



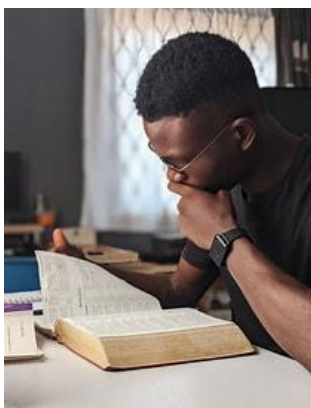
**The Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist
HM Tower of London**

Dear friends,

According to a recent [article](#) in The Guardian, sales of the Bible reached a record high in the UK in 2025, increasing by 134% since 2019. Purchasers appear to be mostly young people. This correlates with growth in church attendance in England and Wales in previous years. According to a [report](#) published in April 2025 by the Bible Society, the numbers attending church in England and Wales rose by 50% since 2018; only 4% of 18- to 24-year-olds said they attended church monthly in 2018, but in 2024 that number rose fourfold to 16% – the largest increase of any age demographic. Overall, according to that Bible Society report, churchgoing Christians now make up 12% of the population, up from 8% in 2018. In numerical terms, that's growth from 3.7m in 2018 to 5.8m in 2024 – an increase of 56%. These figures are quite striking and all the more noteworthy for being based on solid survey evidence. My own experience is statistically less significant as I constitute a single data point but, in recent months, I too have encountered young people asking questions about the Christian faith with a clear intention of taking things further. Perhaps the plainest example of this was a young woman who simply said, 'I have just started reading the Bible, but I don't know how to tackle it. Can you advise me?' I tend to agree with those religious and social commentators who detect a turning-away from the strident atheism so prevalent amongst some writers a few years ago. Those atheist gods have turned out to have feet of clay. Their mockery of faith seems no longer to resonate with young people who are, furthermore, looking for something more substantial than some vague New Age-inspired 'spirituality'. In Christianity they will find a revealed religion rooted in historical fact. Those till receipts for Bibles are also a solid fact, which must mean something. Time will tell exactly what it is that we are now witnessing but we may allow ourselves to rejoice in what certainly look like a turn towards Christianity.

May I remind you that, with effect from Sunday 1st February, we shall again suspend services in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula while the next stage of work takes place – this time, on the roof. Therefore, from 1st February until at least the middle of March, we shall revert to having just one service each Sunday, which will be a service of Said Holy Communion in the Chapel of St John the Evangelist in the White Tower at 9.30 am. Once the roof work is complete, we should be able to revert permanently to our usual pattern of services. By then, the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula should also be fully accessible to those with mobility issues, on completion of the works by the West Door.

With all good wishes, Cortland.



Sunday Services 18 January 2026
Second Sunday after Epiphany
0915 Said Holy Communion in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula
1100 Choral Matins in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula

Responses: Morley

Psalm 40: 1-12

Jubilate: Stanford in B-flat

Anthem: I waited for the Lord (Mendelssohn)

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7 and John 1:29-42.

Hymns 50, 52, 47

Refreshments after church

The Collect for the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth;
Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people,
and grant us thy peace all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Offering of the King's Gifts

On Tuesday 6th January Canon Roger Hall participated in the ceremony of The Offering of the King's Gifts at the Chapel Royal of St James's Palace. In this ancient ceremony, whose origins go back to Norman times, gold, frankincense and myrrh are offered by the Monarch's representatives in commemoration of the gifts presented to Jesus by the Magi, as described in the Gospel of St Matthew. In the photos below you can see Roger standing in front of the richly decorated altar, the gold vessels of the Chapel at St James's, a close-up of the gifts (the frankincense and myrrh helpfully labelled!) and Roger with Bishop Sarah in her capacity as Dean of the Chapels Royal, with Kevin Kitchener, one of The Yeomen of the King's Body Guard and also a former Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London.







Poem of the week: Costly Gifts, by Paul Berchtold

Paul Berchtold is a contemporary American writer who publishes his poems and reflections on a site called '[Thank your stars](#)'. There he invites people to contact him and says, 'I will reply ASARP (as soon as reasonably possible.)'. I like that. I infer from reading his site that he is a Roman Catholic layman with an ecumenical outlook. Otherwise, I have not been able to find out much about him as he seems to prefer to let his poems speak for themselves. He himself would probably not claim that these are works of great literature but there is a straightforward freshness and spontaneity about them which I find attractive. The title of this poem, 'Costly Gifts', puts me in mind of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of 'costly discipleship'. It seems appropriate to this Epiphany season.

Costly Gifts

When wise men came to find the Child,
They brought with them costly treasure.
They gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
Presents for the new king's pleasure.

God is pleased when we bring to him,
Virtues that these gifts symbolize.
The gold of love, myrrh of sacrifice,
And incense as prayers before his eyes.

It's wise to give the gold of love,
Kindness in thought and word and deed,
It's often the little things that count,
A smile, a word, help one in need.

