

# ashwoodnews

## January February 2026



### NHFA

Fundraising time!  
Find out how on  
Page 9

### Elevate REFRESH

Booking is open now.  
Details on  
Page 25

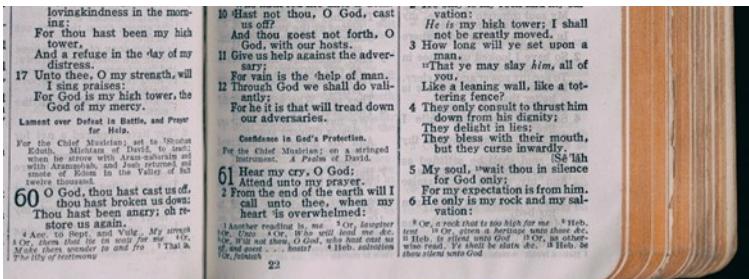
### Café 22

What an amazing  
Community Hub!  
Find out more on  
Pages 28-29



ashwood  
church

Helping people find  
and follow Jesus



# Matt's message

Hello Ashwood News Readers! Welcome to the start of a new year and our first Ashwood News of 2026! We will look back over the last couple of months as well as look ahead to things coming up in the life of the church. If you're new to us, we hope you can find what you're looking for. Feel free to contact us, if we can help you further. Thanks for reading!



First of all, Happy New Year! Welcome to our first Ashwood News of 2026!

Christmas in Ashwood was great!! Starting with the Community Carol Service in the Town Centre as part of the Kirkby Christmas Lights switch on! Our Seesaw Christmas parties were a

huge success, as were the Christmas reflections in Cafe22 and Bags of Blessing give-aways at Foodbank.

Our "Christmas" Sundays were special too! A fabulous nativity acted out by our wonderful children with the theme of light, a Carol Service (also light themed – with "light charades"!) and a



Christingle Service reminding us that Jesus – the light arrived into our dark world – to illuminate the lives of those who had walked in darkness. We had many guests joining us for the first time. And Christmas Morning was another highlight! Celebrating the birth of Jesus with many of our children (young and old) sharing some of their newly opened gifts! Including a Nerf Gun, a new handbag, a transformer robot (we watched as it transformed before our eyes) and an exploding torch! (Thankfully it didn't explode while we were watching!) With a great message of hope in the "waiting" from Gill. And some carol singing in Morrison's!

We are always so grateful to all the incredible

Ashwood Teams who serve so wonderfully to make Christmas so special for our church family but also the many families and individuals in our community. Welcome teams, car park monitors, musicians, scripture readers, meeting planners, Ashwood Centre decorators, Cleaners, Mince pie and bacon bap preparers, carol singers and much more – **THANK YOU! We are so grateful for you!!**



And a special mention to our Ashwood Staff Team: Paul, (Worship) Dave, (Caretaking) Christine, (Café 22) Bec, (Pastoral Care) Rich, (Children and Youth) Gisela, (Administration) Becky, (Finance) Claire, (Senior Leader) Plus Elaine (Chair of trustees) and Gill (not on picture - Foodbank) – who serve us so amazingly all year! Please join me in thanking them when you see them!

And on the subject of "**THANK**

**YOU's**" – **Thank you** to everyone who gave into our Christmas Offering this year! At the time of writing, the grand total is a ginormous whopping **£4,875.07!!** (including Gift Aid) We're excited to send this money to our 2 partner organisations – Links and 100 Homes – who will both see lives changed and transformed through your generosity!



The start of a new year is always a time to look back and reflect on the past year. In so many ways it was a wonderful year in the life of our church. We had the largest group join our Alpha course at the start of the year, we baptised more people in the year than any other, we held our largest mini-conference with our great friends Paul and Perrianne from Texas, had our largest intake for Freedom in Christ – and so many stories of Jesus transforming lives in such a beautiful way.

We were also able to celebrate (finally!) the approval of our Planning Permission – to give us the green light to raise the necessary funds for our new building! And we received an amazing offering towards it in September! Praise God! We continue to welcome more and more new people in our Sunday gatherings and also more and more people asking to join one of our amazing LifeGroups – which is wonderful!

Our Mission hasn't changed - To help more people find and follow Jesus. And by God's grace we are seeing it!

In 2025 we declared that our theme/vision for the year was simple – SIMPLY JESUS! And a particular highlight was hearing how people declared some of the changes that had taken place as we decided that we wanted to follow Jesus more, love Him more, learn more and become more like Him. Of course, that's still our heart as we step into 2026.

As we start a new year – it's another



invitation to reflect on who we are and who we believe God has called us to become - Join us for Vision Sunday 2026 – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb.

No doubt 2026 will be a mixture of blessings and challenges – but whatever happens let's hold tight to Jesus! I'll finish with the prayer, I prayed over everyone in our meeting on the first Sunday of the year! Here it is... Praying this over you today!

## Prayer of Blessing for 2026

May the God who called you keep you.  
May the oil on your life never run dry.  
May your homes be places of rest and laughter.  
May your hearts remain soft, even when the road is hard.  
May wisdom guard you, joy strengthen you, and grace surround you.  
May you start this year grateful and enter it with expectancy.  
AMEN!



**Matt Bell**  
Senior Leader Ashwood  
Church



## Our NEXT Baptism Sunday date is provisionally 14<sup>th</sup> June

If you've never been baptised, please speak to someone, and find out more.

We already have a number of people interested in being baptised. Could this next time be you?

Please contact your LifeGroup Leader or Youth Leader or email [admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk) or [bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk) to register your interest or if you would like to have a conversation.





# prayer

## Opportunities to pray TOGETHER:

We believe prayer is so important in the life of Ashwood. If you consider yourself part of our Ashwood Family – please find ways of joining with us to pray.

### “Prayer Rally”

Every **Sunday** morning 9.50am at the Ashwood Centre before the meeting

### “Pray First”

**Fridays** 7.00-7.30am on Zoom\*

### “Prayer Space”

**Thursdays** 9.30 -10.30am on Zoom\*

### “Touching Heaven”

Please join us! Everyone welcome!  
The people of God in the Presence of God. **Wednesday's:**  
4th February, 4th March, 1st April

### “Prayer for the New Home for Ashwood”

**See separate section**, page

**\*For Zoom meetings,  
find details on your  
weekly email.**



## TRANSFORMED WORSHIP NIGHTS 2026 – Sunday Evenings 7pm.

Let's gather together to worship and to press in to all that God has for us! Join us for a night of praise, worship and seeking God.

