

Mulbarton Community Pantry

A massive **THANK YOU** to all who pop items in the drawers in the church porch to help feed the hungry here in our community.

These drawers are used regularly so what you give is making a big difference. But they often stand empty at weekends. Could you help by popping a few items in when coming to church? Or when passing?

Items that are popular—tinned potatoes, mashed potato, pasta, pesto, pasta sauces, rice, baked beans, tinned veg and fruit, soups, tea, coffee, squash, crisps, biscuits, cereals, tinned meat or fish, crackers, jam, marmalade, shower gel, toothpaste.

But as a rule of thumb, if you would like to eat or use it, then so will someone else.

Bless you for your kindness.

Sarah

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

5 Oct	Mulbarton	Millie O'Sullivan
26 Oct	Mulbarton	Ronnie Wilcox

Funeral and Burial

26 Sept	Mulbarton	George Moore
3 Nov	Mulbarton	Nora Clayton

Funeral and Crematorium Services

26 Aug	Mulbarton	Cynthia Ladbrooke
28 Oct	Flordon	David Postle

Burial of Ashes

30 Aug	Flordon	Sean and Brian White
9 Sept	Mulbarton	Cynthia and David Ladbrooke

Church website <http://www.mulbchurch.org.uk>

Rector: Rev. Adrian Miller: 01508 571167 - adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk

This month's editor: Sarah Miller

Articles included in Mardle do not necessarily reflect the views of the church leadership

MARDLE

DECEMBER 2025

JANUARY 2026

Mulbarton Benefice newsletter



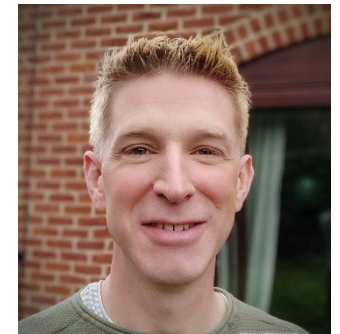
FOLLOWING JESUS

Sharing the journey

WITH THE VILLAGES OF MULBARTON,
FLORDON, BRACON ASH AND HETHEL

FROM THE RECTORY

Email: adrian@mulbchurch.org.uk
(Regular day off Friday)



You may have already met, but just in case you haven't, or you're curious to know more, I'd like to introduce you to Rev Di Rowlandson who has retired and moved into Mulbarton last year. Di has been given permission to officiate here, which means she will be helping out with services in the Benefice from time to time, including over the Christmas period. Di shared some of her story with the editor for Mulbarton's Parish News, and I wanted to share that among all four churches too:

So Di, tell us how you came to be a vicar in Norfolk...

"Actually, I grew up in Norwich but left to get married and work in South Buckinghamshire. My husband was a clergyman whilst I worked as a physio and Pilates teacher. We also had two children, one of whom now lives in Mulbarton with his family. Naturally, this is one of the reasons I have now settled here.

Sadly, my husband Gary died in 2004 after a time of illness. This led to a move and, eventually, a realisation that I too had a calling to re-train to take up a role in the Church of England. It was after this process was completed that I found myself drawn back to Norwich in 2018. For the following 6 years



I had a role as the vicar for the Earlam Benefice, based at St Anne's Church on the ring road."

And what does life look like now?

"On retirement last year, I moved out to my lovely cottage in Mulbarton where I have joined the congregation at St Mary's Church. Apart from helping out by taking services from time to time, I also enjoy going to the gym and singing in the UEA choir. I also have a passion to help people answer

their questions about life and how finding a faith in Jesus might help them with this. Along with a team of others from Mulbarton Church I am starting up a course in January where anyone can come along and ask questions about life and faith."

Details of the Alpha course that Di will be leading can be found on p.8. Please do be thinking and praying about who you might like to invite or encourage to attend.

As you read the rest of this Mardle, you'll see some of the many ways our churches are quietly walking alongside our community this Christmas and into the New Year. From the Community Pantry and the Christmas Hampers, to the Benefice Christmas Card raising money for those in need, there are countless small acts of generosity that speak of God's heart for the hungry and the struggling. You'll read too about our Children's Church, eco reflections, safeguarding, and all the services and gatherings that fill our December and January diary pages – ordinary people, doing what they can, where they are, for the sake of others.

