

St John's Church

PARISH NEWS



Faith, Fellowship, and Friendship

MARCH 2026 £1

www.stjohnsspalding.org

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SPALDING

Vicar	Rev Greg Bannister	07759 957 236
Assistant Priest	Rev Sophie Bannister	
Hon Assistant Priest	Rev Pat Willson	07976 986 694
Curate	Rev Richard Knowles	07747 792 497

Children and Families Worker	Anthony Horton	01775 718 237
Church Administrator	Allison Willson	
Parish Office	email: parishoffice@stjohnsspalding.org	07831 489 545
		01775 718237 (with answer machine)

If you need a wedding, baptism or funeral, please contact the Parish Office

Website www.stjohnsspalding.org

Churchwarden David Grimshaw 07777 675 752

PCC Secretary Allison Willson 01775 718 237
PCC Members Yvonne Edgoose 01775 722 882
Freda Hilliar 01775 766 048
Sarah Grimshaw (Deanery Synod Rep) 07453 358 959
Jacky Owens 07771 706 688
Stuart Parkin 01775 760 570
Elizabeth Roberts 0771 235 3470
Maria Stone (Deanery Synod Rep) 0759 704 0285
Paul Wilson 07821 918 173
Chris Wood 01775 725 257
Betty Lennie
Hilary Moriaty
Michael Moriaty
Mark Ellis
Jackie McPherson

Safeguarding Officer Hilary Moriaty 01775 718 237
Verger Peter Darley 01775 718 237
Treasurer Michael Moriaty 01775 718 237
Electoral Roll Officer Allison Willson 01775 718 237
Planned Giving Elizabeth Roberts 0771 235 3470
Parish News (Distribution) Stuart Parkin 01775 760 570
(Editor) Heather Brookes
email: heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org

St John's School Head: Clare Robinson 01775 722 644
Brownies Diane Ridgley 07962 342 051
Rainbows Tracey Wales 07504 260 129

THE CHURCH SHOULD BE A BUILDING SITE!

By the time you read this, I am hopeful that the whole of the south side of the church will be covered in scaffolding. I say hopeful because at the time of writing it hasn't gone up yet and the scaffolder has pushed the proposed date back by a couple of weeks. This fact, combined with my own gentle pessimism and the fact that I've watched several episodes of *Grand Designs*, means that I'll only be sure the scaffolding is going up when it does!

For some time now we've been wanting to fix a number of holes in the roof and it is wonderful that this much-needed repair work can begin at last! As I've put in the title of this column, by the time you read this, the church should be a building site.

Since I arrived in Spalding just over five years ago the St John's building has been mostly weather-proof. Though even in my time there have been some memorable moments when it wasn't. My personal favourite

was an end of term school Christmas service when, due to the wrong combination of wind and rain, some parents found themselves needing to put their umbrellas up indoors while the service continued in front of them. We've since called chairs in that place 'the cheap seats'!



Rev Greg

To try to protect the floor up until now, perhaps uniquely in the county or even the country, we've had a deflated paddling pool on display to catch any drips of rain that could come through our most porous leak. It has raised a smile from many visitors, prompted any

number of jokes and, best of all, a visiting group of school children genuinely thought it was a feature of the church to be noted alongside the pulpit and the font! The paddling pool has actually been very useful but its days are numbered because the church should be a building site and it will no longer be needed.





This month's magazine is sponsored by
SUE AND CHRIS HEPPENSTALL
In memory of
**OUR PARENTS: ELIZABETH & RAYMOND WILLSON,
AND MARGARET & HENRY HEPPENSTALL**

There will come a day when the holes in the roof are patched up. The paddling pool may one day be filled with water (not rain water!) and be paddled-in in someone's garden on a hot summer's day. But even on that day the church should still be a building site. Don't get me wrong, the building should be fine, but there's a sense in which every church, every Christian community (including St John's) should be a building site.

St Paul wrote about a Christian community in Turkey: *"You belong to God's family. You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles and prophets prepared. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in that building. The whole building is joined together in Christ, and he makes it grow and become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Christ you are being built together with his other people. You are being made into a place where God lives through the Spirit."* (Ephesians 2:19-22)

The church should be a building site where each block of stone, each Christian, is a work in progress being shaped by a good God into more of who He made and rescued us to be. The church should be a building site where we believers are built together by God into a real

community that learns to love one another well; to know and understand each other; and to support and care for one another as we all go through life's ups and downs with Christ. The church should also be a building site where people (whether they would want to own the label 'Christian' for themselves or not) can come with faith; with doubt; with questions; and find a welcoming and safe place to belong and grow in their understanding and confidence in God.

"There's a sense in which every Christian community should be a building site"

I find great reassurance in this biblical picture of the church being a building site: a place where we as people and our community relationships are accepted as works in progress.

21st Century Western culture seems to be marked by an increased sense of loneliness and disconnection, and the community church offers a place where every believer should be able to feel they can belong to the family, without needing to be the finished article first. After all, in this life we will always be spiritual works in progress.

I will be glad when the scaffolding goes up. I will be even more glad when the roof is fixed and the scaffolding finally comes down. I hope and pray St John's never ceases to be a spiritual building site where a good and gracious God is at work.

