

# **ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI WEST WICKHAM PARISH MAGAZINE**



**Feb/Mar 2026**

**50 pence**

**THE CHURCH OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**RAVENSWOOD AVENUE**  
**WEST WICKHAM KENT BR4 0PW**

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# REGULAR SERVICES

## SUNDAY

- 8.00 am Holy Communion**  
*1st Sunday varies - See calendar for details*  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays at St Mary's Church, The Avenue  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at St Francis' Church
- 10.00 am First Sunday – Joint Family Communion**  
with St Mary's, held alternately at each church  
*See calendar for details*
- 10.45 am Parish Communion**  
Activities for younger children (aged 3+) and  
crèche facilities in church
- 10.45 am 2nd Sunday – Morning Worship**  
(non–Eucharistic)

## WEDNESDAY

- 9.30 am Morning Prayer**  
**10.30 – 11.30am Church open for quiet and prayer**

# Letter from Richard

Dear Friends,

Some years ago my mother told me that one day, when she was pushing my older brother out in his pram, an old gentleman stooped over the pram, looked carefully at my brother for a moment, then turned to my mother and told her that she must be careful how she brought him up, as he was destined for great things. To the best of my knowledge, no such similar event took place when I was pushed out in my pram!

I'm always reminded of that story when Candlemas, usually celebrated on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, but this year being celebrated in our churches on Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>, comes round. Candlemas is also known as "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," which better describes the biblical event on which it is based. Luke (2.22-24) tells us that forty days after Jesus birth, he was taken to the Jerusalem Temple as his parents fulfilled two requirements of the Law: the purification of women following childbirth and the Redemption of the Firstborn. It was the custom for the first born male in any family to be dedicated to the Lord, but he could be bought back by the parents paying a sum of 5 shekels to the priest.

It was while Mary and Joseph were doing this that the event occurred that reminds me of what happened to my brother. An old man, Simeon, recognised Jesus as the Messiah and uttered the words which have become enshrined in Anglican liturgy as the *Nunc Dimittis*, including the description of Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" or in the Book of Common Prayer, "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

We can hear in this description echoes of Jesus as "The Light of the World," and in the 4th century, Christians in Jerusalem marked the festival of "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple" with a procession of candles, symbolizing Christ as "The Light of the World" and giving that

festival the name of Candlemas. By the Middle Ages, Candlemas had become a major feast day, not only as a liturgical celebration but also as a community event, so in some places people would bring candles from home to be blessed, which they would then use throughout the year for prayer, protection, and family devotion. In other places, it would be the day on which all the candles to be used in the church throughout the rest of the year were blessed.

But it is what happens next that has, perhaps, more significance, and certainly a challenge, for us. An elderly prophetess, Anna, appeared on the scene, also recognised Jesus as the Messiah, “gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” (NIV Luke 2. 38). Jerusalem, under Roman occupation, was going through troubled times and people, like Simeon and Anna, were looking to God to resolve the situation. We, too, are going through troubled times. Sadly, I fear, fewer people today are looking to God to resolve the situation, at least not in this country, but that does give us the challenge, or rather the opportunity, like Simeon and Anna, to “speak about the child” to those around us.

Lent also falls within the months covered by this magazine, and instead of resolving to give up something for Lent, or in addition, might we resolve to share with those around us our belief that our God is ultimately in control and, to quote Mother Julian of Norwich, the mediaeval mystic, “All shall be well, all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well”? (*Revelations of Divine Love*)

God bless, Richard



# Calendar for February

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>**      **CANDLEMAS Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

8.00 a.m.      Holy Communion at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond*

10.00 a.m.      Joint Service at St. Mary's with livestream

*Carol Coslett/Matt Drummond*

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>**      **2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

8.00 a.m.      Holy Communion at St. Mary's

*Matt Drummond*

9.15 a.m.      Morning Praise at St. Mary's with livestream

*Ken Bryan/Debbie Adams*

10.45 a.m.      Morning Worship at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond/Ken Bryan*

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup>**

3.45 p.m.      Messy Church at St. Mary's

*Messy Church Team*

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>**      **SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT**

8.00 a.m.      Holy Communion at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond*

9.15 a.m.      Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

*Matt Drummond*

10.45 a.m.      Holy Communion at St. Francis

*Carol Coslett/Matt Drummond*

## **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> ASH WEDNESDAY**

10.45 a.m. Holy Communion with Ashing at St. Francis  
*Matt Drummond*

## **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> LENT 1**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's  
*Richard Ford*

9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream  
*Matt Drummond/Richard Ford*

10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis  
*Richard Ford*

# **Calendar for March**

## **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> LENT 2**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's  
*Carol Coslett/Debbie Adams*

10.00 a.m. Joint Service at St. Francis with Ashing  
*Matt Drummond/Debbie Adams*

## **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> LENT 3**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis  
*Matt Drummond*

9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream  
*Matt Drummond*

10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis  
*Richard Ford/Matt Drummond*

### **Friday 13<sup>th</sup>**

3.45 p.m. Messy Church at St. Mary's  
*Messy Church Team*

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> LENT 4 Mothering Sunday**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Francis  
*Carol Coslett*

9.15 a.m. Morning Praise at St. Mary's with livestream  
*Carol Coslett/Ken Bryan*

10.45 a.m. Morning Worship at St. Francis  
*Matt Drummond*

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> LENT 5**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's  
*Matt Drummond/Ken Bryan*

9.15 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream  
*Matt Drummond/Ken Bryan*

10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at St., Francis  
*Matt Drummond/Ken Bryan*

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>**

**PALM SUNDAY**

8.00 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond*

9.15 a.m.

