

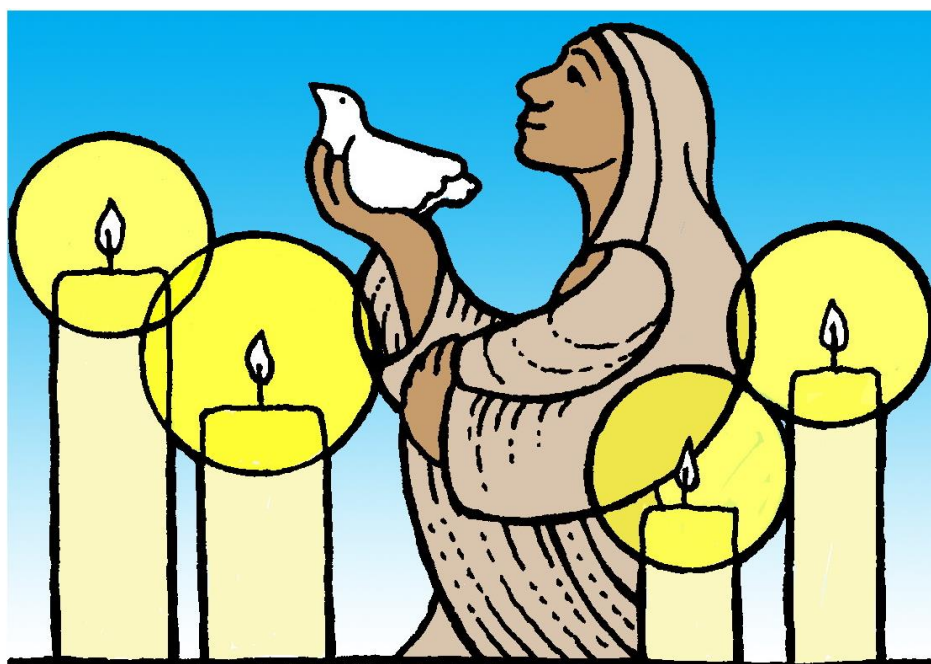
February and
March 2025



GRIDIRON

The Magazine of the Parish Church of
Saint Laurence Upminster

£1



Artwork by Francesca Ross – Parish Pump

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		Weekdays	
Holy Communion	08.00	Wednesday	Morning Prayer 08.45
Sung Parish Mass	09.30		Mass 11.00
Sunday Schools	09.30		Evening Prayer 16.15
Evensong	18.30		
<i>(see Parish Diary for details)</i>			

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 **24th February and 31st March.**



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 the Rector

For quite some years, there have been international and ecumenical attempts to fix the date of Easter, but as yet, nothing has been finally agreed. Hence, we remain in a situation where Easter can occur at any point over a 35-day period – and this year, it happens to be particularly late, with Easter Day falling on 20th April.

There are advantages and disadvantages to early or late Easters, but one of the advantages of a later Easter is that it helps us to avoid the feeling of Lent following hot on the heels of Christmas – some years it feels very much as though we are catapulted from one experience to the other with very little time between. But a year such as this one may give us a little more time to think about the purpose of Lent and how we might seek to make good use of it.

There are a variety of approaches to Lent. Still the one that people most often think of is ‘giving up’ – whether that is fasting from chocolate, meat or alcohol, or something broader – giving up unhelpful habits, giving up ways of living which have a negative impact upon others, giving up the behaviours which we would like to see changed in ourselves. Yet of course ‘giving up’ is not the only action encouraged in Christian traditions around approaching Lent. There is also a strong tradition of charitable giving, whether financially or through volunteering time and effort. There is an encouragement to engage in prayer above and beyond one’s usual patterns – including specific liturgies such as the Stations of the Cross. And traditionally Lent is also a time for study, whether Bible study or study of other aspects of faith. Many parishes hold study groups during Lent, or encourage individuals to think about reading a particular book, or book of the Bible.

At St Laurence, we will as usual be seeking to offer multiple opportunities during Lent to engage in collective worship, charitable giving and study alongside what we choose to do on an individual level. Hopefully each of us will have opportunity before Lent to decide what is possible and helpful in our own situation.

Whatever we undertake, it is vitally important that the focus remains upon God – so that Lent doesn’t become merely some sort of spiritual de-tox/saturation experience which we do because we think it will do us good. Lent is not a second

'dry January' but rather an opportunity for each of us to turn back to God, using various means to seek to do so, and in the seeking also reminding ourselves of our collective identity with our fellow Christians and with the whole of creation.

