

Number 42
December 2025

ALCUIN NEWS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM SAINT ALCUIN OF YORK
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHAPLAINCY IN TOURAINÉ



To help make it happier in Gaza
see Page 8

ON OTHER PAGES

Heroes of the Faith	2	Praying Together	4 & 5
Father John writes	2	Facing the Future	6
Walking for God's World	3	Younger Readers	7
Special Services	3	Bishop's Advent Appeal	8

WHO'S WHO

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HEROES OF THE FAITH

Charles Stuart

King and Martyr

Born in 1600, the second son of James the First, Charles became heir apparent when he was twelve years old on the death of his brother. He succeeded to the throne in 1625, where he came up against the increasing power of an antagonistic Parliament. Combined with the religious puritanism which was prevalent, this made Charles staunch in his resistance of the power of either force in the land. He frequently dismissed sittings of Parliament and tried to enforce high-church Anglican practice on all, throughout both kingdoms of England and Scotland. Opposition resulted in civil war. After Charles' imprisonment and trial, he was put to death on 30th January 1649. Although some see him as a victim of his own pride, his faith and willingness to suffer and die for what he believed in are not in doubt.

FR JOHN WRITES



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND THEREFORE THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION, HAS ALWAYS SEEN ITSELF AS OCCUPYING THE MIDDLE GROUND OF CHRISTIANITY – THE 'VIA MEDIA'. The official news service of the Communion describes us as 'Catholic but not Roman, Reformed but not Protestant'.

This middle way is not a muddled compromise between the extremes, but a considered position. The Preface of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer speaks of our worship saying, 'It has been the wisdom of the Church of England . . . to keep the mean between the two extremes of too much stiffness in refusing, and in too much easiness in admitting any variation from it.'

This middle ground is not limited to our worship, which today rejoices as being celebrated in many different styles, reflecting our need of different ways to approach the living God. It pervades our whole ethos.

The compilers of the Prayer Book were smarting from a time when one faction of the Church, the Puritans, had not only sought to worship in their own way, but also to impose their practices on everybody. Celebrating Christmas had been made a criminal offence. And it had even cost the life of the king.

They were eager that this 'via media' be restored and that we become a broad Church once again, our theology being a blend of Scripture, Tradition and Reason, although people might give more weight to one rather than another.

It is when there are contentious issues to be confronted that this breadth comes under the greatest strain. Of course people feel strongly one way or another, but we pray that they may have the grace to respect the theology and practices of others.

Fr John

AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE



SUNG EUCHARIST

with Junior Church

11.00 am
on the 4th Sunday of the Month
in the Parish Church of St Michel
Savigny-en-Véron

ANSWERS TO OUR QUIZ

1. Nazareth 2. Gabriel 3. Carpenter
4. To register for the census (and possibly to pay taxes) 5. There was no room at the inn. 6. In a manger 7. Bethlehem 8. False. We do not know when he was born 9. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those he favours' 10. The bible doesn't say 11. Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh 12. None 13. Eight, as was required by law at the time 14. God with us 15. Isaiah 16. The shepherds 17. He was worried about the threat to his sovereignty as king 18. Bethlehem 19. westward 20. Egypt 21. It doesn't say 22. Luke and Matthew 23. Caesar Augustus 24. Two years old and under 25. True

THE ST ALCUIN CALENDAR

Our worship in the coming months

November 23rd	<i>Christ the King</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist
December 21st	<i>Advent 4</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist with Carols
January 25th	<i>Epiphany 3</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist
February 22nd	<i>Lent 1</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist

Walking for God's World



ON SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER THE ECUMENICAL GROUP FOR CHINON, with the help of the Pole Questions Ecologiques du Diocèse de Tours, organised a walk in honour of Creation Day. A small but motivated group, we began the day at the Protestant Evangelical Church with some hymns and a prayer, before donning anoraks and leaving on foot for the first half of the 9 km route. The path took us along the long-since decommissioned railway line and we took the opportunity to fill several bags of recyclable and other rubbish along the way, before turning right along the Vienne river path. We took the time to spot some different species (of birds and trees), admire a new tree planting project, and listen briefly to an interesting gentleman from the SEPANT explain the issues around water and rivers in Touraine particularly in view of certain species that have developed in great numbers and now threaten the river's wildlife population and cause erosion of the banks. Pausing for a brief visit at the stunning church in Riviere, we picnicked beside the Mairie, before setting out across the vineyards and their interesting hedgerows to wend our way back to the Protestant Evangelical Church, for a short meditation on one of the late works of St Francis of Assisi : Lecture du Cantique des Créatures.