Holy Communion at St. Mary's with livestream

*Matt Drummond*

10.45 a.m.

Morning Worship at St. Francis

*Matt Drummond*

## **Bible Readings**

**Date**

**Reading**

**Reader**

**February**

1<sup>st</sup>

Malachi 3: 1-5

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Charlotte Wilson

Luke 2: 22-40

Matt Drummond

8<sup>th</sup>

Genesis 1: 1-2, 3

Romans 8:18-25

David Wada

Matthew 6: 25-34

Ken Bryan

15<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 24: 12 – 18

2 Peter 1:16 – 21

Lesley East

Matthew 17: 1-9

Matt Drummond

22<sup>nd</sup>

Genesis 2: 15 -17,3: 1-7

Romans 5: 12-19

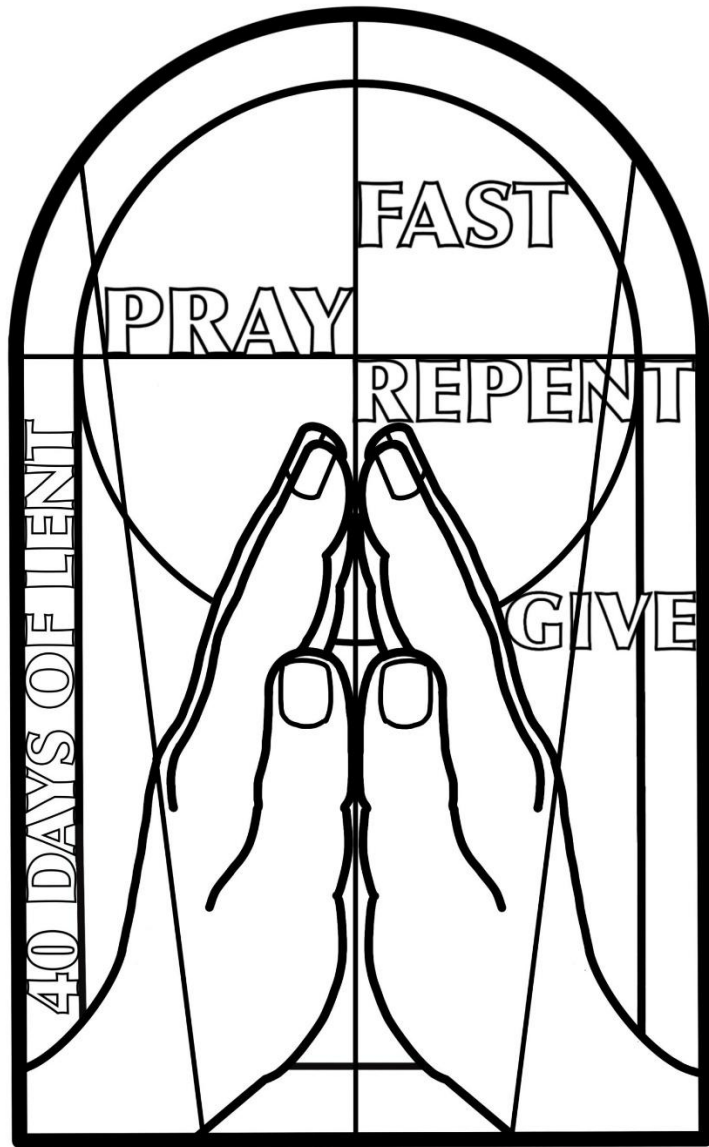
James Pitt-Payne

Matthew 4: 1-11

Richard Ford

## March

1 <sup>st</sup>	Genesis 12: 1-4a Romans 4: 1-5,13-17	Gill Kehoe
8 <sup>th</sup>	Exodus 17: 1-7 Romans 5: 1-11 John 4: 5-42	Valerie Hamilton Matt Drummond
15 <sup>th</sup>	1 Samuel 1: 2- 28 2 Corinthians 1: 3-7 John 19: 25b – 27	David Wada Carol Coslett
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Romans 8: 6-11 John 11: 1-45	Lesley East Ken Bryan
29 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 50: 4-9a Philippians 25: 1-11 Matthew 26:14-end of 27	James Pitt-Payne Matt Drummond



# Dates for your Diary

## February

### Parish Lunch

The February Parish Lunch is on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February at 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please contact Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or email [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com) if you are unable to attend.

### Valentine's Lunch

The Valentine's Lunch will take place in the hall at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February. Please book your place through Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or email [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com) or by signing the list in the vestibule at St. Mary's.



When booking you need to specify if you require cheese, ham or pate and whether you require mushroom or tomato soup. Numbers will be limited to 40 so book early to avoid disappointment. The cost is £12 per person and there will be a raffle. All profits for church funds. Once again this event is organised by the men at St. Mary's.

## March

### Parish Lunch

The March Parish Lunch is on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please let Beryl Bolton know on 0208 289 8097 or [berylbolton@hotmail.com](mailto:berylbolton@hotmail.com) if you are unable to attend.

