

<b>Services at the Parish Church</b>		<i>1st Sunday</i>	10.00 am	Morning Prayer	
Sundays	8:00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	
Thursdays	10.00 am	Eucharist (BCP)	<i>3rd Sunday</i>	10.00 am	Family Service

## SERVICES for DECEMBER and CHRISTMAS



6th	Sunday	<b>St Andrew's, Soham</b>
	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.00 am	Morning Prayer
	3.00 pm	CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
		<b>St Laurence, Wicken</b>
	10.30 am	Holy Communion
13th	Sunday	<b>St Andrew's, Soham</b>
	8.00	NO SERVICE
	10.00 am	Sung Eucharist
		<b>St Laurence, Wicken</b>
	10.30 am	Morning Prayer (United with Methodists)
20th	Sunday	<b>St Andrew's, Soham</b>
	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.00am	Family Service
	6.30 pm	CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE
		<b>St Laurence, Wicken</b>
	4.00 pm	CAROL SERVICE
24th	Christmas Eve	<b>St Andrew's, Soham</b>
	4.00 pm	NATIVITY SERVICE
	11.15 pm	MIDNIGHT MASS
		<b>St Laurence, Wicken</b>
	4.00 pm	NATIVITY SERVICE
25th	Christmas Day	<b>St Andrew's, Soham</b>
	10.00 am	Family Sung Eucharist
		<b>St Laurence, Wicken</b>
	10.30 am	Service of the Word
27th	Sunday	<b>St. Andrew's, Soham</b>
	10.00 am	United Morning Prayer
		No Service at Wicken

## Soham and Wicken Churches Bereavement Support Group

Someone said to me a few years ago “If I could wave a magic wand and take this all away from you I would, but all I can do is sit with you and hold your hand.” The same person also talked about “Looking for the fingertip of God” as we go about our daily lives. Taking a few moments to look at a beautiful sunset, a cloud formation, children playing, snapshot moments that make us stop and wonder at the beauty of God’s creation. Very difficult to do sometimes, I am writing this two days after the attacks in Paris.

From a personal point of view I had to dig very deep four years ago to search for the fingertip of God. In the space of eleven months I lost my husband, brother and mother. It was then I needed people to sit and hold my hand. Words are so hard in this situation, but a cup of tea, a walk with my dogs, friendly smile or hug really did help. I also had support from Cruse Bereavement Care, who told me about a coffee morning they run in Ely twice a month. Sadly there was nothing like this in Soham, Cruse have limited resources and are, at times, overwhelmed to meet the needs locally, so I decided to try and set one up.

I mentioned my idea to Sue Simpson and within a few weeks we were up and running! It is a small group, who meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the church meeting room from 10.30 am to noon for coffee and refreshments. We chat, support each other and yes, even laugh sometimes. We cannot take away your pain and the suffering of grief, but we can share it with you and sit with you whilst you are adapting to the new way of life that bereavement brings.



*I will guide you  
I will turn darkness into light places before you  
and make the rough places smooth*

If you would like to talk to someone, or would like a visit or lift please contact Lynne Turner, [turnerlynn7@aol.com](mailto:turnerlynn7@aol.com) (01353 722146 / 07718 140477) or Claudia Stein-Carr, [Claudia@agbs.demon.co.uk](mailto:Claudia@agbs.demon.co.uk) (01353 727749).

Dates for next year: 27th January, 24th February, 23rd March. *Lynne Turner*

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## LENT BOOK 2016 – WE NEED YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN!

2015’s Lent Booklet included favourite readings and some personal thoughts from Soham and Wicken residents. We need your help to make the Lent Booklet for 2016.

Please could you tell us the name or first line of a hymn that you like, and write two or three paragraphs about why you’ve chosen it. For example, you might mention a time the hymn meant a lot to you, or something that it always reminds you of, or an important truth that it ‘speaks’ to you about. As Ruth Dennigan said in a recent Lodestar article, it’s really encouraging to hear a bit about each others’ stories of faith.

You don’t need to send us the hymn – just the first line or its title. If at all possible please email this to our special address which is [sandwrentbook2016@gmail.com](mailto:sandwrentbook2016@gmail.com) (standing for Soham & Wicken Lent Book 2016). If you really can’t email, please pass your hand-written piece to a churchwarden at either St Andrew’s or St Laurence’s. Helen Randall will gather everyone’s contributions and make them into a booklet. Please send her something before Christmas, so she has time to put it together before Lent which starts on 10th Feb. Thank you for your help!



