Whitton Times Christmas 2026

Church in Community



"Welcome to Whitton Times, a blend of Church and Community, a magazine from us to you".
We hope you'll find it helpful .



We welcome EVERYONE to our church, so please be aware.....



If your children are loud, please still come to church.
If you're running late for whatever reason, please still come to church.
If your toddler won't sit still, please still come to church.
If your baby needs to eat, please still come to church.
If your child asks questions at the least convenient time, please still come to church.
If someone cries, drops a toy, needs a snack, or has to make their third trip to the loo, please still come to church.
If someone doesn't know the words, the prayers, or exactly when to sit or stand, please still come to church.
If Sunday morning feels messy instead of peaceful, please still come to church.
If you're worried your children are distracting the people around you, please still come to church.
Because children do not learn how to be part of the Church family by staying at home until they can sit quietly.
They learn by being here.
They learn the hymns by hearing us sing them.
They learn the prayers by hearing us pray them.
They learn to worship by watching us worship.
They learn that church is home because we make room for them here.
The wiggles, whispers, dropped crayons, crying babies and little voices are not interruptions to the life of the Church.
They are evidence that the Church is alive.
So bring babies, bring toddlers, bring big children, come late, sit at the back, sit at the front,
step out when you need to..... and come back in.
Just come.
If you're still worried why not try our monthly All Together Family friendly gathering @ 10am
on the first Sunday of each month.
Children are not simply the future of the Church, they are part of the Church right now.
We hope to see you soon.

Our Christmas Services

Do please come and join us and make Christmas special as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus with Carol Singing, Readings, and Building the Crib.



Sunday 29th November 9.30am—Advent Sunday Parish Eucharist.
Sunday 6th December 10am—All Together Church—Christingle.
Sunday 13th December 9.30am – Parish Eucharist
2.30-4.30pm – Messy Church
Wednesday 16th December 7.30pm – Carols by Candlelight at Akenham Church
Sunday 20th December 6.30pm – Nine Lessons and Carols at Whitton Church
Tuesday 22nd December 7pm – Blue Christmas Service – A reflective time to remember loved ones and those who find Christmas hard……at Whitton Church
Christmas Eve 24th December 4pm – Crib Service – Especially for families.
11pm Midnight Mass – at Whitton Church
Christmas Day 25th December 8am – Communion Service
10am – Toy Service! Please come armed with a book or toy to show us.
Sunday 3rd January 10am – All Together Church - We Three Kings – Epiphany

A Brief message from us to you

Quiet Presence: Amid the rush and noise of December, Christmas invites us to pause and receive the quiet gift of Immanuel—God with us. May the light of Christ bring calm to your home and steadiness for the year ahead.

Shared Light: A single candle can push back darkness, and a small act of kindness can carry hope across a whole parish. As we celebrate Jesus' birth, may we be bearers of his light and peace to one another.

Everyday Grace: Christ entered an ordinary world in humble circumstances, reminding us that God is close to our real lives, joys, and sorrows.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas filled with peace, joy and lasting hope for all this Christmas and 2027

Reverend Mary and the congregation of St Mary and St Botolph Church Whitton



34th Ipswich Guides – TOP UP SHOP Donations as part of the Guide Eco Award



The 34th Ipswich Guides have been busy making a real difference in the community as part of Their Eco Award. Inspired by the award's focus on positive action the Guides chose to support the church's *Top Up Shop* food bank. Over the past few months, they have contributed weekly donations which have added up to an impressive amount of food, showing how small, thoughtful actions can have a big impact on local families.

This project has helped the Guides understand how community support fits into caring for the environment, one of the key themes of the Eco Award. The award encourages Guides to "make a difference in your community" and work together to help others. By donating food, the 34th Ipswich Guides have not only completed one of their Eco Award actions — they've also demonstrated kindness, teamwork, and a strong commitment to supporting others. A huge well done to all involved; be proud of the positive impression you have left on the world around you!

WHITTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Covering Whitton, Whitehouse and Castle Hill we currently provide Junior, Inters and Senior Youth Clubs, Single gender groups, detached youth work, one to one support, school holiday Craft and play and Youth drop in sessions. All our activities are provided free of charge and free food is available at all activities based within Whitton Parish Hall where we are based.

Junior Youth Club – After school on a Monday

Inters Youth Club – After School on a Tuesday

Senior Youth Club – from 5.30p.m.on a Tuesday

Watch out for our Christmas holiday activities which will be advertised on our Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/whittonyouthpartnership/

Booking essential for holiday Craft and Play Days as spaces go within hours of appearing on our Facebook page.