### Advance Notice

St Mary's annual St. George's Supper will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00 p.m. in St Mary's Hall. Watch the pew sheets for more details nearer the time.

### It's Time For Change!

Don't forget, clocks go forward 1 hour on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 1am.



# Parish Matters

## Christmas Market– Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November

Another memorable St Mary's Christmas Market has been and gone, and as in previous years, it was a great success. The day started with the official opening by our Vicar, Rev Matt Drummond who experienced his first Christmas Market here. There was a steady flow of people throughout the day creating a very happy and festive atmosphere in the hall.

They were presented with a fine array of attractive stalls for everyone to enjoy and to put them in the 'end of year' seasonal mood. The ever-popular choices were all there, including Books, Toys, Bric a Brac, Christmas Decorations, along with the Cake & Jams Stall for tasty home-made treats to take home.

A well-stocked Cafe where you could enjoy Tea & Cake throughout the whole day or a delicious hot meal from the busy Kitchen, run by the talented team and serviced by the Scouts waiting the many tables. The Irish Coffees were, as ever, very popular on a chilly day, going down a treat and, new for this year, was the 'World Food' table featuring the tastes of India, Turkey, Jamaica and Ukraine.

The novel Hamper Stall was a visually attractive success, as was the Wall of Teddies... 'Everyone's a Winner!'. If you wanted to 'Try Your Luck' there were numerous Raffles and Tombolas to have a flutter on, including the Advent Calendar lucky dip. Working hard and getting in some practice for Christmas Eve, Father Christmas and his trusty Elf were kept busy in their beautiful Grotto and Rudolf the Reindeer agreed to have his Red Nose pinned on many times.

The afternoon was traditionally rounded off with the drawing of the Grand Raffle and distribution of great prizes to the lucky winners. The Christmas Market Committee this year was again headed up by Natalie & Tony, who would like to thank everybody involved in any way, whether organising, or running a stall, the total amount raised this year was an impressive £5,140.22.

Claire Bull

## **The Big Christmas Sing 2025**

What a joy it was to find that the weekend we were going to be in West Wickham The Big Christmas Sing for Christian Aid was going to happen. When we arrived in St Francis Church, we were almost overwhelmed to see the church so full and to hear the buzz and chatter as people waited for it to begin.

The lead from the choir and the singing of the people was very uplifting and a great way to start thinking about Christmas and its meaning. It was wonderful to know that The Big Sing has become an annual event and that it attracts so many people.

The purpose of the event was to raise money for Christian Aid and increase awareness of what it does for some of the poorest people in the world and it certainly achieved this as the money raised was £1,743.68 including Gift Aid.

We are very thankful to Margaret, Kay and Geoff who continued to organise it after we left and for the people who have become part of the team not only enabling it to happen but also to develop and grow.

As well as the singing, listening to the choirs, the adults and the delightful and enthusiastic children and their teachers, the quartet, the soloists and the input about Christian Aid, it was lovely for us to meet up with people we have not seen for many years and to see so many people that we did not know.

Very best for the coming year and for the next Big Christmas Sing, we hope that we may be able to come to it again.

Sue and Merv McKinney

## **Message from Dave Willis - Assistant Group Leader of the 7<sup>th</sup> West Wickham Scout Group**

We are very pleased and excited to announce that we are to open a SECOND younger years provision called a Squirrel Scout Drey for children aged from 4 to 6 years. Our Squirrels Drey will meet between 9.15am & 10.15am on Sundays at St Mary's Church, Youth Hall, The Avenue, West Wickham BR4 0DX.

If you would like more information about Squirrels, please visit the website [Scouts.org.uk](https://www.scouts.org.uk).

This is your priority opportunity for your child to become one of the first Squirrel Scouts at this new Squirrels section at 7<sup>th</sup> WW. If you want a place, please email Dave Willis at [dwillis356@aol.com](mailto:dwillis356@aol.com) with the following details:

1. Your child's full name
2. Their DOB
3. Name and DOB of any younger siblings.

Please reply as soon as possible as we are expecting a high level of demand. Once any child becomes a Squirrel Scout they will then get a guaranteed place in one of our two Beaver colonies once they are 6 years old.

We would be grateful if you would spread the news (social media) amongst your friends and families and encourage anyone who is interested in a place in Squirrels now or in the future to email me, Dave Willis at [dwillis356@aol.com](mailto:dwillis356@aol.com)

We would encourage the early placement of a child's name on the Squirrel waiting list and this means as early as newly born to avoid disappointment. Please be aware that generally, for most age groups 0 to 4 years, we have limited spaces on our waiting list.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks.