It's wise to give the incense, prayer,
Rising up as smoke sweet-smelling,
Not just prayer from our lips alone,
But deep from our heart, upwelling.

It's wise to give myrrh, sacrifice,
In everything to do our best,
To give with generosity,
In what we do we will be blest.

But be wiser. Unite with Christ,
He is the Gift. He is God's Son.
The best we give, it is nothing
Compared to Christ - what he has done.

Jesus gives us his boundless love,
He came to show us how to pray,
He gave his life in sacrifice.
He is the truth, the life, the way.

by Paul Berchtold, December, 2013

Jigsaw This week's picture is the gloriously anachronistic Adoration of the Magi by Botticelli (1445-1510). You can find the jigsaw [here](#).



Prayers

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name: Ciara, Louise, Stanley, John, Rob, Kofi, Nick, John, Christopher and Brian.

RIP

We pray for all those who have died as the direct result of war or oppression, in Ukraine, Iran, Palestine and elsewhere.

Please continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and the countries of the Middle East:

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine and the Middle East today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen.

With best wishes to all, Cortland.



The Reverend Cortland Fransella
Assistant priest, Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London
Deputy Priest in Ordinary to HM the King
Cortland.Fransella@hrp.org.uk

Our Safeguarding Officer

Anna Kimber, Deputy Governor and Head of Operations, HM Tower of London: Anna.Kimber@hrp.org.uk Telephone: 07785 954549.

Donations to the Chapel

We are always grateful for financial contributions to help us in our work. If you would like to support the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London by setting up a Standing Order, making a one-off donation to Chapel Funds or setting up a Direct Debit, this is how to do it.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

STANDING ORDER. This is our preferred method because it ensures that we get maximum benefit from your contributions in the timeliest manner. If you would like to set up a Standing Order, you should be able to do this online with your bank, using the following details:

Bank name: **CAF Bank plc**

Sort code: **40-52-40**

Account number: **00027597**

Account name: **The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation**

Reference: *[your initials and surname]*.

If you prefer to set up the Standing Order by hard copy, please complete the Standing Order form below and send it to your bank.

In either case, please be sure to complete the Gift Aid Form below if you are an eligible UK taxpayer, as this increases the amount of your donation by 25% at no additional cost to you. Please send the completed Gift Aid Form to the address on the form: *The Chapel Administrator, 1 Tower Green, Tower of London, London, EC3N 4AB* or scan it and send it as an e-mail attachment to: TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk.

ONE-OFF DONATION. You can make a one-off donation online by clicking on [this link](#) or pointing the camera of your phone or tablet at this QR Code



and following the link which then pops up. If you are eligible for Gift Aid, please tick the relevant box and provide the required details on the CAF Bank online form. These two links are also available on our website [here](#).

DIRECT DEBIT. It is also possible to use the links above to set up a Direct Debit if that is what you prefer.

If you are an eligible UK taxpayer using the CAF Bank website via the links above to make either a one-off donation or to set up a Direct Debit, please remember to tick the Gift Aid box on the CAF site form. This method of Gift Aid payment does entail some delay in our receiving the benefit – hence our preference for Standing Orders. Gift Aid is available only to eligible UK taxpayers.

If you would also like to give to the Music Fund known as the Chapel Music Friends, please click [here](#).

Please note that Standing Orders and Direct Debits can be set up only from accounts with banks in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. One-off payments may be made from anywhere in the world, using the card or PayPal options on the CAF Bank website from the links above.

Please see below for the Standing Order and Gift Aid forms.

Thank you again for your generosity.

The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



Standing Order

Standing Order

If you have an online banking facility, you should be able to use that to set up a Standing Order with the information in the box below. If not, please complete the form and send it to your bank.

To: The Manager, _____ *[Name of your bank]* *[Address*
of _____ *bank]* *[Address* _____ *of*
bank] *[Sort code]* _____ *[Account No.]* _____
Please remit £ _____ to the account detailed below commencing on
_____ *[date]* and monthly / annually *[delete one]* until further notice.

[Signature] _____ *[Date of signing]* _____

Use the information below to set up online, or return the completed form to your bank.

Please remit to: CAF Bank plc	Sort code	40-52-40
	Account number	00027597
	Account name	The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation
	Reference	<i>[your initials and surname]</i>

The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



Gift Aid

Charity Gift Aid Declaration – Multiple donations

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is required to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below.

☐

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ _____ and any donation I make in the future or have made in the last four years to The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in the tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. *If this does not apply, please strike through and continue with the rest of this form.*

My details: Title _____ First name or initials _____

Surname _____ Home Address _____

_____ Post Code _____ Email _____

Phone No _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Please notify the charity if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment Tax Return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please post, or return to:

The Chapel Administrator, 1 Tower Green, Tower of London, London, EC3N 4AB.

or send as an e-mail attachment to:

TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1160859