Visit our Website to see volunteering and fundraising opportunities to help us maintain our services to our young people. We need more volunteers to help on Monday afternoons and Tuesday afternoons during term time.

https://www.whittonyouthpartnership.co.uk/

It has been a great start to the school year with our schools work in Whitton. Recently, we welcomed around 190 into church for our Experience Harvest event. This was a really exciting week where a total of 7 classes from Castle Hill, St Pancras and The Beeches visited with year groups ranged from year 3 to year 5. This was an opportunity for pupils to visit church and learn more about harvest, why it is an important celebration and what it means to Christians. There were 6 stations set up around church each focusing on a different aspect of Harvest and each with a different value. It was great to see the children engaging in multi sensory activities, which included tasting different breads, looking at seeds and their growing times, trying out knitting and weaving and making origami boats!



It was also wonderful to see our fabulous volunteers sharing their skills and knowledge with the pupils. To finish each session, children learned about a Jewish Sukkah and why they are so important.



In addition to Experience Harvest, our Open the Book team had a very exciting Week in October when they delivered the story of Samson in Castle Hill and The Beeches. The children found this very entertaining!

We are now very much looking forward to the second half of the Autumn term where we will be rehearsing and delivering another Open the Book assembly in two schools. I am also planning for our Experience Christmas event which will take place at the beginning of December and will hopefully enhance the pupils RE learning about the meaning of Christmas for Christians and the nativity story.

These projects could not run without the support of our wonderful volunteers! If you enjoy working with children and are interested in volunteering for Open the Book or for our Experience events or would like some more information then please feel free to contact me at lucy.schoolslink@whittonparish.co.uk. I would love to hear from you!

Lucy Fisk – Schools and Children's Liaison



Little Dragons Nursery @ Castle Hill School is now open





We are excited to be sharing our new nursery at Castle Hill Infant and Junior School, we are welcoming children from age 3 with full Wraparound available from 7:30am-6pm. For more information or to register, please contact the school office office@castlehillprimary.org.uk or check out our website www.castlehillprimary.org.uk

The Top Up Shop is **open to everyone.** There are **no questions asked** (apart from contact number and post code in case of product recall). There are no criteria to fulfil. If you need food or just need to top up your food supplies, please come and see us. The cost is £2 for a recyclable bag. Each week we have a good choice of goods and always fresh fruit and vegetables. **We are open from 11am to 12.15pm every Wednesday in the Church Hall, Whitton Church Lane. Coffee and cake are available in the church from 9.00am –12 noon at our wonderful café hub.** You can be assured of a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you.

FAMILY FIRST

Phone:- 0300 7727715

Email:- info@familyfirst-uk.org

Website:- www.familyfirst-uk.org

Facebook:- Family First Ipswich

Ipswich Deaf Church now meet at the Ascension Church the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2.30pm. The service has voice over into English. All the hymns are signed by members of Ipswich Deaf Signing Choir and the service is followed by refreshments. All are welcome to come along and join us. For more information contact Rev Penny Brinkley Diocesan Chaplain with the Deaf Community email rev.pennybrinkley@yahoo.com or text 07901950768. (Please note occasionally the service date may change so please do check if you are planning on coming)



If you are interested in Baptism, for an adult or child,

Please contact Eileen Ardern on 01473 252251

Mums and Tots meet every Wednesday in term time from 1.15 – 3pm @ Whitton Church Hall, Whitton Church Lane.

Not just for Mums – Dads and Grandparents very welcome too!! Enquiries please phone Bridget on 01473 286663 or text 07890 311525





Are you planning a wedding in 2027 or 2028?



Did you know :-

There are lots of ways you may qualify to be married in church.
You don't have to be a regular church goer.
It usually costs less than at other venues.
You can have a range of music, not necessarily religious.
Each wedding is unique to the couple & can have many special moments and elements.
We have a stunningly beautiful church…so why not have a chat and a look around.
Contact Angela Marjoram for a visit and friendly chat……on 07950 086135.

Facebook Whitton Parish Ipswich Page.