WE ARE LOSING OUR PEREGRINE FALCONS

Our peregrine falcons are dying. We've lost more than 80 per cent of our UK population in the past 50 years. That makes them one of the most-at-risk British birds.

Peregrine falcons are special — they are among the fastest animals on the planet and the largest species of falcon in the UK. However, although some rewilding and conservation projects are underway to help these beautiful predators, they are being decimated by pesticide poisoning



and illegal hunting.

According to recent statistics from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, our peregrine falcon population is shrinking at a rate of about seven per cent per year.

The RSPB (rspb.org.uk) helps support these beautiful birds and runs events such as the Peregrine Watch. You can also actively support the breed by adopting one through the Hawk Conservancy Trust — visit hawk-conservancy.org

Easter Lilies

We are having a collection for flowers in memory of a loved one for Easter.

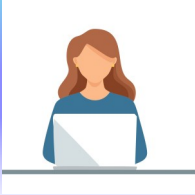
If you wish to make a donation please enclose monies in an envelope marked Easter Flowers and hand in at church by 22nd March.



As thy days, so shall thy strength be — *Deuteronomy 33.25*

JANUARY LOTTERY WINNERS

£20	12	David Lunn
£10	9	Shirley Dye
£5	30	Pat Willson
£5	24	Christine Cox



Material for the April magazine should be with
Heather Brookes
email: heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org
by the 12th of March

PARISH NEWS is available to read online at
www.stjohnsspalding.org


ST JOHN'S CHURCH
SPALDING

Coffee

Everyone is welcome

TUESDAY MORNINGS
8.30AM - 11.30AM



MARCH SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Sunday March 1st

9.15am Informal Service
10.40am Book of Remembrance
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 3rd

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Wednesday 4th

7.30pm Fellowship Group

Thursday 5th

10am Communion in the lounge
11am Bible Study
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Sunday 8th

8am Holy Communion
9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 10th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Wednesday 11th

7.30pm Fellowship Group

Thursday 12th

10am Communion in the lounge
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Friday 13th

5.30pm TREK

Sunday 15th

9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion
6.30pm Deeper Worship Evening

Monday 16th

7.30pm PCC Meeting

Tuesday 17th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Wednesday 18th

7.30pm Prayer and Praise

Thursday 19th

10am Communion in the lounge
11am Bible Study
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Sunday 22nd

8am Holy Communion
9.15am Informal Service
10.45am Choral Communion

Tuesday 24th

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Wednesday 25th

7.30pm Fellowship Group

Thursday 26th

10am Communion in the lounge
11am Bible Study
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Friday 27th

5.30pm TREK

Sunday 29th

10am All Together Service
11am Palm Sunday Lunch

Tuesday 31st

8.30am Drop in Coffee Morning
8.45am Little Seeds
7.30pm Fellowship Group

Tel: 01775 724381 Fax: 01775 722286

Calthrops
Solicitors

(Incorporating Peter Frost & Co.)

For all your legal requirements

18 Hall Place, Spalding, Lincs. PE11 1SP
www.calthrops.co.uk

ELA CARE LIMITED

Tel: 07872 847763

FULLY QUALIFIED, INSURED & DBS
FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER



Providing the following services:
nail cutting & filing • ingrown toenails • corns & calluses
verruccas, fungal nails & athlete's foot • foot health
& diabetic assessments • ear wax removal

With over 20 years' NHS nursing experience
and a degree in District Nursing, you can
feel confident your feet are in safe hands.



**BENNETT
BUTCHERS**

HOME KILLED
HIGH CLASS
QUALITY MEATS

241 WINSOVER ROAD, SPALDING.

01775 722054

PROPRIETORS:
A. J. AND J. PARSONS

YOUR AD COULD RUN HERE!

For information, email
parishoffice@stjohnsspalding.org

or call

01775 718237



Dear family, caring for you

**Luxury Care & Nursing
Homes in Spalding**

Our care is the kind we'd all want our loved ones to receive. Our care and nursing homes in Spalding are luxurious and beautifully furnished whilst retaining a warm, homely atmosphere.

To find out more about life at Country Court Care & Nursing Homes in Spalding visit

www.countrycourtcare.com



THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: WRATH

In the third of our Seven Deadly Sins, we are looking at wrath, or anger.

*“Anger is never without a reason,
but seldom with a good one”*
(Benjamin Franklin).

Anger describes feelings of hatred and resentment; it can lead to resentment and grudges, quarrelling and damaged relationships.

Jesus warns us about the consequence of anger: “I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement.”
(Matthew 5:22)

Jesus Himself got angry, notably when He saw the Temple being exploited by the money changers (Matthew 21:12-13). Such righteous anger is a measured response to injustice or evil, motivated by love, not vengeance.

However, it is important for us to deal with unrighteous anger in our lives: “In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”
(Ephesians 4:26,27).

What practical steps can we take to do this?

- *Acknowledge your anger*

What are the root causes of our anger? Often it comes from deeper feelings, like fear, inadequacy or the desire to control.

- *Control your anger*

Stepping back before reacting can prevent anger from controlling us.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”
(James 1:19,20)

- *Seek to forgive:*

Practising forgiveness, not seeking revenge or holding grudges, will enable us with overcoming anger.
“Clothe yourselves with

compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. (Colossians 3:12,13)

Christ died to take the wrath of God we deserve, that we might know God’s forgiveness.

