



Stretton Parish

CONTACT

News for weekend beginning Friday 12th September 2025

Parish Website: www.strettonparish.org.uk

Parish office: 01694 724224 office@strettonparish.org.uk

The next Contact will be issued on Friday 26th September 2025

Teas to Please

I have heard it said that at no other time throughout the year can so many people be seen walking towards Little Stretton!

With the Shropshire Strummers and the Church Stretton Accordion Band providing the entertainment, talented bakers from all over the area preparing numerous cakes and pavlovas, and a dedicated team of volunteers ready to swing into action, all that we needed was the weather, and it didn't disappoint.

Well in advance of the opening time, people were arriving to enjoy this much-loved tradition, enhanced in recent years by the Scarecrow Competition, which is organised by the Little Stretton Village Society and generates much interest and excitement.

We were joined this year by a team from West Mercia Search & Rescue. As our chosen charity, it couldn't have been more local, with at least two residents of Little Stretton being active volunteers, and the organisation receiving regular calls to attend emergencies in our beautiful hills. We were so pleased to be able to support them this year, donating half of what was made over the two days.

The Teas to Please Committee would like to thank you for supporting this event by volunteering, baking, providing Tombola items and things for sale, or just coming along to enjoy the atmosphere and a delicious afternoon tea. It was a pleasure to see so many people enjoying themselves, and we were also pleasantly surprised to hear from our Treasurer that we made a total of £6,426.15.

Julie Lawton - Churchwarden

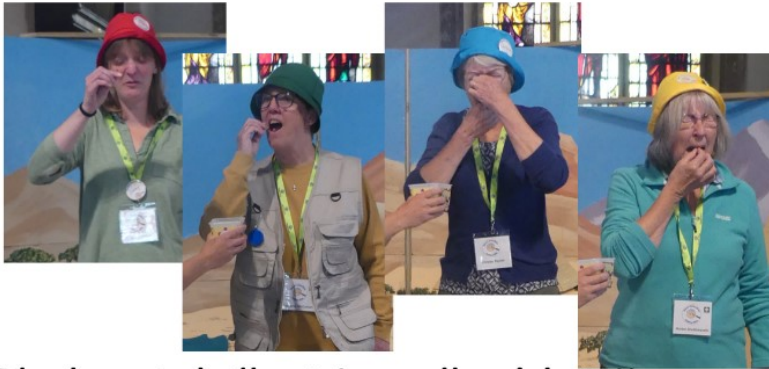


Our Associate Minister Chris is currently taking a few weeks off to spend time looking after her Dad, following a fall. Please do pray for Chris, her Dad and all the family at this time.

Desert Detectives Holiday Club

Once again on August Bank Holiday Monday the church was transformed in preparation for Holiday Club and this year we journeyed into the Egyptian Desert, complete with pyramids and the river Nile. Our upfront team of archaeologists were getting ready for four days of digging for artefacts to help us retell the story of Moses. They were assisted by four Tent Teams who housed the new recruits for the week. – 39 enthusiastic 4 – 11 years olds (those starting Reception class in September 2025 and including those who had just completed Year 6), with 64% attending every day and several children returning for their third year.

During the week we heard how God had a plan for Moses' life as he was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter, encountered God in a burning bush, his reliance on God through the plagues and the joy of rescuing the Israelites through the Red Sea. We were delighted to be able to share some aspects of Desert Detectives at the United Service as we discovered that God continued to provide for the Israelites for 40 years as they wandered through the desert.



The locust challenge! – well, crickets!!

We of course included all the usual elements of Holiday Club with songs, dance, challenges, jokes, crafts, games, water squirting, cream pies and lots of desserts! The children were divided into four age-grouped Tent Teams and they provided opportunities to build relationships, and to have more in-depth, age-appropriate teaching and discussion time. Everyone also had tasty, packed lunches provided every day by our kitchen team!

It was wonderful that by the end of the week the children were able to say with great enthusiasm, confidence and actions the memory verse:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

There were 27 adults involved in Desert Detectives during the four days the club ran, but many more were involved in preparing, loaning equipment, setting up and packing away. Without such a dedicated team holding such an event would not be possible. We also had an amazing crew of 7 young people – Esther, Annabel, Toby, Jacob C, Isaac, Jacob F and Ruari – who stepped up to whatever task was asked of them. Huge thanks to everyone who was involved, and especially to all of you who prayed for us – the Holy Spirit was definitely with us and at work!

