

St John's Church

PARISH NEWS

Faith, Fellowship, and Friendship

MAY 2026 £1

www.stjohnsspalding.org

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SPALDING

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

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Cover: Mount Sinai, known locally as Jabal Musa (Mountain of Moses) see page 10

EVERYDAY SAINTS

I don't know if you have or ever had any heroes. I was never a crazy mad football nut but I remember in my school days there was no shortage of people who went around pretending to be Gary Lineker or Gazza on the football pitch.

Sometimes people do something simply extraordinary or inspiring. Books are written about them. Films, which may or may not be that true to the facts (thank you, Hollywood!) are made about them. Sometimes we find that these great heroes were a bit airbrushed and they were rougher around the edges than we thought; other times we might find they really had feet of clay, as some hidden scandal later emerges. In the best cases, though, heroes become heroes because they really are as good in reality as their reputation suggests, and they aren't self-promoting or carefully cultivating and managing a public image.

Having said all that, I find that as I have got older that the people I am

inspired by or encouraged by, or who I want to emulate, are not the people doing the almost super-human extraordinary things in public. Instead I am drawn to more everyday people. There are all sorts of 'ordinary' people doing truly remarkable things, and not to get famous.



Rev Greg

When I was a teacher a few of us on the staff who were Christians would gather every Thursday lunchtime to eat our sandwiches, share our lives with one another, and pray for each other and the school. (Looking back, I don't think we ever shared sandwiches...) In

the three short years I was in the group it felt like we saw it all: difficulties at work, difficulties in relationships, difficulties at home, difficulties with health — one colleague lost his wife to cancer... In that time, as a wider school, we also found ourselves touched by awful tragedies that more than once made the national news. And yet, despite it all, or perhaps because



This month's magazine is sponsored by
HILDEGARD CARTER
"IN LOVING MEMORY
OF MY HUSBAND, NICHOLAS"

we were honest with each other about our joys and sorrows through it all, I saw in the everyday lives of people I knew things I really admired and wanted to emulate. I saw everyday heroes, everyday saints. Do you have any everyday heroes or saints in your life?

One of the less well-known things about the Bible is the way in which it includes stories of everyday saints. Many Bible stories feature the sorts of people that are ‘typical heroes’. For example: we might think of the future king David defeating the giant Goliath, or we might note the story of Queen Esther rescuing the Jews of Babylon from Haman’s genocidal plans. But there are also the lesser-known heroes: the young widow Ruth, who cared for her mother-in-law with faith and determination; the young girl who was crucial in seeing her master Naaman healed of leprosy; etc.

Perhaps the Bible contains these everyday heroes because it is there to encourage and inspire everyday people to live our everyday lives with a God who is with us and able to strengthen and encourage us through thick and thin. But more than that, perhaps the Bible contains these accounts of everyday heroes and saints because at the heart of the whole Bible is the ultimate hero and saviour — Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Of all the human lives He

could have chosen to live, He decided to live not as a king in a palace in Jerusalem, but as a carpenter born in a stable in an ordinary village.

It’s God’s way of showing us that He really is for everyone, not just the elites (whoever they or we might think they are). And that means this God is able to make everyday saints and heroes out of any of us, too. There are many privileges that come from being a Christian: a personal relationship with God; forgiveness of all guilt and cleansing from all shame through the cross; the leading and guidance of God in our lives... but also by His presence in our lives as we follow Him. He helps everyday people live lives of courage, service, love and kindness

“God is able to make everyday saints and heroes out of any of us”

— lives that in part resemble Christ’s own
— the lives of everyday saints.

In that regard, I remember with gratitude my colleagues from the school I taught at. And now I remember with gratitude (and sadness) the recently-deceased Elizabeth Roberts who, without a shred of condescension or attention-seeking, was so generous: in serving friends with disabilities through organizations like PHAB, in supporting causes like the Guide Dogs, in her ministry at St John’s...

Let’s be grateful for the everyday saints in our lives, who know and imitate Christ themselves and, to paraphrase St Paul: let’s follow them as they follow Christ too. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ELIZABETH ROBERTS

We were all very sorry to hear that Elizabeth died suddenly on March 21.

After leaving school, she worked for the Post Office in the Sheep Market, until it closed.

At church she had joined the choir as a teenager and served faithfully until becoming a server in the sanctuary.

She was a valued member of the PCC, as well as running the Planned Giving Scheme, and the church lottery.

She was a member of a church reading group, and always collected others and brought them with her.

As well as working part time,



Elizabeth gave unstintingly of her self. For many years, she had been raising funds and helping with the merchandise for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and helping at the Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB) Club. She acted as a taxi for friends who couldn't drive, taking them to appointments and on outings.

Elizabeth was a strong, hardworking, vibrant woman, who was dedicated to her family and friends, and her dog, Teddy. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Her funeral will be on 29 April, 12.45pm, at St John's Church.

