



# Two Shires Link - Weekly News

for the Parishes of  
**Tatworth, Chaffcombe, Winsham,  
Thorncombe and Cricket Malherbie**  
January 25th, 2026



The conversion of **Saint Paul** on the road to Damascus is one of the most dramatic and hope-filled moments in the New Testament. It is not a gentle change of mind, nor a gradual softening of opinion, but a profound interruption by God — a moment when grace breaks in and everything changes.

Paul, then known as Saul, is travelling with certainty. He is confident in his cause, convinced that he is serving God by persecuting the followers of Jesus. Yet it is precisely there,

in his certainty, that Christ meets him. A blinding light throws him to the ground, and a voice asks, “*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*” (Acts 9.4). It is striking that Jesus does not say, “Why do you persecute my church?” but “Why do you persecute **me**.” In this moment, Paul learns that Christ so fully identifies with his people that to harm them is to harm him.

Paul’s blindness that follows is not simply physical; it is symbolic. The man who thought he could see clearly is forced into darkness, dependence, and vulnerability. He must be led by the hand into Damascus. Conversion here is not just about new beliefs, but about surrender — letting go of control and allowing God to remake him.

Equally important is the role of Ananias, an ordinary disciple who is asked to welcome and pray for a feared enemy. Paul’s conversion is not a private spiritual experience alone; it is completed within the community of faith. Through Ananias’s obedience, Paul receives healing, baptism, and a new beginning.

Paul’s life after Damascus is not easier. He does not move from persecutor to comfort, but from false certainty to costly faithfulness. The same passion that once drove him to violence is transformed into tireless love for Christ and his Church. God does not erase Paul’s past; he redeems it, reshaping his zeal for a new purpose.

For us, Paul’s conversion invites reflection. It reminds us that no one is beyond God’s reach, that faith can begin with disruption, and that being “blinded” — unsettled, humbled, undone — may be the very place where true sight begins. It challenges us to ask where Christ might be interrupting our certainties, and whether we are willing, like Paul, to rise up changed and walk a new way. Revd Anne

## **This Week's Services in the Benefice**

**Tatworth:** 8am Holy Communion

**Thorncombe:** 10am Holy Communion

**Winsham:** 3pm Choral Evensong

**Chaffcombe:** 6:30pm Holy Communion

## **Collect for this Sunday**

Almighty God, who caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul: grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion may follow him in bearing witness to your truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy spirit, one God, now and for ever.

## **This week's Readings**

### **Acts 9: 1-22**

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.<sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'<sup>5</sup> He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'<sup>6</sup> But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'<sup>7</sup> The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one.<sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.<sup>9</sup> For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup> Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.'<sup>11</sup> The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying,<sup>12</sup> and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.'<sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem;<sup>14</sup> and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.'<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel:<sup>16</sup> I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.'<sup>17</sup> So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'<sup>18</sup> And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized,<sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus,<sup>20</sup> and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'<sup>21</sup> All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?'<sup>22</sup> Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

### **Matt 19: 27 to end**

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter said in reply, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' <sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundred-fold, and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

### **Next Sunday's Services -**

**Forde Abbey** 8am Holy Communion BCP

**Winsham** 10 am Holy Communion

**Tatworth** 10:30am Emmaus

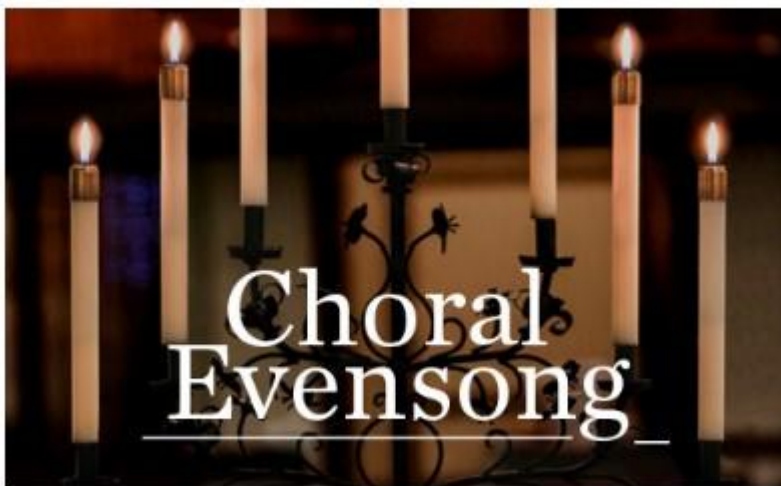
### **Next Sunday's readings**

Hebrews 2: 14 to end and Luke 2: 22 to 40



*Loving God,*

*You are close to the brokenhearted and you hold the weary in your arms. Be near to all who are unwell, bringing them peace and strength. Be gentle with those who grieve, surrounding them with your love and the hope of eternal life. May they know they are never alone, for you walk beside them, today and always. Amen.*



**January 25th at 3pm**  
**St Stephen's, Winsham**  
**with tea and Cake afterwards**  
**(Donations for St Stephen's church)**

### **Contact Us**

For administrative and booking enquiries  
contact **Claire** at [adtworeshires@gmail.com](mailto:adtworeshires@gmail.com)

Benefice Website: [www.twoshiresbenefice.org](http://www.twoshiresbenefice.org)

**Revd Anne Perez:** Deacon 07504338529 [revdanne@outlook.com](mailto:revdanne@outlook.com)  
(contact Anne to add your event to our newsletter/website)

### **Churchwardens**

**Tatworth:** Susan Cox 07434 534827 Tom Down 01460 221164

**Chaffcombe:** Stan Robinson 01460 239121

**Cricket Malherbie:** Audrey Hinkins 01460 52783, Jane Helliard 01460 52929

**Thorncombe:** Charlotte Roper

**Winsham:** Tom Holt 01460 30302, John Webster 07989 675956