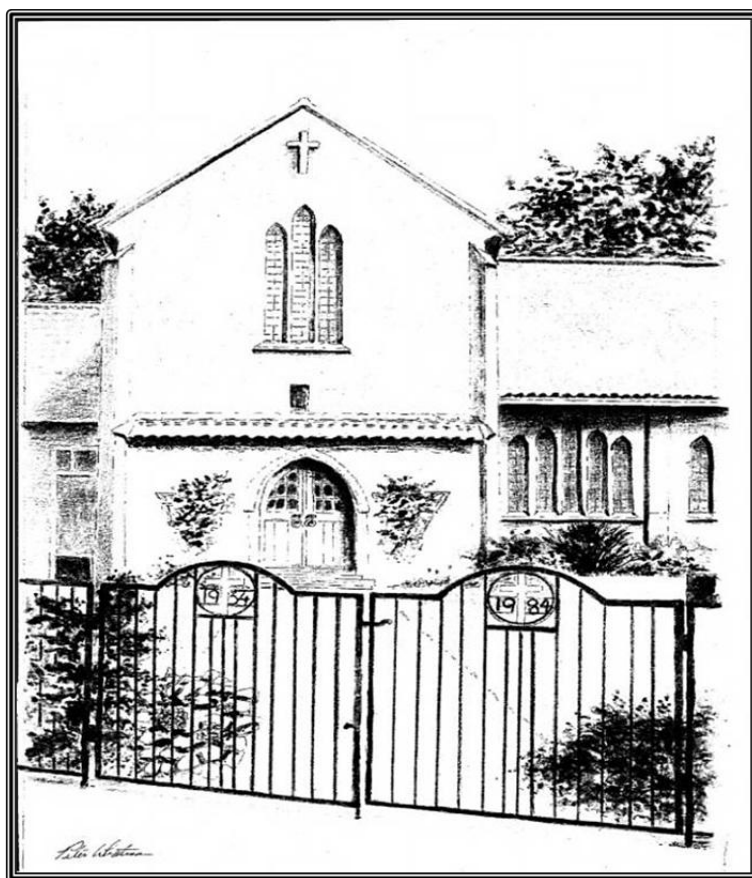


CHURCH MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

ST MARY OF NAZARETH

WEST WICKHAM



*A WELCOMING FAMILY WITH THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH AT THE HEART
OF ALL WE DO.*

50P

Clergy and Officers

Vicar:	Rev Matt Drummond	Vicarage, The Avenue	4629 7301
	revd.matt.drummond@gmail.com		(Day off on Friday)
Assistant Priests:	Rev Richard Ford	7 Sylvan Way	8289 2432
	richard.ford73@gmail.com		
	Ven Carol Coslett	7 Woodland Way	07939 9456
	Carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org		
Readers:	Mr Ken Bryan	55 Goodhart Way	8777 1850
	KennethABryan@aol.com		
	Mrs Debbie Adams	87 Goodhart Way	8777 7834
	debadams87@outlook.com		
Church Wardens:	Mrs Gifty Nortey	gfnortey@gmail.com	8776 1563
	Mrs Jackie Greatorex	6 North Road	07979 331915
	jackiegreatorex@googlemail.com		
Assistant Wardens:	Mrs Natalie Outten	151 Goodhart Way	8777 0340
	Mr. J. Womack	2 Long Meadow Close	8777 8772
	Mrs. M. Womack	2 Long Meadow Close	8777 8772
Sacristans:	Mrs Deidre Fitzgerald		8777 0083
	Mrs Wendy Taylor	92 Wellbrook Road Locksbottom	01689 856512
PCC Secretary:	Ms Julie Conway	julie.conway@ntlworld.com	
Treasurer/Free-Will Offering Secretary:	Mr Bob West	163 Wickham Chase	8776 0210
	robwest46163@gmail.com		
Organist/Choirmaster:	Mr Geoff Mussard	35 Oakfield Gardens Beckenham	8650 8389
	geoff@mussard.org.uk		
Electoral Roll Officer:	Mr Chris Fitzgerald		8777 0083
Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Mrs Charlotte Wilson		07981 040067
	charlottewilson21@hotmail.com		