EASTER LILIES

Thank you to all who donated to the Easter Lilies in memory of loved ones.





Lent Lunches

The Lent Lunches, held on Thursdays after the Lent Course, raised £154 for the work of The Leprosy Mission in Nigeria. Thank you to those who joined us for your generous donations.

Mary Wood



Deeper

Sunday 17th May

6:30-7:30pm

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

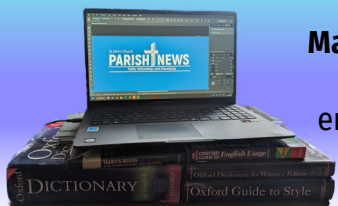
Also a space for those who've served on Sunday mornings in their home churches to come and find some input, encouragement and refreshment.

Every 3rd Sunday - Everyone is welcome



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

www.stjohnsspalding.org



Material for the June magazine should be with Heather Brookes
email: heather.brookes@stjohnsspalding.org
by 12 May, 17:00

MAY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Sunday 3

09:15 Informal Service
10:45 Choral Communion

Tuesday 5

08:30 Drop in Coffee Morning
08:45 Little Seeds
19:30 Fellowship Group

Wednesday 6

19:30 Fellowship Group

Thursday 7

10:00 Communion in the lounge
19:30 Fellowship Group

Friday 8

17:30 TREK

Sunday 10

08:00 Holy Communion
09:15 Informal Service
10:45 Choral Communion

Tuesday 12

08:30 Drop in Coffee Morning
08:45 Little Seeds
19:00 Fashion Show
19:30 Fellowship Group

Wednesday 13

19:30 Fellowship Group

Thursday 14

10:00 Communion in the lounge
11:00 Bible Study
19:30 Fellowship Group

Sunday 17

10:00 Joint Communion Service
11:30 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

18:30 Deeper Worship Evening

Monday 18

19:30 PCC Meeting

Tuesday 19

08:30 Drop in Coffee Morning
08:45 Little Seeds
19:30 Fellowship Group

Wednesday 20

19:30 Prayer and Praise

Thursday 21

10:00 Communion in the lounge

Friday 22

17:30 TREK

Saturday 23

14:30 International Food Festival

Sunday 24

08:00 Holy Communion
09:15 Informal Service
10:45 Choral Communion

Tuesday 26

08:30 Drop in Coffee Morning
19:30 Fellowship Group

Wednesday 27

19:30 Fellowship Group

Thursday 28

10:00 Communion in the lounge
19:30 Fellowship Group

Friday 29

13:30 Games Afternoon

Sunday 31

09:15 Informal Service
10:45 Choral Communion

MOVING THROUGH BEREAVEMENT

Grief affects us all; whether we are mourning the loss of a person, a pet, our youth, our health, or any other life-changing event. Rather than stages, it is more helpful to think of grief as a process or journey; one that unfolds over time and in its own way.

There is no shortcut through grief, but there are ways to support yourself as you move through it.

✦ *Allow Yourself to Feel*

Suppressing grief can prolong or complicate it. Give yourself permission to feel whatever arises, without judging it.

✦ *Talk About It*

Even saying “I don’t know how I feel” can be a meaningful start.

✦ *Take Care of Your Body*

Grief can be exhausting. Try to maintain basic routines such as eating regularly, getting plenty of rest, and engaging in gentle exercise. These small acts provide stability.

✦ *Create Rituals*

Funerals and memorials are traditional rituals but you can also create personal ones. Try lighting a candle, visiting a meaningful place, or marking anniversaries in a way that honours your loss.

✦ *Be Patient With Yourself*

Grief does not have a timetable. Some days may feel manageable; others may feel overwhelming, even long after the loss. This is normal.

✦ *Seek Support When Needed*

If grief feels unbearable, persistent,

or is interfering significantly with daily life, it may help to seek professional support. Counselling or bereavement groups can provide guidance and connection. Consider joining The Bereavement Journey at St John’s on Wednesday evenings, 19:00hrs, starting April 29.

When Grief Feels Overwhelming

Signs that you may need additional support include:

- ✦ Persistent inability to function in daily life
- ✦ Intense longing that does not ease over time
- ✦ Avoiding any reminder of the loss
- ✦ Feeling hopeless or meaningless

These experiences are not failures. Reaching out is a sign of strength.

Staying Connected

One of the most helpful shifts in understanding grief is the idea that we do not ‘move on’ from loss so much as we learn to carry it differently. This might include:

- ✦ Talking to whoever has died
- ✦ Keeping photos or mementos
- ✦ Living in a way that honours their memory or values

Grief changes over time, but love does not disappear.

Supporting Others

If someone you care about is grieving, your presence matters more than having the right words. Simple

and compassionate actions can make a difference:

- ✚ Listen without trying to fix
- ✚ Acknowledge their loss directly
- ✚ Offer practical help (meals, errands, childcare, etc)
- ✚ Continue to check in over time

Avoid phrases like “everything happens for a reason” or “they’re in a better place” unless you know these align with the person’s beliefs. A simple “I’m so sorry” is often enough.

