December 2026, Issue 10

TOWN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

TOWN CHURCH
ST PETER PORT

From the Leadership Team



As I write, the start of Advent is still a few days away, yet Christmas seems to have been with us for months already! Shop windows have been draped in holly since the last Halloween pumpkin was packed away, and I am fairly certain I spotted a turkey nervously peering out from a local menu before Bonfire Night.

We have not been immune to this seasonal enthusiasm. Our Christmas Fair got the festivities underway in fine style and raised a wonderful £1,500. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed, volunteered, baked, crafted, bought, sold, lifted, carried, swept up, or simply joined in the fun. Special thanks must go to Sarah and Dee Dee, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the day such a success.

The Children's Colouring Corner was a tremendous hit and produced an impressive collection of masterpieces. There may even have been enough artistic talent on display to give the professionals something to worry about! (*See right.)* I am delighted to share some photos from the day, kindly taken by Evita (*pictured)* and posted on Facebook.



The festive fun is far from over. Christmas decorations, cards and gifts for all ages will be on sale during our Late-Night Shopping evenings on 3rd, 10th and 17th December. The ever-popular Tombola will also return and we are also holding a competition to guess the number of baubles on our beautiful new Christmas tree, generously donated by CCD Architects and decorated by Zoe Warlow. Please do pop in and have a go. The winner will enjoy both a prize and the satisfaction of proving they have a remarkable eye for baubles!"

As this will be the final newsletter of 2026, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Leadership Team, to wish you, your friends and families a very joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful 2027. May your festivities be filled with laughter, good company, and only a manageable amount of wrapping paper.











Advent & Christmas Wishes from Penny

Welcome to this edition of Town Church Newsletter.

As the days grow shorter and the chill of winter settles in, the Church enters the quiet, hopeful season of Advent. Amid the rush of shopping lists, decorations, and end-of-year preparations, Advent invites us to pause, take a deep breath, and remember what we are truly waiting for.

At the heart of our Christian faith is the breathtaking mystery of the Incarnation -the truth that God did not remain distant from our world, watching from afar. Instead, in Jesus Christ, God chose to step directly into human history, taking on flesh and blood, sharing in our joys, our struggles, and our everyday lives. The Incarnation reminds us that no corner of our experience is beyond God's reach, and no darkness is too deep for God's light to enter.

On Advent Sunday we are delighted to welcome the Elizabeth College Choir to our eleven o'clock service where we light the first candle of the Advent wreath. The solemnity of Advent is marked by the Gloria being omitted in the eucharist until Christmas. In the evening we mark the beginning of this time of preparation and waiting in our Darkness to Light carol service. We hear and sing some of the great music and hymns of this season. Do come if you can.

There are lots of services and events in the run up to Christmas and I hope to see you at some of them. Details are here and also available on the website. They help to keep us focussed on what truly matters at this busy time of the year when it is so easy not to pause and reflect on what we are doing and why.

Please feel free to invite friends, neighbours, and visiting family to join us for any of these services and celebrations, as we try to use this Advent season to make room in our hearts and our schedules for the one who came to dwell among us.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful and blessed Advent. *Penny*



Tour of Town Church

During the summer, Rob Grant, who undertook his Bailiwick of Guernsey Guild of Accredited Tour Guides assessment at Town Church, kindly led a fascinating guided tour of both the exterior and interior of the church. The tour also included a look at some of the church's most interesting memorials.

Rob shared the rich history of this ancient building, originally known as Sancti Petri du Porto Mari. Participants learned about how St Peter Port would have appeared at the time the church was first built, as well as its destruction and subsequent rebuilding over the centuries.

Penny, who also joined the tour, was able to add some of her own knowledge and insights, enriching the experience even further for the group.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative afternoon, offering a wonderful opportunity to discover more about the heritage of our church and its place in the history of the town. You may even spot a couple of other familiar faces in the photograph!





ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT TOWN CHURCH

TOWN CHURCH
ST PETER PORT
www.townchurch.net

Sunday 29th November
6.30 pm Darkness to Light
A candlelit Advent Carol Service.

Saturday 5th December - Monday 3rd January
Christmas Tree Festival
Entry by donation

Thursday 3rd, 10th & 17th December from 5.30 pm
Church stays open for Late-Night Shopping, many bargains, activities for children and refreshments .

Sunday 6th December
4 pm Les Bourgs Hospice Light Up A Life Service

Thursday 10th December
7.30 pm - 8.30 pm Congregation Christmas Get-Together

Friday 11th December
2 pm Christmas Tree Festival Best Dressed Tree Awards

Saturday 12th December
Latvian Christmas Service 6 pm

Sunday 20th December
6.30 pm Nine Lessons & Carols
Hear the Christmas story in words and song.

Thursday 24th December
4 pm Crib Service
Come dressed as your favourite Nativity character for this informal, family-friendly service that tells the story of Jesus Christ's birth.

11.30 pm Midnight Eucharist

Friday 25th December
11 am Christmas Day Eucharist

Desk Still Needed

We are looking to replace the very tired desk in the vestry. We are limited for size and ideally are looking for one no more that 160cm long and 80cm wide. If you have or know of anybody that is looking to dispose of a desk, please contact Martin.

Cards for Sale

The Shop has some beautiful cards for sale including a stunning watercolor by our own Angela Ferbrache.



Late-Night Shopping in St Peter Port

Thursday 3rd, 10th, 17th December Late Night Christmas Shopping in Town.

The church will stay open later on these evenings, offering tea and coffee and shopping opportunities. Please let Sarah know if you can help, even if it's just for one evening.

