

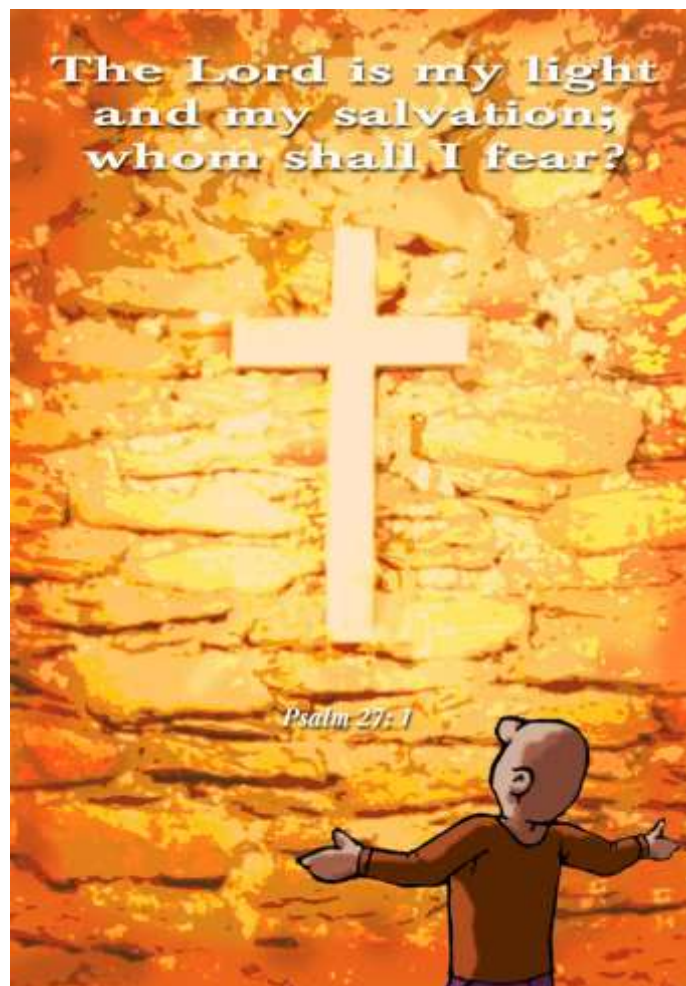
February and
March 2024



GRIDIRON

The Magazine of the Parish Church of
Saint Laurence Upminster

£1



Service Times

The service schedule may change at short notice. Please refer to Porchtalk or contact the Parish Office for up-to-date information.

Sundays

Holy Communion 08.00
Sung Parish Mass 09.30
Sunday Schools 09.30
Evensong 18.30

*(see Parish Diary
for details)*

Weekdays

Tuesday Morning Prayer 09.10
Wednesday Morning Prayer 08.45
Mass 11.00
Evening Prayer 16.15

Footsteps

This Service for pre-school children and grown-ups normally takes place monthly on a Monday at 09.30 in the Lady Chapel. The next service is on **26th February**.



Additional services on Saints' Days are shown in the Diary in the back pages.

Baptisms and Wedding Banns

These are administered during public services.
Please contact the Parish Office to make arrangements.

Confessions

By appointment with the clergy.

**Please inform the Parish Office or Revd Susannah
of anyone who is ill or in need of a pastoral visit.**

See back pages for useful telephone contact numbers

www.upminsterparish.co.uk

Parish Office ☎ 01708 220696

parish.office@upminsterparish.co.uk

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From Revd Catherine

A crook-framed life?

Today, we might think of a hall as a rather drafty entrance room or an unheated passageway we use to get from one room to another. Most of us would certainly not name it as a place we would want to hunker down with others, under a blanket, by a fire, during the depths of February chills or early March frosts.

In medieval times, however, early permanent dwellings were known as halls. In Old English, a 'hall' is simply a large room enclosed by a roof and walls. In its earliest form, the medieval hall house was a simple, one-room building, with a hearth in the middle of the floor for cooking and warmth. Such buildings were the dwellings not only of the lord of the manor but of all his retainers too. The whole community would both eat and sleep within the hall. These simple but sturdy structures, supported and protected them all.

But, with only the simplest of tools available (and certainly no mechanisation!), how were such halls constructed, in order to form solid, permanent, dwelling places, where people were safe from the rough elements of winter weather year on year?

Well, the structure used was that of the crook-frame (or cruck). Long, naturally curved timbers were leant together, their (mutually supporting) meeting at the top, forming the ridge of the roof. Sometimes, the crook-frame was secured by a horizontal beam being inserted to form a rough 'A' shape. Three or more of these crook frames would be raised, joined together with cross-beams and secured with wattle and daub walls.

So, it is somewhat ironic that today, we think of and use the term 'crook' or 'crook-ed' to describe a person who is 'bent', or dishonest, a person who disrupts the trust and support we all gain through the strength of leaning in, to support one another, in the form of a 'cruck'.

Let us maybe, this winter, rather than thinking of the 'upright' (perhaps, isolationist) life as an ideal, instead think on the purpose and the origins of the

cruck, the crook-framed life, to consider our thoughts, motivations and actions in these troubled days.

Rather than becoming low-spirited by domestic stratification or suppression of women or whole communities on the world stage, let us choose instead, in the simple spheres in which we move, to lean into the supportive strength of Christ, held stable in the Holy Spirit.

A crooked-framed life. And standing with others beside us, with the cross-beams and the wattle and daub of worship to shield, may we all seek to form, in our simple Church 'hall', a dwelling place for all we meet this winter.

Summary of PCC Meeting held on 13th November 2023

Halls: It was proposed that a separate reserve account be set up for the maintenance, repair and future renovation of the halls. An increase in 2024 hire charges of 7% was agreed, to be reviewed in six months. Quotes for repairs to Derham and Minor Halls were agreed.