On these evenings we gather together to worship, recognising that as we do that we can be transformed in God's presence. We often find ourselves praying for a fresh in-filling of the Holy Spirit and praying for those who need a touch from God.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Feb /  
31<sup>st</sup> May /  
20<sup>th</sup> Sept /  
22<sup>nd</sup> Nov  
(Provisional  
dates)**



# prayer local and global

## 2025 and 2026

It's wonderful to begin the year in Ashwood Church with our "SEEK FIRST" prayer season, joining with a global 24/7 prayer movement led and empowered by God's Spirit.

Reflecting on 2025, I am so grateful to God for all the ways we can see answers to our prayers in small as well as big ways. In our growing Church family we're grateful for all those who have found and are now following Jesus.

We give thanks for the progress being made towards our New Home for Ashwood.

We give thanks for the generosity of everyone in Ashwood who gave into our Christmas offering, raising an amazing total to be shared between

100Homes and LINKS charity.

As we look forward to all that our generous Father in Heaven has in store for us in 2026, we can pray with confidence.



### Tearfund:



news and  
prayer  
updates  
are

available on [Tearfund.org](https://Tearfund.org) and in [their Tear Times magazine](#), and Prayer Diary. A paper copy is also available from Dave & Christine.

### Open Doors:



[2026 World Watch List](#) provides details of the top 50 countries in the world where it is the most challenging to be a Christian, and where many Christians suffer severe persecution. It is now available [on the link](#), on their website and paper copies can be ordered or are available from Dave & Christine.



**Dave Redfern**



## LINKS.charity

*'We are deeply grateful for your love, prayers, support and generosity throughout this year. More than ever, we believe that we are in this together, and we would love for you to continue the adventure with us as we step into a new year.'* [a quote from LINKS blog]. You can read the latest [LINKS magazine on this link](#) or on their [website blog](#), celebrating the past 40 years of God's faithful love and vision, then looking ahead to embrace all that God has planned for their future. This is a great inspiration for our prayers for LINKS.

We continue to pray for Sam Walker, as he returns to Kenya after a Christmas and New Year break in the UK, that he will be refreshed and renewed in his strength for all that God has in store for 2026. We also pray for the ongoing work of the LINKS Africa Hub in Kenya where Sam is based.

### Hopeful for 2026

It's been wonderful reconnecting with the Ashwood family and sharing what God is doing through our Links partnerships across Africa.

Two years since launching our regional hub in Kenya, we've seen amazing growth—both in the team and in community impact. We've even added dairy cows to support an income-generating project for the hub!

In November, we hosted 14 African partner organisations at the hub to learn and share ideas on agriculture, mental health, and IT—resources they'll take back to strengthen their communities.



Hope Missions continues its vital work among poor communities in Malawi's central region. Annie Mkandawire shared how Hope Farm now funds women's programmes, farming initiatives, and small business loans. Ashwood played a huge role in this, and it's inspiring to see the long-term impact! Recently, our partnership helped launch eight new businesses for women at Kuwala Church and trained four young people in bricklaying—a skill they'll pass on to others.



**Sam Walker**  
LINKS Africa



# new home for ashwood

## New Home for Ashwood – Continuing to Pray

Now that planning permission has been granted the NHFA team are working hard behind the scenes in lots of areas that will move us forward. Please pray in one or more of these ways!

### 1. Monthly Prayer together

We plan to meet once a month, 7.30-8pm online.

Dates see overleaf

### 2. Fasting Thursdays

We're also encouraging people to consider fasting from food on "Thursdays" as we intentionally seek God and add extra weight to our praying. Fasting demonstrates "We're serious and we're focused."



### 4. Pray the Declaration Prayer:

*God our Father, we give you thanks and praise for all that you've done in our past and thank you for your faithfulness to us over many years. We believe that you've called us to be a healthy growing church for all ages. We believe that you have good plans and purposes for our future. We believe you have said "Enlarge the place of your dwelling" and it's time to Plan for Growth. We pray that you will make it possible for us to acquire the land next door, to help with our growing church family. Thank you in advance for providing all the provisions we need! Lord increase our faith for this project – we believe you can do it! We don't want to settle for anything less than your best for us. Help us to think big! Amen*

### NHFA Giving

For donations, please scan one of the QR codes



Via Stewardship pg



Via ChurchSuite



ashwood  
church

# New Home for Ashwood Prayer Gatherings – \*NEW TIME AND DAY\*

In order to make it possible for more people to join and also recognising the darker, colder nights at the start of the year, we've decided to move our New Home For Ashwood Prayer Gatherings back online for the next 3 months. We want to encourage as many people as possible to join with us to pray.

There are really only 2 things most of us can do at the moment: Give and Pray!

Online Prayer Gatherings:

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February 7.30-8pm**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 7.30-8pm**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 7.30-8pm**

## New Home for Ashwood – Pressing on Together

We continue to work hard behind the scenes on our New Home for Ashwood, and at this stage, much of our focus is on the **fundraising side of the project**. With plans moving forward, it's vital that we now build the

financial support needed to turn vision into reality.  
We're really

encouraged by the growing sense that this is something we can all play a part in.

Fundraising doesn't need to be complicated or overwhelming; it might be a cake sale, a sponsored walk, a quiz night, an online giving page, or something more adventurous! Whether you take on something individually or gather a small group together, every effort genuinely makes a difference. We're also conscious of how generously Ashwood already gives in

BUILDING ON THE PAST

BELIEVING IN THE FUTURE

the ashwood centre



time, finances, and volunteer energy, so where possible, we are looking to fundraise more widely too.

To help make this easy, clear, and joyful, we've put together guidance, ideas, and practical information on how you can get involved. You can find out more, including how to give, how to fundraise, and how to get support from the team, by visiting:

[www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk/nhfa](http://www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk/nhfa)

Above all, please continue to pray:

- for wisdom and creativity as we fundraise
- for unity and discernment for the NHFA team

and for God's continued blessing and provision over the whole project

Thank you for standing with us, believing with us, and helping to build something that will serve worship, community, and mission for generations to come.