## PARISH REGISTERS



### Funerals

10th November	Noel Coulson (92 years)
13th November	Philip John Talbot
18th November	Lilian ‘Elsie’ May Murfet (95 years)
20th November	Valerie Avril Thomas (88 years)

# CHRISTMAS

“Is it there yet?” “Can you see it?” “Has he got it with him?”

These are just some of the questions that start the day as excited children (and some adults as well) appear at the door waiting to get in. These days there are even a few desperately enquiring a couple of days beforehand to check that all is ready, everything is ok and what time it is all happening.

It may sound a little like Christmas Day for many of you, but in this case it's two different days of the year, the Carnival and the Pumpkin Fair, as children and others peer into the Scout Hut to see if it is there. “It”, well yes, I'm the person that made and brings along the Meccano Marble Bouncer which has fascinated and entertained a generation of children, and their parents, and many of their grandparents as well. “Can we just wait and see...” is a common question on those two days as everyone seems to have a different favourite marble that they must watch go around again – even if I'm sure there are some out there just quietly waiting for the day it all goes horribly wrong and marbles go everywhere.

Of course it's bound to be a little like Christmas as some of the Meccano I've collected over the years was given to its first owners as presents even if years later some of it has come to me and others as parcels in the post. Indeed I believe the local Post Office a few years ago started to inform the newer people delivering to me that “Tony collects Meccano, some of his parcels are meant to rattle”. Certainly in recent years there have been no worried “I'm sorry it rattles, it wasn't me who dropped it” comments as items are delivered.

In a way it's amazing that a couple of hundred bits from a 1950s construction set, a dozen marbles and a couple of kitchen gloves can bring so many to a state of childlike fascination as they happily stand and watch it year after year.

Christmas though is one of those times of the year when the world around is transformed, the streets gain decorative lights and we have various events to celebrate it as we all return, a little at least, to that childlike state of wonder. Even if, deep in our hearts it is unlikely, we still sing and dream that this year we'll see a White Christmas.

Yet amid all of the hustle and bustle of making sure we've got all the presents, the turkey and the trimmings and have sorted out where we are going on Christmas Day, hopefully we won't forget the reason we are celebrating it all – the moment around 2000 years ago when God, in the form of a tiny baby, came amongst us to show & teach us how to live our lives. Not something announced by an official messenger at the court of a king or emperor but rather by a choir of angels to a group of lowly shepherds sitting on a hillside. *Tony Brown*

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## Foodbank News.

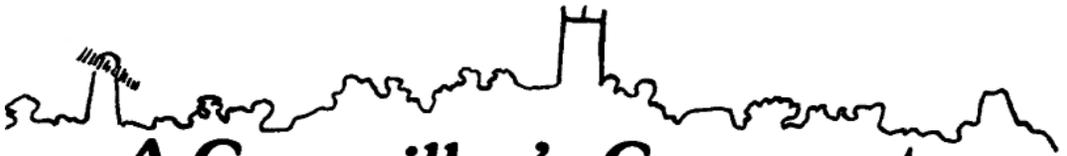
There was an East of England regional meeting in Cambridge earlier this month which was attended by representatives of the foodbanks in the area. Presentations were given by members of the Trussel Trust management, the most interesting one being about rural poverty in East Anglia compiled by two independent universities. Compared to urban areas the average pay is ten to fifteen percent less and the cost of living is fifteen to twenty percent more. The main reason for the higher costs is the need for transport, higher fuel costs and local shops charging higher prices.

In parallel with the financial issues they compared public health and mortality (including suicide) between the two areas concluding that there is a higher incidence of depression and other mental illnesses with their associated side effects.

It didn't come as a surprise but to get hard facts that confirm what we see on a regular weekly basis was of little comfort.

What do you tell a young mother with three children who because of domestic abuse was moved to a house in a village with no shops or bus service and has been brought to the foodbank by her neighbours?