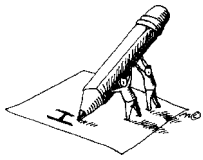
Charity Matters: Christmas collections were decided. Charity of the Month suggestions were discussed and agreed for 2024. The Lent Charity would be St Francis Hospice.

Care of Creation: An update on progress and future plans was given. How do we move forward to embed permanent change?

Church Building Improvements Project: Fundraising efforts would continue following the successful Autumn Fayre.

Electoral Roll: This stood at 131.

Other matters discussed included January salary reviews; 2024 fees; dates of future meetings; financial report and payment of Parish Share; updates on all building matters including Quinquennial repairs, electrical work and problems with the weather vane; communications, website, contactless giving, etc; progress on finding a replacement for Katie Bowman as Parish Safeguarding Representative; report on Churches Together meeting; and the need for volunteers to open church and set up for 8 o'clock service.



From the Editors

Dear Readers

This edition has many memories of the Christmas period including some photos of the Nativity and the Crib Services. I have included a photo of the 'clear-up' as it often gets forgotten that there must always be someone to tidy up after services and we are very grateful for all the 'behind the scenes' work that members of the church family undertake without any fuss.

Christmas and New Year are now but a distant memory and we start to look towards the beginning of Lent and Easter week.

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalms 27:1

Arlette Wiggins, Editor

From the Parish Registers

MARRIAGE

We offer our congratulations to and pray for:

11th November Michelle McKee and Gary Carter

FUNERAL

We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

15th November Lance Edward Jackson

INTERMENT OF ASHES

We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

30th November Lance Edward Jackson

April and May Magazine Deadline

Items for inclusion in the April and May edition of *Gridiron* should reach the editorial team by **Friday 8th March**. We would prefer to receive items by e-mail at gridiron@upminsterparish.co.uk. Paper copy is acceptable but should be submitted to us as early as possible. The **April and May** Magazine will be on sale from **Sunday 31st March**.


St Laurence Building Improvement Project

The Building Improvement Project team (Revd Susannah, Penny Edwards, Debbie Stewart, Sarah Keen, Chris Mowat and Christine Clifford) have been busy planning fundraising events for 2024, and have a series of dates booked. Details for each of these events will be in Gridiron and Porchtalk in due course. We look forward to seeing you and/or to having your support, as well as that of your families and friends. We trust we will all continue to have fun while fundraising. The more we can raise in the near future, the more we can get this project moving!

If you have any ideas for fundraising, large or small, please let one of the team know.



You can scan this QR code to donate to our Buildings Improvements fund.



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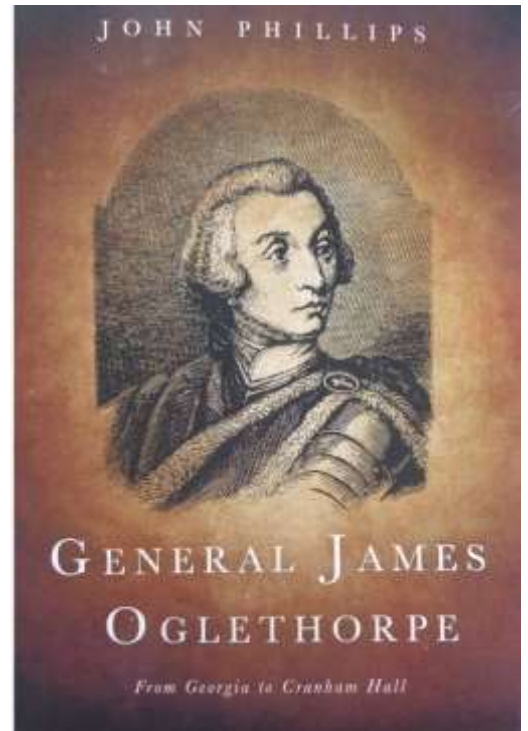
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From Georgia to Cranham Hall - General James Oglethorpe, Founder of Georgia, USA

by Rob Brabner

John Phillips has previously authored a short but interesting booklet on Victorian Cranham and the Boyd Hall, which we reviewed in an earlier edition of Gridiron. He has now researched and produced a short and fascinating account of Oglethorpe's life, which was certainly eventful.

John Phillips produces a very balanced account of Oglethorpe's adventures both at home and abroad and his dealings with the prominent people of the day, including John and Charles Wesley, the evangelist Revd George Whitefield, Sir Hans Sloane and both George II and III. After returning from America, Oglethorpe mixed with the literary and the artistic communities, i.e. James Boswell, Oliver Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds and William Hogarth. Reynolds painted a portrait of Oglethorpe but unfortunately the picture was destroyed in a fire in 1816.



Dr Samuel Johnson urged Oglethorpe to write an account of his life... 'I know no man whose life would be more interesting' but Oglethorpe declined and is quoted as saying: 'the life of a private man is not worthy of public notice' - hardly a response that would be in keeping with today's media, when anyone who has five minutes of so-called 'fame' is a celebrity.

The excellent introduction by Marcus Paul, author of 'Ireland to the Wild West: A True Story of Romance, Faith, Tragedy and Hope', is worth reproducing here:

'John Phillips' General James Oglethorpe: From Georgia to Cranham Hall has three major things to recommend it. As biographies go, it is short, informative and to the point. Oglethorpe, living from 1696 until 1785, witnessed, and was central to, some of the most important events of the eighteenth century in US-UK relations. For those who know little of his life, this book will be an eye-opener to those early days of Imperial expansion. Phillips tells a stirring tale of how one man sought justice, first in his own country and then in South Carolina and Georgia, for the disadvantaged and dispossessed: underpaid Royal Navy seamen, those in debtors' prisons, those denied freedom of conscience. But

more than this, Oglethorpe fought a lonely battle in attempting to found a colony that was not dependent on slavery - when every other was.

Equally brave, both in moral and physical terms, was his insistence on fair trade with the Indians of his day and his respect for them. Few of his status would be prepared, as he was, to act as pallbearer at the funeral of an Indian Chief, his close friend. To crown all this, Oglethorpe was a capable military leader, building chains of forts and conducting successful campaigns against the Spanish and French to keep his community safe.