All of this, it seems to me, is part of the journey of following Jesus. Christmas reminds us that God does not wait for us at the finish line of life, but comes to meet us on the road – as a vulnerable baby, born into the mess and uncertainty of a real family, in a real place and time. The shepherds and wise men found joy not only at the manger, but in the very act of going, searching and wondering.

My prayer is that, whatever our paths look like just now – smooth or rocky, clear or confusing – we might find something of that same quiet joy in the journey. And that, as we step into 2026, we may walk it alongside Christ, no longer a baby, but a strong and present joy-giver in our midst.

With love and prayers for a joyful Christmas,
Adrian

The **Children's Church Group** at Mulbarton has recently held several engaging sessions that have been both enjoyable and inspiring for everyone involved. Although the group is small in number, the participants have demonstrated great enthusiasm and commitment.

During our recent gatherings, the children have explored key stories from the life of Jesus. These have included the calming of the storm, the healing of the paralysed man, and the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. Each session has brought our small but dedicated crew together, and we have cherished every moment spent learning and sharing.

The Children's Church Group is designed for children aged 5 to 12, providing a welcoming space to learn about God and Jesus while nurturing their faith. Our aim is to offer meaningful experiences that help children grow spiritually within a supportive environment.

If you would like your child to join the group or if you are interested in helping out, please do get in touch.

You can email Sarah at sarah@mulbchurch.org.uk or Eve at eve.newbery@gmail.com.

We are excited to continue our journey together in the New Year and look forward to welcoming new faces to our group.

We meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month, alongside the Communion Service.



How to be a greener Christian #22

COP30 – the 30th Conference of the Parties, ie countries that have signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – is happening right now (ends 21.11.25). Search online for “COP30” for updates or an end-of report. The Guardian blog looked useful. Major nations are not represented: US (11%); India (8%); China (29%) – the figures are each country’s contribution to global emissions. This does not bode well, but one has some sympathy with world leaders deluged with problems, not least wars. Given that *How bad are bananas?* estimated the ‘annual global military footprint’ to be 3.3 billion tonnes of CO₂e in 2020 – over 8% of all annual emissions – if you need another reason for us to stop fighting each other, here it is.

A useful long BBC article on the implications of patchy attendance is at bit.ly/COPpurpose, with interesting data about how the Chinese economy is focussing on ‘global green growth’. Hopefully it’ll help them to get their 29% down as well.

A wake-up call for us was when the sustainability consultant for the housing development in which we’re involved said *cooling* for all new apartments and houses should be considered. Data suggests that significant, health-harming heatwaves will be a regular feature of the UK climate within 10-20 years so if we want to sleep at night and avoid residents buying bulky, energy-expensive portable air-conditioners, we’d better install ASHPs for cooling as well as heating.

Christmas is coming! In 2007 The Stockholm Environmental Institute (York University) published “The carbon cost of Christmas”, which is still widely quoted. Headline: Our total consumption and spending on food, travel, lighting and gifts over three days of festivities could result in 650 kg of carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂) per person – equivalent to the weight of 1,000 Christmas puddings! This is 5.5% of our total annual carbon footprint. Gulp! But it’s easy to save 615 of those puddings - read how at bit.ly/xmascarbon. Check out the main author’s prize-shortlisted *My Dad the Earth Warrior* as a gift for tweenage (grand)children – second hand, of course, if you can.

BBC Good Food can offer you 203 (!) vegetarian Christmas recipes to help follow one strand of that Stockholm / York advice at: bit.ly/veggymas. Do what you can to dispel the notion that vegetarian food is insipid (years ago it was?) – I’m going to try out the Chestnut, Spinach & Blue Cheese en croute.

Peter Nicholls, 15.11.25





Join us to

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Sun 30th Nov 4pm: Advent Light at Flordon

Sun 7th: 4pm Christingle at Hethel

Mon 8th & Tue 9th 9.45am: Pre-School Nativity

Wed 17th, 6:30pm, Flordon Carolling

Carol Services

Sun 14th, 6.30pm, Mulbarton Church

Sun 21st, 4pm, Hethel Church

Sun 21st, 6:30pm, Flordon Church

Wed 24th, 10.30am, Hanover Gardens

Wed 24th: 4pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

Thu 25th: 10am All Age Christmas Celebration

9am Christmas Communion at Flordon

10am Christmas Communion at Bracon Ash



Merry Christmas

HETHEL NEWS

Hethel Church News

As ever, all are welcome to Advent and Christmas services here at Hethel.