*“People who fly into a rage always
make a bad landing”*
(Will Rogers)

By Canon Paul Hardingham



THE THREE Rs OF LENT: REFLECT, REPENT, and RECONCILE

Lent rarely announces itself with much fanfare. It arrives quietly, marked not by feasting or festivity but by ashes, prayers of penitence, and an invitation to reflection. In the life of the Church, it is a season that asks us not to hurry forward, but to pause – to notice where we are, who we are becoming, and where God may be leading us.

For many of us, this invitation feels increasingly difficult to accept, and to implement. Our lives are full: full of noise, information, expectation, and distraction. We

move quickly from one thing to the next, rarely stopping long enough to attend to what lies beneath the surface. Lent, with its call to simplicity and self-examination, can feel at odds with the pace of modern life. Yet it may be precisely because life is so noisy that Lent matters more than ever.

“Be still, and know that I am God”
(Psalm 46:10)

Stillness, in the biblical sense, is not inactivity. It is attentiveness. Lent invites us to become alert and to listen – to God, to ourselves, and to the world as it really is.

A Season Rooted in Scripture

The 40 days of Lent are not an arbitrary number. They echo the great biblical stories of preparation and testing: the 40 days of rain in the time of Noah (Genesis 7:4); Moses’ 40 days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18); Elijah’s 40-day journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8); Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness (Numbers 32:13). Prominent judges and kings each ruled for about 40 years: Eli; Saul; David; and Solomon (1 Samuel 4:18; Acts 13:21; 2 Samuel 5:4; and 1 Kings 11:42



Ashes mark not an ending, but a beginning – an invitation to return, to reflect, and to listen

respectively). Above all, Lent reflects the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry (Matthew 4:2).

In his gospel, St Luke goes into more detail about Jesus’s period of solitude and testing.

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness”
(Luke 4:1)

This detail matters: Jesus does not enter the wilderness because He has failed, or because God is displeased with Him. He enters it immediately after His baptism, after the

declaration of divine love: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). This desolate landscape is not a place of abandonment but of preparation.

In Scripture, the wilderness is a place where distractions fall away. There is no excess there, no room for illusion; it is uncomfortable, sometimes frightening. But it is also a place of encounter — where people meet God more honestly because there is nowhere else to turn.

Lent invites us into a kind of wilderness of our own. Not necessarily a physical one, but an interior one: a space where we are asked to notice what sustains us, what we cling to, and what truly gives us life.



In Scripture, the wilderness is a place of testing, but also of encounter — where God speaks without distraction

Living on More Than Bread Alone

Jesus is tempted during His time of isolation — not with obvious evils, but with shortcuts. He is tempted to turn stones into bread; to grasp power; to avoid suffering. Each temptation offers a way to bypass trust.

Jesus echoes Deuteronomy 8:3 when he responds to Satan’s testing during this difficult time:

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4)

This is not a rejection of physical needs: bread matters; bodies matter. Jesus reminds us that human beings need more than consumption to live well. We need meaning, relationships, and honesty.

Lent asks us to consider whether we have allowed lesser goods to take the place of greater ones.

This is where the traditional Lenten practises of fasting, prayer, and generosity find their purpose. They are not tests of willpower or

exercises in self-denial for its own sake. They are ways of creating space — space to notice hunger; to listen more carefully; to become aware of our dependence on

God, and on one another.

It’s a common misconception that fasting means to abstain from edible pleasures. For some, fasting from food may be appropriate; for others, it may be wiser to fast from noise: from constant news, social media, or the pressure to be endlessly productive. What matters is not the form it takes but the attentiveness it fosters.

Repentance as Turning, Not Self-Reproach

One of the words most closely associated with Lent is *repentance*. It’s also one of the most misunderstood.

Repentance is often imagined as self-reproach or dwelling on failure. In Scripture, however, repentance is about turning — turning towards God, and towards life as God intends it to be.



Lent invites us to live by more than what sustains the body alone

The prophet Joel voices God's invitation:

“Return to me with all your heart”
(Joel 2:12)

Repentance begins not with condemnation, but with return. It is an act of hope. To repent is to believe that change is possible, that God is merciful, and that we are not fixed forever in our shortcomings.

Psalm 51, traditionally associated with Lent, expresses this beautifully in verse 10:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”

This prayer is not about perfection; it is about honesty. Lent encourages us to tell the truth about ourselves — not only about our sins but about our fears, our weariness, and our need for grace.

In the Anglican tradition, this honesty



Lent unfolds not apart from daily life, but within it

is held within the assurance of forgiveness. Confession, whether formal or informal, is never an end in itself. It is a doorway to freedom.

Lent in Ordinary Life

For many people, Lent unfolds not in quiet retreat but in the midst of ordinary responsibilities: work; family; caring; and community. This does not make the season less meaningful — on the contrary, it grounds Lent in real life.

Acknowledging and respecting Lent may be as simple as choosing to pause before reacting, to listen more carefully, or to pray honestly rather than eloquently. It may involve acts of generosity that go unnoticed, or decisions to let go of habits that no longer serve us well.

Lent also invites us to look outward. As we simplify our own lives, we may become more attentive to the needs of others.

Acts of giving and service are not add-ons to Lenten discipline; they are integral to it. They remind us that repentance is never only personal — it reshapes how we live together.

