



2026 isn't quite here yet, but the new Church Year begins in 9 days time on Advent Sunday (30 November).

Throughout 2025 our focus has been ***Going Deeper With God***. I hope that you have found ways to engage with this personally. Do let me know if you have a story to share.

This coming year our focus will be *Building a Firm Foundation for Future Growth*.

It will be a year where various things look and feel different, in order to help us prepare for whatever lies ahead for St Mary's.

Investing in our building

The Church Rooms Project begins on Monday when we will be welcoming K P Wilton's team onto the site so that they can start the preparatory work. Scroll down for some important information about the impact that this will have if you are coming to things in the church or hall.

Investing in our relationships

We will continue to prioritise getting to know each other on more than just a surface level. The Kaleidoscope and Journey-men socials are helping with this, alongside small groups and 54321 triplets.

Investing in our finances

We will continue to highlight the financial needs of the church. The £90,000 shortfall which needs to be raised so that we can complete the Building Project, and the increase that we need to see in planned giving, in order to sustain the ministry we are currently able to offer. If you are not yet giving regularly to the church, please consider responding to this appeal by setting up a Direct Debit through the [Parish Giving Scheme](#).

We pray this coming year will be one of further transformation for St Mary's. We will see dilapidated parts of our building greatly improved, and hopefully we will see transformation in our shared life together.

However, with transformation comes change and change can be difficult and confusing.

This month the Leadership Team reached the painful decision to pause Bright Sparks Toddler Group for a few months whilst the building work is taking place. We have shared this with the families who come regularly and they were very understanding. It will resume as soon as possible.

The bigger, and wider reaching news is that last week the PCC agreed that we should have just one Sunday morning service each week throughout 2026. This is to reduce workload at a time when the building project is a drain on time and energy, taking some of the pressure off ministry staff and volunteers. It will also mean we can all worship together on a Sunday as one church family, which will help to strengthen relationships.

One 10am service each week throughout 2026

The 10am services will always include Communion and will alternate in style.

WEEK A

10am with band led worship and SHINEonSundays groups

WEEK B

10am with organ and choir led worship. Explore@4 at 4pm

We will need to be patient and gracious with one another as we navigate this temporary new way of worshipping together. Please talk to Jema, if you have concerns or questions.

Practical things to be aware of during the Building Works

- KP Wilton (the Contractor) will be taking over part of the site, including the car park. Please park sensibly on Mariners Drive, being considerate of our neighbours. Blue Badge holders can use the Vicarage driveway.
- No-one will be allowed onto the site without express permission from KP Wilton.
- The entrance to the Church Rooms will be via the Hulbert Room lobby (located up the slope). The code will change weekly, so if you need access please talk to the office team.
- The interconnecting door between the church and stairs to the hall will be sealed off, so there will be no access that way.
- If you bring children to church, please remember that you are responsible for them at all times, except for when they are supervised by another adult in their SHINEonSundays groups. Before and after the service they must not be unsupervised outside in the car park area, and they will also not have access to the hall to play in after services.