Finding Meaning After Loss

Grief can reshape your understanding of life. Some people eventually find that it deepens their empathy, clarifies their priorities, or strengthens their relationships.

This does not mean the loss was ‘meant to happen’, but rather that human beings have a remarkable capacity to adapt and find meaning, even in pain.

Grief and Belief

Within the Church of England tradition, grief is understood not as something to be hidden or overcome quickly, but as a natural and meaningful response to loss.

- ✚ *Grief Is Honoured in Scripture*

The Bible gives voice to sorrow, lament, and questioning.

“The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”

(Psalm 34:18)

“Jesus wept”

(John 11:35)

- ✚ *Lament Is a Form of Prayer*

In Anglican tradition, lament — expressing pain, confusion, or even anger to God — is a valid and important form of prayer. The Psalms are full of such honest expressions.

Grief can be brought directly to God, without needing to be filtered or made ‘acceptable’.

- ✚ *Hope in Resurrection*

Christian faith holds that death is not the end.

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain...”

(Revelation 21:4)

- ✚ *The Role of the Church Community*

Funerals, memorial services, and ongoing pastoral care are ways the church surrounds the bereaved with prayer and practical help. You are not expected to carry grief alone.

- ✚ *Ritual and Remembrance*


Liturgical practices such as All Souls’ Day, lighting candles, and naming the departed in prayer, all provide ongoing, structured ways to honour those who have died.

Final Thoughts

Grief is not something to ‘get over’. It is something to move through, to live with and, eventually, to integrate into your life story.

There will be days when grief feels sharp and immediate, and others when it sits quietly in the background. Both are valid. What you are feeling is human, it matters, and you do not have to face it alone.

WHEN GOD TURNED THE WIND UP

 Pentecost has a problem. Or perhaps we have a problem with Pentecost.

Christmas is comfortable. Easter is triumphant. Pentecost, by contrast, is noisy, unpredictable, and faintly alarming. There is wind, fire, confusion, people speaking languages they have never learned, and accusations of drunkenness before breakfast. It is not the sort of day that lends itself easily to neat liturgy or polite reflection.

Yet Pentecost is not an optional extra in the Christian year. It is not a theological footnote or the Church's birthday party (though cake is always welcome). Pentecost is the moment when the risen Jesus keeps His promise; when God's Spirit is poured out on ordinary people; and when the Church moves from fearful waiting to courageous witness.

Pentecost is when God turns the wind up — and nothing is ever quite the same again.

Not a New Idea

Pentecost did not begin in Acts 2. Long before tongues of fire appeared over the heads of the disciples, Pentecost was already a Jewish festival: the Festival of Weeks,

celebrated 50 days after Passover. It marked the harvest. It later came to be associated with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. This matters, because Luke is not telling a random miracle story. He is telling us that what God once did on a mountain, He is now doing in people.

At Sinai, God descends in fire, smoke, thunder, and noise:

“Mount Sinai was covered in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire... and the whole mountain trembled violently”
(Exodus 19:18)



Both photos show Mount Sinai. The right-hand picture was taken just before dawn — the graininess makes it look as though the whole mountain is ‘trembling violently’

At Pentecost, there is again fire and sound — but instead of the mountain shaking, the disciples are transformed. God is no longer writing His will on stone tablets, but on human hearts, just as the prophets foretold:

“And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws”
(Ezekiel 36:27)

Pentecost is not a break with Israel’s story. It is its fulfilment.

Wind and Fire: God on the Move

Luke describes the moment with vivid, almost unsettling, detail:

“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them”
(Acts 2:2-3)



“Tongues of fire came to rest on them”

The Spirit does not arrive quietly. There is no gentle background ambience here. The word for ‘wind’ (*pneuma*) is the same word used for ‘spirit’ or ‘breath’. This is the breath of God filling the house, pushing the disciples out of stillness and into motion.

Fire, throughout Scripture, is a sign of God’s presence, from the burning bush to the pillar of fire in the wilderness.

Fire illuminates, purifies, and spreads; it cannot be contained for long. That alone should give us pause

when we pray for the Spirit’s work.

The Holy Spirit is not given to help us maintain the status quo.

Speaking in Many Tongues

The immediate result of this outpouring is speech:

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”
(Acts 2:4)

Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from across the known world and, suddenly, they heard the mighty acts of God proclaimed in their own languages. Luke goes out of his way to list them —

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Romans, Arabs — to make the point unmistakable: the gospel is not owned by one culture, one people, or one language.

This is the undoing of Babel. At Babel, human pride leads to confusion of language and division (Genesis 11). At Pentecost, divine grace leads to understanding and unity — not by erasing difference, but by honouring it. People do not suddenly all speak the same language; rather, they hear the same good news within their diversity.