Come with your friends to our



**EUCHARIST
with
CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

**11 a.m.
Sunday 21st December
at the Parish Church
Savigny-en-Véron**

**Sing your favourite Carols
Listen to the Christmas story
Enjoy festive « apéros »**

“Ut unum sint”

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18th - 25th January

EUCHARIST FOR UNITY

11 A.M.

SUNDAY 25TH JANUARY



The material for the 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Church, a Church which traces its roots back to the first century evangelisation of Saint Bartholomew, one of Jesus' twelve apostles.

From the preface to this year's service material:

“Unity is a divine mandate at the core of our Christian identity, more than simply an ideal. It represents the essence of the Church's calling – a call to reflect the harmonious oneness of our life in Christ amidst our diversity. This divine unity is central to our mission and is sustained by the profound love of Jesus Christ, who has set before us a unified purpose. As the Apostle Paul asserts in his letter to the Ephesians, “there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling” (4:4). This Bible verse, chosen for this year, encapsulates the theological depth of Christian unity.”

The Search for Unity

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IS TODAY EXTREMELY CORDIAL, BUT THIS HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE. For many centuries it was very cold and there was deep-seated mutual suspicion.

The thaw started officially in 1965 when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, visited Pope Paul VI in Rome. There had been informal initiatives before, but this was the start of something big.

The pope already had great respect for Anglicanism, which he described as “our beloved sister Church.” So it was no surprise that Ramsey was warmly received.

Two important outcomes emerged from the three meetings they had together, one symbolic, the other marking the start of a journey.

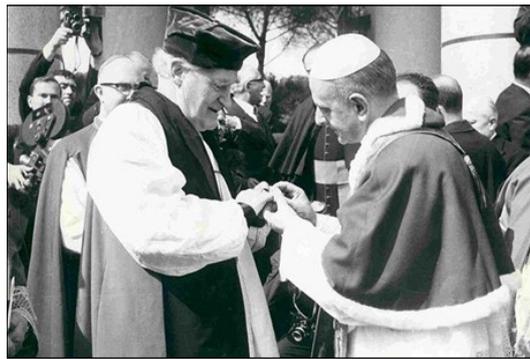
The symbolism was in the gift of an episcopal ring by the pope to the archbishop, which Michael Ramsey received with tears in his eyes.

The journey was marked by the setting up of a joint commission to study matters of doctrine (ARCIC).

This was later joined by another group with the clumsy acronym of IARRCUM. The ‘M’ in this is highly significant as it stands for mission. This

has been a decided and very welcome shift from discussing theological issues to practical working together.

To give expression to this, in 2016 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, committed to working together, were blessed by Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby at a special event in the Vatican.



It is one thing to start an initiative, but it can be challenging to ensure that it continues. A danger point could be when bishops leave and their successors are less interested in co-operating with their neighbours.

There are always ups and downs in relationships. What remains important is that they are encouraged to flourish: to look to the future rather than to dwell on the problems of the past.



Another positive development is the new respect given to each other’s traditions. Unity does not mean uniformity, breaking the centuries’ old principle when Alcuin, following Charlemagne’s policy, suppressed local liturgies and ensured that they were universally celebrated following Roman practice.

Fr John writes

What is the Office of Daily Prayer?

FROM EARLIEST TIMES, THE CHURCH HAS CELEBRATED DAILY ‘OFFICES’, which consist largely of the recitation of psalms and orderly reading of scripture.

By the time of the sixteenth century reformation this ‘orderliness’ had so many variations and exceptions that, as Archbishop Cranmer, the chief architect of the Book of Common Prayer, put it: “many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.”

So he consolidated the six daily offices into two, Matins and Evensong, using principles laid down by a Spanish cardi-

nal, Francisco Quiñones.

The clergy had to recite the new offices daily, with parish clergy having to say them in church and “cause a bell to be tolled a convenient time before he begin, so that the people may come to hear God’s Word, and to pray with him.”

Such was Cranmer’s craftsmanship that they have lasted until today and, not only is Evensong sung daily in many English cathedrals, but it is also used in Churches outside the Anglican tradition.

But by the start of the twentieth century, there was call for richer fare and so Night Prayer (Compline) found its way into official Church of England services, ideal for just before going to bed.

A century later the pace of daily life is even more hectic and the Church has met the need for another shorter Act of Worship in the middle of the day.