Phillips captures all this and more (his marriage and political life) in this fast-moving account of an heroic figure who loved both Britain and America, welcomed the peace after American Independence, and stood unflinchingly for what is right.'

Since Oglethorpe's time both Cranham Hall and All Saints' Church have been rebuilt, but Oglethorpe and his wife Elizatheth are buried in the aisle of the Victorian church, with a monumental tablet extolling his achievements, and there is also a further commemorative display about Oglethorpe near the south door.

The book is published by Ambassador International, a Christian publishing company Copyright of John Phillips 2023.

A Message from the St Laurence Care of Creation Team

Part of our team's remit includes looking for ways to enhance our care and appreciation of the natural world. With this in mind, we have recently been in contact with Michael Blencowe who is a naturalist, writer and wildlife guide living in Sussex.

Michael's passion and wildlife knowledge have taken him all over the globe. He's discussed Swifts on BBC Countryfile, Swallowtails on BBC Springwatch and herbalism in a Harry Potter documentary. His work for a number of wildlife conservation organisations has helped thousands of people to understand, appreciate and celebrate their amazing wildlife heritage.

He has agreed to share with Gridiron readers the following short article on Stinging Nettles which we found thought-provoking and particularly appropriate for the season of Lent with its promise of the joy of Easter. We hope to be able to share more of his articles in future editions of Gridiron.

Care of Creation Team (Revd Catherine, Penny Edwards, Debbie & Keith Stewart, Michael Masterson, Beryl Speed).



Stinging Nettle by Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

In the shadows under the Oak trees my enemy awaits. There are hundreds of them, huddled together in a silent, ferocious mob. With their drab green leaves and insignificant flowers, the Stinging Nettle is a joyless plant infamous only for its ability to inflict pain. I can almost hear these nettles straining at their roots, desperately trying to reach me because I am in possession of something they crave: a pair of bare legs. When I started writing this article, I realised that I hadn't been stung by a Stinging Nettle for so long that I had forgotten what it felt like. So, dear reader, just for you I am wading into a nettle patch in a pair of shorts.



As my legs brush the underside of the nettle's leaves, I break the fragile tips off hundreds of hollow hairs, and I'm injected with histamine, serotonin and acetylcholine, with a splash of formic acid. This volatile cocktail acts like napalm on my knees - my skin itches and blisters and that familiar fiery, tingling, pulsing pain sears up my spinal cord. The plant does not inflict this agony as some sadistic vendetta against schoolchildren and writers. The nettle's hairy, hurtful suit of armour is a defence mechanism against hungry herbivores.

Despite our hatred for the Stinging Nettle, we have found many uses for it over the centuries as cloth, medicine, and food. Seventeenth century Herbalist Nicholas Culpepper (*sic*) claimed nettles - which "can be found by feeling in the darkest night" - cured everything from nosebleeds to leprosy. Celebrity chefs extol the virtues of vitamin-packed nettle soups, risottos and spanakopita. And the caterpillars of our most impressive butterflies enjoy munching on nettles too. Red Admirals, Peacocks, Commas and Small Tortoiseshells all depend on them.

Halfway through the nettle patch all this is offering me little comfort. If I focus my mind, I can rise above it and the waves of pain can start to feel strangely invigorating. But not for long and I soon start frantically searching for a cure. Rubbing mashed dock leaves on my legs has soothed my stings since I was a

schoolboy, so I was surprised to read that it's all a ruse. Scientists claim dock leaves are simply a placebo - and the searching and rubbing is just a distraction that numbs the pain.

Beyond the nettle patch I stumbled across an amazing glade of orchids, vibrant and stunning in the sunshine. In an instant the stinging stopped. Maybe it was all in my mind after all. Even when we are in our darkest night we need to keep pushing through the painful patches. There's something surprising and soothing awaiting us on the other side.



Coffee Morning snaps



Holy Days

February 2nd Candlemas – the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times, 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child – to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day – hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is, of course, found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

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 25th March does indeed place the conception of Jesus exactly nine months from his birth on 25th December, but the latter part of March almost inevitably falls during Lent. But 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 – it is one of the most frequently depicted in Christian art. Gabriel's gracious strength and Mary's humble dignity have inspired many artists.

Churchyard Clippings

by Chris Mowat

The wind is gusting, as I write, and it is drying out the churchyard which has been very wet for some weeks. Even now there is a blanket of leaves as the deciduous trees shed their last colours. For a few weeks it seems a never-ending task to sweep up the leaves, but thanks to the sterling efforts of the Gardening Squad and the Saturday path sweepers, we manage to keep on top of it and top up the composters we have around the churchyard. Thanks to Clive Edwards, who constructed the composters, we are able to be as environmentally friendly as possible and gone are the times when we would have large bonfires on occasions.



This year we were able to continue mowing and strimming until the rains came in October and now the mowers and strimmers, which have served us well for a number of years, will be off shortly for their annual service. Where we can, we continue to cut back bushes and some low tree branches, all of which are shredded. And the resultant chippings are spread on holes and dips in the churchyard.

Litter continues to be an issue which is symptomatic of Society at large.

Going forward into 2024, we shall be taking up the privet hedge around the edge of the War Memorial. Much of this is dead and it will be replaced with a laurel hedge which we shall be able to keep trimmed. More importantly, it will go all the way round with no gaps as at present.

Hopefully, by the time you read this magazine, the scaffolding around the tower will be down and we shall have been able to clear up the path and area around the tower. I am surprised at the number of dog walkers who have said they are looking forward to walking round the entire outside of the church.

Our churchyard has been likened to 'God's Acre' and it continues to provide not only a resting place for the many who have gone before but a place of peace and quiet for the benefit of all the community. Our thanks, as ever, go to the Gardening and Path Sweeping Squads for all their endeavours.