Normal Services

Sunday:	8:00 a.m.	Holy Communion (1 st , 3 rd and 5 th Sundays only)
	9:15 a.m.	Sung Communion & Crèche (joint service at 10am on the 1 st Sunday of the month, alternating with St Francis')
Morning Praise:	9:15 a.m.	Normally on the 2 nd Sunday of the month
Messy Church:	3:45 p.m.	Normally on the 2 nd Friday of the month
Holy Baptism: By appointment		
Other Services:		Refer to the Calendar in this magazine. Weddings/Banns, etc.: By appointment

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 2nd, but this year being celebrated in our churches on Sunday February 1st, 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 1st 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 8th 2nd 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 12th

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

Messy Church Team

Sunday 15th 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 18th ASH WEDNESDAY

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

Sunday 22nd 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 1st 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 8th 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 13th

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

Sunday 15th 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 22nd 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 29th 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 st	Malachi 3: 1-5	
	Hebrews 2: 14-18	Charlotte Wilson
	Luke 2: 22-40	Matt Drummond
8 th	Genesis 1: 1-2, 3	
	Romans 8:18-25	Stephen Howe
	Matthew 6: 25-34	Ken Bryan
15 th	Exodus 24: 12 – 18	
	2 Peter 1:16 – 21	John Womack
	Matthew 17: 1-9	Matt Drummond
22 nd	Genesis 2: 15 -17,3: 1-7	
	Romans 5: 12-19	Sharon Newman
	Matthew 4: 1-11	Richard Ford
March		
1 st	Genesis 12: 1-4a	
	Romans 4: 1-5,13-17	At St. Francis
8 th	Exodus 17: 1-7	
	Romans 5: 1-11	Margaret Bond
	John 4: 5-42	Matt Drummond
15 th	1 Samuel 1: 2- 28	
	2 Corinthians 1: 3-7	Beryl Bolton
	John 19: 25b – 27	Carol Coslett