Blessings,

**Bob Goody**  
On behalf of the NHFA  
Team





# courses



## FREEDOM IN CHRIST

quite painful at times engaging with the teaching material, depending on the hurts we may have experienced in our lives. But we know that this course has been instrumental in helping people to identify negative thought patterns, to help take our thoughts captive and renew our minds. We've seen people develop amazing connections and friendships through mixing with other people across church and being vulnerable in a safe space.

### So glad I took that step!

My name is Maureen Ndururi, and I love God—and I know He loves me a lot.

Now, I didn't always know this the way I know it now. That realisation really hit me when I joined the Freedom in Christ (FIC) course.

It's not that I didn't know God loves me before. I knew it... but I didn't know it, you know? Like that saying, "when you know, you know." Yeah—that kind of

We have been running the Freedom in Christ (FIC) course for many years and had over 80 different people attend the course over the past 4 years! And we've run it again this year and it's been amazing to see what God has been doing.

We know that the course does not solve everything and that it can actually be

knowing. I hope that makes sense. That's why I'm giving this testimony—because of what this course has done in my life.

I first heard about FIC when the lovely Emmeline shared about it in church with so much passion and excitement. I thought, "Okay, why not?" I decided to give it a try, not really knowing what to expect, but trusting that He who began a good work in me would finish it.

And honestly, I'm so glad I took that step.



Every week, I learned something new. Some things I had heard before, but being in that class - and intentionally asking the Lord to open my eyes and ears - made all the difference. Every session came with a new insight or a small "aha!" moment. Scripture started making more sense, and I began to see my life in Christ in a completely new way.

Thanks to Freedom in Christ, I now know who I am in Christ. I know that God doesn't love me less when I'm not perfect (which is great news!) and above all I'm learning to live from freedom, not pressure—and that has changed everything.

Some things I am still learning and unlearning, thanks to this amazing eye-opening course. If I had one word to describe the whole experience it would be "IMPACTFUL"



I would like to thank the Ashwood Church team who made this possible, and to all my classmates who made the class and group discussions so much fun, I got to meet a lot of wonderful people.

May we all continue to experience Freedom in Christ!

**Maureen Ndururi**



## Freedom in Christ - there's always more...

I loved joining with the group of people who committed ourselves to the Freedom in Christ course from September - November 25. Every time I go through this course there's always new things to discover and greater freedom to receive and live in.

In session 5: The Battle for our minds - we read and prayed through putting on the whole armour of God as described by Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18:

*Finally build up your strength in union with the Lord Jesus and by means of His mighty power. Put on the whole armour God gives us for our good protection and victory. I had a bit of a light bulb moment seeing each piece of the armour as putting on a different characteristic of Jesus.*

- I put on the belt of Truth: Jesus is my Way, my Truth, my Life - the only way to true living.
- I put on the breastplate of righteousness: Jesus is all my right living, He protects my heart and my emotions.
- I put on the shoes of the gospel of peace: Jesus is my good news of peace and reconciliation with God, with myself and with others.

->

- I put on the helmet of Salvation: Jesus is all my Salvation, all my right thinking, he protects my mind with his Word.
- I take up the shield of Faith: Jesus is my faith and trust in God's Word in the Bible.
- I take up the sword of the Spirit: Jesus is my revelation and prophetic Word of God for today and now, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

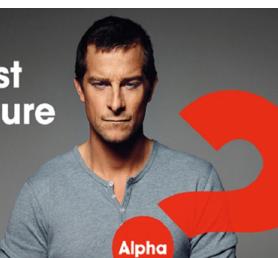
We pray with the help of God's Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers for all God's people.

I hope we can all enjoy lots of light bulb moments to help us grow in our freedom and fruitfulness this year.

*Dave Redfern*



**My greatest adventure**



Watch Bear's story [Alpha.org](https://Alpha.org)

**Food** A chance to eat together

**Talk** A short talk about the Christian Faith

**Discussion** A space to share your thoughts in small groups

Ask anything about Life, Faith and God

**You're INVITED**  
**Try Alpha**  
 The Alpha Course  
 starting TUES 20th January 2026  
 For 13 weeks  
 To book in, express interest or ask any questions email  
[alpha@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:alpha@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)



A very big group of people have started the Alpha course this year.  
 Please keep praying for them.

**12<sup>th</sup> February, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 26<sup>th</sup> March**

Emotionally Healthy Woman Course

The Emotionally Healthy  
**Woman**



**Geri Scazzero**  
 with Peter Scazzero

With **Bec Goody and Helen Tomlinson**

**ashwood church**

**Book online**



(Website or My ChurchSuite)



28 - 31  
AUGUST  
2026

LINCOLNSHIRE  
SHOWGROUND



## We are so excited about AWAKEN 2026

...and want to invite you, your family and our whole church to join together. We are so thrilled to see this event building and gathering momentum and we know that it is significant for the church in our nation at this time. Once again we will be on the Lincolnshire showground over the August Bank Holiday weekend expecting and experiencing a great move of the Holy Spirit as we gather together. Awaken is a time of Celebration and the strapline FAITH, FAMILY, FUN really does sum it up.

### Tickets/Prices:

The earlier you book, the better price you get!

**“Early Bird”**

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct – 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb**

**“Spring Saver”**

**4<sup>th</sup> Feb – 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

**“Summer Saver”**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> July**

**“Event Price”**

**1<sup>st</sup> Aug – Event**

**The “Early Bird” price is ending on 3rd February!**

To book, go to:

<https://awakenevent.uk/tickets>

Most people will camp for the whole event, but it is also possible to stay in a hotel nearby (parking is freely available on site). If you can't be there for the whole weekend, you can also just book for a day or two.

**There will be no Sunday service on 30th August.**

If you have any issues with camping gear or transport, please talk to Janet Wright or Gisela Beighton and we will try to help you out.

# LIFE GROUPS

BETTER TOGETHER

## Ashwood LifeGroups

LifeGroups have always been important for maintaining support and care and also a place to grow spiritually.

LifeGroups are a committed place in Ashwood where you can get to know a group of people, share life together and support a smaller group of people. It's also a safe place where we encourage one another to be followers of Jesus.

We continue to add new people to our groups which is always a great pleasure, and is a great way to become part of the Ashwood Family.

If you are new to Ashwood or maybe you've started connecting with us on Sundays online, and you would like us to introduce you to one of our friendly LifeGroups.

Please email [admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk) and we'll be in touch with you!