How would you deal with a young father, again with three children, whose wife left them - with the child allowance being paid into her account which she refused to hand over? *[continued on the next page]*



# A Councillor's Comments

At our November Council Meeting there was no Public Comment Time

County and District Council Reports: These included a report that Tracy Harding was trying to get the Soham Weekly Market established. There was also concern expressed that there was a need for a roundabout put in place on the Soham By-Pass in the light of a recent accident there. There will be a roundabout when the Eastern Gateway Development takes place but the County Councillors expressed their frustration about the lack of progress on this project.

Community Amenities Committee: At long last we have an answer to a request made to East Cambs. to update the rules governing our Soham Commons because the existing rules were made by the Rural District Council. But sometime in the past, which could be 1972, this was passed over to East Cambs. Now East Cambs declined to update any rules pertaining to the Soham Commons. The Rights of the Commons belong to the Lord of the Manor, but not the land. The Town Council have the responsibility to maintain them in good order. These Commons are unique and precious and need guarding against any form of encroachment or abuse, thus we need updated local rules to protect them. The Council are planning to convene a meeting with the Lord of the Manor to discuss this issue.

Cemetery and Allotments Committee: There were plans to do some tree replacing in the Cemetery and to replace the diseased hedge surrounding the cremation plot. There was some concern that some people were getting unauthorised access to Berrycroft allotments and plans were made to eliminate this.

Applications For Financial Support: The usual appeal to the council to cover the cost of insurance for erecting the festive lights in our town. This was granted, but support for the Soham Lodge Christmas Bazaar, to raise funds to take the clients out on day trips was declined as they are a private business. Another one called Cruse Bereavement Care were to be asked to come to a future meeting to give a presentation of their work.

Footpath Consultation Proposal: This concerns the footpath going through the centre of the college campus. There has been in the past several incidents of harassment and abuse subjected to both pupils and members of staff. The police have been called on a number of occasions and as they cannot be on hand for all the school hours, they had decided to close the path off during school hours and term time. But after a recent consultation it was proposed to monitor the path with a camera, so that the path may remain open under strict rules of conduct for all other users of the path. The council have agreed to fund one quarter of the cost.

Public Toilets Fountain Lane Car Park: East Cambs. had proposed to hand the maintaining of these toilets to Soham Town Council They would pay us a lump sum to run them for three years after which they would be ours to maintain by ourselves. We would need to get a cleaning company both to clean and maintain them. It was decided to accept the money for the three years and this would then give us a clear idea of how much it would cost before deciding if we wanted to carry on. *Councillor Ginn*

*[continued from the previous page]*

We never know what to expect on a Thursday morning apart from the fact there will be some pretty sad stories. To date this year the number of "mouths fed" for three days is about the same as last year

Some families and individuals have come on more then one occasion.

We are non judgemental, and strictly confidential.

You can help by making donations or if you want to volunteer to help you are more then welcome. Thank you.

households, both family and individuals .....	447
scroungers .....	maybe 5
foreigners .....	none
<i>(apart from a man sleeping rough for whom the police asked for some food)</i>	

*Howard Laver*



☆ **Over 60's Lunch** at Soham Village College, Lodeside Dining Hall. This will take place on Wednesday, 9th December and will be followed by mincepies and tea or coffee served in the Performing Arts Centre with entertainment by the Students. Tickets are £4.50 (Members of Soham Over 60's Club £3.00) and are available from P. Gibbon (01353 723491).

☆ **Soham Museum Coffee Morning** Saturday 5th December, 10.00 am to 12 noon at Soham library. Christmas goods stalls. Come along for a chat and a coffee. All are warmly welcomed.

☆ **200+Club winners for November** Emily Sargeant £5; Rachel Moore £10

☆ **Items for the February edition of LodeStar** should be submitted by Friday, 22nd January, 2016. E-mails should be sent to [peterdscott@btopenworld.com](mailto:peterdscott@btopenworld.com) or printed copy left at 22 Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA. Note that there is no edition in January.

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## Prickwillow Engine Museum

Prickwillow Engine Museum Christmas Run Day will take place on Sunday, 6th December from 11.00 to 16.00. For further details call 01353 720737.

Admission Adults £5.00; Concessions £4.00; Children £2.00; Families £12.00; Under 6 Free.

As well as the usual museum exhibitions and engine demonstrations there will be craft stalls selling unusual Christmas gifts and cards, a raffle, a fairground organ playing carols, bygones, bric-a-brac, various fun activities as well as jacket potato lunches and of course homemade mince pies and cakes to enjoy.