22nd

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Romans 8: 6-11

Bill Howell

John 11: 1-45

Ken Bryan

29th

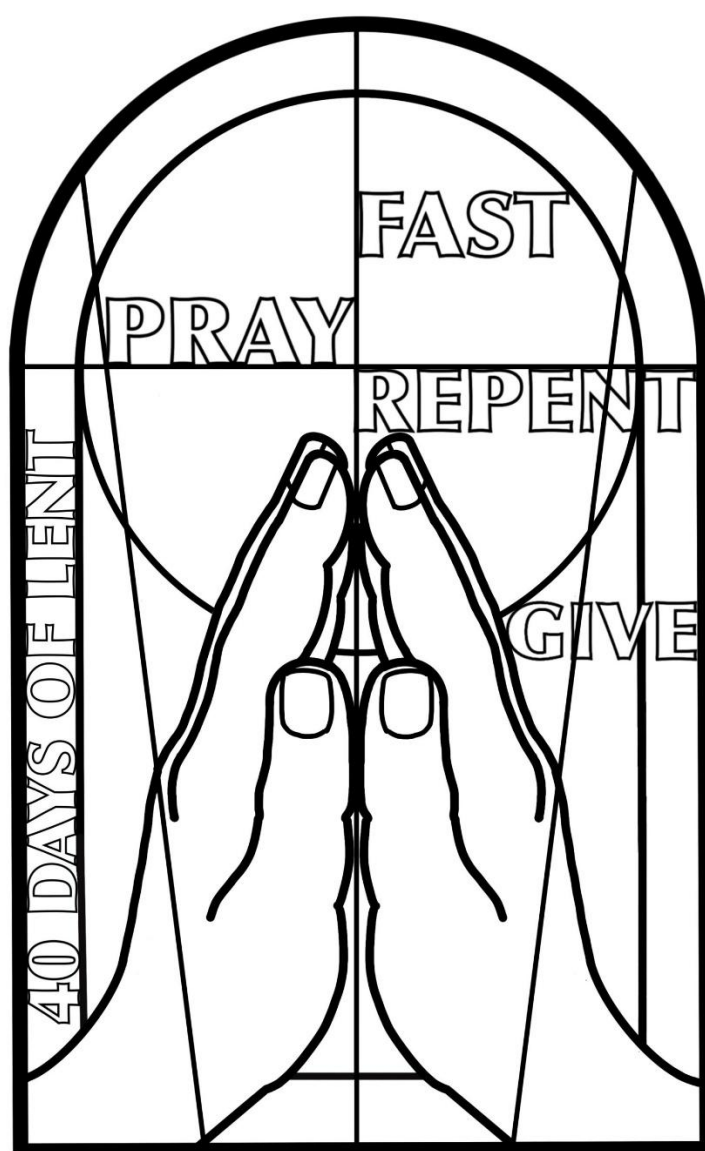
Isaiah 50: 4-9a

Philippians 25: 1-11

Gifted Nortey

Matthew 26:14-end of 27

Matt Drummond



Dates for your Diary

February

Parish Lunch

The February Parish Lunch is on Wednesday 4th February at 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please contact Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or email 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 14th February. Please book your place through Beryl Bolton on 0208 289 8097 or email 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 4th at 1.00 p.m. in the hall. Please let Beryl Bolton know on 0208 289 8097 or berylbolton@hotmail.com if you are unable to attend.

Advance Notice

Our annual St. George's Supper will take place on Saturday 25th April at 7.00 p.m. in the hall. Keep the date free. Watch the pew sheets for more details nearer the time.

Looking ahead – Are you growing bedding plants, tomatoes or chillies from seed? If so, can you plant an extra tray for the plant stall at the Garden Party? Any other plants would be greatly appreciated by Chris Fitzgerald. Thank you.

It's Time For Change!

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



Parish Matters

Christmas Market– Saturday 29th 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

St Mary's Christmas Market Prize Winners 2025

<u>Grand Draw</u>	Ticket No.	Name
£200	0547	James Hubbard
6 Bottles of wine	1134	Annette Livey
Btl Famous Grouse Whiskey	0441	Andrea Heard
Back & Neck Massage	0433	Peter Heard
Signature Liqueur chocs	0399	Michelle Graydon
Fox's Classic Chocolate Biscuit Collection	0788	Sharon Newman

Christmas Cake	944(yellow)	Hillary Gent
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Christmas Hamper	542(white)	Annette Livey
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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

Christmas Services

Once again, our church was beautifully decorated for Christmas with the flowers, the lights, the tree and the crib. Thanks to all who contributed to this.

The **Messy Christmas celebration** was attended by only 5 children and their families but was a very happy occasion with the usual activities in the hall, followed by a short service in church then back to the hall for a meal. We continue to pray for an increase in numbers this year.

The **Carol Service** was attended by 82 people who enjoyed singing along to the traditional carols and listening to some items by the choir. The service was followed by tea in the hall, and a collection was taken for CRISIS.

The **Midnight service** was attended by 55 people, and a further collection was taken for CRISIS. The amount sent to CRISIS from the two services was £281.66

A lot of work and preparation went into the **Christingle Service** and the church was full with 211 people attending. It was lovely to see all the excited children as the candles were lit and the lights switched off whilst *Away in a Manger* and *Light a Little Candle* were being sung. Thanks to Katrina and Ken for taking the service and, due to the generosity of the church members who paid for all the expenses involved, we were able to send a cheque for £364.80 to The Children's Society.

A very happy Christmas time of celebration at St. Mary's and thanks must go to Matt, Carol, Richard, Ken, Debbie, Geoff and the choir, our two Churchwardens Gifty and Jackie, Julie our PCC Secretary, and all who work so hard, particularly at these special times of year.

Beryl Bolton

What a find!

A bracelet, that was thought to be gold, was bought by a Church Member for a small sum at the Christmas Market, was valued and sold for £600. This amount has been donated to the Church and, using Gift Aid, makes a total donation of £750.00. The Lord works in mysterious ways.



Henry is making a real effort for Lent –
he's giving up the remote control and
walking to the TV

Message from Dave Willis - Assistant Group Leader of the 7th 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 7th WW. If you want a place, please email Dave Willis at 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

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- 7th 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

Sanctuary Pedestal List

No flowers during Lent.

Electoral Roll

If you are new to St. Marys, or already a member but not on the electoral roll, please see Chris Fitzgerald on a Sunday morning or give him a ring on 020 8777 0083. Chris will be pleased to explain what is involved and give you the necessary form to be filled in. Being on the Electoral Roll gives you the right to vote on any matter concerning the Church.

The Food Bank

Thank you all for your generous and regular donations to the Food Bank. The need is always there but even more so during the winter months and at Christmas time. Please continue to leave donations in the box outside the Hall. Any “bags for life” you may have spare would be very useful.