In our contemplation of how we turn back to God, these words from the 'Confessions' of St Augustine of Hippo may provide some helpful material for reflection:

'Late have I loved you, O Beauty, so ancient and so new, late have I loved you! And behold, you were within me and I was outside, and there I sought for you, and in my deformity I rushed headlong into the well-formed things that you have made.

You were with me, and I was not with you. Those outer beauties held me far from you, yet if they had not been in you, they would not have existed at all.

You called, and cried out to me and broke open my deafness; you shone forth upon me and you scattered my blindness.

You breathed fragrance, and I drew in my breath and I now pant for you.

I tasted, and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for your peace.'

With my prayers and good wishes

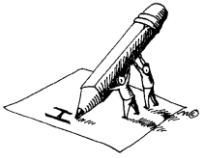
Susannah

Gridiron contributions

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 an 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.

You may have some comments or general questions, and if you are a long-standing church attending member, you could have a whole number of questions or observations that you've never got around to expressing which you could share with others. Your ideas would be very welcome. Stimulate a debate!

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



From the Editors

Dear Readers

Well, we're into 2025! The lead-up to Christmas at St Laurence was filled with ministry, music, services and many, many candles! The centre pages have a few photos of services during this time to remind us of what a wonderful part of the Church year Advent is.

Amongst other items are articles about the preparation of the new Electoral Roll which is due every six years. Please check you are on the roll.

As Susannah says in her article, it seems that as I write this in early January we have only just finished Advent and we are starting to look towards Lent and Easter. Life seems to rush by so quickly that we all need, sometimes, to step off the treadmill of life and find a quiet time. Often, I find this when in church, especially at the end of the Parish Mass when the service is over and I sit and listen to Nigel playing the final piece of music on the organ.

Arlette, Editor

From the Parish Registers

FUNERAL

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

11th Dec John Douglas Bolton

INTERMENT OF ASHES

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

16th Dec Tony and June Mason

April and May Magazine Deadline

Items for inclusion in the April and May edition of *Gridiron* should reach the editorial team by **Friday 7th 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 30th March**.





Belong



Participate



Contribute

Preparation of New Electoral Roll

Every church has an Electoral Roll - the church's register of electors. In the same way that being on the civic electoral roll entitles you to vote in local and general elections, being on the Church Electoral Roll entitles you propose candidates for the Parochial Church Council (PCC), to stand for election

to the PCC, Deanery Synod or as a Churchwarden, and to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (the church's 'AGM'). The roll is revised every year, but the Church of England requires the roll to be completely renewed every six years and so we need to do this in 2025.

The Electoral Roll of St Laurence could be described as our 'official membership list', although if you attend church regularly and take part in parish life you are already a member of the church, which is a good reason to be on the Electoral Roll. Being on the Electoral Roll is not compulsory and it doesn't mean making any additional commitments, but it is a way of demonstrating that:

- **You belong** - it is an act of commitment to the work of the church and a statement of witness.
- **You support** - by being involved in the life, work and witness of our church in Upminster.
- **You may be willing to serve** - through greater involvement in the church at parish, deanery, diocesan and national levels, if you wish.

The size of the Electoral Roll is important because it affects the number of PCC members that we can have. It also affects our representation (and therefore shows the strength of this church) in the deanery and the diocese.

To join the Electoral Roll you must be aged 16 or over; be baptised and either live in the parish or have attended St Laurence Church regularly for at least six months.

Details of how to join the new Electoral Roll will soon be available on our notice boards or from the Parish Office (☎01708 220696 or email: parish.office@upminsterparish.co.uk).

Keith Stewart - *Electoral Roll Officer*

BF Mulley & Son



incorporating Horace Fry

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Brimstone

by Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

It's around about now that I start getting a bit bored of winter.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy a bit of bleak beauty: bare trees, frosted landscapes and all that. But now I need something to get my heart racing. Send me a sign – some life in the graveyard of winter, a promise of those dynamic spring months ahead, a flash of colour.



In February my light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming butterfly. On sculpted, vibrant yellow wings the Brimstone makes his elegant entrance into the New Year on those bright February days when you feel the warmth of the sun on your face.