The Pilgrim route through Hornchurch

by Carol Metcalfe

‘Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote...Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages’, (When it is the time of April showers ... people like to go on pilgrimage).

Lines from the opening verse of The Prologue to Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. The route from Southwark to Canterbury is probably the most famous because of Chaucer’s poem, but Canterbury wasn’t the only place of Pilgrimage, and there were as many ‘Pilgrim’s Ways’ as there were routes in and out of the site of shrines. The most popular route to Canterbury was actually from Winchester having first visited the shrine of St Swithin. But Chaucer lived in Greenwich at the time, so he started from near home.

The shrine of St Thomas à Becket at Canterbury was up and running as a place of pilgrimage within 4 years of his murder in 1170. Before that two of the most important pilgrimage sites (in Eastern England) were the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk and Our Lady of Grace in Ipswich. Pilgrims wanting to travel onwards to Canterbury (or the other direction) would have travelled through Essex and then had to cross the Thames and Hornchurch became one of the stops on the route which was established. The Monks of Savoy had already built their priory in our village from 1160 when King Henry II granted them several parcels of land in England, one of which was our part of Havering. The purpose of the Monks of Savoy was to minister to pilgrims crossing the Alps on their way to Rome and Henry was grateful to them for their care of his envoys during the winter 1158/9. This expertise made them well placed for the care of English pilgrims travelling from east Anglia into Kent, through their Hospice of St Nicholas and St Bernard at what was to be called the Cornutum Monasterium (the horned monastery, later Horn(ed) Church)

Meanwhile Henry’s son-in-law and Justiciar, Richard de Lucy, was keen to do penance for his part in St Thomas’s death and for this purpose he founded the church of St Helen and St Giles in Rainham and Lesnes Abbey near Erith in Kent. The monks of Lesnes ran one of the ferries across the Thames, and for many years provided the priests for Rainham Church. They ran two routes depending on the tide, the long and the short.

Pilgrims coming from north Essex would congregate in Brentwood, having passed through Pilgrims Hatch (gate) where there was a shrine of St Thomas (and a modern church is still dedicated to him) and facilities. From there they had a choice.

Some could go through South Ockenden, on the road still called Pilgrims Lane to use the ferry at Stoneness to Greenhithe.

Others would take the road through Warley and eventually on to Wingletye Lane and a night's accommodation or more at the Hornchurch Hospice. The path through Warley still exists in part; when the modern B186 was built, the old road became the drive to Warley Place and is now the main path into the Nature Reserve.

Opinions differ as to where in Hornchurch the priory buildings were, and where the pilgrims were housed. Suggestions are the church building which became the Britannia pub, on the corner of North Street which was demolished to build Burton's the Tailor (now Boots for ear health) or under the White Hart pub (now the collection of restaurants where the roads meet). Over the two centuries that the priory ran the Hospice they probably used both and other buildings at different times.

From Hornchurch it was a relative short walk to Rainham for the ferry, and maybe another sleep at Lesnes. They were then on the best-known route along the south bank of the Thames. Chaucer himself stayed at Lesnes in company with the landlord of the Tabard Inn before writing his poem. From Lesnes they were now on the old Roman Road which eventually became the A226/A2. The next Hospice was at Dartford, and then on to Rochester. The great Cathedral was significant in itself, and after 1201 the Shrine of St William of Perth, a murdered and miraculous Scottish pilgrim, was of added interest.

Neither Hornchurch Priory, nor Lesnes Abbey, ever grew very rich, although I believe Canterbury did very well from visitors. Hornchurch as we know was closed in 1392 and the church and manor bought by William of Wykeham so that the rents could support his newly founded New College Oxford. Lesnes was in dire straits by the early 16th century and so poor the monks could not maintain their buildings. The house was closed by order of Cardinal Wolsey in 1525. It didn't even survive long enough to be dissolved by the Cardinal's successor, Thomas Cromwell.

I don't know if any of the Abbey records survived from the 16th century and if so who holds them. I do know that records of the Priory of Hornchurch exist in the Great St Bernard Hospice in Switzerland. I would love to know just how much co-operation (or rivalry, maybe) there was between Hornchurch and Lesnes for care of the pilgrims who passed through Essex and Kent and over the River.

St Laurence Confirmations

by Revd Catherine

Some of you have met them already, but for those who haven't, Rob and Jenna Slade are our newest confirmed fellows in Christ at St Laurence! Rob is a firefighter who also volunteers for a wildlife rescue call-out service. Jenna is both self-employed and a mum! They have two children, George and Amelia, whom you'll have seen around, variously dressed in the armour of Christ or as characters in our Nativity Play. They were all baptised on Easter Day in 2023.



It was through supporting their son through First Communion Classes (run by our welcoming and engaging Pastoral Assistant, Deborah Masterson, assisted by the equally wonderful Linda Edge) that they came to ask if they could be baptised too.

'Yes! Of course, we'd be delighted!' I replied, 'But as adults, you'd have to be prepared to commit to Confirmation Classes to explore your faith further, later in the year.'

Both Rob and Jenna duly engaged with each week of Confirmation Classes in a profound way; sometimes asking questions which revealed their coming to faith as a seeking, sometimes mulling things over and saying, 'Oh, that makes sense, now I understand, that's why we do that.'

We discussed when might be a good time for them to pray each day. Rob bewailed that the only time he ever stops thinking about work or the kids or commitments is when he lies down in bed, 'But I'm afraid if I try to pray then, I might just fall asleep... which might be rude.'

'Just as it might be if you fell asleep when talking to a friend here on earth?' I asked. They both agreed. 'But when your children were little, and you were holding them in your arms, and they fell asleep, how did you feel?'

We spoke of how special a moment it is, when a child falls asleep in your loving arms. I explained how we are never closer to understanding how God feels about us, than when we love our own children. That falling asleep in his arms, is not a problem. He feels the same way about us, as we do about our children.

Rob and Jenna asked how they might go about starting to read the Bible and how to begin in prayer. We discussed how living out faith is based in prayer and knowledge of Scripture, as a resource.