I can personally testify as to how much it has met that need. In the last parish I served in London, we wanted our church to be prayed in daily, not just on Sundays. We used Daily Prayer and there were always people who came to share in this time of prayer—some regular worshippers, some not.

If you would like to have Daily Prayer as part of your own prayer life, you can find it at <https://almanac.oremus.org> and go to either ‘view’ or ‘download’.

Together



THE OCCASION WAS MOMENTOUS. The setting was sumptuous. The people involved were of great significance. The event was simplicity itself.

The significance of the visit of King Charles III on 23rd October to pray with Pope Leo XIV in the Sistine Chapel was more than just theological. It was a step in healing the rift between the two Churches dating from the reign of Henry VIII—itsself an event involving much politics.

The time of prayer which they shared marked a new stage in the relationship between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church after centuries of, often bitter, estrangement.

It did not come out of the blue, but was the fruit of decades of work behind the scenes to rediscover how much we have in common.

The service itself was testimony to what we already share. It was not merely a hotch-potch of prayers and readings, but part

of the daily round of prayer which we have in common. It is called 'Prayer during the Day' and complements Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer (Compline).

Its structure is the same in both our Churches, having as its core the recitation of a psalm, a short reading from the bible (read on this occasion by the Foreign Secretary, Yvette Cooper) and intercessions.

In both Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions it starts with a response which is Psalm 70, verse 1. What was remarkable is that Pope Leo used the Anglican version, 'O God make speed to save us', rather than that used by the Roman Catholic Church, 'O God come to our aid'. A truly ecumenical gesture.

Praise the Lord.

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE OCCASION

VINCENT NICHOLS
ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER



'In the Sistine Chapel, for the first time for many centuries, the King of my homeland and the Holy Father of my faith prayed together in a united voice. It was, quite simply, the healing of an ancient wound.'

ROBERT INNES
ANGLICAN BISHOP OF GIBRALTAR IN EUROPE



'It enacted our friendship and love for each other, helping to overcome divisions that have separated us for 500 years. . . . May God continue to bless, guide and lead our efforts to build unity and togetherness in a divided and increasingly polarised world.'

Facing the Future

WITH FR JOHN'S RETIREMENT DRAWING EVER CLOSER, WE AT ST ALCUIN'S NEED TO RE-EVALUATE OUR FINANCES. At the moment we do not pay for Fr John's accommodation or its related costs. He and Lesley have their own apartment in Tours.

Our diocese works on the system that each chaplaincy funds its own clergy. This means that, like us, many of them, because they are small, do not have a full time chaplain.

However, we are fortunate, in that a number of clergy, mostly from England, who have recently retired from stipendiary ministry, volunteer to act in a "house for duty" capacity. This means that they receive accommodation, but not payment, for two or three days work a week.

This is the situation that we expect St Alcuin's will find itself in.

What expenditure would be incurred if we were to have a house for duty chaplain? First comes the cost of the property itself, whether as **mortgage** or **rent**. Then comes the **maintenance** and **insurance** of the property and the **taxe foncière**. We should also expect to meet any **social security** costs as well



as the contributions to a **mutuelle** (top up health insurance) for the chaplain (and his/her spouse). We would need to provide the chaplain with a **car**, too, and meet the **removal costs** when the chaplain arrives and leaves.

All this is somewhat daunting, but, as we will probably be invited to join with other local Church of England communities to share a chaplain, we are hoping the costs involved will be manageable.

The Church community has already started on the work of boosting our finances: we have held a stewardship campaign which we hope will bring in much needed income.

But we may need more and would be most grateful for other donations. If you feel you can help, our bank details are below.

RELEVÉ D'IDENTITÉ BANCAIRE Ce relevé est destiné à tout organisme souhaitant connaître vos références bancaires pour domicilier des virements ou des prélèvements sur votre compte				
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Freddy's Hearing



Freddy goes to the church and listens to the preacher. After a while, the preacher asks anyone with needs to be prayed over to come forward. Freddy goes up and the preacher asks, "Freddy, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

"Preacher," says Freddy, "I need you to pray for my hearing."

The preacher puts one finger in Freddy's ear and he places the other hand on top of Freddy's head and prays and prays and prays. After a few minutes, the preacher removes his hands and stands back.

"Freddy, how is your hearing now?"

"I don't know, Reverend," says Freddy. "My hearing's not until next Wednesday."

FOR OUR "YOUNGER" * READERS

* aged 97 and under

A CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. Where did Mary and Joseph live before Jesus was born?
a) Nazareth b) Bethlehem c) Jerusalem
2. What was the name of the angel that told the Virgin Mary she would have a child?
3. What did Joseph do for a living?
4. Why did Mary and Joseph leave to go to Bethlehem?
5. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?
6. Where does the Bible say Jesus was born?
a) in a stable b) in hay c) in a manger
7. In which city was Jesus born?
8. Jesus was born on the 25th of December. True or false?
9. What does the angel say to the shepherds when they tell them to go to Bethlehem?
10. How many Wise Men visited baby Jesus?
11. What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
12. According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born?
a) sheep and a donkey b) cattle and a donkey c) donkey, sheep and cattle d) none
13. How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
14. What does Jesus' other name, "Immanuel", mean?
a) God with us b) Son of God c) He who is God d) Chosen One
15. Who was the prophet that foretold a virgin shall give birth to a son called Immanuel?
16. Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
17. Why did King Herod want to kill Jesus and all the children in Bethlehem?
18. What is the City of David also known as in the bible?
19. The wise men travelled to Jerusalem.
a) northward b) southward c) eastward d) westward
20. Where did Jesus' family flee to from Bethlehem?
a) Egypt b) Nazareth c) Samaria d) Greece
21. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, according to the bible?
22. Which of the gospels tell the story of the Nativity
23. Who was the Roman ruler at the time Jesus was born?
24. Children in the region of what age were to be killed, in the hope that Jesus would also be killed?
25. Christmas wasn't celebrated for over 300 years after Jesus died. True or false?



Answers on Page 2



The Bishop's Advent Appeal

Al-Ahli Anglican Hospital, Gaza

Bishop Robert writes:

"When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit." – Psalm 34:17-18 (NRSV)

The headlines may be fading, but the suffering in Gaza is far from over. Months of devastation have left entire communities struggling. The impact of conflict lingers long after the fighting stops. Disease spreads rapidly, food and clean water remain scarce. At the time of writing, 68,280 people have been killed in Gaza, the vast majority of whom are civilian women

and children, and the toll of wounded stands at 170,375.

Despite overwhelming challenges, the medical team at Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza is doing everything in their power to care for the injured and sick. They face impossible odds: shortages of medicine and essential supplies, dwindling fuel reserves for life-saving equipment, and an ever-growing number of patients in desperate need.

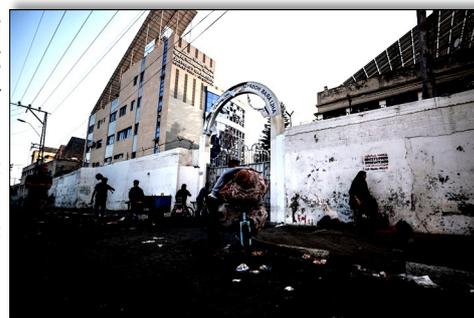
At Al-Ahli Hospital, doctors and nurses have treated over 190,000 outpatients and performed more than 6,000 surgeries in the past year alone. The demand is relentless. The injuries they see of burns, broken bones and shrapnel wounds are devastating.

Beyond emergency treatment, Al-Ahli hospital offers long-term rehabilitation, mental health support, and essential community care. Many of those injured will face lifelong disabilities, requiring physiotherapy, pain management, and counselling. Without urgent funding, these critical services could be lost.

This Advent, I am asking you to support the work of one of our partners in the Gospel, USPG, whose partnership with the Diocese of Jerusalem gives us the opportunity to sustain this vital hospital, ensuring that it remains open and equipped to serve those who need it most, not only in moments of immediate crisis but in the long, difficult years of recovery that follow.

It looks – for now – that there is a fragile semi-peace. It is to be hoped that this not only lasts but spreads and deepens, and that rebuilding can begin. Your gift today will help keep the hospital open and equipped to provide urgent medical aid, long-term rehabilitation, and dignity to those in crisis.

"Every donation and every prayer is an act of love. It is a message to families in Gaza that they are not forgotten," says Sawson Aranki-Batato, Programme Development Officer, Diocese of Jerusalem.



HOW WE CAN HELP

In cash:

via our Treasurer to Nick Wraight in the Diocesan Office

By cheque made out to:

Diocese in Europe
Diocese in Europe Board of Finance
14, Tufton St
London SW1P 3QZ
(Please add the words "Advent Appeal 2025" to any note you send with the cheque)

By bank transfer:

Account number: 40317039
Sort code: 20-06-13
IBAN: GB16 BUKB 2006 1340 3170 39
Swift / BIC: BUKBGB22

On the Diocese in Europe Just Giving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/diocese-ineurope>
(please add "2025 Advent Appeal" in the Message from Donor column)