Dave Willis

Assistant Group Lead Volunteer- 7<sup>th</sup> WW

## Warm Space at St Francis

We are open on Wednesday mornings between 10.00am and 3.00pm for coffee and soup and for somewhere to chat, play some board games and do puzzles. We are always looking for volunteers to support this and if you would like to offer a couple of hours on a Wednesday please contact Nicky Nightingale - [nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk)

## St Francis & St Mary's Joint, All-Age, Other Special Services and Events Calendar

### February

- 1<sup>st</sup> Joint service at St Mary's Candlemas – 10am
- 4<sup>th</sup> St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 13<sup>th</sup> Messy Church - 3.45pm
- 14<sup>th</sup> Valentine's lunch at St Mary's – 12.30pm
- 18<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday at St Francis' – 10.45am

### March

- 1<sup>st</sup> Joint service at St Francis' – 10am
- 4<sup>th</sup> St Mary's Community Lunch – 1pm
- 6<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer service at St Mary's – 10.30am
- 13<sup>th</sup> Messy Church – 3.45pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> All-age: Mothering Sunday services – Scouts at St Francis'
- 17<sup>th</sup> St Francis & St Mary's Women's Group – 8pm at St Francis'
- 22<sup>nd</sup> St Mary's APCM – 10.30am
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Community Lunch at St Francis' – 12.30pm
- **29<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

## ***People are coming to faith amidst the 'darkness' of crises around the world***

*So says several Church of England bishops. They believe that increasing numbers of people have been turning to the Christian faith. The Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs, said: “Something is going on. Or rather, God Himself seems to be up to something – way beyond what we as Christians have been doing to share the message of the gospel with the people around us.*

*“Humanly speaking, I believe this is happening because people have begun to realise that the things in which they had placed their hopes – things like ever-increasing prosperity or the ability of science and technology to solve all our problems – have started to crumble in the face of economic crises, global pandemics and climate change.”*

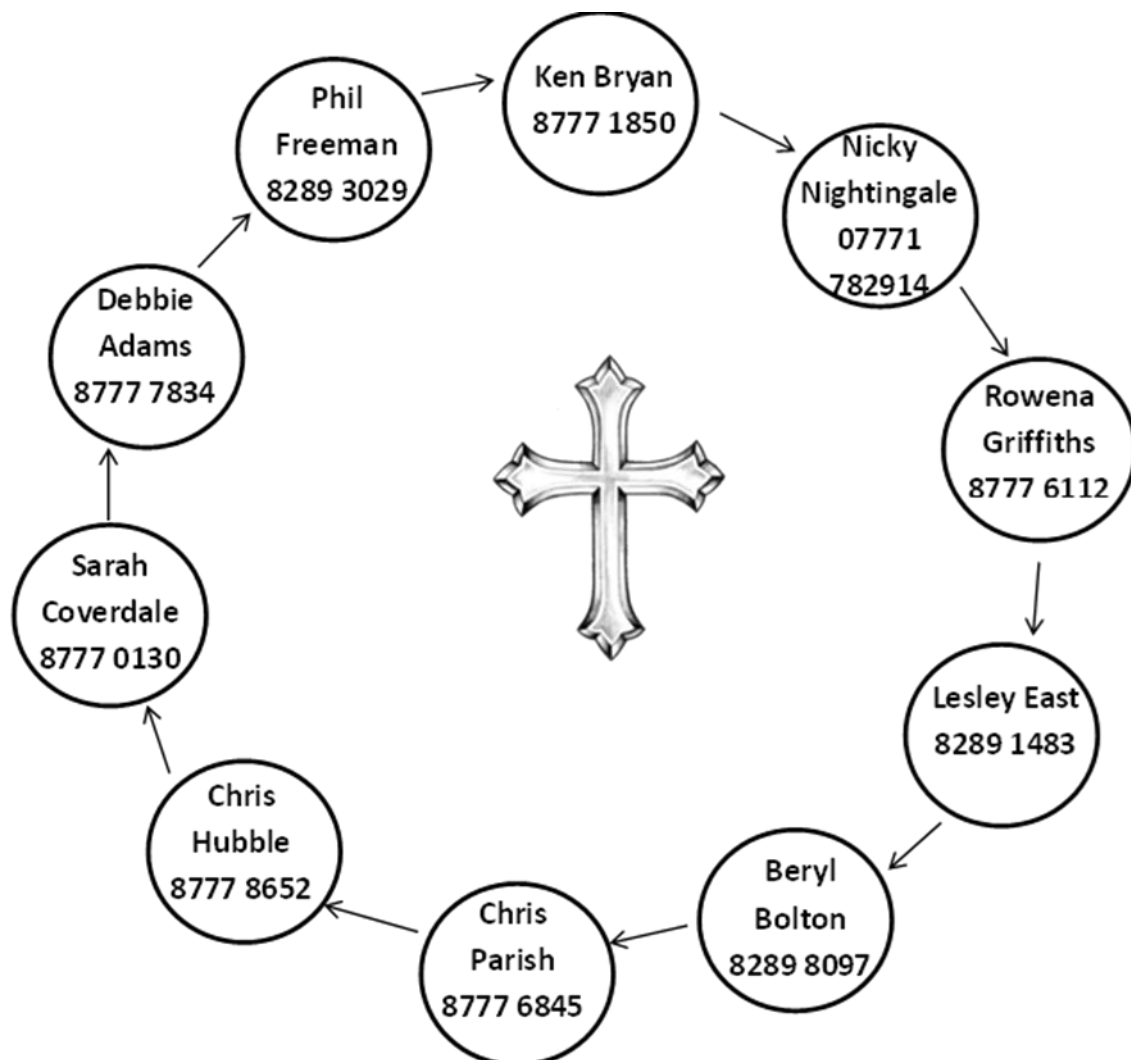
*The Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek, said: “As I have listened to the voices of children, young people and adults across this diocese; the voices in Westminster, and indeed in prisons; I believe there is a yearning for certainty amid the turbulence, anxiety and uncertainty, and the endless messaging of crises.”*

*The Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, speaks of joyful celebrations of baptisms and confirmations in his Diocese and new congregation members at Chichester Cathedral. “A new generation attending Chichester Cathedral have shifted the atmosphere,” he said. “Buggies now take their place alongside the Zimmer frames, to the delight of everyone.”*

# St Francis and St Mary's Prayer Chain

Many people find they are given strength and peace of mind when they know that they, or their loved ones, are being prayed for. And the more people who are praying for someone, the better!