The appointed day came and we all gathered at St Andrew's in Hornchurch. With Deborah and Linda standing as sponsors, Rob and Jenna were confirmed in their faith by Bishop Lynne in an uplifting service, with beautiful choral music surrounding us.

'We only took the bread,' they said afterwards, 'they give the wine separately here!'

'My error,' I explained, 'post-pandemic life, but if you've taken in one kind, you've still received your First Communion.'

The following week Rob and Jenna were presented with gifts of a Bible and a commentary from the people of St Laurence, to welcome them among our number.

As a curate, my first Confirmation candidates were Rob and Jenna. It has been a joy and a privilege to bring them to this place in their lives.

Pam Chapman

During coffee after the 9.30am Mass on Sunday 26th November we celebrated Pam's significant birthday with wine and cake (beautifully made by Jean Keen).



Nativity



The Light of Christingle

By The Children's Society Cttee (St Laurence Branch)



Preparing for Christingle is a companionable and enjoyable 'task', one that the Committee have not considered onerous at all! Knowing the joy that the service brings to local families and, in turn, the money raised for The Children's Society, made the sticky mess worthwhile.

Members of the Uniformed groups and many local families attended the service, during which they transformed their oranges into Christingles. A time of candlelit reflection followed.



Donations received during and after the service totalled the wonderful sum of £420.08. The sale of Children's Society Christmas cards, together with donations, came to an additional £335.50.



By raising awareness and money we help the Society work to prevent young people and their families being at risk, provide mentors, safe places and a place to turn to. As the world delivers more challenges, their work remains essential. Thank you for all you have done to help.

The Children's Society Committee, past and present, have enjoyed supporting the charity over many years at St Laurence Church. It is with sadness that the Committee will fold in the New Year. A number of factors has led to this decision and it has not been taken lightly.

However, the long-standing connection between St Laurence and The Children's Society will not be broken. The Christingle service will continue and it is intended to have the charity firmly fixed in our annual schedule of 'Charity of the Month'. It is also hoped we can have an occasional fundraiser when other events permit. Magazine articles will, it is hoped, keep the congregation updated on the charity's work on the ground and with the Government, ensuring children's best interests are kept at the forefront of policymaking.

Volunteers will be needed for Christingle next year; please do consider offering your services. It is fun and brings extra joy to the Advent season. With thanks for your support over the years from The Children's Society Committee.

Lance Jackson

by Chris Mowat

Lance was born across the water in Sidcup and his mother called him Lance because at the time of his birth, she was reading a mystery book in which the hero was named Lance.

Within a year or two of his birth, his parents moved into Beech Avenue here in Upminster and he subsequently became a pupil at the Bell School. During his time there, the Second World War broke out and he was evacuated to North Wales. He clearly engaged with the local population because on his return, he could only speak Welsh.



From the Bell School he went on to the Royal Liberty School in Gidea Park and from there he joined National Westminster Bank to work under the guidance of the manager, Ron Wood, one-time treasurer of this church, who taught him all he knew about bookkeeping, balances and banking. He enjoyed this but his banking days were cut short when he was called up for National Service. Out of the three services, he chose the RAF and he was posted to RAF Bircham Newton in West Norfolk. There he worked on aircraft location equipment linked with two other airfields, switchboards, undertook guard duty and played the trumpet in the band, a skill which he passed on to his son Giles.

It was whilst he was on guard duty one day that a gentleman approached the main gate and said he wanted to fly. Lance made it clear that the gentleman could not enter because he had no papers etc. After a little stand-off, the gentleman was allowed through and much later, whilst Lance was still on duty, he left but said to Lance in passing..... 'Well done, airman, you were only doing your duty'. It transpired that the gentleman was none other than Prince Philip, the then Duke of Edinburgh!

His time in Norfolk gave him a love of the County which he visited many times thereafter, including a visit when he took Joan to show her where one of his previous girlfriends lived!

He had met Joan at a music competition and after a six weeks' whirlwind romance they married and made their home at 11 Derham Gardens. By this time, he was working for Air BP and he was sent to Das Island, a lump of rock in the Persian Gulf inhabited by sea birds, turtles and 6000 male oil workers, all

with their associated issues. He was on the accounting side, making sure the workers got paid and aviation fuel was distributed correctly. He would often have to check on how fuel was being siphoned off illegally – a tense and somewhat dodgy situation where cultural differences and customs played their part. As we all know, Lance would talk to anyone and during his time abroad he met and befriended the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi.

On his return to the UK, he continued to work for BP until he was made redundant at the age of 51. Typically, he did not sit on his hands but found a job with Grange Motors in Brentwood delivering high value cars across the country. When that ended, he joined Status Security in Loughton, a company which installed security systems. He enjoyed his 10-year stint with Status as it included opportunities to travel to Italy on business but at the age of 63 he retired. As we all know he did not slow down but continued to live life in the fast lane.

Lance enjoyed Classic cars, driving them, stripping them down and repairing them in his garage inspection pit or in the deeper pit in the garage of his good friends and neighbours, Colin and Margaret.

In his early days he had at least one, if not more, Douglas motorbikes and then his pride and joy, E-Type Jaguars followed by his Morris Minor, known as 'Moggy'. As a member of the Jaguar Owners Club, he would attend rallies and meetings and often he, Joan, Colin and Margaret and their other good friends and neighbours, Brian and Christine, would load up hampers and wine in their cars to attend rallies at Leeds Castle and Blenheim Palace. These were joyous occasions save that on one trip, when approaching the junction on the M25 to go north on the M11, Colin and Brian's cars went north but Lance went south. Not the first time his directions went awry!