### What are LifeGroups all about?

These are the four core values that are at the heart of all of our LifeGroups:

- 1. WELCOME** – LifeGroups are inclusive and a really positive place for everyone to “share life” together.
- 2. RELATIONAL** – LifeGroups are a place of high commitment where people are supported, through trusting, open and accountable positive relationships.
- 3. GROWING** – We believe that the Christian life will always include spiritual development as we seek to become more like Jesus. LifeGroups are a great place to do this.
- 4. JESUS CENTRED** – We want to be a community of people who know the truth of Jesus and live by His Spirit. Prayer, sharing God’s word and exercising the gifts of the Spirit are all part of keeping Jesus unashamedly at the centre of all we are about.



# Melissa shares this month:

To be really honest, I'm not exactly sure why I joined a LifeGroup! I was invited and thought I had nothing to lose by giving it a try. That was a couple of years ago and I haven't looked back. The group are friendly and welcoming, and it feels great to be a part of it. Even though we don't always agree on things, it's refreshing to be with such a mix of different people who are united in their passion for Jesus. I enjoy the study we do, prayers we share, but also the laughs we have along the way.

## Prayer Course II

In our LifeGroups we started the year praying together and now in the run up to Easter we will use material created by Pete Grieg called the prayer course II which looks at some of the challenges of what seems like "Unanswered prayer".

Being part of a LifeGroup is a great way to deepen your faith and do life with others. LifeGroups are small groups that meet together fortnightly to share life and support one another. At Ashwood we aim for our LifeGroups

As someone who comes to Ashwood on my own, I think it's especially important to consider joining a LifeGroup. Everyone at Ashwood is so approachable but when you have questions, need support or encouragement – it can be hard to know exactly where to go or who to turn to. Join LifeGroup and you have an instant faith family, within the wider Ashwood community, who are there and ready to journey through life with you.

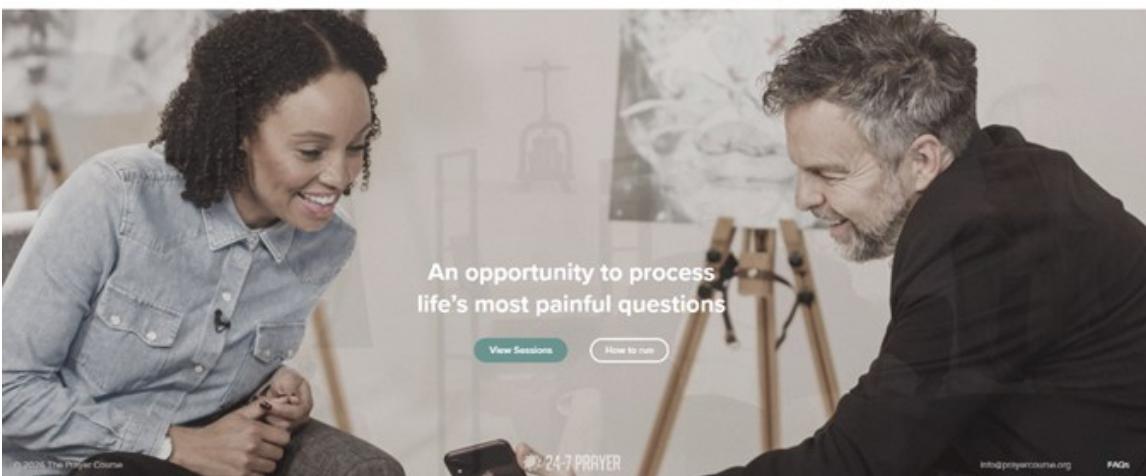
***Melissa Harrison***



to be: welcoming, relational, Jesus centred and a place to grow! LifeGroups are such a brilliant place to

share, develop and learn together, supporting one another in the highs and lows of life.

***Matt Bell***



# Pastoral Care



## Pastoral Visiting Team

Many of you know that we have a team that will be available to visit those who are in hospital or chronically ill at home. This is primarily for adults who are within or connected to the church.



We recognise that our LifeGroups, Pastoral Hub and Gathering provide the backbone of our Pastoral care

across the church and this team of pastorally gifted people will only enhance our support.

The team is led by Helen Tomlinson and includes a variety of people who are both trustworthy and compassionate and have the capacity to give some time to visit those in need on behalf of Ashwood Church.



The purpose of the visit will be to offer encouragement and a listening ear, to pray, offer communion or anoint with oil – always led by the person being visited.



**For more information or to request a hospital visit for yourself or someone connected to Ashwood Church, please contact Helen at [helen@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:helen@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)**



## Two's Company

Most of us have a variety of people that we connect with in some way. People at work, parents at school, those we see at church or at café 22. But for some people in our community, they may not have connections. They may not see anyone for weeks. For some the TV is their main source of company.

## Time to Talk Befriending

many ways we can serve the community and help to address the

Two's Company is our telephone befriending service. It is one of the

## Caring for the Carers

- Are you involved in caring for someone? A spouse? A sibling? An elderly parent or a friend?

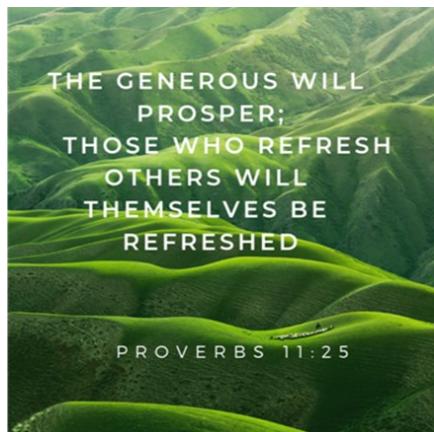
-Want to be encouraged by others who are in a similar position to you?

-Want an opportunity to connect, share stories, insights, advice with others walking a similar path?

Then why not get in touch?

We recognise that within church we have a lot of people

I care...



problem of loneliness. **A simple phone call once a week, or once a fortnight could make a HUGE difference to a lonely person in Ashfield.** We are blessed to have a variety of wonderful volunteers at Ashwood. **Do pray for our volunteers and the people that they are supporting.** This befriending is such a blessing and we want our lovely volunteers to feel upheld.



If you want to know more why not chat to- Bec Goody or email: [Bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:Bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

involved in caring for relatives and we've been thinking about how we can support those within church that are involved in caring for loved ones. We have a WhatsApp group for those involved in caring for loved ones, so we can pray/support each other and have social get togethers (about every few months). Caring looks different for each of us, some live and care full time for someone, for some it's regularly

checking in and supporting a loved one, but we all share that emotional burden of caring for someone.