Its distinctive yellow wings have given birth to a legend – that this 'butter-coloured fly' inspired the word butterfly. This claim may not entirely be true. Also untrue is the notion that these February Brimstones are the first signs of the year's new life. Because by the time Brimstones appear in February they are already on their last (six) legs. Fresh

Brimstone butterflies emerged from their chrysalises in late summer, so by February they could be seven months old – and in butterfly years that's ancient.

Admittedly almost all of that time they've been asleep in a hedge, sheltered from the storms under holly and ivy. Yet despite the worst winter weather they always emerge immaculate in the spring.

They must be made of Teflon. When they awake the (bright yellow) males search for a mate, they mate, the (pale yellow) females lay eggs and then both die. Still, an adult life of over ten months earns them the title of our longest-lived butterfly. An insect OAP.

The Brimstone's caterpillars feed on the leaves of Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn, unobtrusive shrubs which, like the butterfly, are widespread across Sussex.

When I first became the proud owner of a garden it was only a matter of days before I evicted the gnomes and planted an Alder Buckthorn. The following spring I was excited to watch a Brimstone laying her tiny skittle shaped eggs and I studied the caterpillars as they hungrily defoliated my tree. It's funny, people

often complain to me about caterpillars eating their plants – especially cabbages (the food of Small and Large White caterpillars). Why people are concerned is beyond me. Cabbages are horrible. The only reason I would ever plant a cabbage is for the pleasure of watching something else eat it.

The first Brimstone sighting in February doesn't exactly mean that spring is starting but it's certainly a sign that winter is starting to end. And right now that's good enough for me. Either way this yellow butterfly is a welcome messenger of what's to come – the first sulphurous spark to ignite the blaze of spring.

A Message from Rachel Grainger on behalf of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust

The Annual Ride & Stride Event

Thank you so much for participating in this wonderful day. Together we have raised the magnificent sum of £29,700, and counting - many thanks to the generous effort and time you have expended to raise funds for the FoECT. I am writing to confirm we have returned to your church bank account your 50% share of the money you raised.



The Friends of Essex Churches Trust is enormously grateful to you. Last year FoECT gave grants in excess of £200,000 for repairs and improvements to churches across Essex (and the five eastern metropolitan London Boroughs), and many more need our help. The funds that we are able to give are vital in these very financially challenging times, if the wonderful buildings of our religious heritage are to be preserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy and to use in so many imaginative ways. They are real community assets, most deserving of our care and attention.

With renewed thanks and our very best wishes.

Rachel

rideandstrideorganiser@friendsofessexchurches.org.uk

Patron Saint of Wales - St David (Bishop) - Celebrated on 1st March

David was born probably in the first quarter of the sixth century and died in the year 589.

After his ordination as a priest, and further study, he founded a monastery at Menevia in Pembrokeshire. He is credited with the founding of a number of other monasteries, all of which were renowned for their asceticism. David was consecrated bishop and his seat seems to have been his seat at Menevia. David ruled his diocese by example. He was meticulous about the detail of his monastic way of life.

Be full of joy, my brethren! Keep the Faith and copy the little things you have heard and seen me do. (attributed to St David by Geoffrey of Monmouth).

There is, if you like, a branch of asceticism all of us can practise. Not for us, perhaps, the severity of a strict regime, but a simple daily rule to follow, a little prudent abstinence, and a freedom from the pressures of one-upmanship and the 'must have and throw away' society. If we were to pay attention to those few details, as David paid attention to the detail of his more stringent monastic rule, we should be released immediately from some of the pressures of modern society and able to be 'full of joy'. The biographies of many of the holy men and women emphasise their concentration on the 'little things' - the detail, the fine points. It is true to say that if we tend to bother about those things, the larger things probably take care of themselves; but if our lives are crammed with transient pleasures, there is no possibility of spending time on the 'little things' and certainly we have little capacity for joy. Joy tends to accompany the living of our lives in faith, as David was anxious to testify.

In our prayers: thanks for the life, example and intercession of Saint David; for the freedom to be joyful; for strength against acquisitiveness and covetousness.

Saint David, pray for us, for the principality of Wales, its Assembly and its people, and for all places dedicated in your name.

The article above is extracted from A Calendar of Catholic Devotion by Julien Chilcott-Monk published by the Canterbury Press Norwich in 2008.

The Sign of the Cross

It is increasingly common to see Christians of all traditions making the sign of the cross on themselves. How did the practice originate and what does it mean?