Sally Clilverd, Children and Families Worker



Pyramid Prayers

TRY ALPHA  **Stretton Parish**

A different kind of hope.

Explore the Christian faith on *your terms* at Alpha.

It's free and includes a meal and we would love to welcome you!

Thursdays, starting 25 September at 19:30pm

AT THE PARISH CENTRE, CHURCH STRETTON

Let us know you are coming or to ask a question:
01694 724224/ strettonparish.org.uk or
or use the QR code 



Alpha

Are you interested in attending Alpha? Or do you know someone who you think might be? It would be helpful if you book in by **17th September**, so we can plan the catering.

You can book your place using [this link](#)

Could you help with the catering? Dave Gibson is heading this up, but we need two assistants each week. You would need to arrive at 7pm to help serve the meal and clear away afterwards. Your meal will be provided. If you can help, please contact the office as soon as possible, Thank you.

Calling all bakers: Could you provide a cake one week for Alpha? We are also looking to provide cakes for those attending the Bible Course. If you can offer, please let Jo know: jo.aze@strettonparish.org.uk or 724224. Thank you.

 **Stretton Parish** 

We are running The Bible Course and would love you to join us!

The Course will help you discover how Bible characters, stories, and themes are connected, from Genesis to Revelation.

Wednesdays, starting 1 October at 19:30pm

AT THE PARISH CENTRE, CHURCH STRETTON

Let us know you are coming or to ask a question:
01694 724224/ strettonparish.org.uk or
or use the QR code 



The Bible Course is open to anyone who would like to learn more about the Bible, helping you to discover how Bible characters, stories and themes are connected, from Genesis to Revelation. You are very welcome to come along, whether you have been a Christian for many years, or are new to the Christian faith. There are eight sessions and the format is videos followed by questions and discussion using the Bible Course Guidebook,

Further information is available on the [Bible Society website](#).

There are eight sessions, to be held weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, beginning on 1st October.

Do [book in](#) to register your place on the course.

Introducing our new Readers, Paul and Kate Green

On Sunday 7th September, Rev Mark Godson, Ministry Development Officer for the Hereford Diocese came to the morning service at St Laurence where he licensed Paul and Kate Green as Readers. We asked them to write a little bit about themselves by way of introduction.

Kate: I feel blessed to have first encountered God on a family visit to Australia. It was the time of the Charismatic renewal (then called The 'Toronto Blessing') and was pretty wild in some ways, but my experience of God's knowledge and love for me was profound and life-changing. My career has mainly been in the wine trade, including teaching wine courses, until I retrained as a relationship counsellor, which I practised for 10 years.

Paul and I have been Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) in Essex for several years, and love serving the rural church. I am also a Spiritual Director.

I love theology, good conversations and nice food and wine with friends, walking our dog, Holly and watching good tv dramas.

Paul: Hello, I'm Paul, married to Kate with a dog called Holly. Although I have degrees in science and maths, I think creatively which enabled me to become a founding director of three technology companies. Becoming a Christian as a teenager, I came alive with the Holy Spirit in 2005.

Wanting a solid grounding for my charismatic experience I studied theology and developed an enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God, applying it in ministry and at work. In 2016, I was licensed as a Lay Minister joining a team ministry with nine rural parishes in Essex and engaging with other activities in the diocese. I am now a guide at Ironbridge Gorge Museums, dabble in model railways and have just started studying for an MA in Kingdom Theology. For me, the best thing about living in Stretton is walking in the hills with our dog and often chatting with people we meet about Jesus.

We look forward to getting to know you!



Stretton Parish's Harvest Services, Sunday 5th October

This harvest Stretton Parish is looking locally and globally.

Locally, our produce will go to the Stretton Foodbank. A list of suggested items will be in the next Contact.

Globally, our monetary gifts given at our Harvest services will be sent to Tearfund, which provides the finances for innovative Bible-based training to be delivered through local churches around the world. This training brings hope and belonging through the local church, and communities begin to use their own skills and resources to lift themselves out of poverty. Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme brings change that is both sustainable and equipping. Investing in communities, we can help transform lives because God takes the small things and multiplies them beyond all we can imagine.