**Bec Goody**

If you're involved in caring for someone -whatever capacity that is-we really encourage you to get in touch and come along! Or maybe you just want to find out a bit more about it-get in touch with me:

[bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)



At Ashwood, we strive to create a culture of care and to support people pastorally to the best of our abilities.

Some issues however are so complex and deep that they may require additional support. If you're unsure of where to go, here are a few ideas. This may be for you or someone you're supporting, but we hope you find it useful. Don't hesitate to get in touch with me for more information.

**Bec Goody**  
Pastoral Care Team Leader



## Prison Ministry



**PACT** - is a brilliant Christian charity that works to support prisoners, people with convictions and their families. <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/>. It is estimated that around 1 in 15 children experience the imprisonment of a parent. They have some brilliant videos about supporting children and young people who have experienced a family member go to prison <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/get-help/children-young-people/>. They are really insightful and worth a watch! They have a helpline for family members to provide support, support for people on probation and befriending schemes.



**Prison Fellowship** - is a brilliant charity that works to support those in prison and provide hope and care through befriending, chaplaincy, restorative justice courses and bible studies and resources.

If you know someone impacted by prison-why not have a look. <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/>



## Additional Needs



**Sight Loss: TORCH Trust** - is a Christian charity that works to support those who are **partially sighted or blind**, to encounter Jesus and thrive in a Christian community. They have resources, fellowship groups, podcasts. If you or someone you know is affected by sight loss, why not see how they could help?



**Hearing Loss: Open Ears** - is a Christian charity that supports those who are **partially or completely deaf**. They have information about lip reading, sign language, blogs and ways to connect with others with hearing difficulties. <https://www.openears.org.uk/>



**Additional Needs: Count Everyone In** - is a brilliant Christian charity that challenges, encourages, advises and supports churches to welcome and be accessible for adults with **learning disabilities**. They run Know & Grow workshops (Know & Grow Longing to Belong, Life Matters & Makaton) to equip churches to communicate the love of Jesus to people with learning disabilities.

<https://www.counteveryonein.org.uk/>

## Eco Tips

### Month: January

**Big Impact:** Thinking about summer holidays, consider a staycation or travelling by train.

**Little Stuff:** Repurpose and upcycle, before recycling.

**Easy:** Feeling blue? Get empowered by writing to your local decision makers and ask them to act in the best interests of us and our planet.

### Month: February

**Big Impact:** Bank green and bank ethically. Various banks are investing in things not in keeping with Christian values. <https://bank.green/>

#### Little Stuff:

Give your loved ones some ethical chocolate or a voucher for an experience rather than more stuff.



**Easy:** Avoid running your appliances between 4pm-7pm and if you can run them after 11pm to use that sweet low-carbon electricity. Some energy providers will even give you rewards or a cheaper rate for doing so.

**Jono Wright**





## ACE Kids: November and December Highlights



### Fun, Faith and Festive Joy!

The last two months of the year have been full of fun, faith, and festive excitement at ACE Kids!

#### November Friday Night Takeaway – Jesus, the Greatest Gift

On Friday 28th November, our Friday Night Takeaway focused on the true meaning of Christmas. With the big idea that “Christmas is about God’s love — Jesus is the best gift ever!”, we explored John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.”

Abby brought the Christmas message to life with a creative sketch, playing a

delivery person bringing gifts from God — and the final gift? Jesus, God’s greatest gift to the world! Not wrapped in fancy paper or bows, but in love, born in Bethlehem for everyone. Children learned that we receive this gift with thankful hearts, and when we show love, kindness, or forgiveness, we’re sharing God’s gift with others too.

As always, the evening was packed with crafts, dancing, food, faith-sharing, and friendship-building.

#### December Virtual Christmas Assembly – The Grinch and God’s Love

In December, ACE Kids sent out a virtual Christmas assembly celebrating the season with a Grinch twist. Rich led the children through the story of the Grinch, showing how he tried to steal Christmas but discovered that Christmas isn’t just about presents or decorations — it’s about love, kindness, and sharing joy.

The assembly highlighted the greatest gift of all: Jesus, God’s gift of love to the world. Children were reminded to thank God for His love and to share it with others, just like the Grinch learned to do.



Let the little **CHILDREN**  
come to me, and  
**do not hinder**  
them, for the  
**KINGDOM**  
of heaven  
**BELONGS TO**  
**such as these**

MATTHEW 19:14

@cbonfilm

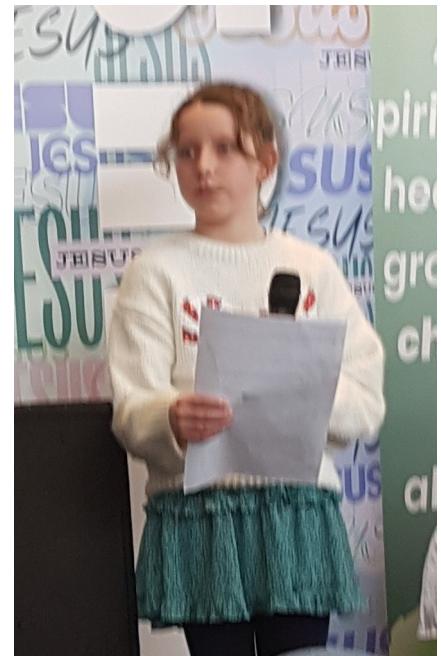
Even virtually, the session was full of laughter, interaction, and reflection, leaving children inspired by faith, friendship, and festive joy.

It's been a wonderful end to the year at ACE Kids, celebrating how God's love,

kindness, and generosity make every moment — from Friday Night Takeaways, Holiday Clubs to virtual assemblies — truly special.

We can't wait to see what God's going to do this year in ACE Kids! Join us for more fun, faith, and friendship at ACE Kids, starting with our Friday

Night Takeaway on 13th February!



**Rich Reason**  
Children and Youth Team Leader

School Years  
1-6  
Free, Fun & Food

13TH FEB  
6-730pm

Friday  
NIGHT  
Takeaway

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1134945.  
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE REGISTERED  
IN ENGLAND & WALES NUMBER 6946764  
REGISTERED ADDRESS - 41 CROCUS ST  
KIRKBY-IN-ASH NG17 7DY

ashwood church

ACE KIDS  
ASHWOOD CHURCH



ashwood  
church

# ashwood kids

## Earthshakers Family Christmas Service

### A Huge Thank You!

What a wonderful time we had celebrating Christmas together as a church family through our Earthshakers Family Service!