Magazine Subscriptions

This is a reminder that subscriptions for the magazine are due with this Edition of the magazine. The cost remains at £3 for the year. If you prefer to pay with each two-monthly edition, the cost is 50p per copy. Electronic copies are sent to everyone on the church’s email group. If you wish to receive an electronic copy, please contact Gifty at office@stmaryswestwickham.co.uk

We are always pleased to receive any articles for the magazine.

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

February

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

March

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

Crossword Answers

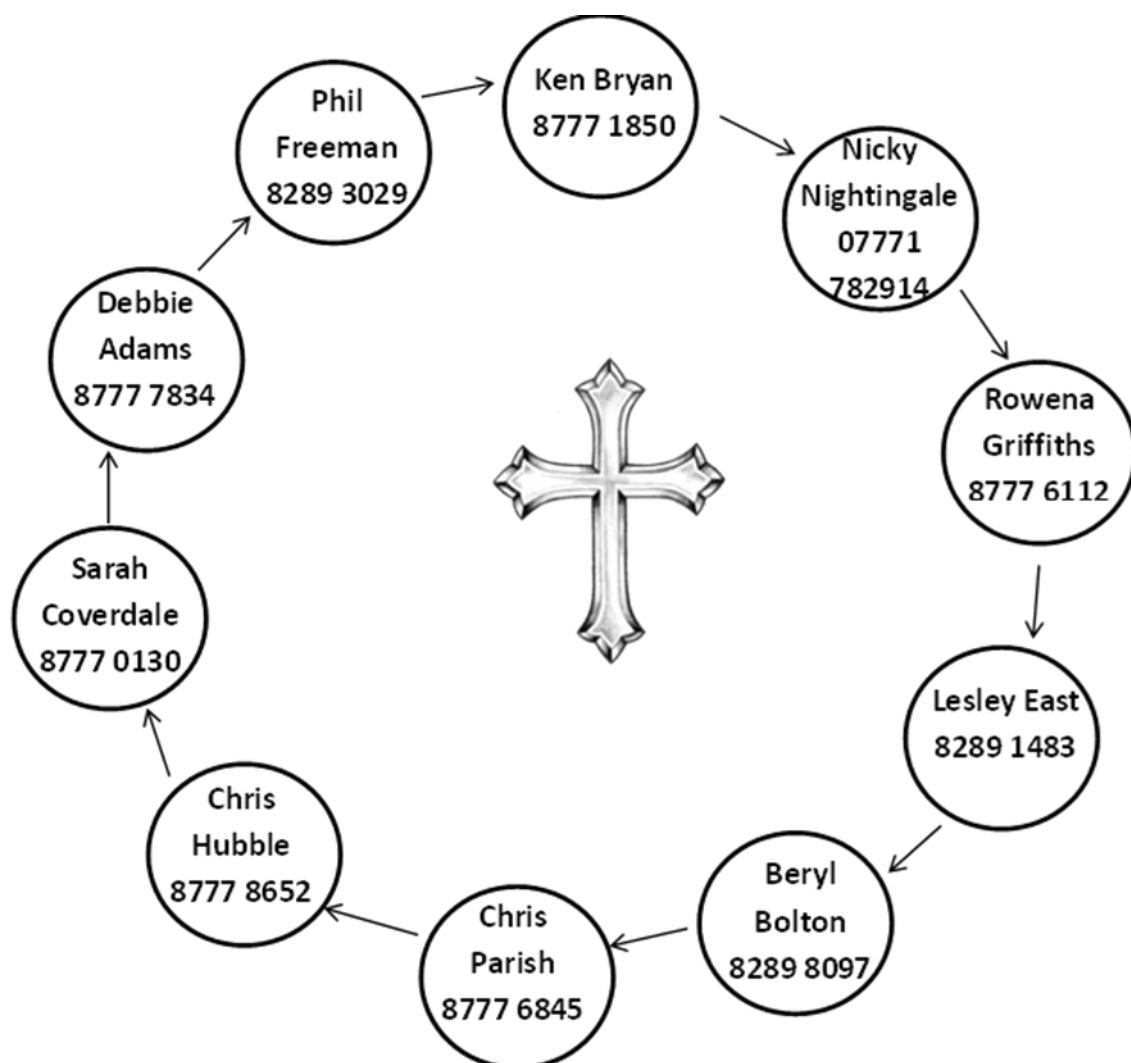
ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

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.