There's Christingle on 7th December (4pm), Holy Communion on 14th (8.30am) and the Hethel and Bracon Ash Christmas Carol Service on 21st (4pm). We've invited Mulbarton Community Choir to send a Chorale (12-16 singers in four harmonising parts) to the carol service, which they are delighted to do. Their red and black 'livery' with a decorated church and a zillion candles will make this special service extra special. The acoustic is excellent and lifts our hearts in worship. Mulled wine and mince pies afterwards, of course.

We'll be Blessing the Plough on 11th January, but that's too far ahead to contemplate!

[**Rector's editorial note:** we are planning to stick to our plough Sunday custom on 11th, and it will also be the last Sunday Peter will be leading worship in the benefice, before his license expires, so we will also be marking that moment by celebrating all he has given over many years!]

Question: in what state will the church be for these events. Good question!

The builders have been told (a) that it would be terrific to be able to ring the bell at Christmas (I gather all the necessary work has been completed at the foundry in Somerset); (b) it would be wonderful if the work was all finished within a year of the scaffolding being put up last January; and (c) it's essential to have the church cleared of builders' stuff by December 21.

So there will be plenty of room for everyone at those services and the church should look good, not least with great thanks to Ali who cleans monthly and others who go in daily to tidy as necessary when builders aren't there.



Peter Nicholls

Benefice Christmas Card

Last year, the Eco Church Group created a Benefice Christmas card that was circulated around the four churches during advent. Everyone was encouraged to send Christmas messages to other people in the Benefice via this card and to donate the money they would have spent on individual cards to the charity the church was supporting over the Christmas period. Last year as a result of this, we were able to send over £150 to Embrace the Middle East, a Christian charity tackling poverty and injustice in the Middle East.



We will be repeating this initiative this year, starting at the Service of Light at Flordon on 30th November. The aim is that the card should be available twice at each of the four churches in the Benefice over the Advent period, to give everyone the opportunity to both write a message and to read those from other everyone else. Money donated will again go to the charity Embrace the Middle East.

Safeguarding Survey

We all have a part to play in helping our churches be, and continue to be, safe places for people to meet and share the journey of life and faith with each other.

If you have a moment and can respond to this survey that would be a help. We can evaluate where we are at in this endeavour and where we may need to focus our attentions next.



Scan the QR code, head to the link, or pick a paper copy up from the back of church <https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/M1xsTGvV>

And a reminder that if you would appreciate talking with someone about anything you have seen, heard or experienced that is causing concern then details of our Safe Guarding Officers are in the porches of all of our churches. Please do be in touch.

Do join us for a festive morning to kick start your December.

**Saturday 6th Dec
at The Rectory
10am –12.30pm**

A warm welcome awaits, along with seasonal drinks and yummies to munch.

RSVP if possible
sarah@mulbchurch.org.uk



Mardle Musing

Some words to say / pray on the Winter Solstice, our shortest day, if you, like me, find it a moment you would like to mark in your faith walk:

*We have turned the year, we have turned the year.
With God's help, we have made it to the turning of the year.
We are turning back to the sun.
We are turning back to the light.
As the planet turns we turn our faces to Your Light.*



*Where we have known darkness, bring Your Light.
Where we have known sorrow, bring Your Light.
Where we have known struggle, bring Your Light.
The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.
We will hope again.*

*As you have walked with us, so you will walk on.
As you have watched over us, so you will watch on.
As you have waited for us, so you will wait on.
The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.
We will hope again.*

*We have turned the year, we have turned the year.
With God's help, we have made it to the turning of the year.
We are turning back to the sun.
We are turning back to the light.
As the planet turns we turn our faces to Your Light.*

Sarah Miller



Christmas Hampers— Can you help?

Running alongside the Community Pantry and Hardship fund we would love to gift a Christmas Hamper to those in our community needing a little extra help just now. Lynne (Laws) has kindly costed out hampers for 2 people and for a family—£25 for 2 people, £45 for a family. We would ideally like to gift 4—6 of each.