Our monetary gifts can either be by cash, or by using the card readers situated in St Laurence Church, All Saints Church and the hall in the Parish Centre. Use the "Harvest" option on the card reader menu. Alternatively, donate via [Tearfund's website](#). If you want to Gift Aid, please give direct to Tearfund as we can only reclaim Gift Aid where money being given is for our income. HMRC are very specific about this.

Stretton Parish Harvest Hoedown

Saturday 4th October 6pm-9pm, St Laurence Church

Plans for this year's Harvest Hoedown are now underway, this year back on Saturday evening.

This is an opportunity for the church to engage with our community. So **please invite friends and neighbours** to join with us to celebrate the Harvest season and remember and be thankful for God's bounty to us. Flyers are available in the churches.

Please book in via the [church website](#) or use the QR code or call the church office.

Tickets are £8 per adult, children free (up to two per adult). A simple Harvest supper will be served (for which donations will be gratefully received on the night).



Help is needed:

- * to **prepare the church** on Saturday morning;
- * to **organise the drinks** in the Parish Centre —perhaps a Life Group could take this on?
- * to help **prepare the food** on Saturday afternoon;
- * and if you don't (or can't dance) there are **supporting tasks** which you can help with on the night – e.g. greeting people, sitting by the South door, pouring drinks.



Please contact me or Jo in the office if you can help. Thanks for your support and looking forward to seeing you at the Hoedown.

Marion Shuttleworth

Harvest lunches on Sunday 5th October at All Saints and St Michael's

- * St Michael's is hosting a two-course harvest lunch at All Stretton Village Hall at 12.30pm. Please [book in via the website](#) or there is a sign-up list at St Michael's.
- * The lunch at All Saints, Little Stretton is at 12 noon, book with Liz Bourke on 01694 722910.

Payment for both lunches is by donation, all proceeds to Tearfund's Harvest Appeal. Everyone is invited to these lunches.

Experience Harvest

At the end of September we are inviting local primary schools to join us for another 'Experience' week. The church will be set up with 5 stations all based around Harvest. If you have any of the following resources that I could borrow for the stations please can you let me know:

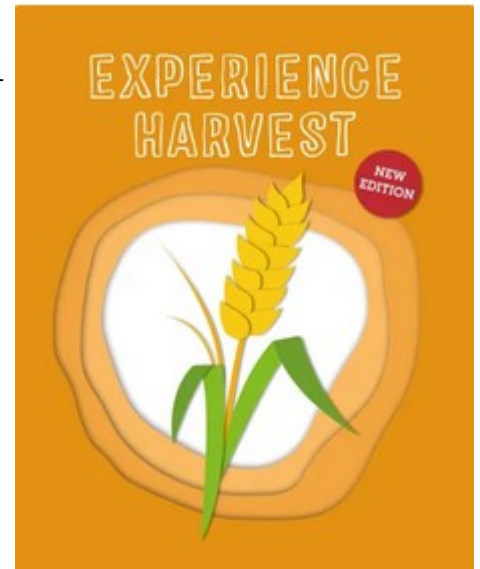
- Hand-thrown ceramic ware
- Bread crock/bin
- Traditional masonware mixing bowl
- Lobster pots, buoys, anchor, thick rope (anything I can use to represent sea fishing!)
- Metal watering can, clay pots, traditional trug

Also, if anyone has the skills to create a traditional harvest loaf that would be amazing!

Please do pray for us as we prepare for this and the children and staff who will visit.

Many thanks, as always, for your support.

Sally, Children and Families Worker



Parish Choir

We are so grateful to be able to use our musical gifts to enable sung worship across the Strettons. Many of our members have served the church in this ministry for many years and recently some have decided it is time to gracefully retire. We'd like to record our thanks to them but also open up the opportunity for new people to come and sing with us.

If you'd like to explore whether this is for you, just come along to our weekly Friday practice in St. Laurence's at 5pm and have a go. We're a lovely, friendly group. We sing in church about once a month. You don't have to be able to read music (though it helps) but being able to sing is an advantage!

More information: ring Ru (07793001649)

Churches Together

The next Churches Together Open Forum is on Wednesday 24th September, 7.15pm for 7.30pm start in the Methodist Church Hall. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

One of the items for discussion on the agenda is our Holy Week arrangements. We are **urgently** in need of a small group of volunteers to help organise this. If you'd like to be involved please go along to the meeting or let Steve know. A checklist is now in place to help with this role.