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 2nd 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 25th March, and I explore this in a bit

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

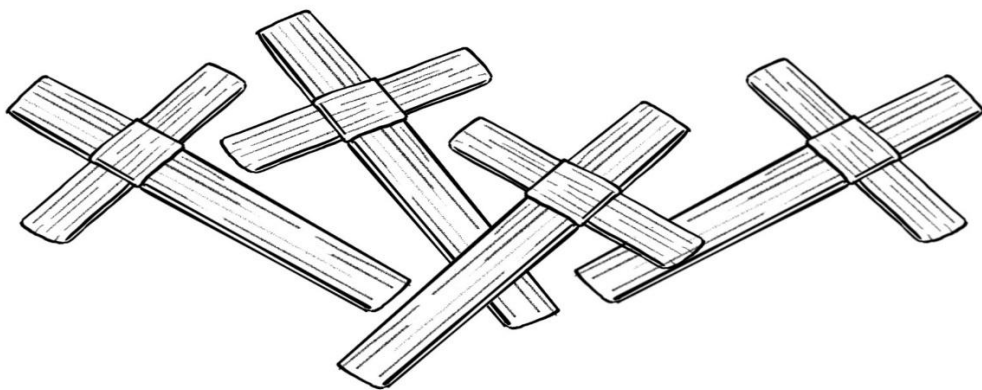
Following Candlemas, we dip briefly into Ordinary Time. There is nothing 'ordinary' about Ordinary Time, and it is a reminder that fruit grows in valleys, not on mountaintops, and whilst we might prefer celebration, the human soul also needs the peace of the ordinary as it's here we consolidate and grow. On the Sunday next before Lent (15th 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 13th to 20th 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 7th 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 25th 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



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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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Answers on page 33



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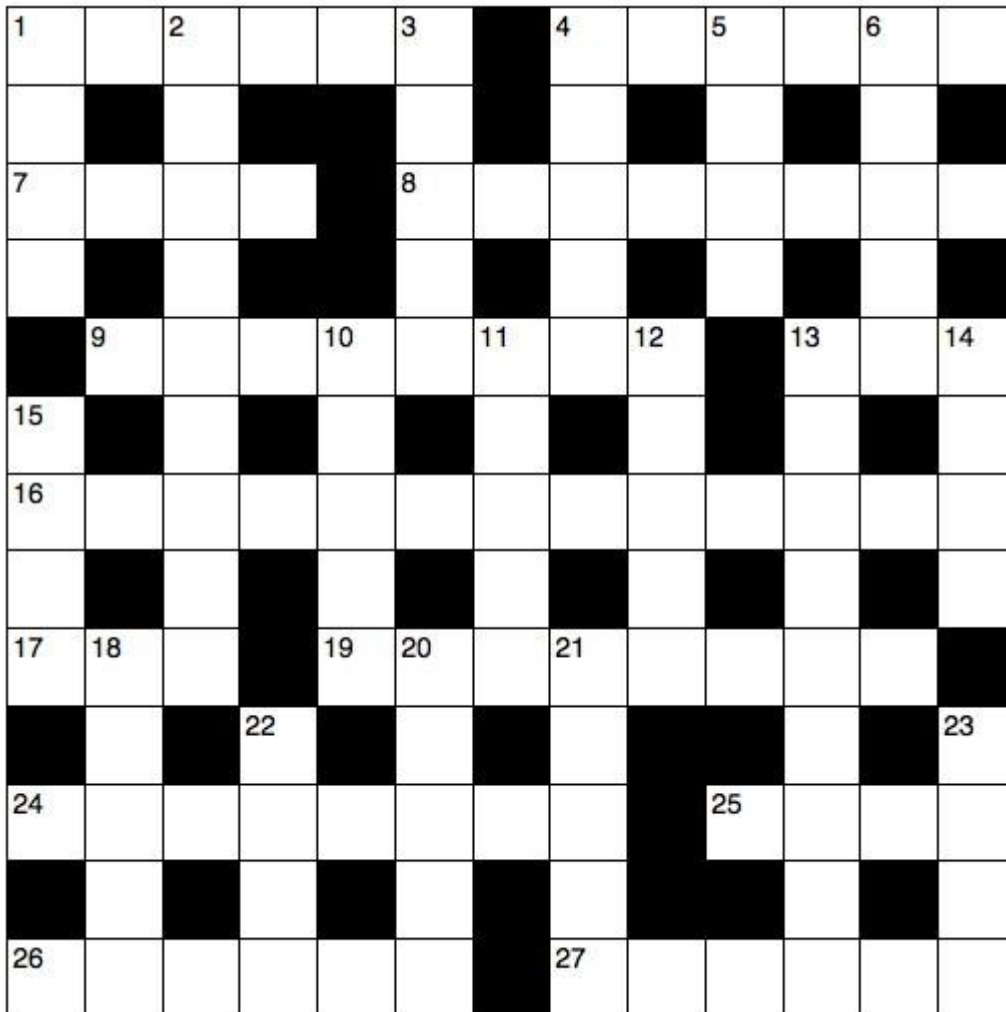