As a youngster, his family had a yacht moored at Maldon and he would often go sailing or fishing with his father. The eventual sale of the yacht enabled Lance to build his extended garage and workshop and in his retirement years when his Classic car days had passed, he became very interested in carpentry. He made numerous pieces of furniture for the home, friends and for this church. Indeed, the book cabinet at the back of the church was made by him in memory of a long-standing member of this congregation; the gift aid boxes in the pews; a Christmas stable for the youngsters; and, even a set of stocks made from railway sleepers for a Mediaeval Banquet. These are just a few of his talents in carpentry crafted from an extensive set of tools. His favourite programme on television was 'The Repair Shop' and he even timed his arrival at The Tap Room on a

Wednesday night once the programme had finished. Deep down, I am sure he wished to be part of the team and one only had to ask if he could make something and it was done.

He loved being outside and meeting people. Indeed, he knew so many people from his involvement in the community.

At one time, he stood in the local elections on behalf of the Ratepayers without success; he was a governor at the Bell School and one of the first to start the annual Fireworks Display; he played Father Christmas at Roomes Stores although all the children in Derham Gardens knew who he was; he was a longstanding member of Upminster Probus Club and held the positions of Luncheon Secretary and the office of President and he recorded books and other items for the Havering Talking Book Service. He was not a retiring sort of man but lived life to the full.

Here at St Laurence he was a longstanding member of the Gardening Squad and for many years serviced the lawnmowers. Indeed, his joy was to make sure that the grass on the South side of the church was always cut and his sun hat clearly stated that he was 'The Lawn Mower Man'.

He would always enjoy the Gardening Squad's sailing trips to the Broads and, fuelled by an Olympic Breakfast from a Little Chef, he would apply the sailing knowledge from his youth to explore the delights of another part of Norfolk. On one occasion the delights made his eyes stand out on stalks. After a good sail from Hickling, we moored up for lunch at West Somerton. At the far end of Somerton Dyke there was a cruiser moored on which there was a young lady sunbathing topless. Our mooring was some distance away but to dispose of our lunch rubbish necessitated a walk past this cruiser to the dustbins. Always willing to help, Lance eagerly volunteered to dispose of the rubbish on at least two if not three occasions. In his words he was admiring the view!!

Lance loved classical and choral music and for many years was a stalwart member of the basses in the church choir. His favourite composers were Beethoven and Liszt but not Messiaen whose music, in his words, was discordant. On one occasion, he even appeared in a Songs of Praise programme from St Giles Cripplegate, this being very near to the BP offices.

He was a bell-ringer here and held the office of Churchwarden for several years and, until the day he died, was a current member of the Parochial Church Council.

He was generous to everyone he met and was always prepared to go the extra mile with enthusiasm, speed and determination. Often, he would give lifts to others, including on one occasion driving one, if not more, of the nuns from the Convent to Carlisle where he stayed for the night amongst the sisters. This was marked by Rob Brabner of the Gardening Squad, finding a calendar of nuns leaping and dancing, which was presented to Lance one Christmas.

In all this, Lance's love for his family was paramount. He was proud of Camilla and Giles and all the extended family. However, Joan was his rock and the love of his life. Each week, his parting words to us who drank with him in The Tap Room, were – 'I must go home to my beloved'.

Sadly, in the later years, his eyesight and hearing deteriorated but he never gave up and he fought these conditions with good humour and an indomitable spirit. As his mobility declined, he took to his mobility scooter sometimes with Joan astern. Speed never bothered him and one often feared for other pedestrians.

The scooter enabled him to be outside and get around to meet people whether here at the church, in the shops, Abigail's Café or the Sweet Rose Cakery where he was a frequent patron. On a number of occasions, he even rode the scooter into Hornchurch and back.

When I reflect on his life, there is a theme of transport running through it from sailing, aviation, cars, scooters and even a camel in the Holy Land – he was a veritable Jeremy Clarkson in his own way.

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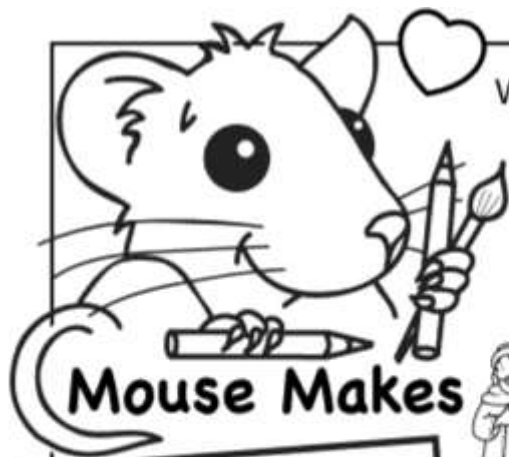
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Mouse Makes

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ABRAHAM	MARY
ISAAC	HANNAH
JACOB	PRISCILLA
BOAZ	EVE
ZECHARIAH	RUTH
ELKANAH	REBEKAH
AQUILA	RACHEL
JOSEPH	SARAH

Which couple helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry?

_____ and _____ Romans 16:3

Who were the first couple?

_____ and _____

Genesis 2:22-25

Who's wife became a pillar of salt because she disobeyed the angel's warning?

_____ Genesis 19:26



Which of Laban's daughters did Jacob love?

_____ Genesis 29:18

Who was Moses' wife?

_____ Exodus 2:21

Who married Boaz to become King David's great-grandmother and a distant relative of Jesus?

_____ Matthew 1:5



FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

XIBU HPE IBT
KPJOFE UPHFUIFS,
MFU OPU NBO
TFQBSBUF.