The Church is born multilingual.



They are Filled with New Wine

Not everyone is impressed.

“Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine!’”

(Acts 2:13)

This may be the most relatable verse in the passage. When God does something new, there will always be those who try to explain it away. Peter’s response is both practical and theological:



A French woodcut

“These people are not drunk, as you suppose.

It’s only nine in the morning!”

(Acts 2:15)

One senses that Peter has learned a great deal since his last public speaking attempt. But he does not stop there: he interprets the moment through Scripture, quoting the prophet Joel:

“I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy”

(Joel 2:28)

Pentecost is not spiritual excess. It is divine fulfillment.

From Fear to Courage

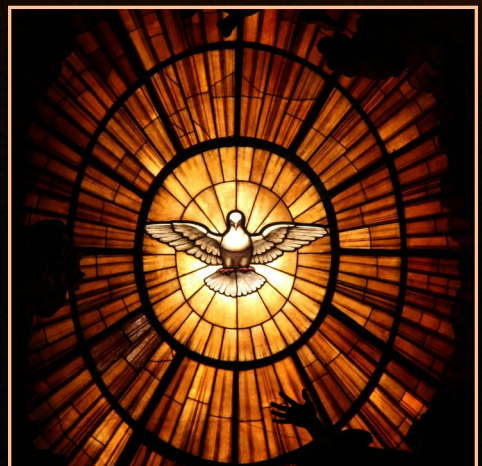
Peter had denied even knowing Jesus just weeks earlier. Now he stands in public and proclaims him as Lord and Messiah. The difference is not improved confidence or better training: the difference is the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not erase Peter’s personality; he redirects it. The same impulsiveness that once led to denial now leads to proclamation. Grace does not flatten us — it transforms us. The result is striking:

“Those who accepted His message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day”

(Acts 2:41)

The Church grows not through clever strategy but through Spirit-filled witness.



From St Peter’s Basilica

The Shape of a Spirit-Filled Church

Luke goes on to describe the life of this newborn community:

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”
(Acts 2:42)*

Notice what is not mentioned: spectacle, chaos for its own sake, or spiritual individualism. The Spirit leads people into teaching, fellowship, sacrament, and prayer — all things Anglicans hold dear. The Spirit creates joy, generosity, and shared life.

*“All the believers were together and had everything in common”
(Acts 2:44)*

Pentecost is not just about a dramatic moment. It is about a transformed way of living.

What Pentecost Means for Us

Pentecost reminds us that the Church is not held together by nostalgia, buildings, or habit, valuable though those may be. The Church lives by the Spirit of God.

That same Spirit is still given — not only to the confident or the qualified, but to all who are open to receive: sons and daughters; young and old; Saints and strugglers.

Pentecost invites us to pray not merely for comfort but for courage; not merely for stability but for faithfulness. It reminds us that God is still at work, often beyond our expectations and, occasionally, beyond our control.

This, admittedly, can be slightly inconvenient. But it is also very good news. Because the wind that filled that house in Jerusalem is the same wind that still breathes life into the Church today. And when God turns the wind up, the world takes notice.



Breaking of bread



Pentecost by Georges Trubert 1469-1508, French illuminated manuscript



Games

Afternoons

1.30pm to 4.30pm

Friday 29th May

Friday 26th June

Friday 31st July

Friday 28th August

Friday 25th September

Friday 30th October

Friday 27th November

Friday 18th December



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ST JOHN'S CHURCH
SPALDING

Coffee

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TUESDAY MORNINGS

8.30AM - 11.30AM



THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS **LUST**

Lur Deadly Sin for May is lust. It is usually understood as an intense desire for sexual pleasure but can include other things, such as food, success or fame. Objectifying a person for our own selfish pleasure can leave us feeling guilty, ashamed, or disappointed.

“Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst”
(Frederick Beucher)

Our relationship with God is spoilt as we create an area of life that is not under God’s authority. As Jesus says: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’.

“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
(Matthew 5:27,28).

How can we deal with lust in our lives? By confessing it to God:

*“If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just and will
forgive us our sins and purify
us from all unrighteousness”*
(1 John 1:9)

Lust feeds on secrecy, yet God

already knows our thoughts and desires. Focus on Jesus, who loves and accepts us for who we are. Confess our desires to Him, knowing that He wants to cleanse us of our sin. Renew your mind:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will”
(Romans 12:2)



This illuminated manuscript illustrates the most famous story of lust in the Bible – that of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. It tells of the destructive progression of lust from idle temptation to adultery and murder

Overcoming lust requires an understanding of our thinking. We must acknowledge when lust affects us, understand the triggers for

our thoughts (circumstances, time...) and address them by asking for God’s strength to overcome them.