PRAYER FOCUS

We pray for local, national and international needs:

- Let us give grateful thanks to God for the fun enjoyed by the children who attended Holiday Club. May their exploration into God's faithfulness to Moses and His love in sending Jesus encourage them to put their trust in God.
- Please pray that all those who have signed up for the Alpha course may find it a time when they can feel relaxed and able to voice questions they have about the Christian faith. May the Holy Spirit encourage other people to join this group.
- May those leading school Assemblies be given wisdom and vision as they present the Good News to the young people and the staff.
- Give thanks to God for the recent rain and pray that farmers may be given guidance as they plan for the year ahead.
- Please pray that God will have mercy on our nation, that there may be a healing of the fragmentation of so much in society that is causing conflict and aggression.
- Pray for wisdom and guidance for all those people seeking to bring about peace in the Middle East.
- We ask that God may give courage and hope to the people of Ukraine as they try to protect their right to freedom and democracy.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at
risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

We pray for those who mourn,

For the family and friends of **Janet Wilcoxon**.
A thanksgiving service will be held in
St Laurence at 1.30pm on Tuesday 16th
September;
And the family and friends of **Brian Jones**
whose funeral is at 11.30am on Saturday 27th
September at All Saints.

Please pray for Sophie-Nicole Dodds and
Barnaby Russell who are marrying at All
Saints on Thursday 18th September.

Memorial Book

We give thanks for the lives of those in our memorial book in September:

David Elderwick, Alma Wright, Ada Jarvis,
Gwendoline Mason, Jennifer Roberts, Hensley Hawes,
Robert Williams, Thomas Reece, Arthur Hardingham,
Jack Birks, Richard Yates, Celia Hills, Edward Jenkins,
Bob Tanner, Richard Evans, Charles Young,
Graham Scott, Susan Lee, Ivy Downes, Bill Mackay,
Daisy Williams, Richard Turner Jones,
Adam Williamson, Gwyneth Evans.

Residential Homes

We pray for all our residential
homes, this month particularly
remembering Field House

NOTICE BOARD

Youth Weekend Away —Sponsorship invitation

In October the Youth Life Group are having a weekend away together at Rock UK Summit Centre, South Wales.

We want all the youth to attend if they wish to. The cost of a place is £150. If you would like to sponsor a place for a young person to go on the weekend by making a donation towards the cost, that would be welcomed. You can do so by donating via [this link](#) or speak to one of the clergy, or Graham Vince, our treasurer.



Taizé Worship: Sunday 14th September at 6pm at St Milburga's. Join us for 40 minutes of singing, readings, prayers and a time of quiet reflection. Stretton Taizé is associated with Churches Together in the Strettons.



Could you help clean the brass in St Laurence Church?

The brasses are polished in St Laurence every month by a rota of lovely volunteers. We have gaps in February, June and July. Could you offer to help? If so, please offer to Jo at 01694 724224 or jo.aze@strettonparish.org.uk

The photo to the left shows Pat and Jill having fun cleaning the brasses at All Saints!

St Laurence Working Party

Saturday 20th September, 9.30am-12.30pm

Please come along to lend a hand with jobs around the churchyard, even if it's just for an hour. All help very much appreciated. Thank you.



Our verse for 2025

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.."



1 Samuel 12:24



DIARY

Sunday 14th September Readings Jeremiah 4.22-28, Luke 15.1-10

St. Laurence's	8.30am	Holy Communion, Order 1
	10.30am	Morning Worship
St Michael's	10.30am	Holy Communion, URC
All Saints	10.30am	Morning Prayer, Common Worship
Parish Centre	5pm	Young People's Life Group
Online Service	10.00am	Online, via website

Monday 15th September

7.30pm St Michael's ECC

Tuesday 16th

9.15am Parish Prayer Meeting, St Laurence
1.30pm Thanksgiving Service for Janet Wilcoxon, St Laurence

Thursday 18th

10.00am Parents and Toddlers, Parish Centre
10.30am Holy Communion, Order 1, St Laurence
3.00pm Wedding of Sophie-Nicole Dodds and Barnaby Russell, All Saints