Walking Towards Easter

It's important to remember

that Lent is a journey — one that leads, always, towards Easter. The Church does not ask us to linger indefinitely in self-examination, but to walk through it, with hope.

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face”
(1 Corinthians 13:12)

Lent acknowledges that our vision is partial, our understanding incomplete, and yet it trusts that God is at work even when clarity eludes us.

Jesus Himself speaks of loss and renewal using the image of growth. This is not a call to despair but to trust. What is surrendered in Lent is not wasted; it is transformed.

“...Unless a kernel of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds”
(John 12:24)

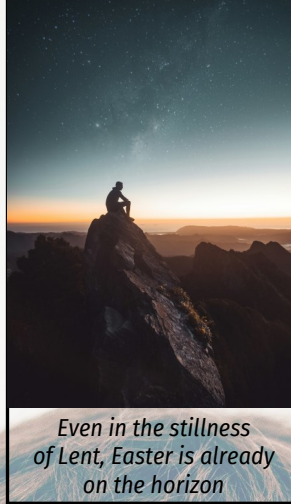
A Gentle Invitation

Lent does not demand heroics. It does not require us to become different people overnight. It invites us, simply, to walk a little more attentively with God — to pause, to listen, and to trust that grace is already at work.

In a world that prizes speed, Lent

offers patience. In a culture that rewards noise, it offers quiet. And in lives often marked by pressure and performance, it offers the deep relief of knowing that we are already loved.

As we make our way through this season, may we discover that in learning to pause, we are not losing time, but finding it — and that in the stillness, God is already waiting to meet us.



Even in the stillness of Lent, Easter is already on the horizon

A Lenten Prayer

*Loving God,
As we walk through
this season of Lent,
help us to pause,*

*To slow our hurried hearts,
and to listen for
Your voice.*

*In the quiet, show us
where we need to turn,*

*And grant us the courage to follow
You with open hands.*

*Teach us to seek Your presence
in the everyday,*

*And to surrender all that distracts
us from Your love.*

*May our fasting lead us
to deeper compassion,*

*Our prayers open our hearts
to Your mercy,*

*And our giving bring us closer
to the heart of Christ.*

*Through this season of reflection
and renewal,*

*Lead us toward the joy of Easter.
In the name of Jesus,*

Amen

First visit
FREE!

Little Seeds

Baby & Toddler Group

Tuesdays 8:45 - 10:30

Come and play!

Join Anthony (former EYFS Teacher) for:

- Number and Letter of the Week
- Small World & Role-Play
- Imagination Station & Moving + Grooving
- Reading Nook & Active Area
- Designated Bouncing Babies space
- Bible Stories & Refreshments.



BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY TO BE INSTALLED AS ARCHBISHOP

In a special service at St Paul's Cathedral, at her Confirmation of Election, Bishop Sarah Mullally DBE legally became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January.

The Confirmation of Election is a legal ceremony, set within a church service, at which Bishop Sarah, the Archbishop-Elect, legally became the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Archbishop Sarah's first act as Archbishop was to take up the Primatial Cross and give the blessing at the end of the service.

The Confirmation will be followed by an Installation service at Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March, where

Archbishop Sarah will preach her first sermon as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Between her Confirmation of Election and Installation, Archbishop Sarah will pay homage to The King, and meet with the leaders of other Christian denominations and other faiths in the UK.

She also co-presided at the Church of England's General Synod in London in February, where she delivered the Presidential Address.

By tradition, Archbishop Sarah will begin her public ministry and full

programme of public engagements following her Installation.

Bishop Sarah said: "It is an extraordinary and humbling privilege to have been called to be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

"In this country and around the world, Anglican churches bring healing and hope to their communities. With God's help, I will seek to guide Christ's flock with calmness, consistency and compassion.

"These are times of division and uncertainty for our fractured world. I pray that we will offer space to break bread together and discover what we have in common – and I pledge myself to this ministry of hospitality.

"I want us to be a Church that always listens to the voices of those who have been ignored or overlooked, among them victims and survivors of church abuse, who have often been let down.

"I am committed to equipping the Church to be a kind and safe place that cares for everyone, especially those who are vulnerable, as we rise to the challenge of God's call to justice, equity, peace and the care of creation."



Sarah Mullally at her Installation as Bishop of London



PRAYERS FOR MARCH

If you are unable to use all the prayers every day, then it is suggested that you use a prayer for that day and the Parish prayer, if possible. In this way we shall all be praying together to bring about God's kingdom

A PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God,
Teach us to walk in your way more trustfully,
To accept your truth more faithfully
And to share your life more lovingly.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
Guide us in our work for our church
That we may come, as a family,
To the Kingdom of the Father
Where you live for ever
Amen

A Sunday prayer

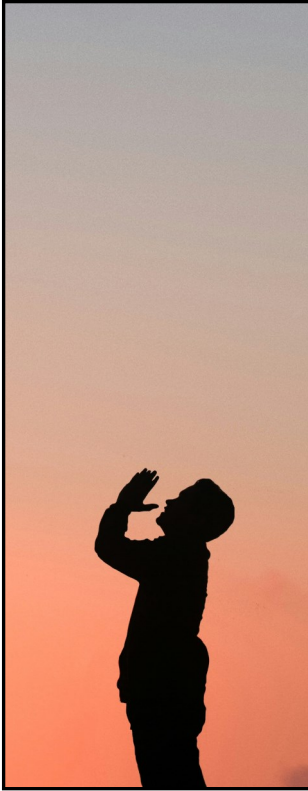
As the days lengthen, and the earth spends longer in the light of day, may we spend longer in the light of your presence, O Lord.