“Lust is a poor, weak, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed”
(CS Lewis)

By Canon Paul Hardingham



PRAYERS FOR MAY

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

PRAYERS FOR PEACE

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

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, and no strength known but the strength of love: we pray that you will spread abroad your spirit that all peoples and ranks may be gathered under one banner, of the Prince of Peace; as children of one God and Father of all; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever.

A Monday prayer, from Week of Prayer for World peace

God of all grace, call to the nations of the earth to cease from strife, that all may join to fight not one another but their common foes of want and ignorance, disease, and sin. Lead back humankind out of the way of death into the way of life; and from destruction to the building up of a new world of righteousness and peace, liberty, and joy. End the dark night of lies and cruelty; bring in the dawn of mercy and truth.

A Tuesday prayer

Father, we pray for all who are trying to bring peace to your world, especially the United Nations. May their influence calm explosive situations and help to bring about a just and lasting peace.

A Wednesday prayer

O just and holy God, you have brought us peace by making the many peoples into one people; Jew and Gentile; slave and free; male and female; black and white. We pray for those places where peoples are kept apart because of the colour of their skin, station in life, gender or religion. Help us to root out discrimination in our hearts so that we may welcome every stranger in our midst as a fellow citizen, a neighbour, and a friend of God.

A Thursday prayer

We pray for peace throughout our world. In those places where there is war, civil unrest or rebellion, bring forth those with the skill to calm the situation, negotiators to bring a peaceful and just solution. We pray that the leaders and their advisors may consider the effect of their decisions upon the people they lead and will work to bring about a fair and just peace rather than escalating the situation.

A Friday prayer

by Frank Colquhoun

God of the nations, whose kingdom rules over all, have mercy on our broken and divided world. Shed abroad your peace in the hearts of all people and banish from them the spirit that makes for war; that all races and peoples may learn to live as members of one family and in obedience to your laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Saturday prayer

Lord God, you want the well-being of people and not their destruction. Take all violence from our midst and extinguish hatred in our hearts. Curb the passion in us that makes us seek each other's lives. Give peace on earth to us and all people. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.



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WILDLIFE NEWS

A BUSY TIME FOR BIRDS

If you sleep with your bedroom window open, you will know all about the dawn chorus around now. The birds are busy establishing their territorial rights, and the 'early birds' have probably already selected a nest site and started building.

The blackbird builds a solid cup of twigs, plant stems and leaves, lined with a thick skin of mud covered with finer grasses and leaves. The long-tailed tit forms a soft hollow ball of



mosses, hair and wool, with a tiny hole as entrance. The wrens do it differently, with the male wren often building several nests before his finicky mate will accept one. He gets his revenge, though, because he sometimes installs a second wife in one of the rejected sites.

THE FORGOTTEN RED SQUIRREL

Sadly, red squirrels are now so rare in Britain that many of our children are not even sure what they are. A recent study found that one in 10 children are unable to even identify a red squirrel when shown a picture of one – and a third of British children do not know that red squirrels live in the UK.

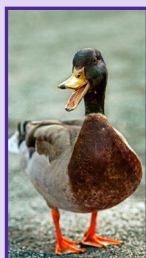
It all means that our native species of squirrel is at risk of being forgotten as the larger grey American



invader takes over.

In order to combat this trend, Center Parcs, in collaboration with The Wildlife Trusts, has launched a campaign to create a red squirrel emoji. The aim is to help increase awareness of the species among our young people.

Sign the petition online to keep the red squirrel visible in everyday life and help protect its future in Britain's woodlands at [c.org/SnTYhQGPP6](https://www.c.org/SnTYhQGPP6)



BEWARE BREAD FOR DUCKS

The Canal & River Trust, which looks after Britain's waterways, has warned that bread is 'junk food' for ducks. It can lead to excessive

droppings, which spread disease. If bread is left to rot, it can trigger noxious odours that can kill fish and encourage algae, as well as rats and mice. So, what *do* ducks eat? Try corn, peas, lettuce and seeds.



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A FESTIVAL OF FAITH, FOOD, AND FRIENDSHIP

 In Sunday 29 March all of our congregations joined together in one joyful service to celebrate Palm Sunday at St John's. Around 110 people gathered at 10am, filling the building with an excited buzz.

We began with *Sing Hosanna*, accompanied by both the organ and guitar, led by a choir of St John's singers, with every voice united in



worship to our humble King of Kings. Rev Pat then led us in a beautiful prayer of dedication as we held our Palm crosses aloft, declaring:

“Let these palms be for us signs of Jesus's victory and grant that we who bear them in His name may ever hail Him as our King, and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life.”