If you would like prayer for yourself, please call anyone on the chain below and they will pass a message on around the circle. If you like a name added to the intercessions list in our services, (which will be on-line as well as in-person) please state this when you make contact.



# Prayer Focus

## February

### **Focus for Prayer: February – March 2026**

As February begins, so the season of Christmas comes to and end with Candlemas (the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. The Feast is so called because it is traditionally the day in which the candles to be used in the church over the coming year are blessed, hence it the Mass of the Candles or Candlemas.

Candlemas is a bitter-sweet celebration, as the Cross begins to cast its long shadow over the life of Christ and the Holy Family, with the words spoken to St Simeon to the Blessed Virgin, *'and a sword shall pierce your own heart also'*, speak of Calvary and her standing at the foot of the Cross. A moment of celebration, Christ's presentation in the Temple as a first-born son suddenly becomes one wreathed in shadow.

But if we see the Cross casting its shadow now, then it has been there right from the start. It is there in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Tradition has it that following his death, Adam's third son Seth asks for a sapling of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil so that he can plant it over the tomb of his father, and that the wood of the Cross is taken from that tree. (That tomb is in Jerusalem, right under the site of Calvary hence the hill's name *'the place of the skull'*.) But the Cross is foreshadowed also in Christ's nativity: swaddling bands become grave cloths; a borrowed tomb finds itself foreshadowed in the womb of Mary, which God 'borrows' at following her 'yes' at the Annunciation.

Candlemas is, as I say, a reminder of the bitter-sweet nature of our faith, one that is founded in death as well as in new life, and Mary's 'yes' is one that leads from life to death, and on into new life. This 'yes' we celebrate on the Feast of the Annunciation on 25<sup>th</sup> March, and I explore this in a bit

more depth in my short article about the artwork in St Mary's Lady Chapel.

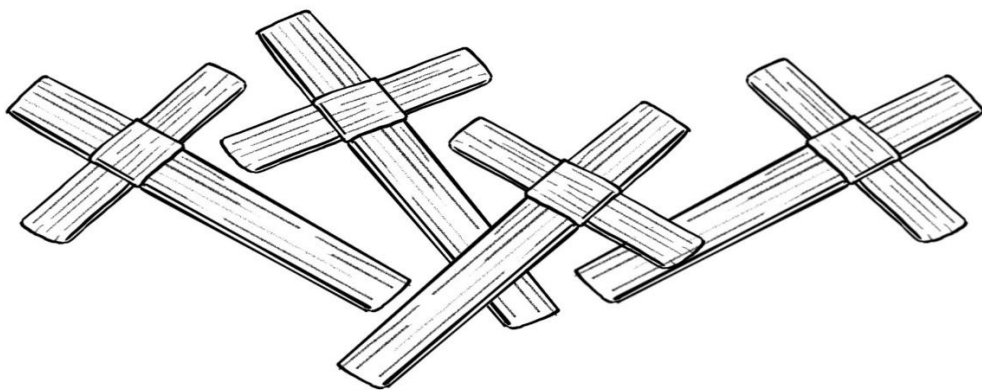
Following Candlemas, we dip briefly into Ordinary Time. There is nothing 'ordinary' about Ordinary Time, and it is a reminder that fruit grows in valleys, not on mountaintops, and whilst we might prefer celebration, the human soul also needs the peace of the ordinary as it's here we consolidate and grow. On the Sunday next before Lent (15<sup>th</sup> February) we read the story of the Transfiguration, a moment of foreshadowing where we see the light of the Resurrection (Christ's and ours) made visible to the three disciples on the mountaintop. As Christ is and will be, so we too will be in eternity.

On the Sunday next before Lent, it is traditional to bury the 'Alleluia'. Alleluia is a word that marks our Easter celebration, and as a Church we refrain (fast) from using it during Lent so as to make it all the more special when it returns on Easter Day. In my last two churches I made an Alleluia banner which was taken down and symbolically buried on this Sunday so that it could be 'resurrected' on Easter day.

As our Lenten fast begins, so we are encouraged to walk with Christ through the wilderness of repentance and self-denial. 40 days is a good amount of time to kill bad habits or to develop wholesome ones, and I would encourage you to reflect on those things you wish to put away, or which spiritual habits you would like to take up. Fasting can include denying oneself the things that make life more bearable (coffee, alcohol, or chocolate), but I would also suggest looking at taking up something that will deepen your spiritual life. Lent should not be seen simply as an opportunity to kick start that long put off diet, or to resurrect long failed new year's resolutions!

Lent comes in two unequal portions. The first up until the eve of the Fifth Sunday (often called Passion Sunday) focuses on the desert and repentance, the second half beginning on Passion Sunday draws us into the final days and hours of Christ's life. Whilst during Lent it is traditional to not have flowers in Church, now the banners are removed and any statues covered up as fast more deeply with our eyes. In some churches where bells are used to mark the various parts of the service, they are replaced by a wooden clapper, marking the solemnity of the period.