Friday 19th

9.00am Prayer Meeting, St Michael's
5.00pm Choir Practice, St Laurence

Saturday 20th

9.30am St Laurence Working Party—see separate notice

Sunday 21st September Readings Jeremiah 8.18-9.1, Luke 16.1-13

St. Laurence's	8.30am	Holy Communion, Order 2
	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Deeper
St Michael's	10.30am	Morning Worship
All Saints	10.30am	Holy Communion, Order 1
Parish Centre	5pm	Young People's Life Group
Online Service	10.00am	Online, via website

Tuesday 23rd

9.15am Parish Prayer Meeting, St Laurence
7.30pm PCC, Children's Room, Parish Centre

Wednesday 24th

10.15am Banner Group, Children's Room
7.30pm Churches Together Open Forum, Methodist Church Hall

Thursday 25th

10.00am Parents and Toddlers, Parish Centre
10.30am Holy Communion, St Laurence, Order 2
7.30pm Alpha, Parish Centre

Friday 26th

9.00am Prayer Meeting, St Michael's
5.00pm Choir Practice, St Laurence

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Anna Hunt is now in post as our new Operations Manager. Initially this position is for twenty-five hours a week for a fixed term for two years. We pray this may be funded from additional giving. We have a vision that, as well as one-off giving, there will be a commitment of 50 x £30 x 24 i.e. fifty people committing £30/month for two years which, with Gift Aid, amounts to £40,000 (£20,000 a year) which covers salary, pension, NI etc. We are seeking Project Angels who would be willing to support with financing. Leaflets are available, explaining the plan in more detail, and we would ask that you talk about it, pray about it and speak to any member of the Ministry Team should you need further information.

HOW YOU CAN GIVE:

Monthly giving - if you are able to commit to a monthly amount, please do so using this link -

<https://tinyurl.com/GivingOpsMgr> - which takes you to the Parish Giving Scheme.

One-off giving - please choose one of the following three options:-

a) please use this link - <https://tinyurl.com/GivingOpsMgr> - which takes you to the Parish Giving Scheme.

b) or you may prefer to make a one-off gift direct into the church's bank account. The bank details are as follows:-

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling., ME19 4JQ

Account name: Stretton Parish

Sort code: 40-52-40

Account number: 00090571

Reference: Ops Mgr Fund

Please can you make sure that you quote the reference above, so that I can clearly see that your gift is for the Operations Manager fund. If you have already completed a Gift Aid declaration I will reclaim Gift Aid on your gift unless you tell me not to do so.

c) or you can make a gift by cheque or cash - please make your cheque payable to "Stretton Parish" - please put your cheque or cash in an envelope clearly marked "Operations Manager Fund" and give the envelope to the Parish Office. If you have already completed a Gift Aid declaration I will Reclaim Gift Aid on your gift unless you tell me not to do so.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me:

email graham.vince@strettonparish.org.uk or 07455-917082.

Thank you.

Graham Vince, Parish Treasurer

Rector	Rev Steve Johnson	steve.johnson@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 722585
Curate	Rev Mary Carter	mary.carter@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 328649
Associate Minister	Rev Preb Christobel Hargraves	chris.hargraves@strettonparish.org.uk	01547 550311
LEP URC Minister, St Michaels	Rev Hazel Allen	hazel.allen@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 751400
Children & Families Worker	Sally Clilverd	sally@strettonparish.org.uk	07985 943 906
Readers	Gillian Taylor	gillian.taylor@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 724224
	Chris Lear	chris@barcombe.net	07514 738 653
Churchwardens	Stephen Carter	stephen.carter@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 328649
	Julie Lawton	julie.lawton@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 723750
Deputy Wardens			
St Laurence	James Foster	james.foster@strettonparish.org.uk	07736 324 160
All Saints	Moiria Matthews	moiraemathews@gmail.com	01694 723045
Pastoral Coordinator	Rev Nancy Cleaton	nancy.cleaton@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 328132
Treasurer	Graham Vince	graham.vince@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 328478
Rector's PA	Jo Aze	jo.aze@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 724224
Operations Manager	Anna Hunt	anna.hunt@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 724224
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Chrissie Pepler	chrissie.pepler@strettonparish.org.uk	01694 771888
Life Group Coordinator	Rev Caroline Windley	caroline.windley@strettonparish.org.uk	
Rector's Day Off	Fridays	Church office hours: 9am-12.30pm Monday to Friday	