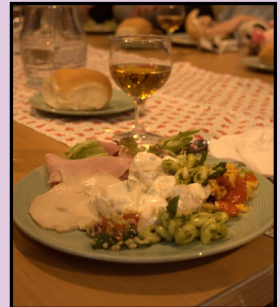
Rev Greg preached from the account of the events of Palm Sunday in the gospel of Matthew (chapter 21 verses 1-11). He explained how the residents of Jerusalem perhaps didn't understand fully what was going on around them but were invited to consider Jesus as someone who had a message from God. The disciples were the only ones who could see just how in control of events Jesus

was that day. They were also the ones who were able to see Jesus's gentleness as a humble King and the meaning of His suffering and death to rescue us from sin and guilt, and bring us His love, friendship, grace, and peace with God.

Rev Pat then led communion as the St John's singers sang *Meekness and Majesty*, and *We Worship At Your Feet* by Graham Kendrick, followed by our final hymn *Ride On, Ride On In Majesty*.

There was, as always, great fellowship and friendship shared over tea and coffee immediately after the service, while preparations were made for a delicious lunch. Hilary and the hospitality team laid on a spread of cold meats and a wide variety of salads, followed by a mouth-watering array of desserts. The 70 diners enjoyed wonderful food and good company, and many hands made light work of the washing up and tidying away afterwards!

This wonderful example of unity and servant-hearted love for one another, from across all congregations, completed a thoroughly enjoyable day.





HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS MAY



ay 16 , Caroline Chisholm

If you want an example of someone who can show you their faith through their works, Caroline Chisholm is a saint for you. This doughty little 19th century English woman had such a compassionate heart that she helped tens of thousands of people, from India to Australia.

Caroline was born in Northamptonshire in May 1808. Her father, William, was a pig dealer and already had 15 children by four wives. When Caroline was about five, her father brought a poor maimed soldier into the family home and urged his children to look after the wretched man well, as he had fought for their freedom. This compassion for a struggling 'outsider' would become the lodestar of Caroline's life.

In 1830, when Caroline was 22, she married Captain Archibald Chisholm of the East India Company Army. Out in Madras, Caroline grew alarmed for the young girls growing up in the barracks. She founded the Female School of Industry for the 'Daughters of European Soldiers', to provide a practical education.

After having two sons, and working on the Indian subcontinent for a number of years, Captain Chisholm



was granted a two-year furlough in 1838 on grounds of ill health. The family moved to the sunshine of Australia, near Sydney. Caroline was appalled at the conditions that faced emigrants, especially female, arriving in the colony. Many ended up working the streets just to survive.

Caroline stayed for seven years in Australia, placing more than 11,000 people in homes and jobs and, in all, her Female Immigrant Home helped more than 40,000 people. She accepted money from no one. When Archibald left the army in 1845 he and Caroline toured Australia at their own expense, collecting more than 600 statements from emigrants that detailed the truth about the problems of emigration.

Back in England, the statements caught the attention and respect of many, including Charles Dickens and even Pope Pius IX. Caroline and Archibald went on to help more than 3,000 people safely emigrate to Australia, before moving back there themselves, where they both died in 1877. In his novel *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens is said to have partly based the character of Mrs Jellyby on Caroline Chisholm.

**May 21: Helena,
Protector of the Holy Places**

Helena should be the patron saint of all mothers who help their sons achieve great things.

Helena was born at Drepanum in Bithynia about 250. Although only a stable maid or innkeeper's daughter, she caught the eye and affections of a Roman general, Constantius Chlorus, while he was stationed in Asia Minor on a military campaign. She bore him a son, Constantine, in about 272 AD.

But Constantius was ambitious, and when he became co-emperor (the rank of Caesar) in the West in 292, he abandoned Helena in order to marry the stepdaughter of his patron. Helena and her son were sent to live in the court of Diocletian at Nicomedia, where Constantine grew up as a member of the inner circle. Helena never remarried, and lived close to her son, who was devoted to her.

Then, in 306, Constantius died and Constantine became Augustus of the Roman Empire. He brought his beloved mother to live at the imperial court.

When Constantine became the first Christian emperor of Rome, Helena also became a Christian. She was devout, dressing modestly, and giving

generously to churches, the poor, and to prisoners. But soon Constantine had other plans for her: they agreed that she would help him locate the relics of Judeo-Christian tradition in Palestine. To aid her, Constantine gave her the title Augusta Imperatrix, and unlimited access to the imperial treasury.

And so, from 326-328, even though she was very old, Helena explored the Holy Land on behalf of her son, the Emperor.

She went to Bethlehem and founded the Church of the Nativity. She went to the Mount of Olives and founded the Church of Eleona. She went to Calvary and tore down a temple built to Venus over the tomb of Jesus. Constantine then ordered the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Helena also seems to have founded the chapel at St Catherine's Monastery.

Helena died in 330 in the Holy Land, with Constantine at her side. He brought her body back to Constantinople and buried her in the imperial vault in the Church of the Apostles.

We owe to this special mother and son the preservation and honouring of the most famous sites of Christianity.