Palm Sunday with its dramatic reading of the Passion Gospel leads us into Holy Week and the solemnity of the sacred Triduum (the three days before Easter Sunday). Here time seems to slow down, and at 3pm Good Friday comes to a stop as the Light of Life is extinguished on the Cross. Of course, the light continues to shine even more brightly as Christ enters Hell, and there harrows it. (The word harrow comes from the agricultural word meaning to turn over a piece of ground in order to sow it with new seed.) In Icons of the Harrowing of Hell we see the gates of Hell being crushed under Christ's feet as he reaches out to raise Adam and Eve from their tombs, whilst Moses, King David, the Prophets and John the Baptist look on. But that is to take us into April ...



# Matt's Book Review

**Andrew Graystone 'Bleeding for Jesus: John Smyth and the cult of the Iwerne Camps: The Scandal that Shook the Church of England' DLT books; and the Channel 4 documentary 'See no evil' (two episodes) available on 4 on Demand.**

Lord North famously said that *'power corrupts'*, and indeed power does corrupt, which is why oversight is such an important concept in the life of the Church: power needs to be overseen and managed, lest it corrupt the wielder. The case of Peter Ball (an Anglo-Catholic bishop) and latterly John Smyth (a Conservative Evangelical activist) are both cases where there was no oversight, and where power corrupted almost absolutely. Peter Ball set up a quasi-monastic community of his own, without any of the usual modes of oversight such a community would usually have, such as an Episcopal Visitor to interview and question members on the life of the community and used this as an opportunity to abuse young men. So too did John Smyth, using a form of "confession" as a means of accessing and then abusing young men who had come under his influence.

The journalist Andrew Graystone has chartered Smyth's life and career in his book *'Bleeding for Jesus'*, a revised edition of which came out later last year. This was followed in December by a two-part Channel 4 programme *'See no evil'* which looked at Smyth's abuse not just of young men who came under his influence, but also of his own son PJ. Both are recommended, if harrowing reading/viewing, and both complement each other. The Channel 4 documentary explores the coercive power Smyth exercised over his wife and children, the former of which had knowledge of his abusive actions, but was unable to do anything about it, such was his control over her. The book takes a deeper look into Smyth's background, and his association with the Iwerne or 'Bash' camps led by the Rev Eric Nash.

Nash believed he had a ministry in evangelising young men from the top public schools, grooming them for power in the Church, government, military or business, and inculcating in them a particularly conservative evangelical theology. The camps were staffed by young men who were themselves products of his camp system, and some of whom went on to hold significant positions of power in the conservative evangelical movement within the Church of England. Indeed, there is a story in Graystone's book that shortly after Justin Welby moved into Lambeth Palace he was visited by two ministers from large conservative evangelical churches in London, I am guessing one to be St Helen's Bishopsgate, though the minister nor the church is not named by Graystone. They told him that they, not he, held power in the Church. Welby concluded towards the end of his time at Lambeth that they were correct!

The problem with Nash and Iwerne was that it was in effect a cult in all but name, with him exercising coercive power over those who staffed the camps. As Graystone makes clear he, Nash, had control over everything from how one parted one's hair and which style of shorts one wore, to whom one married. Women served as staff at Iwerne but were forbidden from talking to the male campers or staffers. The boys who attended the camps were also coerced into its workings through tightly controlled and managed communications with the camp leaders, communications which used a style of contact utilised by other cult groups like the Moonies.

Into this stepped Smyth, who regularly siphoned off young men from this movement for his special attention, and who then abused them. His abuse was well known within the Iwerne Camp community as Graystone makes clear, and when things became too difficult for him in England, he moved

to Zimbabwe then South Africa where he set up his own Iwerne-style camp, and which allowed him to continue his abuse.

I mentioned Peter Ball at the beginning because both he and Smyth though from different ends of the theological spectrum both operated without outside oversight. Nash and the Iwerne camps did have limited oversight from a management committee, though one staffed by people of his own theological ilk, and many of whom had been formed in by his camps. However, there is no suggestion of illegality in Nash's work, though his methods as Greystone points out, are at best highly questionable.

Both book and documentary need to be read/ watched together to get the full impact. Interestingly at no time is there the suggestion that Smyth's wife, though aware of her husband's abuse, was complicit in it and the documentary is very explicit in making this point, Graystone much less so. She too was subject to his psychological control, and being married to a man whose theology emphasised the power of the husband over his wife, was constrained in her actions. Whether or not you take that at face value is for you to decide, but whatever you conclude, what we must accept and adhere to is the call for us to report abuse or concern about potential abuse wherever we encounter it. Unchecked power can corrupt even the best of us, but in Smyth and Peter Ball it found individuals who were willing to use power and its corrupting influence for their own twisted pleasure.

- **If you have any concerns or questions about safeguarding, or the issues raised in this article please do speak to either myself or one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers: Kim Teare: (St Francis), or Charlotte Wilson (St Mary's). Please also see the Safeguarding posters displayed in Church.**

Revd. Matt

## **St Francis of Assisi - Christmas Tree Festival 2025**

For the third year running St Francis of Assisi church held a Christmas Tree Festival and once again we supported Welcare through donations raised.

