

**May 2026**



# **Pentecost**

*Benefice Newsletter*

—  
**SEVEN**

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**CHURCHES**

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We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

We try to be a church which welcomes and values everyone so we strive to celebrate and affirm every person and do not discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, age, experience, background or sexuality.

## **A Time for New Beginnings**

May is a busy time in the church year - Thursday 14 May is Ascension Day and we also celebrate Pentecost on 24th May at Thorpe Abbots

As we celebrate Pentecost, we remember the powerful moment when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, transforming fear into confidence and uncertainty into bold leadership. It was the beginning of something new - the birth of the Church and a reminder that God continues to guide and renew His people in every generation.

Pentecost is not only a story from the past; it is a living reality for us today. The same Spirit that empowered the early followers of Christ is at work among us, calling us forward, strengthening our faith, and shaping our life together as 'the body of Christ' in our communities.

This sense of new beginning is especially meaningful for us this year as we welcome the Reverend Jonathan Richardson and his wife Steph to our Benefice. Jonathan will be licensed as 'curate in charge' at a service on the 19 May at Brockdish and he will celebrate Pentecost with us at a Benefice service at Thorpe Abbots. Jonathan, our new minister, comes to lead and serve among us. We give thanks for his calling and his willingness to respond to God's invitation to minister in this place.

The arrival of a new minister marks an important moment in the life of any church. It is a time of hope, expectation, and renewal - a chance to listen together for God's direction and to grow in faith as we journey forward side by side.

We extend a heartfelt welcome and assure Jonathan and Steph of our prayers, support, and encouragement. May this be a time of fruitful ministry, deepening relationships, and joyful service as we all strive to serve God in our Benefice.

As we celebrate Pentecost, may we all be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit—ready to embrace change, to welcome new leadership, and to step forward in faith together.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.

With every blessing, Rev Sue



**All welcome to**

**The Licensing by the Rt Revd Ian Bishop, Bishop of  
Thetford  
Of  
the Revd Jonathan Richardson as Assistant Curate  
of the Benefice of Redenhall with Scole**

**On  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026  
7.00pm  
at St Peter and St Paul, Brockdish**

Refreshments will be available after the service

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**Quiz** with **Chips**

**£7**



**Saturday 27 June**

**6.30 for 7pm**

**St Andrew's Church, Scole**

**Contact Sue on 740325 to book  
as an individual or a team.**

**Bring your own drinks and glasses**

**Benefice Ascension Day Communion**

**Thursday 14th May**

**6.30pm**

**St Andrew's, Scole**

**St Peter & St Paul Brockdish**

**Saturday 16th May**

**Quiz, Brockdish Village hall,**

**7.00pm**

**St Andrew's - Scole**

**Coffee Morning**

**Saturday 2nd May**

**10.00am - 12 noon**

Come and enjoy homemade sausage rolls, cheese scones and home-baked cake along with coffee, tea, and friendly chat

All welcome.

**Harleston**

**Coffee Morning**

**Saturday 2nd May**

**King Georges Hall**

**9.30am - 12noon**

**Forget-Me-Not Cafe and Church**

**Thursday 14th May**

**London Rd Church**

**10.30am - 12.30pm**

**Chatty Church**

**Saturday 23rd May**

**King Georges Hall**

**11.00am-1.00pm**

## **Report on the Fire at St John's Church - 1<sup>st</sup> October to the end of March 2026**

A fire was discovered at St John's Church on the afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025. Over the next few hours, six fire crews with the aid of an aerial ladder platform and a water carrier, worked to put out the fire. By the evening it was deemed to be out and one crew stayed overnight to monitor things. While still burning late afternoon a rainbow had been seen arching over the building which was an encouraging sign of hope – all would be well in time. Messages of support soon came flowing in from all areas. Our architect over many years, Ruth Brennan, offered her services and has been invaluable in organising all that needs to be done in these situations. Canon Simon Blakesley promptly offered the use of the RC Chapel of St Thomas More for our 11.00am Sunday services and this is where we have settled until we can return to St John's. Our other groups, namely the Coffee Mornings, Chatty Church and the Forget Me Not Cafe, started to look for alternative venues within the town.

Once the building was handed back to us by the Fire Brigade the first job was to secure the building and make it water-tight. The roof, broken office door and broken windows were secured and Heras security fencing placed all round the outside of the building. Ecclesiastical Insurance UK were notified of the fire and the forensic investigation began. The source of the fire was confirmed as the kitchen, and accidental. Crawford's Loss Adjusters were appointed to manage the finances. Ecclesiastical confirmed at the November PCC meeting that full cover was in place both for reinstatement and where necessary replacement of any damage.

Helen Orford was able to collect the office equipment and so continue her work as Benefice Administrator. The independent groups using St John's were notified of the items that had been destroyed. The remains of the RBL and RAFA standards were returned to their owners, and a few of the school children's butterflies were collected from the

floor. Nicholas Cannon of the DAC came to advise on things going forward and said faculties would not be needed for the restoration work.