A big thank you to all the children, parents, and our amazing Earthshakers team who made the morning so special. Who knew you could have so much fun using Boom

Wacker sticks for a game of “Christmas - Name That Tune”.

We were inspired by the Bob Hartman poem “It Begins in Bethlehem” and delighted by the Signing Choir video to “Starry Night”, before experiencing the nativity story in a fresh way through the book Jesus’ Christmas Party.

Our young people and Earthshaker children led everyone in worship with Star of the Morning, and we shared a thoughtful reflection and prayer together. Every family also took home a decorated star, lovingly prepared by our Earthshakers children, as a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

We closed the morning with a joyful celebration of “Joy to the World”, leaving everyone uplifted and full of Christmas cheer.





Thank you again to everyone who joined, participated, and contributed — your creativity, enthusiasm, and heart made this service truly memorable.



**Rich Reason**  
Children and  
Youth Team  
Leader





# elevate youth

## Elevate YTH Update

### Faith, Fun and What's Coming Next!

It's been great to kick off the new year by picking up right where we left off with Youth Alpha! We're now at the halfway point of the course, with five exciting sessions still to come. Over the coming weeks, our young people will be exploring more about the Holy Spirit, healing, and how God is at work in our lives today. It's been brilliant to see faith growing, questions being asked, and confidence building week by week.

We did have a couple of youth nights disrupted by the weather - Storm Claudia and Storm Goretti clearly didn't get the memo that Elevate.YTH happens on a Friday! While we missed those evenings, we're very grateful everyone stayed safe... and we're hoping that's the last of the storms for a while so we can enjoy a smoother run of youth nights ahead.

In December, we wrapped up the year with a brilliant Christmas Social at Freestyle Trampoline Park on 12th

December. It was a fantastic night full of energy, laughter, and fun together. We're already planning another youth social in the spring, so if you're a young person with ideas or suggestions, please let Rich or the team know - we'd love to hear them!

**Rich Reason**

*Children and Youth Team Leader*



## Stay Connected

Parents and young people can stay in the loop:

- Join our **WhatsApp groups** for updates (Parents and Year 7+ Youth)
- Follow us on **Instagram: @elevateyouthashwood** for updates, inspiration, and event info
- Got questions or want to get connected? Contact **Rich** at [rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Key Dates This Term

**January:** 23rd  
**February:** 6th and 27th  
**March:** 6th, 20th and 27th

## When, Where and Who

All Friday evening sessions start at 7 pm (unless stated otherwise) at the Ashwood Centre and open for all young people in year 6 – age 18.

## REFRESH 2026 – Bookings Are OPEN!



We're incredibly excited to announce that bookings are now open for Refresh 2026, taking place 17th–19th July 2026. Refresh is open to all young people from Year 6 to Year 13 and is a powerful 48-hour getaway

packed with FUN, FAITH, and FRIENDSHIP.

This weekend is always a highlight of the year — a chance for young people to grow in their faith, build lasting friendships, and encounter God in a fresh way. We're praying and expectant that this year will be our biggest and best yet, and places will fill quickly, so we'd encourage families to book as soon as possible.

Full details and booking information can be found via the QR code.



## Could You Help a Young Person Get to Refresh?

We never want cost to be a barrier. If you're able to donate or sponsor a place (fully or partially) for a young person to attend Refresh, your generosity could make a life-changing difference. Please speak to Rich or the church office for more information — every contribution helps open the door for a young person to say "yes" to this amazing weekend.

If you would like to be involved in the Elevate or children's team, please speak to Rich Reason: [rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)



# other

## Free Access to RightNow Media

Hopefully by now you'll have heard about our exciting **free gift** for everyone in our church family, **full access to RightNow**

**Media!** It's an incredible online library packed with thousands of Bible studies, devotionals, teaching videos, and children's series to help us all keep growing in our faith and focusing on *Simply Jesus*.



I said I would give you a little update on what I have been watching, and I am enjoying one of their fascinating series,

***Excavating the Evidence for Jesus***, where archaeologist and author Dr. Titus Kennedy explores the history, archaeology, and evidence surrounding Jesus' ministry. Filmed from his research lair and on location across Israel, it's engaging, faith-building, and perfect for all ages.

If you haven't already signed up, you can access it all for free at <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/ashwoodchurchuk>

## “Belonging to Ashwood” – Next Session Sunday 1st February 12-12.45pm after the morning meeting.

If you'd like to find out what it means to be part of Ashwood – please join us for this short session. This is the perfect place to ask questions, and hear about our vision, values, and mission as a church. You can also find out how to join a LifeGroup or one of our serving teams. If you're new to Ashwood or been around for a while this is also perfect for you. You can just turn up or let us know you're coming [claire@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:claire@ashwoodchurch.org.uk) or [bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

Future Provisional Dates: 29 March / 31 May / 12 July / 20 Sept / 22 Nov



# Rural Missions Update – Out and About, Building What's Next



It's been a full and encouraging season for Rural Missions, with the team very much *out and about* across the country. Over recent months, we've been supporting churches through tailored consultations and vision days, walking alongside leaders as they reflect, pray, and discern how God might be calling them to serve their local rural communities more effectively. These days continue to be rich moments of listening, encouragement, and practical planning, and we're grateful for the trust churches place in us.

Alongside this, we're excited to be launching new missional networks,

bringing together people who share a heart for rural ministry. These spaces are already proving invaluable for connection, shared learning, mutual support, and reminding rural leaders that they are not alone.

We're also exploring some really exciting potential partnerships. Early conversations with Bible Society are opening up possibilities around rural engagement, Scripture, and mission in fresh and accessible ways. At the same time, we're looking at how we might work more closely with Christians Against Poverty (CAP), particularly around addressing hidden need, poverty, and financial vulnerability in rural settings.

Please keep praying for wisdom, open doors, and God's leading as these opportunities develop. We're thankful for all your support as we continue enabling rural churches in God's mission.

Blessings

**Bob Goody**



Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

**Matthew 28:19-20**



# Cafe

## Looking back and looking ahead

Christmas has been and gone, we are now well into the new year and looking forward to what is in store in 2026.