Many had found us on 'Facebook Live' for Sunday services, since being hacked we are not yet able to stream to the new Facebook page – 'Whitton Parish Ipswich'. Other things are posted regularly. If you would like to watch our service live stream, please go to https://www.youtube.com/@whittonparishstmaryandstbo8772

Usual services at St Mary & St Botolph & the Ascension Churches

Sundays—1st in month - 8am Said Eucharist & 10 am—All Together Church—Not livestreamed

2nd - 4th in month—9.30am—Eucharist All at St Mary & St Botolph, Whitton Church Lane. These are livestreamed https://www.youtube.com/channel/

Wednesday 10am—Eucharist at the Ascension, Larchcroft Road



Look out for Mary around the Parish

Email:- marysokanovic@outlook.com

Telephone:- 07824 323073

A Christmas Quiz

1. What day of the year was Christmas Day in 2020?
2. Which animal carried Mary before she gave birth to Jesus?
3. Which world leader celebrates his birthday on Christmas Day?
4. When do the 12 Days of Christmas start?
5. Which country annually sends a Christmas tree to be erected in London's Trafalgar Square?
6. Which monarch delivered the first Royal Christmas Day Message?
7. Which country is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition?
8. What happened in the 1914 Christmas Day truce during the First World War?
9. In which year was the first Christmas card sent?
10. What indispensable item for the Christmas table did Tom Smith, a confectioner, invent?
11. Which ocean can Christmas Island be found in?
12. In what type of building was the baby Jesus born in?
13. What is your star sign if you are born on Christmas Day?
14. How many of Rudolph's fellow reindeers' names start with 'D'?
15. What gifts did The Three Wise Men give Jesus on his birthday?
16. Who was crowned King of England on Christmas Day in 1066?
17. Which country traditionally plays the Boxing Day Test Match every year?
18. Which plant based Christmas tradition was started by servants in Victorian Britain?
19. Which plant has bright red and green leaves and is sometimes known as the Christmas Flower?
20. How many ghosts appear in A Christmas Carol?

Answers in Spring edition!

The Mince Pie!

Mince pies originated in England during the early Middle Ages, initially as a way to preserve meat without refrigeration or heavy salting.

Medieval Meat Pies: The earliest versions were large, savory-sweet pies containing chopped meats (such as mutton, beef, rabbit, pork, or game) combined with dried fruits, suet, and expensive Middle Eastern spices brought back from the Crusades.

Manger Shapes: Early pies were often oblong or rectangular to resemble the manger of baby Jesus, sometimes topped with a small dough effigy representing the infant.

Religious Symbolism: Spices like cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg were said to represent the gifts of the Magi.



Christmas Crackers -

originated in London, England, in the mid-1840s.

In 1840, a London confectioner and baker named **Tom Smith** visited Paris and saw French *"bon-bons"* (sugared almonds wrapped in twisted tissue paper).

Adding Mottos: Smith brought the idea back to London and started selling similar wrapped sweets, eventually adding small love poems or riddles inside the paper.

The "Bang": Around 1861, inspired by the crackling sound of a log fire, Smith added a friction-actuated explosive mechanism (using silver fulminate) so the package would go *pop* when pulled. He initially called them "Bangs of Expectation".

Evolving the Tradition: As the treats grew in popularity, the sugared almond was replaced with small toys, and Smith's sons later introduced the paper party hats (crowns) and jokes we see today.



An **Advent wreath** (or Advent crown) is a traditional Christian circle of evergreen branches holding four candles. It is used during the season of **Advent**—the four weeks leading up to Christmas—to mark the passage of time and symbolize **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.**



Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
love was born at Christmas
star and angels gave the sign.

Love shall be our token,
love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and neighbour,
love for prayer and gift and sign.

The Christmas Story

Long ago, in the town of Nazareth, an angel named Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary. Gabriel told her she would have a special baby boy named Jesus, who would be God's Son. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph, and an angel also told Joseph in a dream to care for Mary and the baby.

- **The Journey to Bethlehem:** A ruler called for a census, so everyone had to travel to their home town. Mary and Joseph made the long trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- **A Humble Birth:** Because Bethlehem was crowded, there was no room at the inn. A kind innkeeper let them stay in a stable. There, baby Jesus was born, wrapped in warm cloths, and laid in a manger.
- **The Shepherds:** Out in the hills, shepherds were watching their sheep at night. A bright angel appeared and shared the joyful news of Jesus's birth. Soon, many angels filled the sky singing praises. The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see baby Jesus.
- **The Wise Men:** Far away in the East, wise men saw a bright new star in the sky. Knowing it meant a special king had been born, they followed the star to find Jesus and brought him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



Christmas Giving

By Iris W. Bray

Christmas is for giving
And for showing that we care,
For honouring the Christ Child
With the loving gifts we share

The wise men gave of riches;
The shepherds, faith and love.
Each gift, in its own measure,
Was smiled on from above.

Let every gift be treasured;
Not always size or price
Determines the extent of love
And willing sacrifice.

Handsome gifts with festive trim
Brings smiles of sweet content,
But modest gifts of humble means
Are ofttimes heaven sent.

Whether it be large or small
Each gift will share in part
The message of true Christmas joy
If given from the heart!