Here's some ways you can help if you would like—

- 1) Donate items—get in touch and we will let you know what is on the list and can tick off what it is you will be getting.
- 2) Make a monetary donation to Mulbarton Church ref Christmas Hampers and we will get items on your behalf (if we happen to be gifted more than we need we will role the money into the Hardship Fund)
- 3) Help with the wrapping and boxing of the hampers on Sunday 21st Dec

For this to work well we need to coordinate our efforts so please contact me (sarah@mulbchurch.org.uk) to let me know if you can help with any of the above. Thank you all in advance.

Join us for Alpha

You are invited to unpack the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal setting at Alpha.

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions that explore the basics of the Christian faith . We will watch a short film together that unpacks the big questions around life, purpose and faith. This is followed by an open conversation where you can share your thoughts (if you want to) , ask any question and hear from others. There is no pressure. Why not come for the first week and if you don't like it you don't need to come back.

Maybe you have a friend who is curious about why you go to church or asks questions about your faith. Why not invite them to come with you?

We are meeting on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm starting on January 15th—venue to be confirmed shortly.

For more information contact Di on diana@mulbchurch.org.uk



Diary Pages

Please check church website for info and changes nearer the time

December

Mon 1	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Tues 2	2.30pm	Bracon Ash Village Hall: Tea Pot Tuesday
Weds 3	2.00pm	Flordon Church: Flordon Chit Chat
Thur 4	9.15am	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer
Fri 5	6.15pm	Christmas Concert: Bracon Ash Church
Sat 6	10.00am	Coffee Morning at The Rectory (see p8)
Sun 7	9.00am 10.00am 4.00pm	Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer Mulbarton Church: All Age Service Hethel Church: Christingle
Mon 8	9.45am	Pre-School Nativity: Mulbarton
	10.am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Tues 9	9.45am	Pre-School Nativity: Mulbarton
Thurs 11	9.15am	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer
		NB// NO HANOVER MIDWEEK SERVICE
Sun 14	6.30pm	Mulbarton: Carols by Candlelight
Mon 15	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Wed 17	6:30pm	Flordon Community Carol Singing
Thur 18	9.15am	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer
Sun 21	9.00am 10.00am 4.00pm 6.30pm	Bracon Ash Church: Communion Mulbarton Church: Communion Hethel: Carol Service Flordon: Carol Service
Mon 22	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Tues 23	2.00pm	Mulbarton Social Club: Mardlers Christmas
Wed 24	10.30pm 4.00pm 11.30pm	Hanover Gardens: Carol Service Mulbarton Church: Crib Service Mulbarton Church: Midnight Communion
Thur 25	9.00am 10.00am 10.00am	Flordon: Christmas Day Communion Bracon Ash: Christmas Day Communion Mulbarton Church: All Age Celebration
Sun 28	10.30am	Mulbarton: Benefice Service

January

Sun 4	9.00am 10.00am	Bracon Ash Church: Morning Prayer Mulbarton Church: Wild Church
Mon 5	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Tues 6	2.30pm	Bracon Ash Village Hall: Tea Pot Tuesday
Weds 7	2.00pm	Flordon Church: Flordon Chit Chat
Thurs 8	9.15am 2.30pm	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer Hanover Gardens: Mid-week Communion
Sun 11	8.30am 10.00am 3.30pm	Hethel Church: Blessing the Plough (Celebrating Peter Nicholls' ministry) Mulbarton Church: Morning Worship Flordon Church: Evening Prayer
Mon 12	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Thurs 15	9.15am 7.00pm	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer Alpha Starts—venue tbc (see p9)
Sun 18	10.00am	Mulbarton Church: Communion with Children's Group (see p11)

Mardle Deadline-Editor Chris Carter
chrismarinacarter@gmail.com with the subject line Mardle

Mon 19	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Thurs 22	9.15am	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer
Sun 25	10.30am 6.00pm 7.00pm	Hanover Gardens: Church @ Hanover Harvest House: Together Meal Mulbarton Church: Together Service
Mon 26	10.00am	Mulbarton Social Club: Community Hub
Tues 27	2.00pm	Mulbarton Social Club: Mulbarton Mardlers
Thurs 26	9.15am	Harvest House: Coffee and Prayer

***The Mardle Team wish you all a very Happy Christmas and
a deeply blessed New Year***