During the four weeks of Advent we took time to reflect on the coming of Jesus and what that means to us. Thanks go to Molly, Bec and Anton who all contributed to those reflections, each bringing their own unique style.

The final Cafe before Christmas Gill and I reflected on the beauty of waiting, the way that we can grow and the build up of anticipation as we get closer to the 'big event'. We celebrated with Turkey cobs (thank you Claire for your support in this) and Avril's beautiful Christmas cake.



As we move into the new year we are still loving and serving our customers with great cakes, lunch, drinks and especially company and friendship.

We are always open to new volunteers to continue to build the team and enable us to develop what we do.

I am so grateful for the wonderful people we already have on board, their care for the people who come to the cafe, each other, myself and the culture we have developed over the years.

Our prayer into the new year is that the



Cafe continues to thrive, full of God's love and provision.

**Christine Redfern**



ashwood  
church

## Come as you are. Leave feeling lifted

Every so often, something lands in your inbox that reminds you why Café22 exists. Claire recently received an email from a customer who had visited us for the very first time. They wrote with such warmth and gratitude — not just about the food, but about the welcome, the atmosphere, and the sense of community they felt the moment they stepped through the door.

It was one of those messages that stops you for a moment. A reminder that what happens in Café22 is more than coffee and cake. It's connection. It's kindness. It's a place where people meet.

She finished with a simple phrase that captures the heart of Café22 and the experience so many people share:

### The Gathering Place: Come and See

You may be thinking “Is The Gathering Place for me?”

Why not come and see? There is no set agenda or criteria, there are a variety of people that go, different ages, different backgrounds, just playing games, doing craft, chatting, drinking tea and doing life together.

Why not get connected?

**Bec Goody**

### The Gathering Place



A place to connect, have conversations, receive support, relax and have fun!!

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday each month, 2pm – 4pm The Ashwood Centre

“Come as you are. Leave feeling lifted.”

And while we're celebrating what Café22 is becoming, we also want to say a huge thank you to everyone who made our Christmas special swing such a joy. Avril — what a cake!

Christine — for sharing Christingle. And to everyone who served, welcomed, washed up, baked, chatted, and made the room feel alive with warmth: THANK YOU. You helped create something special.

Café22 continues to be a place shaped by the people who walk through its doors. We're grateful for everyone involved

Cafe22 Team

**Gill Isterling**  
Community Outreach Lead



**The Gathering Place at The Ashwood Centre**  
Join us every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month, from 2:00 – 4:00pm.

The Gathering Place is open to everyone — a friendly space to connect with others, make new friends, and enjoy a relaxed afternoon together.

There's plenty to do, with tabletop activities such as **jigsaws, board games, crafts, and painting**. We often include a fun **quiz**, and always end with a short **“Thought for the Day”**, offering a reflection inspired by our Christian faith.

Of course, no afternoon would be complete without **tea, coffee, and delicious homemade cake!** Come along — everyone is warmly welcome.





# community

## Storehouse Foodbank

### A Season of Generosity at the Food Bank



Since October, our food bank has been noticeably busier. Demand rose quickly, and

for a moment it looked as though our shelves might struggle to keep up. We're grateful to have financial reserves for times like these, but we also know that moments of pressure can become moments of community — and this one certainly did.

We put out the call, and you responded with remarkable generosity.

The church family, local groups, and neighbours across our community stepped forward, filling baskets, bringing tins, and giving what they could. Because of this outpouring of kindness, we were able to provide generous Christmas Bags of Blessing, including food vouchers, ensuring

families could celebrate with dignity and joy.

**VOLUNTEERS  
Are Unpaid.  
NOT BECAUSE THEY  
ARE WORTHLESS,  
BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE  
Priceless.**

Thank you for standing with us. Your kindness makes a real difference, and we are very grateful.

Storehouse Foodbank  
Team

*Gill Isterling*  
Community Outreach  
Lead





Welcome and hospitality are really important to us at Ashwood, we long to see every person made to feel welcomed and cared for whether they are new to us or whether they have been coming to us for while. We hope people feel seen and valued from the moment they come through the church doors to the moment they leave and beyond! Every person helps to cultivate a welcoming atmosphere, but our welcome and hospitality team play a big role in sustaining this!

## **Everyone has something to offer**

Joining the Welcome Team at Ashwood has been a really positive experience for me. From the very beginning, I felt supported and encouraged, even though I wasn't completely sure what to expect. The team made me feel part of the church family straight away, and it's been great getting to know people I might not otherwise have met.

Being on the Welcome Team has helped me step out of my comfort zone in a simple but meaningful way.

Something as small as a smile, a hello, or helping someone find their way can make a real difference to how people feel when they arrive at church. I've seen how a warm welcome can help people relax and feel at home.

Serving in this way has reminded me that everyone has something to offer, and that God can use even the smallest acts of kindness. I'd really encourage anyone thinking about joining to give it a go, it's been incredibly rewarding.

**Mark Leek**



Why not come and be a part of our amazing welcome team and help provide a

welcoming space for everyone coming into Ashwood? Whether you can make a cup of tea/coffee or simply greet people as they come in with a smile and warm welcome - we'd love to hear from you!

**Chat to Janet Wright If you want to find out more!**

**Janet Wright**





# giving

## Ashwood Church Financial Giving

We are so thankful to everyone who gives financially. We can't do anything without you! With your help, we can play our part in seeing God's Kingdom built and lives transformed for Jesus.

**The easiest and most cost effective way** to give to Ashwood Church is directly into the church bank account. You can make a one off bank transfer or set up a regular standing order using our bank details:

**Account Name:** Ashwood Church  
**Account Number:** 00216525  
**Sort Code:** 60-01-73

This account can be used for donations for the general work of the church and the New Home for Ashwood project (if making a donation towards the New Home for Ashwood project, please use 'NHFA' as the reference so your gift can be correctly allocated).

### Alternatively, you can:

- Donate by cash during the offering on a Sunday morning
- Make a debit / credit card donation via our online **Stewardship** page (visit <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20024077> or scan the QR code)
- Make a debit / credit card donation via our online **Donate** page (visit <https://ashwoodchurch.churchsuite.com/donate> or scan the relevant QR code)
- By debit / credit card on a Sunday morning (please see Becky if you would like to donate this way)

**Please note that due to local branch closures and increased banking costs, we can no longer accept cheque donations**



Donate - via Stewardship page



Donate - NHFA



Donate – General Fund

	Total Giving	General Offerings	Development (NHFA) Fund*	Building Fund
November 2025	<b>£15,672</b>	£10,751	£4,096	£825
October 2025	<b>£14,398</b>	£11,557	£1,850	£991

## Finance Focus: Children and Young People

We are passionate about children and young people!