Town Church Evening

Please join us in Town Church, on the 10th Dec from 7.30 pm, to celebrate the season with a glass of mulled wine and some Christmas cheer. It will be lovely to see you all.

The Christmas Tree Festival

The Festival opens on 5th December. As there is a wedding taking place in the church that day, you may wish to save your visit until the 6th. This year we are delighted to be welcoming over 40 different charitable organisations, including two local schools. We will be awarding certificates in a number of categories, including an award for 'The Congregation's Favourite'. Judging will take place on 11th December, and nearer the time you will be invited to cast your vote for your own personal favourite. With so many wonderful displays on show, choosing may prove to be the hardest part!



Mill Street Café at Town Church

Mill Street Community Café will be holding a drop in 'Café at Church' event on Saturday 19th December between 10 am and 2 pm. Hot food and drinks will be available by donation. Funds raised will go to support both the Café and Town Church. All are welcome.

Former Members of Town Church – the Late John & Jane Rihoy

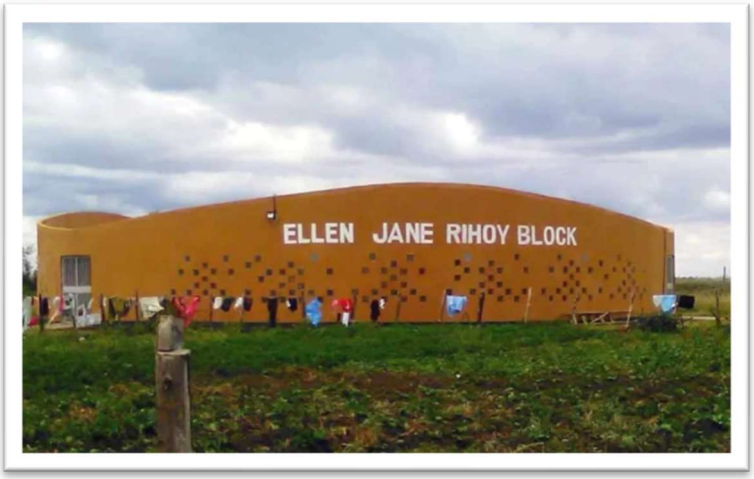
by Peter Lane

Seeing so much scaffolding around town, it is hard to believe that 35 years ago the builders had insufficient work to keep their employees busy. But in 1991 I was fortunate to introduce my brother to John Rihoy who, with his wife Jane, were members of the Town Church.

My brother Sebert, also a retired Headmaster, learned of an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. where the electricity had failed. He himself, being a handyman, went and rewired the building, but discovered that the children had no school. He therefore founded a charity (COPA), determined to build a school for them, and he set about raising money in Gloucester, Guernsey and in Florida.

The following year, in October 1992, John Rihoy was pleased to keep 4 of his staff employed by paying the wages and travel costs for a carpenter, a bricklayer, a plasterer and their younger son Gavin (now Chairman of the Board of J. W. Rihoy and Son Ltd) to go there and, alongside my brother, build "Guernsey Classrooms." They worked very hard for 6 weeks and also taught local men their skills, so that a school was completed in the village of La Hoya, 40 miles from the Haitian border; charitable fundraising paid for the teaching staff, equipment and books. Later, a clinic was also built there, and a second school was built in the village of Bombita for refugees who had crossed the mountains from Haiti. Now at last the D.R. government has taken over the funding of the schools, and some of the teachers are now former pupils of those schools.

The E. J. Rihoy Charitable Trust (named after Jane Rihoy) continues to provide financial support, thanks to Jane and John's children, Jeremy, Gavin and Liz, to improve the livelihood and opportunities of some of the world's most impoverished and marginalised communities, particularly in parts of Africa.



The Ellen Jane Rihoy block is the girls' dormitory at Endana school in Laikipia, Kenya. This is the first girls' dormitory that the school has had. It has transformed educational opportunities for girls from pastoralist communities in Laikipia.

Town Church and the Rectories' Situation

by Martin Priest (People's Warden)

You will, no doubt, have heard of and read about the decision made in the States of Deliberation for the secular parishes to stop funding the Rectories of the ancient parish churches or house the Rectors by 2030.

You may be wondering what this means for Town Church. The happy answer is nothing.

This is because the congregation of Town Church made the decision to purchase a Rectory for the Rector of Town Church when the Rectory moved to Cornet Street in 1956. This was achieved by considerable fundraising and the generosity of the congregation and , with foresight, was an excellent decision.

Only Vale Rectory, of all the other ancient parishes, also owns its Rectory. The Vicarages of the other town churches (St John's, St Stephen's and Holy Trinity) are not affected either as the churches own their respective Vicarages already.

So, the good news is that the new legislation will not affect Cornet Street. Town Church owns and funds the Rectory. It is ours. There will be no change for us. That is why it is not included in the Remede which, in St Peter Port, is solely to do with the maintenance of the church. It's worth saying that the Remede, and thus the ratepayers, do not fund anything to do with Christian ministry. The Remede concerns solely the wonderful, ancient building which is one of the glories of the town.

Whilst the Rectory does require regular maintenance, it is generally in good order, in a prime position, very conveniently situated by the church, large enough to host parish groups, meetings and events, and is a valuable asset to us all.

Town Church is therefore able to fulfil its duty to provide our Rector with a suitable home. Where the clergy are housed in the future may prove to be a struggle, so we can be very thankful to those people who enabled the Rectory to be purchased seventy years ago, thereby helping Town Church in 2026 and onwards.



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