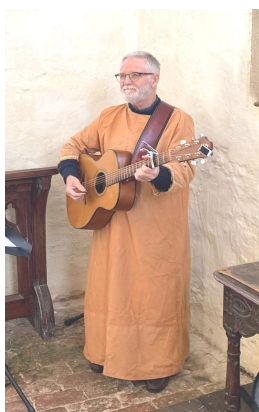
They took the children on a trip, chatting and telling very corny sheep jokes on the way!

The first stop on the journey was stopping at the census booths, having to give their names and where they came from. This went very smoothly. As they travelled on, they met a very enthusiastic tax collector. One little girl indignantly said "he took all my money"! After getting past the tax collector they soon arrived at the inn at Bethlehem. Knock, knock, knock! The children and the shepherds were greeted by the inn keeper and taken through a rowdy group of people making merry by the open fire! On they went through into a stable at the back of the inn, a very bright star shining overhead.

What a sight to see - an angel watching over Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus lying in a manger. The children were very happy to see the sight and were given an opportunity to ask questions, which most of them did. We had a wonderful musician playing 'Away in a Manger' and the children very beautifully sang along.

I can honestly say this is a wonderful opportunity to tell and show the children what happened all of those years ago and brings to life a little the wonder of the true meaning of Christmas.

Jennifer



The Deanery Mission Project for 2026 will be launched on Sunday 25th January 2026 at 3pm in Nether Stowey Church Centre.

The 2026 Deanery Mission Project is: **When I needed a neighbour**

The Salvation Army is helping the homeless in and around Minehead and as a Deanery we are joining in. Margaret Tatham from Watchet is leading on this for the Deanery. Please do make contact with her if you are planning a fund raising event.

Her email address is: mtatham0502@gmail.com

We will also be saying 'thank you' to Steve Atkinson for championing our Deanery Mission Project for 2025—the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

What will the final total raised be? Do come along and find out!

Enquires about any article or organisation featured here should be made to eleanor.king@hotmail.com

Contributions for next issue should be submitted to Eleanor by the last Friday of February 2026 please.



Quantock Group Ministry

Quantock Good News!

Christmas 2025

Stories of faith in action from around Quantock Deanery

NEWS FROM ST DECUMAN'S CHURCH



Our big electrical upgrade began with replacing the old heating systems - a combination of a defunct oil-fired hot water system and an ineffective electrical one - with locally controlled under pew heaters. This allows us to give warmth to people sitting in the pews rather than the seagulls sitting on the roof ! More significantly it provides an important reduction in our carbon footprint and thus qualified us for a grant towards the work from the Diocesan 'NetZero Quick Wins' programme.

The team then moved to higher things, replacing the high level light fittings with their multiple switch locations with a zoned system that is centrally controlled. The nave and aisles were filled with scaffold towers for three weeks !

The final stage will be linking everything back to the control panel in the Vestry and to the newly upgraded power supply.

PET SERVICE AT STOGURSEY

We had some very well-behaved, and some quite cheeky



visitors to our pet service, and all the animals seemed pleased to go up to be blessed one by one. I can't say we had a wide range of pets, but we were pleased to welcome them along with their families to an informal service. This was advertised to those who attended our holiday club, and all families were invited to this service, which has turned out to be a good follow-up for the church, and an encouragement to all.



BICKNOLLER-A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CHURCH

Members of Bicknoller PCC met in early November to discuss with Margaret Tatham the possibility of joining the Watchet and the Quantocks Dementia Friendly Churches initiative.

Margaret explained that she is not suggesting huge changes to church work. Rather she hopes that parishioners will think of ways they can help people to keep attending church even if they or a close family member develops some kind of dementia. She explained that a diagnosis often makes people become reclusive, self conscious and reluctant to take part in all the hobbies and interests that they loved before. And that includes attending church. One suggestion she had was to adopt a kind of buddy system so that, if a family or individual stop coming to church, there would be someone to notice this, find out the reason and possibly bring them back.

Margaret presented a certificate to be displayed in the church since they are certainly 'working to become' Dementia Friendly.

If you or your church (or other group) are interested in hearing Margaret's ideas or even becoming an Alzheimer's Society dementia friend please contact her on 07973638030 or watchetdementia@gmail.com

You may remember that some years ago our deanery profile expressed an aim that ALL the Churches in the Deanery should become Dementia Friendly. We have some way to go but Margaret is working on it!

Pictured: Margaret Tatham of Watchet and the Quantocks DAA (and also our assistant Lay dean) presenting the Certificate to Carolyn Stock, Church warden, Bicknoller.



ADVENT - FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



The Deanery Singers set the scene for Advent on 1st December in St Andrew's Church, Stogursey. Through words from the Bible, congregational hymns and music sung by the Deanery Singers we travelled from darkness to light.

Many thanks to all who made this service possible. The retiring collection of just under £400 was split between the Dorset

and Somerset Air Ambulance and The Children's Society.

Sarah

Pictured: congregation and choir at St Andrew's Church, Stogursey, with thanks to Mike Bradshaw

GROUP MISSION TEAM MEETS FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Group Mission Team held a successful meeting in September. All four benefices of the Group were represented and focussed their attention on how we could develop activities on the 2026 Diocesan 'Year of Prayer'. The GMT members in each Benefice will be encouraging church members from all the parishes to take forward some of the ideas discussed. There are too many to list here, but they included repeating the Deanery Quiet Day, having a daily prayer book and a place for prayer requests in each church, and encouraging the practice of pilgrimage in and around our villages.

If you have ideas about activities for the 'Year of Prayer' or, indeed, about any aspect of our Mission, please contact one of the GMT members from your Benefice.

Andrew Tatham

Stop Press: Here is the logo for the Group Ministry, with each Benefice represented by a symbol! Thank you to Revd Alison for its design. Please look out for it on paperwork, posters and service sheets.



Sharing ideas—OPPORTUNITY SUNDAYS - IN GOATHURST



This year, when it was no longer possible to staff Sunday services in every church across the Quantock Villages Benefice, each church was reduced to three services per month. The PCCs were encouraged to think of the Sundays without a service as 'Opportunity' Sundays rather than 'fallow' ones and challenged us to seek ways of growing our church. Goathurst PCC has sought to embrace this and, during 2025 have stepped out

in faith to take church out into the community. On two occasions it has offered 'Bag a Bacon Butty with a Squirt of Faith' events in the village hall which have been well attended beyond our usual congregation. Other Opportunity Sundays have included a Rogationtide walk; a led walk through Mill Wood with refreshments at the Temple of Harmony (by kind permission of Halswell Park); a Pets' Service with a talk by Secret World; and an afternoon cream tea in the church grounds. Plans are already being made for continued development in 2026!

Tim Hunt of Kids Alive International (one of Goathurst's designated charities) giving a talk at Bacon Butty 2 in November.

Brenda