Originally founded in 1894, Welcare is a family support charity working with families and children up to the age of 13 in South London and East Surrey. The charity's work is driven by Christian values providing practical and emotional support and advice to families in need, of all faiths and none.

Welcare's Chief Executive had given a presentation about its vital work at Women's Group last year and the range of services and intervention it provides to local families and children which is needed now more than ever.

The Christmas Tree Festival was also an opportunity to welcome people from our community into the church. It provided a calming atmosphere for visitors to take well-earned time out from busy schedules and enjoy some festive cheer with beautifully decorated, twinkling trees.

The festival was open over five days between 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> December. Sixteen community groups kindly participated, and the 'forest' of trees was awesome and inspirational. We never cease to be amazed by the creativity exhibited. Who knew a Christmas tree could be made from wooden bird boxes, for example?!

We also had a nativity themed treasure hunt for young children that took them around the trees with a sweet treat reward on finishing.

The groups who provided and decorated trees include Memory Box, Rotary West Wickham and business partners, Link to Hope, West Wickham Floral Society, West Wickham Library, Sugarcraft, Matchbox Theatre, Community Garden Group, Women's Group, Ravenswood Women's Institute, Messy Church, Youth Club, Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and 7<sup>th</sup> West Wickham Scout Group. We would like to thank them all for their contributions and hard work.

Our thanks also extend to those who welcomed visitors at the door, served refreshments and all who popped in to enjoy and support the festival.

We raised over £290 which will go towards Welcare's wonderful work in Bromley.

Gill Kehoe, Nicky Nightingale and Caroline Povlsen



## A Surprise at St Mary's

I am a member of the Anglo-Catholic History Society, an organisation that offers occasional papers and talks on the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England. When I came to change my address with the organisation, the Secretary wrote to me to tell me about the two Annunciation figures on the North Wall of the Lady Chapel in St Mary's. These he said are the work of noted artist and Anglo-Catholic Martin Travers (1886-1948) and were originally placed on the Reredos which stood behind the Altar on the Western end of the Hall, where the stage now sits. It is interesting that this should be the case, as Travers is usually associated with the Anglo-Papalist wing of Anglo-Catholicism, one that sought to reunite Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, and Travers himself favoured a more Baroque artistic style to the one we see in figures at St Mary's. (If you want a fine example of a Baroque church in an English setting then Google St Mary's Bourne Street, a favourite of John Bejetman and also of mine, and which has a fine Baroque style Altar.)



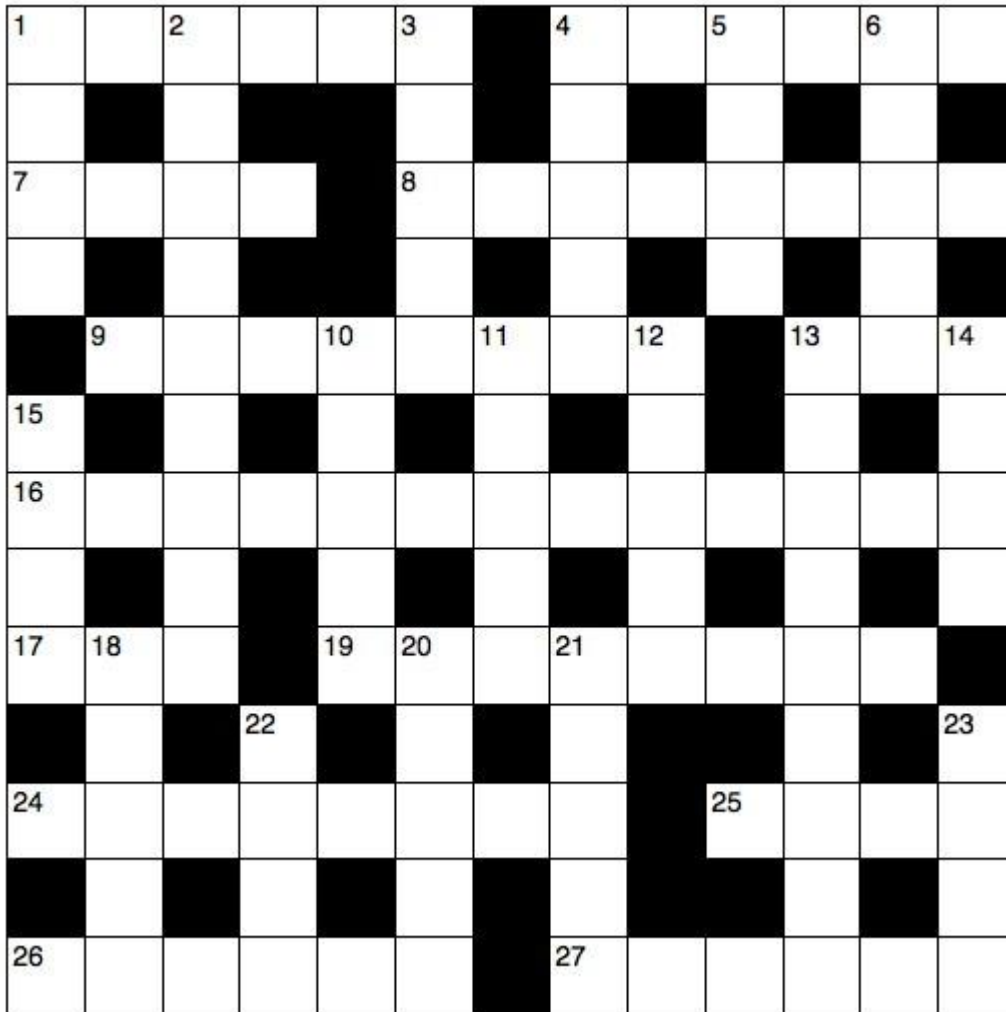
That the two plaques depict the Annunciation (which took place at Nazareth) reminds us that the Mary we celebrate is she who says ‘yes’ to the angel’s call to bear Jesus in her womb, an encounter that takes place at the well in Nazareth in Northern Israel. (Had we been a Catholic Church, I feel it likely that the Church would have been named something like ‘*Our Lady of the Annunciation*’.) It is an unusual designation, but a joyful one because of that. As Anglicans we don’t tend to spend much time on Mary as an individual, but it is because of her that we are here now.