May the seeds of your Word, which have been long buried within us, grow like everything around us into love for you and love for other people — a visible declaration of the Lordship in our lives.

Grant, Lord, that there may be a springtime in our lives this Lent.

A Monday prayer, by David Silk

God our Father, in your love and goodness you have taught us to overcome our sins with prayer, fasting and generosity. Accept our Lenten disciplines and, when we fall by our weakness, raise us up by your unfailing mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



A Tuesday prayer, by C N R Wallwork
Lord Jesus Christ,
Accept our songs of praise
as you journey to the Cross;
And enable us to both grieve
at its necessity
and be renewed by its power

*A Wednesday prayer,
by Alcuin of Tours (c735 - 804)*
Eternal Light, shine in our hearts;
Eternal Goodness,
deliver us from evil;
Eternal Power, be our support;
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of
our ignorance;
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us,
that with all our heart and mind and
strength we may seek your face
and be brought by your infinite mercy
to your holy presence;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

A prayer for Thursday, by Henry Alford

Heavenly Father, give us more charity, more self-denial, and more likeness to Christ. Teach us that it is better to give than to receive; better to forget ourselves than to put ourselves forward; better to serve than to be served, after the example of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A prayer for Friday
By the prayers of Jesus,
Lord, teach us how to pray.
By the gifts of Jesus,
Lord, teach us how to give.
By the toils of Jesus,
Lord, teach us how to work.
By the love of Jesus,
Lord, teach us how to love.
By the cross of Jesus,
Lord, teach us how to live



COMPLAIN WITH CONFIDENCE

C We often find it difficult to complain about something, or to feel heard, when things don't go as we'd hoped. Here's some general advice on what to do when you're not happy about something, and how to make complaints effective.

*"I cry aloud to the Lord; ...I pour out
before Him my complaint;
before Him I tell my trouble"*
(Psalm 142:1,2)

Perhaps it is a British thing, but we do not like to complain, do we? But the psalmist (King David) was not British, so he did not mind complaining — even to God, we are told.

Nowadays, most large organizations, especially public bodies, actively want us to complain if something is wrong, because good service standards are important. They have well-designed complaints systems and independent ombudsmen to oversee it all.

The first thing is to try to resolve an issue informally. If this has not worked, use the proper procedure. You can probably find how to do this on the company's website.

Be precise about what you are

complaining about. Be clear — use account numbers, references and dates. Put in the names of persons involved, if you know them. Do not leave it too long because most procedures have deadlines.

Keep it short, simple, and to the point. Ask a friend to look at it first, to make sure they understand what you are complaining about. Be firm but polite and business-like — you are more likely to be listened to. Keep a note of dates. It may be



helpful to use numbered points, in date order. Be reasonable. It may be an apology will suffice, but do not be fobbed off.


Think about what outcome you want. Is it an apology? If so, get a genuine one. Don't accept "we are sorry you felt let down".

That is not an apology; "We let you down" is. Perhaps you want the organization to change their ways so something bad does not happen to other people.

Don't forget that all feedback is valuable. If you get good service from someone, tell the company, especially if you can name the individual: it might make their day.

By David Pickup, solicitor

MEMORIALIZING MATRIARCHS

 Mothering Sunday — the fourth Sunday of Lent — offers families an opportunity to honour the women who have nurtured them. Lots of different streams and traditions have come together to make today's Mothering Sunday the special day that it is.

In the Middle Ages it was an occasion for everyone to visit their 'mother' church — the place where they had been baptised. Later, an opportunity for those who worked away from home to visit their mothers became added to the mix of reasons to make it a special day.

Today we honour all women who have in one way or another been special to us and, in church, this is usually signalled by small bunches of flowers for every woman present.

Treating mums and grandmothers to Sunday lunch, chocolates and flowers is also part of the present mix. Often there will be a simnel cake to be seen — a tradition from ages past — with its rich layers of marzipan, and 11 balls of marzipan on top, representing the 11 disciples who remained faithful to Jesus.

Not everyone has enjoyed a wonderful or enduring relationship with their mum, so lest we get carried away on a wave of love and

sentimentality, there is usually space in the Mothering Sunday church service to reflect on and pray for those whose relationships with their mother were not all they might have been.

Also, there are the families blighted by the lack of — or death of — a child; families remembering a mum who died tragically young; women who never had a child but would have dearly loved the opportunity; all these and more are a recognition of the imperfections of human love and human life.

These imperfections can all be brought in prayer to the God who mothers us. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks of God comforting His people like a mother hen. In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke bear witness to Jesus expressing His desire to gather His people as

a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Yes, God has strong maternal qualities, which He invites us to discover and enjoy!


Have you discovered the mothering, nurturing, maternal qualities which God offers to all people? It's lovelier than flowers and more long-lasting than simnel cake. It's free to everyone who wants it — and it could be yours!