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Crossword Puzzle



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)

Answers on page 17

SODUKO 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

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.

HAVE YOU OR WILL YOU BE MAKING A WILL?

If so, please consider leaving a legacy to St. Mary's.

Legacies we have had in the past have been a great blessing and encouragement and enabled us to carry out important work. It is helpful if the bequest is given without conditions so the PCC can use the money as they feel appropriate.

Please give this prayerful consideration.

To make a Will is one of the kindest things you can do so your wishes are known.

Rotas

February

Welcoming in Church

1 st	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
8 th	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe
15 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
22 nd	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe

9.15/10.00 a.m. Services

1 st	10.00 a.m.	Joint	Linda West/Charlotte Wilson
8 th	9.15 a.m.		Merri and John Womack
15 th	9.15 a.m.		Natalie Outten/Phil Nortey
22 nd	9.15 a.m.		Malcolm Hubbard /Stephen Howe

Coffee

1 st	10.00 a.m.	Joint	Margaret Bond/Sharon Newman
8 th	9.15 a.m.		Beryl Bolton/Gifty Nortey
15 th	9.15 a.m.		Linda and Rob West
22 nd	9.15 a.m.		Jean Mathers/Natalie Outten

Church Cleaning

13 th	Margaret Bond/Sharon Newman
27 th	Christine Bryan/Annette Cordery

Church Flower Pedestals

1 st	Donated by Debs & Bill Howell for Debs' Mother's Birthday on 5 th . Arranged by Merri.
8 th	Donated by Malcolm Hubbard for Carol's anniversary. Arranged by Merri.

March

Welcoming in Church

8.00 a.m. Services

1 st	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe
8 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
15 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe
22 nd	St. Mary's	Stephen Howe
29 th	St. Francis	Stephen Howe

9.15/10.00 a.m. Services

1 st	10.00 a.m.	Joint at St. Francis
8 th	9.15 a.m.	Julie Conway/Jackie Greatorex
15 th	9.15 a.m.	Claire Bull/Dot Smythe
22 nd	9.15 a.m.	Linda West/Volunteer needed
29 th	9.15 a. m.	Merri and John Womack

Coffee

1 st	10.00 a.m.	Joint at St. Francis
8 th	9.15 a.m.	Claire Bull/Jackie Greatorex
15 th	9.15 a.m.	Debs and Bill Howell
22 nd	9.15 a.m.	Merri and John Womack
29 th	9.15 a.m.	Deirdre and Chris Fitzgerald

Church Cleaning

13th	Margaret Bond/Sharon Newman
27th	Claire and Peter Cordery

Church Flower Pedestals - No flowers during Lent.

Contacts

Bible Reading Fellowship:	Mrs M Richards	miriamrichards@outlook.com	07732 557709
Church/Wedding Flowers:	Mrs M Womack	2 Long Meadow Close	8777 8772
Beavers:	Mr D Tarrant	duncan.tarrant@openreach.co.uk	
Brownies:	Mrs S Hann	149 Hayes Chase	8776 1385
Messy Church:	Mrs K Mussard	35 Oakfield Gardens	8650 8389
Magazine Editor:	Mrs D Howell	dmh@williamhowell.co.uk	07776 250021
Articles for typing to:	Mrs B Bolton	3 Foxes Dale, Shortlands	8289 8097
Printing:	Mrs G Nortey	office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk	8776 1563
Hall Hire:	Hall & Youth Hall:	6 North Road jackiegreatorex@gmail.com	
Party Bookings:	Mrs S Newman	sharon@newmanhome.plus.com	07811 742062

Magazine Articles

The Parish Magazine welcomes articles from its readers. Please send to Beryl at berylbolton@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

www.stmarywestwickham.co.uk

**St Mary of Nazareth Parish Church
The Avenue, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0DX**