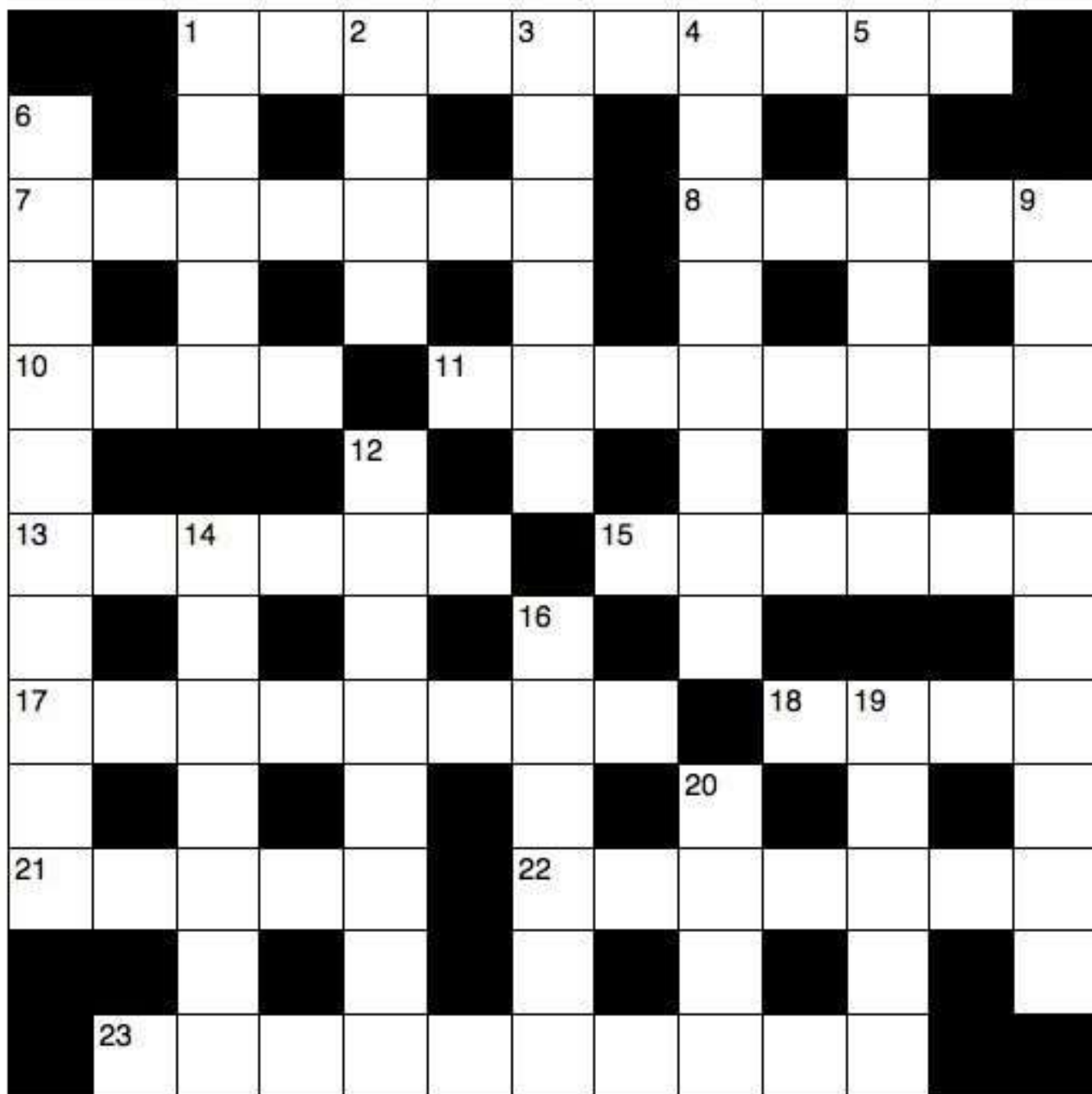
NBSL
UFO WFSTF
OJOF

DID YOU KNOW?

King Solomon had **700** wives! They were princesses of royal birth and he loved them all, but his wives caused him to turn away from God
See 1 Kings 11:1-3

E E Z R E E L I Z A B E T H R
S V Q S L R Z J I B O A D A M
R E B E K A H O J R A O Q N O
U I S A A C A S A A Z P R N S
T H A Q N H Z E C H A R I A H
H R U T A E V P O A I E B H I
S A R A H L T H B M A R Y S D
P R I S C I L L A Q U I L A

ABRAHAM
ADAM • AQUILA
BOAZ • ELKANAH
ELIZABETH
EVE • HANNAH
ISAAC • JACOB
JOSEPH • MARY
PRISCILLA
RACHEL
REBEKAH • RUTH
SARAH
ZECHARIAH



Across

- 1 Success or wealth (Deuteronomy 28:11) (10)
- 7 Forbidden fruit for Nazirites (Numbers 6:3) (7)
- 8 Concede (Job 27:5) (5)
- 10 Look at (Psalm 48:13) (4)
- 11 Much in evidence after weddings (8)
- 13 Condense (Job 36:27) (6)
- 15 Breakwater (6)
- 17 Give a tan (anag.) (8)
- 18 More usually now called Pentecost, — Sunday (4)
- 21 After living for 365 years, it was said of him that 'he walked with God' (Genesis 5:23–24) (5)

- 22 Trampled (Judges 9:27) (7)
 23 For example, Miriam, Deborah (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4) (10)

Down

- 1 Arrogance (Proverbs 8:13) (5)
 2 Roman poet from first century BC (4)
 3 So rapt (anag.) (6)
 4 Declare again (2 Corinthians 2:8) (8)
 5 Paul's 'fellow worker', to whom he sent two epistles (Romans 16:21) (7)
 6 God's foreseeing care and protection (Job 10:12) (10)
 9 Traditional form of Roman Catholic Mass (10)
 12 'The Lord... has given the — of Israel to David and his descendants for ever' (2 Chronicles 13:5) (8)
 14 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my — ' (Luke 1:46–47) (7)
 16 The central element in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, identified and interpreted by Daniel (Daniel 2:31) (6)
 19 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of — will not overcome it' (Matthew 16:18) (5)
 20 City where Paul was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:16) (4)

Answers to December & January Crossword

ACROSS: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

DOWN: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

Gridiron is your magazine. We welcome contributions from all our readers. Has something in the news caught your eye? Have you had a holiday you would like to write about, or a exhibition or other event you've attended? Perhaps a question about the Bible or the Church, or a comment on the many aspects of St Laurence activities such as the music, services and social events. Have you recently read a book or article that may be of interest - remember the church has a library of books that can be borrowed from the Parish Office.