We want them to grow up in an environment where they can learn about Jesus and understand God's love for them. We want to equip our children and young people to meet Jesus and have a life long relationship with him.

Here are some of the great examples of ways we have been able to invest in the lives of children and young people with the money you have given. Every gift, small or large, makes a difference.

Since February 2025 we have:

- Run and resourced **six Friday Night Takeaway** (FNT) events for school years 1 to 6 (FNT is a great night of fun, games, music, food and stories. Each event enables children to learn more about Jesus). **The next FNT is on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026**
- Run and resourced **one holiday club** (during October half term) for school years 1 to 6. (Each holiday club has a different theme which explores different aspects of life with a positive message



and story from the Bible)

- Run and provided materials, activities and refreshments for our Sunday morning '**Earthshakers**' groups (for ages 2 – 14)

- Facilitated **training** opportunities for our Children and Youth Teams
- Run **social events** for our young people including the Colour Run in August 2025
- Hosted and resourced our **Elevate youth** sessions on Friday evenings (these sessions have included Youth Alpha)
- Purchased **graduation gifts** for our young people graduating from Sunday morning Earthshakers groups into the main meeting
- Purchased **new tablets** to help with the registration for Earthshakers and ACE Kids events
- Invested in **Elevate Refresh** (our Youth weekend away for school years 6 to age 18) event. The next **Elevate Refresh will take place in July 2026**. (We subsidise the weekend to keep the costs as low as possible.)

It is so important to keep our children and young people connected and engaged with Jesus. Thank you for the money you give which helps us to try and do this. Everything we do is connected to our mission to help people find and follow Jesus!

**Becky Holmes**  
Financial Administrator



### Gift Aid

If you are a UK Tax Payer, there's some really good news! Ashwood Church can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you give from the Government, using the Gift Aid scheme. Just email [becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk) for a Gift Aid form.



# what's on

## Regular Meetings:

- **Sunday Morning:** Ashwood meets in the Ashwood Centre starting at 10.00am for refreshments, meeting starts at 10.30am
- **Touching Heaven Gathering:** 7.30 – 9.00pm usually 1st Wednesday in the month: 4th February, 4th March, 1st April - Details see page 5
- **LifeGroups** meet fortnightly on Monday afternoons or evenings. For more info, see pages 14/15 - to join, talk to Bec Goody
- **Ashwood Youth** meets on Fridays, details see page 25
- **Prayer Opportunities** see pages 5 - 7
- **New Home for Ashwood Prayer** dates see page 9
- **Belonging to Ashwood** Meetings see page 26
- **Opportunities to Serve**, see pages 13, 29-31
- **Transforming Worship Nights**, dates and details see page 5

## Ashwood in the Community

- **Ashwood Men:** Weekly Breakfast on Thursdays 9.30 am
- **Café 22:** Mondays except Bank Holidays 9.30 am – 1 pm
- **Foodbank:** Tuesdays 2.00pm - 3.00 pm
- **Seesaw (toddlers):** Tuesdays & Fridays term time 9.30am – 11.15 am
- **The Gathering Place:** First and third Friday of the month 2-4 pm / pg 15

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

## For Your Diaries:

12nd Feb	Start of Emotionally Healthy Women Course	pg 12
13th Feb	Friday Night Takeaway	pg 21
14th June	Next Baptism Sunday	pg 4
17th-19th July	Elevate Refresh	pg 25
28th-31st Aug	Awaken - Lincoln Showground	pg 13



# sunday messages

**The best way to get hold of our Sunday messages is the 'Talks' section of our church website (or Facebook).**

**Here's a remind of what has been preached over the last few weeks**

Sunday 16th November

**The Real Jesus - Part 4 - Cunning Jesus**

Sim Dendy

Sunday 23rd November

**The Real Jesus - Part 5 - Human Jesus**

Gill Isterling

Sunday 30th November

**In Jesus' Name - Part 6 - Honest Jesus**

Matt Bell

Sunday 7th December

**In Jesus' Name - Part 7 - Intimate Jesus**

Bec Goody

Sunday 14th December

**Family Nativity**

Rich Reason

Sunday 21st December

**Christmas Carol Service**

Bob Goody

Christmas Day

**Christmas Day Service**

Matt Bell

Sunday 4th January

**God does not change**

Matt Bell

Sunday 11th January

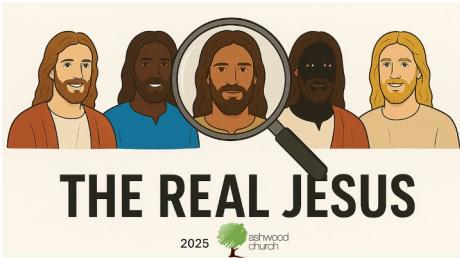
**Entering the year Anchored in God**

Claire Bell

Sunday 18th January

**Core Team Panel**

Matt Bell



# Further information

For further information about any church activities, please speak to one of our welcome team or one of the people taking part in the meeting. Alternatively, feel free to make use of the following contact information:

## Senior Leaders

Matt & Claire Bell

[matt@ashwoodchurch.org](mailto:matt@ashwoodchurch.org) /  
[claire@ashwoodchurch.org](mailto:claire@ashwoodchurch.org)

## Administrator

Gisela Beighton

[admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Children and Youth Work

Richard Reason

[rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Community Outreach Leader

Gill Isterling

[gill@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:gill@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Pastoral Care Team Leader

Bec Goody

[bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Finance

Becky Holmes

[becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## LifeGroups

Bec Goody

[bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Church email

[admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Church website

[www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk](http://www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

## Facebook

ashwood church page

## [www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk](http://www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk)

In case you miss any of the information from Ashwood News or the weekly notices, then visit [www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk](http://www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk).

We have a Church Weekly email with lots of information to help keep you up to date with what's going on and how to get involved. To be included in the mailing list to receive this information please email [admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk).

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Registered Charity Number 1134945

Registered Address: 41 Crocus Street, Kirkby in Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 7DY

[www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk](http://www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk)