

St Thomas à Becket, Ramsey

e-Bulletin 1 February 2026

Dear Friends

Many of the Christian festivals we celebrate today didn't start that way. For example, Saturnalia, a week-long feast, was given a make-over by the Church and was chosen as Christ's Birthday. This Sunday is Candlemas which also began as two pagan celebrations - the Roman festival of Lupercalia and the Celtic fire festival of Imbolc. Both had rituals involving fires and sacrifice symbolising purification and fertility: So, the Church took what was familiar and reshaped it through a Gospel lens.

Imbolc, traditionally celebrated on February 1st or 2nd, was adopted by the Christian church for the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus and the Purification of Mary around the 5th century. The fires and chants were replaced by candles and prayers, but the light symbolism remained. The custom was to bless and give candles to the congregation in the belief that they would bring protection, warmth, and blessings into the home throughout the coming year.

In some parts of the world, particularly in Scotland, there is a charming custom called 'creeping of the candle'. The youngest child carries a candle whilst walking around the darkened house to symbolise the return of light and the banishment of shadows. Let's hope they were not afraid of the dark! Also, people believed that the weather on Candlemas could predict the duration of winter. If the day was dry and bright, winter would return but if it was wet and windy then winter was over. Legend has it that Pope Gelasius I, in the 5th century, distributed crepes to pilgrims who visited Rome on Candlemas day. These crepes symbolized the round and golden sun, signifying the end of winter and the arrival of spring.

All very interesting! But for the Christian church Candlemas marks 40 days since Christmas. It commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem and the purification of Mary, in accordance with Jewish law. The feast of the Presentation is one of the oldest feast days from the

ancient Christian Church- there is a record of its celebration going back to the 380s. Yet it seems very under-rated now.

Mary and Joseph were poor and could not afford the traditional lamb AND a turtle dove or pigeon. So, they just took two turtledoves. Mary would have had to wash in a pool of natural water as she was considered 'unclean' after giving birth. During the Presentation, Jesus was consecrated in accordance with Mosaic law which redeemed him as a firstborn son. This was a reminder of how God saved firstborn sons during the tenth plague: And it is still celebrated by Jews today.

However, it is ironic that Jesus' family couldn't provide a lamb to redeem their son, yet this same son was the lamb who would be sacrificed to redeem the world. Candlemas represents the triumph of light over darkness, hope over despair, and renewal over stagnation. This is the day we should celebrate the revelation of Christ to all people- shouldn't we ?”

Simeon's words say it all -“*For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel*”.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. – with love and blessings, Shân

Services

February 1 10.30am Parish Communion with Sunday Fun
4.30pm Evensong

February 8 8am Holy Communion (said)
10.30am Worship Together

February 15 10.30am Parish Communion with Sunday Fun
4.30pm Evensong

February 18 (Wed) 7.30pm Ash Wednesday Service

February 22 10.30am Worship Together

APCM 2026: Please note our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Monday 27 April at 7.30pm in church.

Yarn Bombing with Flowers: this exciting new event being run jointly by Becket Flower Group and Ramsey Yarners, is being held in church this weekend. There will be a café serving tea, coffee and cake on Saturday from 9.30am to 5pm and on Sunday from 12.30pm to 4.30pm. Free entry with raffle. All donations to be shared between Becket Flower Group and Ramsey Yarners. If you are able to help in any way, please sign up on the sheet at the back of church.

Farewell to the Tate-Druiffs

Many of you will have heard Revd Maggie's exciting news that she has been appointed as Rector of the Mortimer's Cross benefice in Herefordshire. Maggie has been Curate with us since her ordination in July 2022, completing her final stages of training as a priest. Her curacy ends this year, meaning she is now able to apply for longer term jobs as incumbent of a parish or group of parishes. After a process of prayer, discernment, application and successful interviews, Maggie and her family will be relocating to Hereford Diocese, where Maggie grew up and where they have a good network of family and friends nearby.

We will be saying goodbye to Maggie and her family on Sunday 1st March at a Benefice Service of Celebration with Holy Communion, followed by a bring and share lunch at St Thomas a Becket. More details to follow.

Maggie will be installed in her new role by the Bishop of Hereford on Monday 23rd March, 7pm at Kingsland Church, HR6 9QW. You are most welcome to attend this service - please let Maggie know as soon as possible if you intend to come, so that she can pass on numbers to her new parish. Which leads on to...

Farewell bring and share lunch: to help us with our planning, we would like to know numbers for the Bring and Share lunch to say goodbye to Maggie, Toby and Vera after the service on March 1st. Please sign up on

the sheet at the back of church by Feb 8th. This will help us to organise the next stage of sign-up sheets for what to bring!

Cheese and Wine Tasting: 14 Feb 7pm in church. £20 per ticket from Rachel Thompson 07751 126752. Non-alcoholic drink available by arrangement. In aid of Becket Flower Group.

Classics for All: Our next concert is by concert pianist, Julian Saphir on Saturday 28 February at 7pm. Tickets £15 available from Richard Hyde 01487 812220 or Jane Cusworth 01487 814984 or on the door. Raffle and refreshments. Sponsored by Butler Smith Piano Carriers and Kawai.

Exciting news from Hayley:

Dear church family,

I am pleased to share that I have accepted a new role with Ely Diocese as a Growing Younger Enabler, starting at the end of February. The post is part time, which means I will continue in my role as Children and Families Missioner at Ramsey, though on fewer hours than I currently work.

I am really excited about this opportunity, as it will allow me to support other parishes across the Diocese in growing their children, families, and youth provision. Please be assured that you will still see me regularly on Sunday mornings, Mondays, and Wednesday afternoons ☺

Thank you for your continued support and prayers as I step into this new chapter.

With love,

Hayley

Sunday Fun: our Sunday Fun is flourishing. We are still looking for a volunteer to lead our youth (ages 11–17) on a monthly basis. Support and training will be provided. If this is something you feel a calling for, please speak to Hayley.

Lent Course: Jeremy and Tracey Summerell are hoping to run a Lent course at their home in Bury. They would like to gauge interest and to find out availability on which days. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of church. More details to follow.

Cakes: just a reminder we are asking for volunteers to make cakes for after Sunday services. Please sign up on the sheet at the back of church.

News from Uganda:

You may remember seeing and hearing about Johnson, when Martin talked to us in October.

He is one of the sponsored children cared for by members of our congregation, seen here at the front of the photo.

Here is a lovely update.

Johnson has been in care in Bucence Children's Centre since he was a baby - during this time he has been in regular contact with his grandmother and family with Eunice ensuring he visited them regularly during the school holidays. The good news is he has returned home to live. He will remain on the sponsorship programme as his family live in poverty and they will continue to need our support and he will continue to be monitored.

Thank you so much for continuous support for him.

The Mission Committee

Ramsey Neighbourhood Plan: residents of Ramsey Parish are invited to respond to the Ramsey Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation period is between 19 January and 9 March. Details of where to find the draft plans and how to respond are in a letter at the back of the church.

Pancake Morning:

Upwood St Peter's Church invites you to its Pancake event. Wednesday 18th February 10:30 - 12:00 in Upwood Village Hall.

See poster in Thomas a Becket entrance - Tickets at the door - £6 (£3 for Primary school children) and Free for under 5's

Tickets include a pancake with filling & tea or coffee. Gluten free friendly available for cakes and pancakes. Contact Anne Marie

amcracknell106@gmail.com or text: 07484 294155

<https://www.facebook.com/UpwoodRaveleys>

Clergy days off: as a general rule, Joe's day off is a Saturday and Maggie's day off is a Friday. Please take note of this if you wish to speak to clergy on either of these days.

Dates for the diary:

Monday 27 April 7.30pm APCM in Church

Regular Activities:

Mondays: Toddlers 9.30am – 10.30am

3 in 1 (primary-aged) 3.30pm – 5pm (Scout Hut)

Tuesdays: Bellringing 7.30pm

Craft Group 2nd Tuesday of month 7.30pm

Wednesdays: Youth Space 3.15pm – 4.30pm

Becket seniors 3rd Wednesday of the month 12.30pm

Friday: Choir practice 6.45pm

Saturday: Men's Breakfast first Saturday of each month.

Becket Flower Group meet throughout the year for events and to decorate the church for festivals.

For more information about the above activities, contact:

jackie@ramseysandupwood.org

Bulletin items: please send all items for the Bulletin to

jackie@ramseysandupwood.org by noon Wednesday.

Pastoral Needs: if you have any pastoral needs or would like someone to pray with you, please contact Val Molloy: 01487 710583 or email

valmolloy@hotmail.com

Online Prayer meeting:

Monday to Friday at 8.30am. To join [simply click here](#) Download zoom and join in. Meeting ID: 837 2798 9081 Passcode: 702720

Prayer list:

Please pray for: Dilys; Doug and Maureen; Julie; Ian; Kay; Juliet and Philip; Janet; Vicki; Oonagh and her parents Matthew and Jade; Alan; Jill; Jennifer and Simon, Pauline Cook, Glen Dawkins and Rachael and Ian Bell-Berry

Names can be added to the list by notifying Jan Bowd 01487 822418

janbowd298@btinternet.com