If you want to talk it over before producing something for Gridiron, speak to one of our Editors, Arlette Wiggins or Joanne Chapman.

Charity of the Month for Lent

St Francis Hospice



Saint Francis Hospice specialises in providing care for any persons, from any faith or cultural background, who have been diagnosed with a serious illness who are living in Havering, Brentwood, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge or West Essex. Saint Francis Hospice offers experienced, compassionate advice and support.

The hospice works alongside GPs, community nurses and hospital specialists to help manage pain and other difficult symptoms, with an aim for comfort, as much independence as possible, and the best possible quality of life.

The hospice team also provides care for people at the end of life, at home and at the hospice. They assess and address spiritual needs, linking in with local religious leaders and they do their best to accommodate any specific dietary requirement, custom or ritual that needs to be upheld.

Often family and friends provide the bulk of care, this can be emotionally and physically hard. If you are caring for someone who is nearing the end of life they are here to stand by your side, supporting you with experience and care.

Patients and the people who love them are embraced by a team of experienced professionals who are devoted to making everyone's life the very best it can be. Their aim is that no one is afraid or in pain, and no one dies or grieves alone.

Because Saint Francis Hospice is an independent charity, there is no cost if you need our services, nor to the people who care for you and about you. Kind and generous gifts from local people, companies and schools help make sure that everyone who is under the care of Saint Francis Hospice has round-the-clock support. Experienced consultants, doctors, nurses and other health and social care professionals, are on hand to care for you whether you choose to be at home, in the hospice itself, in hospital or in a care home.

To provide this dedicated and expert care, the hospice needs to raise over £8 million each year because only 28% of our costs are paid by the government. Individuals in need of our services and the people who love them, also depend hugely on 870 skilled and committed volunteers. These wonderful people help keep costs down and bring huge joy and support to those who need our care, their loved ones, families, staff and volunteers.

Parish Diary for February

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

Thurs	1 st	<i>Brigid, abbess, c525</i> 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	2 nd	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sat	3 rd	<i>Anskar, archbishop, missionary, 865</i>
Sun	4 th	2nd Sunday before Lent, 6.30pm Evensong (on Zoom)
Tues	6 th	<i>Martyrs of Japan, 1597</i> 7.30pm PCC Meeting, Parish Office
Thurs	8 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	9 th	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sat	10 th	<i>Scholastica, abbess, c543</i>
Sun	11 th	Sunday next before Lent, 1.00pm Quinquagesima Lunch, Main Hall, 6.30pm Evensong (on Zoom)
Wed	14 th	Ash Wednesday, 11.00am & 8.00pm Mass with imposition of ashes
Thurs	15 th	<i>Sigfrid, bishop, 1045, Thomas Bray, priest, founder of SPCK and SPG, 1730</i> 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	16 th	<i>Janai Luwum, archbishop, martyr, 1977</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Joseph's)
Sun	18 th	1st Sunday of Lent, 6.30pm Sung Compline (in church)
Fri	23 rd	<i>Polycarp, bishop, martyr, c155</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Laurence)
Sun	25 th	2nd Sunday of Lent, 6.30pm Compline (on Zoom)
Mon	26 th	9.30am Footsteps
Tues	27 th	<i>George Herbert, priest, poet, 1633</i> , 10.30am Adventurers' Meeting, Parish Office
Thurs	29 th	8.00pm Choir Practice

Details of dates, times and venues of all meetings and events need to be recorded in the Parish Diary (Parish Office 01708 220696)

And Finally....

The following lines are quoted from a children's nativity play:

Mary and Joseph approach the Innkeeper who tells them there is no room at the Inn.

Joseph: 'But my wife is pregnant'.

Innkeeper : 'Well it's not my fault'.

Joseph: 'It's not my fault either!'

Parish Diary for March

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

Fri	1 st	<i>David, bishop, patron of Wales, c601</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Joseph's)
Sat	2 nd	<i>Chad, bishop, missionary, 672</i>
Sun	3 rd	3rd Sunday of Lent, 9.30am Lent Parade Service, 6.30pm Compline (on Zoom)
Thurs	7 th	<i>Perpetua, Felicity and companions, martyrs, 203,</i> 12.45pm Lent Lunch, Main Hall, 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	8 th	<i>Edward King, bishop, 1910, Felix, bishop, 647, Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, priest, poet, 1929,</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Laurence)
Sun	10 th	4th Sunday of Lent, 6.30pm Compline (on Zoom)
Thurs	14 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	15 th	10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Joseph's)
Sun	17 th	5th Sunday of Lent, 6.30pm Compline (on Zoom)
Mon	18 th	<i>Cyril, bishop, teacher of the faith, 386</i>
Tues	19 th	Joseph of Nazareth
Wed	20 th	<i>Cuthbert, bishop, missionary, 687</i>
Thurs	21 st	<i>Thomas Cranmer, archbishop, Reformation martyr, 1556,</i> 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	22 nd	10.30am Coffee Morning, 7.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Laurence)
Sun	24 th	Palm Sunday, 8.00am Mass with Reading of the Passion, 9.30am Liturgy of the Palms, Procession and Parish Mass with Reading of the Passion, 11.00am PCC Accounts Meeting, Parish Office, 6.30pm, Compline (on Zoom) – tbc please see Porchtalk
Mon	25 th	9.30am Footsteps
Thurs	28 th	Maundy Thursday
Fri	29 th	Good Friday
Sat	30 th	Holy Saturday
Sun	31 st	Easter Day, no evening service

HOLY WEEK

Please see Porchtalk for details of all services

Details of dates, times and venues of all meetings and events need to be recorded in the Parish Diary (Parish Office 01708 220696)

You can advertise in Gridiron from as little as £11 per issue. Please contact Maureen Gourley 01708 640747 mlgourley@talktalk.net



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