The next task was a general clean-up of the pieces of glass and slate covering the floor area. The West Window was in a poor state and was removed to be stored at Devlin Plummer with perspex being fitted into the space temporarily. Many items were placed in skips and others were taken for storage including the oil painting of John the Baptist in the Desert donated by Rev. E. Wyn Jones. A drone was used to do a survey of the inside and outside of the roof. An asbestos check was carried out. The time scale for restoration was said to be two years.

Completely destroyed parts included the whole of the kitchen and its two windows i.e. the stained glass window of the Naming of John the Baptist and the other in cathedral glass, two clerestory windows, the bible inscription over the chancel arch "Come unto me all ye that labour ---". Paul Quail's window, the Wedding at Cana, was badly damaged and will need to be re-made, as will all the other clerestory windows. St John's single bell above the vestry/office will be checked when the outside scaffolding is up. The organ suffered from the extreme heat and will be removed for restoration by Bower's of Norwich. The carving Christ Ascending by Jane Quail remained hanging over the Lady Chapel altar throughout the fire and was taken down to be stored, during which both hands came away and will be reattached during restoration. The smaller carving of Mother and Child by Marcel Glasscock is securely attached to a pillar and has been covered to protect it.

The soot damage to the stone pulpit and font was removed by specialists in the first month. Dryers were installed to run constantly as the fire brigade had needed to remove some roof slates and pour water in from the top. Arrangements were made for Seckers to come and remove the melted heating units. Scaffolding was constructed in

stages to eventually reach the inside roof level and lighting was fitted on all levels. Archdeacon Steven has ventured up the various levels with the architect to inspect the damage close-up.

A list of items was sent to us of the various items beyond economical repair, and another list of electrical items that could be restored. The old office printer was removed by Green Angel and found to be beyond repair. A further list of items being stored was then sent by Bonner. Ecclesiastical asked for a valuation of silver items which was carried out by Gaze.

BBC Look East returned to St John's to record a follow-up piece and focused on the specialist cleaning techniques and went on to visit Devlin Plummer to see the restoration of stained glass. With the scaffolding up it was possible to study the inside roof. "The roof is of softwood (possibly Douglas Fir) with a surface finish on a dark stain. It has bubbled and melted, with runs in places. Some of the roof members are badly charred".

At this point, the end of March 2026, we are studying the lists of stored items to decide on their restoration or otherwise. Ruth Brennan is sending out tenders, the various cleaning tests having been completed on the stone, floor tiles, decorative wood and reredos. In early summer the work inside the church of rebuilding and restoring, should begin in earnest.

Stephanie Woollam  
Churchwarden, PCC Secretary.

## Donations to our churches

If you would like to donate to any of the listed churches please use the QR codes below linked to the church you would like to donate to.

St John's, Harleston. St Leonard's, Billingford. All Saints, Thorpe Abbotts





## THE REGISTERS - 26TH MARCH 2026 TO 25TH APRIL 2026

### Funerals and Interments

15th April Gillian Carpenter - St Peter's, Needham.

21st April Jennifer Adams - St Mary's, Redenhall.

	<b>7churches Benefice Services</b>  <b>Compline</b> Thursday 28th May, 6.30pm All Saints, Thorpe Abbotts  <b>Celebration Service</b> Sunday 31st May 4.30pm St Andrew's , Scole.	
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### PLEASE PRAY FOR

Nick Crane, Fran Pitt-Pladdy, David Barker, Kathy Wood.

If you have a loved one who is very ill and would like them to be on our prayer list then please get in touch with one of our ministers.  
*(details on the back).*

## MAY SUNDAY SERVICES AND READINGS

<b>Sunday 3rd 5th of Easter (White)</b>	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Leonards, Billingford
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Peter & St Paul, Brockdish
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Mary's, Redenhall
	11.00am	Informal Worship	St Thomas More, Harleston
	11.00am	Informal Worship	St Andrew's, Scole
	4.00pm	Evening Prayer	St Peter's, Needham

*Acts 7.55-end/John 14.1-14*

<b>Sunday 10th 6th of Easter (White)</b>	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Peter & St Paul, Brockdish
	9.30am	Holy Communion	All Saints, Thorpe Abbotts
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	St Thomas More, Harleston
	11.00am	Holy Communion	St Andrew's, Scole

*Acts 17.22-31/John 14.15-21*

<b>Sunday 17th 7th of Easter (White)</b>	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Peter & St Paul, Brockdish
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Peter's, Needham
	11.00am	Morning Worship	St Thomas More, Harleston
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	St Andrew's, Scole
	6.00pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's, Redenhall

*Acts 1.6-14/John 17.1-11*

<b>Sunday 24th Pentecost (Red)</b>	10.30am	Benefice Service - Holy Communion	All Saints, Thorpe Abbotts
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*Acts 2.1-21/John 20.19-23*

<b>Sunday 31st Trinity Sunday (Gold or White)</b>	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Leonards, Billingford
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	St Peter & St Paul, Brockdish
	11.00am	Holy Communion	St Thomas More, Harleston
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	St Andrew's, Scole
	4.30pm	Celebration Service	St Andrew's, Scole

*2 Corinthians 13.11-end/Matthew 28.16-20*