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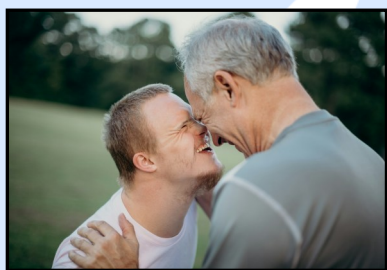
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PEOPLE WITH DOWNS ARE OF 'EQUAL DIGNITY'



person with Down syndrome has the same dignity and sacred value as any other, says The Vatican.



It firmly rejects prenatal screening and the selective termination of pregnancies, where the condition has been diagnosed in the unborn child.

The Holy See's Apostolic Nuncio in Geneva, Archbishop Balestrero, said that "persons with Down syndrome are more than a diagnosis, more than a condition, and certainly more

than the limits others may imagine.

"All of them, like all of us, possess the same inherent dignity and sacred value, intentionally and lovingly imprinted by the Creator from the very first moment of conception."

The Vatican recently released the statement on World Down Syndrome Day (March 21)

BISHOPS JOIN ABORTION DEBATE

Eleven bishops joined a recent late night sitting in the House of Lords to debate proposed changes to the law on abortion.

A clause in the Crime and Policing Bill, inserted in the House of Commons last year, will disapply the existing criminal law for women who access an abortion outside the legal limits. This means that a woman seeking an abortion outside the terms of 1967 Act, which regulates the term limit, could not be prosecuted for doing so. However, providers could still be investigated or prosecuted.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, took part in the debate, alongside the Bishops of Chelmsford, Coventry, Chester, Leicester, Southwell & Nottingham, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Chichester, Hereford and Oxford.

Archbishop Sarah spoke in support of an amendment brought by Lady Monckton, to reject the clause altogether.

“Decriminalization of abortion is a question of such legal, moral and practical complexity that I do believe it cannot be properly addressed in an amendment hastily added to another bill,” she told Peers.

“Women confronted with the very complex and difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy deserve our utmost understanding, care and

practical support as they face what is often a heart wrenching decision,” she continued.

“However, I cannot support Clause 208 as it stands.

“Though its intention may not change the 24-week abortion limit, it undoubtedly risks eroding the safeguards and enforcement of those legal limits, and inadvertently undermining the value of human life.”

“Women with the complex and difficult decision to terminate deserve our utmost understanding”

Lady Monckton's amendment was lost by 185 votes to 148. Bishop Martyn's amendment fell by 163 votes to 68.

CARE's Director of Advocacy and Policy, Caroline Ansell, said: “We are deeply troubled and grieved by the outcome in the House of Lords.

“By rejecting the opportunity to remove the highly controversial clause allowing women to abort their own babies up to birth without legal consequences, Peers have instead endorsed a dangerous principle which may prove truly terrible in practice with more, not fewer, women taking desperate and risky steps to end late term pregnancy.”

Peers also rejected a bid to make it mandatory for a pregnant woman to have an in-person consultation before lawfully being prescribed medicine for the termination of a pregnancy at home.



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.



FLOWERS

Plant summer hanging baskets, adding good-quality compost, slow-release fertilizer, and water-retaining crystals to keep them in top condition. Protect them from late frost under cover.

Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs. Divide established clumps of hostas as they come into growth.

Trim back spreading plants such as aubrieta, alyssum and candytuft after they've flowered, to encourage fresh new growth and more blooms.

Tie in sweet pea plants with support rings to encourage them to climb.

Harden off half-hardy plants by leaving them outside during the day and bringing them back under cover at night for seven to 10 days before planting outdoors.

Supplement container plants with balanced liquid feed every two to four weeks to promote healthy growth.



TREES and SHRUBS

Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as japonica, Japanese quince, or *Ribes* after flowering. Evergreens such as *Viburnum tinus* can also still be trimmed this month.

Prune overcrowded, dead or diseased stems of *Clematis montana* once it has finished flowering. Untangling the stems can be fiddly, but once you can see where you are cutting, you need not worry about pruning this plant – it will take even hard cutting-back very well.

Twining climbers (such as honeysuckle and *Clematis*) need regular tying-in and twining around their supports.

Clip evergreen hedges. If not too woody, shredded clippings can be added to the compost heap.

This time of year is nesting season, so always check for signs of activity before getting out the pruners.



FRUIT and VEGETABLES

Keep young fruit trees well-watered while they are putting on rapid growth. Remove blossom and fruits from newly-planted fruit trees to help them establish properly during their first year.

Protect strawberry plants with straw (to control weeds and lift the berries off the ground) and netting to keep birds off the fruit.

Regularly check the centre of gooseberry bushes for green gooseberry sawfly caterpillars – they will quickly skeletonize leaves if not removed.

Make supports for your runner beans, using 8ft (2.4m) bamboo canes.

Support pea plants with twiggy sticks or pea netting.

Harden off outdoor tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins for planting early next month.

Protect carrots from carrot fly by covering with horticultural fleece or similar.