By Rev Roy Shaw



Simnel cake has 11 balls adorning it, to represent the 11 faithful disciples

SYNOD TO VOTE ON SAME-SEX COUPLES

 Summer brings us the election of a new General Synod. The people who get voted on to this new General Synod are the ones who will be voting either for or against the standalone services of blessing for same-sex couples that are expected in 2028.

Whatever you believe, when it comes to choosing your candidates for the next General Synod, here are some common-sense tips from synodical experts:

- “It’s not always clear from what candidates

say about themselves what their actual position is on some quite hot-potato issues like human sexuality and women’s ministry.”

- “If the candidate does not mention an issue that you care about, don’t assume they would agree with you and if they do say something, be very clear as to what they are and aren’t saying.”

- “It might be helpful to talk about listening positively to and respecting the views of others, even when we find ourselves disagreeing.”



Lincs Alarms

SSAIB
CERTIFICATED
Member since 2014

**View Your Property Anytime, Anywhere
Home & Business Security Solutions**

01775 660 710

info@lincsalarms.co.uk

Whether you are looking to upgrade an existing security system or install a new one we can advise on the right choice for you.

Contact us for a Free, No Obligation Quote

More than 30 Years Experience
www.lincsalarms.co.uk

**Pendragon
Antiques**

*We Also Buy As Well As Sell
We Buy Gold, Silver and Coins*

Please Enquire


Justin Grimshaw
Director



**1a Red Lion Street
Spalding**

Tel: 07710435241
email: justingrimshaw1954@gmail.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF DONKEYS IN CHRISTIANITY

 Are you a pet-lover? Many people own a dog, a cat or a budgie, but most of us don't own a donkey! Yet in biblical times, donkeys were essential to daily life. They did everything from helping to grind corn to ploughing, from carrying people to transporting their belongings.



Despite their small frame, donkeys are surprisingly tough. They are content with poor fodder like thistles and can travel an average of 20 miles a day.

There are two occasions in the Christian calendar where donkeys walk into the picture. At Christmas, Mary travelled the 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem on a donkey. And although a donkey doesn't get a specific mention in the manger story, that same one that transported her was probably there at the birth; where else would it have been?

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey on Palm Sunday. Jesus deliberately chose this animal rather than a horse. Why? In biblical times,

the horse was associated with war, conquest, and worldly might, but the donkey was a symbol of peace and humility. Jesus used this animal to show that He had come with the dignity of the King of peace. His entry into the Holy City

also fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Donkeys are hardworking and undemanding. They wait for their master to put them to the work he has chosen for them.




And, strikingly, each one bears the mark of the Cross on their backs!

By Lester Amann

Every donkey carries the sign of the cross

THE TRUTH OF THE TWO DONKEYS



 Two donkeys were walking the streets of Jerusalem. One said: "Just a few days ago, I came down that hill carrying Jesus, and the people were all singing and shouting. They were throwing down their cloaks and palms for me to walk on; but today they don't even recognize me."

The other donkey replied: "That is how it is, my friend. Without Jesus, none of us amounts to much."



HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS MARCH

March 25th:

Lady Day or The Annunciation

This beautiful event (Luke 1:26-38) took place in Nazareth, when Mary is already betrothed to Joseph. The Archangel Gabriel comes to Mary; greets her as highly favoured; tells her not to be afraid; that she will bear a son Jesus; and that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is already pregnant (with John the Baptist).

The church calendar is never quite as neat as some would like it. To celebrate the Annunciation on March 25th does indeed place the conception of Jesus exactly nine months before His birth on December 25th, but the latter part of March almost inevitably falls during Lent. That said, the birth and



death of Jesus are intrinsically linked – He was born to die and thus fulfil God’s purposes.

The Annunciation is a significant date in the Christian calendar and it is one of the most frequent depicted in Christian art. Gabriel’s gracious strength and Mary’s humble dignity have inspired many artists. Certainly, Mary’s response to the angel has for centuries been an example of good faith in practice – humility, enquiry of God, and trusting acceptance in His will for her life.

March 29th: Palm Sunday and Holy Week

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Passion Week. It began on Palm Sunday.

After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following. On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded as Jewish people were arriving to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 years earlier.

Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey to be greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom.

Jesus and His followers returned to Jerusalem the next day. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish

faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds.

On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times later on that day. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution.

By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus's disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and

agreed to betray Him to them.

Jesus and the 12 disciples gathered on the Thursday evening to celebrate the Passover meal, known as the Last Supper. During the evening, Jesus initiated a ritual still marked by Christians – Holy Communion – which commemorates His death. Jesus broke bread and shared it and a cup of wine with His disciples.

Judas then left to meet other plotters. Jesus continued to teach the others and then went outside into an olive grove to pray. He even prayed for all future believers. He agonized over what was to come but chose the way of obedience. The *Gospel of Luke* records Him praying: "Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." Minutes later, Judas arrived with soldiers and the chief priests, and Jesus was arrested.