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## Eddies service (AD 687)

Eddi, priest of St Winifred  
In his chapel at Manhood End  
Ordered a midnight service  
For such as cared to attend

But three are gathered together  
Listen to me and attend,  
I bring good news my brethren  
Said Eddi of Manhood End.

But the Saxons were keeping Christmas  
And the night was stormy as well  
Nobody came to the service  
Though Eddi rang the bell.

And he told the ox of a manger  
And a stall in Bethlehem  
And he spoke to the ass of a rider  
Who rode to Jerusalem.

“Wicked weather for walking”  
Said Eddi of Manhood End  
“But I must go on with the service  
For such as care to attend”.

They steamed and dripped in the chancel  
They listened and never stirred  
While just as though they were bishops  
Eddi preached them the word.

The altar lamps were lighted  
An old marsh donkey came,  
Bold as a guest invited  
And stared at the guttering flame.

’Til the gale blew off on the marshes  
And the windows showed the day.  
And the ox and ass together  
Wheeled and clattered away.

The storm beat on the windows  
The water splashed on the floor,  
And a wet, yoke-weary bullock  
Pushed in through the open door.

And when the Saxons mocked him,  
Said Eddi of Manhood End  
“I dare not shut His chapel  
To such as care to attend.”

How do I know what is greatest,  
How do I know what is least?  
That is my father’s business  
Said Eddi, Wilfred’s priest.



# Just a few words

Ruth Dennigan

Dear friends,

As this month begins, world leaders are embarking on addressing what has been described as “the most severe problem we are facing today - more serious even than the threat of terrorism”: climate change (David King, U.K. Chief Scientific Advisor <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/77>). The rising overall temperature of the planet has led to changes in climate, resulting in disruption to food systems and water availability, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. These issues are having a significant effect now but, if left unchecked, the impact will worsen in years to come. Nov 30<sup>th</sup> to Dec 11<sup>th</sup> is COP21, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (see <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/> for information). There has been little media publicity in the run-up to the conference although, if you know where to look, you can read of campaigns and pilgrimages aimed at raising the profile of the event and communicating a sense of urgency to world leaders. People of faith have been called to take action, but why? Why should our faith lead us to take the threat of climate change seriously?

Later this month we will once again celebrate God’s ultimate expression of his love for his creation: the sending of his Son, Jesus. This is the climax in a story that had continued for generations, as God sought new ways to reach out to his creation and communicate his love for them - for us. It’s the story told in the Bible, of God desiring loving relationship, humankind not wishing to respect the boundaries of the relationship and so turning away, God repeatedly calling them back and finding new ways to make it easier to maintain the relationship, and ultimately sending Jesus in order to make a new kind of relationship possible. It’s a story which demonstrates the value God places on his creation - on us, and the world in which we live. It’s a story which calls us to value God’s creation - our fellow humans now and in future generations, and the natural world.

How can we do this? Reducing our use of fossil fuels, avoiding flying, limiting the amount we drive, saving water, campaigning against governmental policies that reduce research into renewable energy and checking that wood products and fish come from sustainable sources are all significant actions we can take. Living more as a community - sharing transport, buying locally and getting involved in caring for the local natural world - will help too.

As we celebrate again the birth of Jesus, let’s remember God’s love for his creation in the sending of his Son. Let’s look again at creation and learn to see it - ourselves, those around us and around the globe, and the natural world - as God sees it: as good, beautiful, worth loving and worth saving. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, with the opportunities it brings, let’s resolve to take action to save this creation that is so loved by God.

*Ruth Dennigan. Licensed Lay Minister, Soham and Wicken*

Book Review: *Accidental Saints: Finding God in all the wrong people* by Nadia Bolz-Weber (Canterbury Press, Norwich 2015)

The trouble with us in the church is that we often assume - usually without meaning to - that to be in church, and to hear God, involves being a certain kind of person living in a certain kind of way. Nadia Bolz-Weber pastors a Lutheran church in Denver, USA, which has discovered time and time again that God doesn’t have those assumptions. This book tells of glimpses of God in unlikely people and unexpected places. When life is at its grittiest, its rawest, or its most beautiful, God is present and ready to reach out and transform whatever it is that we have to offer.