Thin out direct-sown vegetables such as spinach, carrot and lettuce seedlings, then water the rows well.

Continue earthing up potatoes.



GREENHOUSE

Check plants at least every few days, to see if they need watering. Seedlings will need daily attention. Use rain or recycled water wherever possible.

Continue to prick-out and pot-on new seedlings and cuttings.

Don't forget to give greenhouse plants more space as they put on new growth. This will help to prevent disease and to contain early pest infestations.

Hang fly traps throughout the greenhouse to monitor levels of whitefly, thrips, and other pests.

LAWN

Consider trying No Mow May – take a break from mowing this month to let wildflowers in your lawn grow up to bloom and provide pollen, nectar, and shelter for insects and other wildlife. You can 'no mow' your whole lawn or just part of it.

Continue sowing lawn seed and repairing bare patches in the early part of the month.

Feed your lawn with a high-nitrogen fertilizer to encourage healthy green growth.

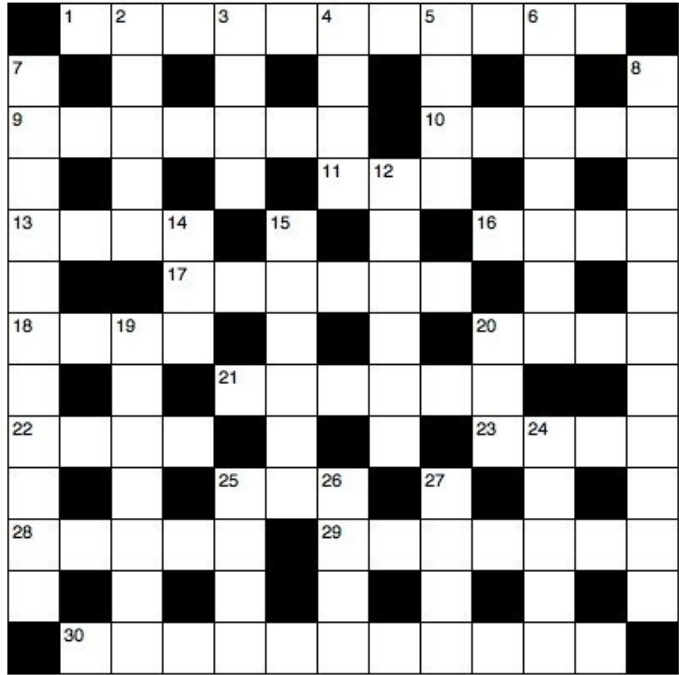
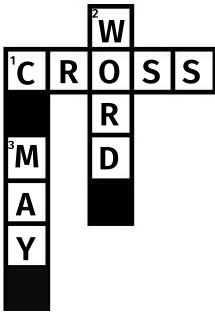
If you are mowing this month, lower mower blades to their regular, summer-cut height.



TIP

Look after your finished spring bulbs for next year. Once they've gone over, let them die and break down on their own, and add liquid fertilizer all around the clumps. This will give you an even better display next spring.

Happy Gardening
Petunia Flowers



Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 “The — are mantled with corn” (Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 “Each man — a sword to his side” (Exodus 32:27) (5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from — to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
- 16 “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought — — and doesn’t do it, sins” (James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts13:50) (6)
- 18 Burden (Luke11:46) (4)
- 20 “As far as the east is from the —, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign (Luke23:38) (6)
- 22 “After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to — his disciples’ feet” (John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh’s dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has (anagram) (3)

- 28** “This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, – sons” (Genesis 10:1) (5)
29 “I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for – and – awake”
 (Jeremiah 51:39) (4, 3)
30 Paul said of him, “he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains”
 (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

- 2** Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
3 “A bruised – He will not break” (Matthew 12:20) (4)
4 “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly – appeared with the angel”
 (Luke 2:13) (4)
5 Slip (anagram) (4)
6 “Take an awl and push it through his – – into the door, and he will become
 your servant for life” (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3, 4)
7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
8 “Therefore, as we have –, let us do good to all people” (Galatians 6:10) (11)
12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
15 “He...became obedient to death, even death on—!” (Philippians 2:8) (1, 5)
19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
20 “She began to – his feet with her tears” (Luke 7:38) (3)
24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
25 “Give to everyone who – you” (Luke 6:30) (4)
26 “I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my – come from?” (Psalm 121:1) (4)
27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah
 as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

APRIL CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS **1** Cosmic **4** Thomas **8** In his **9** Delaiah **10** Falwell
11 Water **12** Recovered **17** Sidon **19** Radiant **21** Centaur **22** Broil
23 Eleven **24** Prison

DOWN **1** Cliffs **2** Scholar **3** Issue **5** Holy war **6** Moist **7** Sphere
9 Deliverer **13** Candace **14** Deacons **15** Psyche **16** Stolen **18** Dance
20 Debar

LOTTERY

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