Games Afternoons

1.30pm to 4.30pm

Friday 27th March

Friday 24th April

Friday 29th May

Friday 26th June

Friday 31st July

Friday 28th August

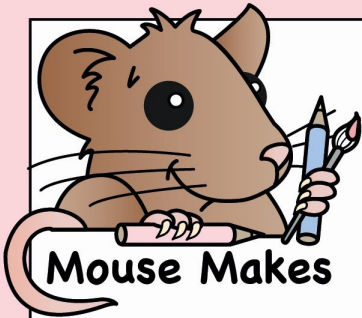
Friday 25th September

Friday 30th October

Friday 27th November

Friday 18th December





The Bible has many stories of mothers who had great faith in God. With their love, care, encouragement and prayers their children grew up to be great people of God.



Who saved her baby by putting him in a basket in the river?

Exodus 2:1-3 and 6:20

Who was 90 years old when she had her son Isaac?
Genesis 17:19



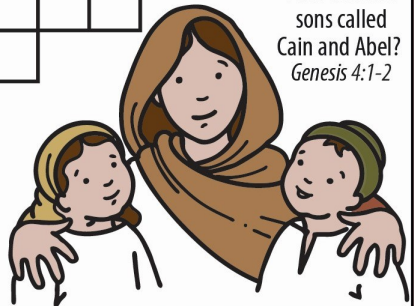
Whose prayers for a child were answered by God?
1 Samuel 1:20

Across

- 3. **Obed's** mother
Matthew 1:5
- 4. **John's** mother
Luke 1:57-60
- 7. **Reuben's** mother
Genesis 29:32
- 8. **Joseph's** mother
Genesis 30:22-24
- 9. **Jesus' mother**
Acts 1:14

Down

- 1. **Boaz's** mother
Matthew 1:5
- 2. **Solomon's** mother
1 Kings 1:11
- 4. **Timothy's** mother
2 Timothy 1:5
- 5. **Ishmael's** mother
Genesis 16:15
- 6. **Jacob and Esau's** mother
Genesis 25:21-26



Deeper

Sunday 15th March

6:30-7:30pm

An informal gathering of sung worship, youth-accessible Bible teaching, and a chance to respond in prayer.

Also a space for those who've served on Sunday mornings in their home churches to come and find some input, encouragement and refreshment.

Every 3rd Sunday - Everyone is welcome



St John's Church, Hawthorn Bank, Spalding, PE11 1JQ

www.stjohnsspalding.org



'FORMERLY AGE UK' Charity No. 1068857

Serving older people in the Spalding District since 2000



The Meadows Day Centre works to promote the wellbeing of all older people and to make later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

We organise a range of activities to stimulate and entertain our clients each day as well as providing refreshments and a traditional cooked lunch. Additional services include bathing, chiropody & hairdressing are also available.

For more information please Telephone: 01775 720305
www.themeadowsspalding.co.uk

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

BY PETUNIA FLOWERS

MARCH


*"In March, winter is holding back and spring is pulling forward.
Something holds and something pulls inside of us, too"*
Jean Hersey

"March is the month of expectation, the things we do not know"
Emily Dickinson


s March arrives there are sure signs that Spring is well on its way. Days are noticeably longer and milder.

There are a myriad of jobs calling to be done in the garden and so starts a busier time for gardeners after the slow winter months.

Seed beds need preparing and seed sown and shrubs and plants are in need of their Spring prune.

There is so much to look forward to – the colours, joy and new life that Spring will bring. 

A GARDENER'S PRAYER FOR MARCH

ord and Creator of all things, as I turn the soil this March, I ask for Your blessing on my labour. Protect these fragile seeds and young seedlings from the late frost and biting winds. Grant me the patience to wait for the soil to warm, and the wisdom to know when to plant. May this garden bring forth beauty and sustenance. Amen

FLOWERS

Sweet peas can be sown outside this month. Place autumn-sown sweet peas in a sunny position, perhaps on a high shelf in the greenhouse that gets plenty of light.

Early spring is an ideal time to plant herbaceous perennials, including Geranium and Oriental poppies. Finish cutting back dead foliage from perennials and ornamental grasses to make way for new growth.

Continue to deadhead winter pansies to stop them setting seed. This will encourage flushes of new flowers throughout the spring.

Deadhead daffodils as the flowers finish and let the foliage die back naturally. Trim winter-flowering heathers as the flowers disappear, to prevent the plants becoming leggy.

TREES and SHRUBS

Prune winter-flowering jasmine after flowering, to encourage new growth for next year's blooms. Cut back the previous year's growth to 5cm from the old wood. If you have a rhododendron that needs a new lease of life, choose a frost-free day this month to cut the branches hard.

This is the best month for planting roses in heavy soils or in cold areas. Avoid planting in areas where previously grown to avoid replant disease. Feed with special rose feed or balanced fertiliser as they come into growth. Prune now.

Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a balanced fertiliser sprinkling it over the root area before hoeing into the soil surface. Many summer-flowering deciduous shrubs can be pruned between January and March including *Buddleja davidii*, hardy fuchsia, and deciduous *Ceanothus* species.

FRUIT and VEGETABLES



Mulch rhubarb with a thick layer of well-rotted manure to keep it healthy and reduce moisture loss through the soil. Take care not to cover the crown, as this is where the growth happens. Cover strawberries with a cloche to encourage earlier fruiting. Feed blueberry plants with ericaceous plant fertiliser. Dig compost, well-rotted manure or green waste into your vegetable beds to prepare for the growing season ahead. Dig in a 5cm-plus layer when the soil becomes workable. Weed vegetable seed beds before adding the layer. Cover prepared soil with sheets of black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for planting.