Similarly, the Annunciation is important not just because it leads to the birth of Jesus, but also because it undoes the ‘yes’ given by Eve to the serpent, the one that caused our fall and separation from God. (In Catholic theology there are very close parallels drawn between Mary and Eve.) As we celebrate the Annunciation on 25<sup>th</sup> March, we are called to unite our ‘yes’ with that of Mary’s. Ours might not bring about the birth of the saviour, but it will change our lives and our relationship with God for the better.

I know that many of you know far more about the history of St Mary’s than I ever will, and I apologise if I have got things wrong. Please do let me know, I am keen to fill in the gaps in my knowledge of our two churches.

Revd. Matt

# Crossword Puzzle



## Crosswords Clues

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
- 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
- 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)

- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
- 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
- 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1–2) (5,3)
- 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
- 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
- 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
- 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

#### Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)
- 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
- 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
- 4 Belief (5)
- 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
- 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
- 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
- 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
- 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
- 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
- 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
- 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)

- 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
- 18 ‘He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand’ (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
- 20 ‘Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion’ (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
- 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
- 22 ‘And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love’ (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
- 23 ‘God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end’ (Daniel 5:26) (4)

## SUDOKU

1	9					5		8
	2	6		3	8	1		9
8				7		4		
				9				6
3	4		8		6		1	7
2				1				
		4		8				1
7		3	9	2		6	5	
6		2					8	3

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### **Crossword Answers**

ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistolic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.

## WE ARE ALL GUILTY

Well, I am. At times! Of complacency of leaving it to others to sort out!

**BUT** we do have a duty when it comes to the safeguarding of children **OR** vulnerable adults in the church.

There is a manual in our church vestibule entitled, '*A Safe Church*', which is for reference by anyone and acts as a guide to safeguarding matters.

If you do have a genuine concern about such a matter, then you may wish to speak to Charlotte Wilson or Kim Teare, our Safeguarding Officers or to one of the churchwardens.

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

1	9	7	2	6	4	5	3	8
4	2	6	5	3	8	1	7	9
8	3	5	1	7	9	4	6	2
5	7	1	3	9	2	8	4	6
3	4	9	8	5	6	2	1	7
2	6	8	4	1	7	3	9	5
9	5	4	6	8	3	7	2	1
7	8	3	9	2	1	6	5	4
6	1	2	7	4	5	9	8	3

## **GROUPS & ACTIVITIES AT ST FRANCIS' CHURCH**

**On the first Saturday of every month** the church is open from 10.30 am to 11.30 am when refreshments are served, and this raises money for Action Aid.

*Contact Barbara Goodchild      8777 8782*

**The Church Halls.** Our main large hall is available for hire. There is also a small hall which can be used in conjunction with the main hall at weekends and during school holidays.

*Bookings Secretary: Liz Raper 8777 2745*

**Men's Group.** This meets on the second Monday evening of the month, alternately at St Francis' and St Mary's.

*Contact: Stephen Howe      8249 0315*

**Reading Group.** This meets on the second Thursday morning of the month.

*Contact Barbara Goodchild      8777 8782*

**Matchbox Theatre.** A well-established amateur dramatic society which includes members of St Francis' Church and performs in the church hall, two or three times a year.

*Contact Annie Norris      8651 1775*

# **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH HALL**

## **Cubs**

Tuesdays from 6.15 pm to 7.45 pm

Contact Kat Hardman .. .. . [katkahardman@gmail.com](mailto:katkahardman@gmail.com)

## **Scouts**

Fridays from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Contact Hilary Moy, Group Scout Leader .. .. . 07961 826814

## **West Wickham Market [Stalls & Refreshments]**

Fridays from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm .. .. . 07712 492854

## **Wednesday Market**

From 9.00 am to 2.00 pm .. .. . 07492 864597

## **Debbie's Dance**

Thursdays from 9.00 am to 10.00 am .. [debbiesdanceschool@yahoo.com](mailto:debbiesdanceschool@yahoo.com)

## **Sugar Craft & Cake Decorating**

Thursdays at 8.00 pm (Six meetings a year)

*Articles and items for the magazine are always welcome.*

*We are currently looking for a new editor, but if you have any contributions for the next bi-monthly magazine [editions*

*for Apr/May '26, etc], please contact Nicky Nightingale*

*[nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk)*

*by the second Sunday of the month*