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Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

SWANMORE: St Barnabas Church hosted a baptism service recently for five children aged between 8 and 11.

Children are often baptised when they are babies, when their parents and godparents promise to bring them up in the Christian faith. But these children were all making their own decisions to be part of God's family.

They were Hettie Ankers, aged 9, and her sister Maddie, 11; Ben Woodman, aged 8 and his brother Oliver, 10; and Isobel Oates, aged 11. They are all part of the church's Sunday Club, which meets in the hall during worship.

They each got to choose a hymn or song, and also told the congregation during the service why they wanted to be baptised.

Isobel has been coming to church for five or six years, and helps during the service, but the Ankers and Woodman families have started coming to church fairly recently.

Hettie learnt about baptism at Swanmore C of E Primary School and wanted to be baptised. But her mum Amanda explained that they had to go to church – baptism wasn't a one-off event, but represented a way of life as a Christian. The family have been regulars ever since.



The Rev Claire Towns (left) with baptism candidates (l to r) Oliver Woodman, Ben Woodman, Hettie Ankers, Maddie Ankers and Isobel Oates, with their parents and godparents at St Barnabas, Swanmore

news from the pews

And Ben and Oliver's mum Sarah started coming after offering to help play the organ.

COWES: Tickets are now available for the Island-wide Songs of Praise event to be held for Isle of Wight Day.

TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh will introduce the event from 4pm on Sunday 24 September at Cowes Enterprise College.

Worshippers will be accompanied by the Isle of Wight Symphony Orchestra. Tickets cost £2.50 per person and can be booked on www.isleofwightday.com.

PORTSMOUTH: Worshippers at St

Aidan's Church in Anchorage Park will mark their 25th anniversary this month.

The church, which meets in the Lodge Community Centre in Sywell Crescent, was created as a church plant from St Cuthbert's Church, Copnor, back in the early 90s.

At the time, Anchorage Park was a new housing development, but few other community organisations have survived for as long as St Aidan's. Among other activities, last year worshippers started a community cafe, which is thriving.

The anniversary service will be on September 24 from

9am. The Archdeacon of Portsdown, the Ven Joanne Grenfell, will preach. The service will be followed by bubbly and cake.

LEIGH PARK: Our team of PO9 pioneer ministers have made the shortlist for a national award.

The Revs Barney and Sara Barron's work in the PO9 area of Havant was nominated in the community building category of the Love Britain + Ireland Awards.

The awards, run by Christian media organisation Premier, are designed to honour those Christians who are demonstrating love for their neighbours.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony on September 20, hosted by Christian comedian Tim Vine. Details on www.premier.org.uk/awards.

HAVANT: He served a Havant school as governor for 25 years – and now John Sawtell has stepped down.

John retired as governor of St Alban's C of E Primary School in West Leigh a quarter of a century after he was first appointed in 1992.

At his final assembly with the children, he told them how much he had enjoyed being part of the school.

"I shall be sorry not to see you all so frequently, but I have enjoyed being governor and have seen many changes. You have teachers who care very deeply about your



John Sawtell

the school report

education and it has been a pleasure to see many of you grow up and move on in life."

Headteacher Nicola Hordell said: "John has been dedicated to the work of the school. He has brought his wisdom and understanding to the organisation and has championed education for those with special needs.

"I appeal to those who have a little spare time to volunteer as governors. It is increasingly difficult to find people who are happy to share in helping run a school. It is a challenge but very fulfilling."