GREENHOUSE



Try growing-on plug plants in your greenhouse. They are a relatively cheap source of a large numbers of plants, and can be ordered and grown on quickly if you didn't get round to sowing seed in good time earlier this season.

Don't forget to give greenhouse plants more space as they put on new growth. This will help to prevent disease and contain early pest infestations. Check plants at least every few days to see if they need watering.

Seedlings will need daily attention. Continue to prick-out and pot-on new seedlings and cuttings. Harden off half-hardy bedding plants that were started off under cover.

LAWN

If you have bulbs in your lawn such as crocuses and daffodils, wait at least six weeks after flowering before you mow the area to allow the leaves to photosynthesise, and feed the bulbs for a good display next spring.

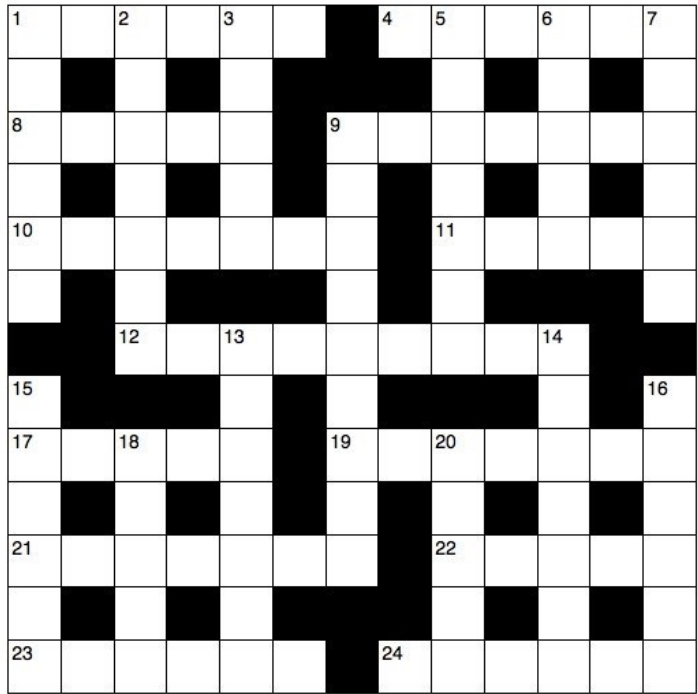
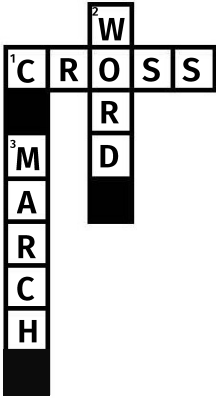
Recut any lawn edges if necessary or install lawn edging to make future maintenance easier. Mow your lawn if it needs it – choose a dry day and set your blades higher than usual.



TIPS

- * Get rid of slimy patches on patios and paving by scrubbing with a broom or blasting with a pressure washer
- *Top up veg planters and raised beds with compost and good quality topsoil
 - *Put supports in
 - *If any of your garden plants or climbers need supporting this year, put them in now, so plants can grow up through them. Adding supports afterwards is trickier and often looks unattractive
 - *Scrub watering cans with hot soapy wate to prevent fungal diseases

Happy Gardening
Petunia Flowers



Across

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
- 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
- 8 “They — —,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!” (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
- 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
- 10 Jewish (7)
- 11 Dirge (anagram) (5)
- 12 “A truthful witness gives honest — , but a false witness tells lies” (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
- 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
- 19 ‘Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature’ (Galatians 5:13) (7)
- 21 “As you can see, he has done nothing to — death (Luke 23:15) (7)
- 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
- 23 ‘All the people — — one man, saying: “None of us will go home”’ (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
- 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham’s side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

Down

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
 2 “In an – to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea” (Acts 27:30) (7)
 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
 5 “But I have a baptism to – , and how distressed I am until it is completed!” (Luke 12:50) (7)
 6 “Of the increase of his government and peace there will be – –” (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
 9 “For I desire mercy, not – , and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6) (9)
 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob’s well (John 4:5) (7)
 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
 16 One of Paul’s first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a – in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
 18 Donkeys (5)
 20 Raked (anag.) (5)

FEBRUARY 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

The following appeared in the magazine of the Light Music Society

Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music – *schoolchild’s essay*

Most composers don’t live until they are dead – *child’s essay*

Gone Chopin, but have Liszt, so Bach in a Minuet! – *sign on the door of a music shop*



Grief is hard.
Death can impact
all of life.

The Bereavement
Journey
a place to talk

7 Sessions of films
and discussion
for anyone bereaved anytime

Topics include:

- Attachment, separation and loss
- The pain and responses of grief
- Anger and guilt
- Coping with others' reactions
- Delayed and suppressed grief
- Adjusting to change
- Moving forward healthily
- Faith questions – a Christian perspective (optional)

To find out more visit:
thebereavementjourney.org

Starting
Wednesday 29th April 2026

7:00pm-9:00pm

(refreshments from 6:45pm)

@ St John's Church
Hawthorn Bank, Spalding, PE11 1JQ

Contact

Church Office

07831 489545

sally.knowles@stjohnsspalding.org

To sign up scan
the Qr code
or visit the
website



www.stjohnsspalding.org