What does it mean?

To look at the cross is to identify oneself with the Christ who died there, and to trace it on oneself is a reminder that the believer is incorporated into Christ at baptism and a sharer in his death and resurrection. To make the sign of the cross is to profess faith in the Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Besides identifying us as Christians, the sign of the cross helps to concentrate the mind, marking the starting point of a time when we are focused on God.

How?

Generally, the right hand is used. The thumb, index and middle finger are brought to a point. They are then placed on the forehead, then moved down the breast, and then from one shoulder to the other. In the western tradition the left shoulder is touched first and in the eastern tradition (Orthodox) the right shoulder.

When?

The sign of the cross both initiates and punctuates our worship. These are the main places where it is often used

- On dipping the hand in holy water when entering a church - a reminder of our baptism.
- At the beginning of the Eucharist: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.
- At the absolution.
- When the Gospel reading is announced (three small crosses made with the thumb on the forehead, lips and chest. This action embodies a prayer that we may embrace the message of the Gospel with our minds, proclaim it with our lips and believe it deeply in our hearts.)
- At the elevation of the host and chalice.
- Before receiving communion

- At the blessing.

The cross is also often used at other times, for example , before meals, first thing in the morning and last thing at night, at the beginning and end of private prayer, at times of danger or anxiety.

Origins

The sign of the cross seems to have originated in the second century, and was originally traced only on the forehead with the thumb of the right hand. This was meant as encouragement in time of trial and as a means of recognition. From very early times the sign of the cross was used in baptism and confirmation and was traced over people and objects when they were blessed. 'In all our travels and movements,' says Tertullian (c160-c220), 'in all our coming in and going out...in whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.' And St Cyril of Jerusalem (c315-87) says, 'Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the cross our seal, made with boldness...in everything; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings and in goings; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake; when we are travelling, and when we are at rest'.

Galatians 6: 14 NRSV: May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

2nd Feb: 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.

Summary of PCC Meeting held on 13th November 2024

It was confirmed that Nigel Lockwood is now officially our Director of Music.

Dates for meetings of CM&FG and PCC for 2025/26 were agreed. The 2025 APCM would be on 20th April.

It was decided that the charity portion of the Crib Service collections would be donated to UNICEF and the tree presents to the same charities as last year. Any special collections at Christmas would go to Crisis, the December Charity of the Month. WaterAid was selected as the Lent Charity for 2025.

It was agreed to install LED lighting in the halls, floodlights and the parts of the church not yet changed.

As more children were attending the 8 o'clock service the possibility was being explored of providing an additional service for them in the hall. This would be once a month on a trial basis.

Recent problems with the church heating were discussed. A report had been received from the heating engineer on the work needed and it was agreed that this should be carried out.

The Church Electoral Roll currently stands at 131. It was noted that next year we have to compile a completely new roll.

Reports on all routine matters were considered plus news from Churches Together, Deanery Synod and the uniformed organisations. Items that were discussed included churchyard trees, St Laurence House, legacy income, increase in fees not set by Church of England, salary increases, weatherproofing of bell tower, Christingle, 'Tommy' silhouettes, car park safety, remarking of disabled and clergy spaces, bag collections at 8 o'clock service, Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, problems with sound system, increase in one-off halls charges, and new chairs for Main Hall.

St Laurence at Christmas





June Mason

by Chris Mowat

It is an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the family and all of you today on this occasion when we are here to remember and celebrate June's life. You will all have so many memories and stories of June whether as family, as friends, her involvement here at St Laurence, Harwood Ladies Probus Club, and various volunteering roles – the list is not exhaustive. For myself and Nancy, she has been a close friend and neighbour for over 40 years and it is no doubt that she will be sadly missed.



As you sit here I would ask you to hold in your minds those many occasions when June has touched your lives.

Born in Upminster on the 14th June 1938 to Elsie and David Howell, the family lived in Cranborne Gardens and at the bottom of the garden was Upminster Windmill providing a very nice outlook. However, the Windmill was used by the Luftwaffe as a visual waypoint on low flying raids on London and as a young child in those horrendous times, June would often have to cuddle her younger brother John telling him ...'don't cry John, its's only the Germans...'

June went to the Bell School and then on to Brentwood County High where she proved an extremely able student, achieving excellent 'O'-Level grades across a broad range of subjects. To her regret, her family was unable to support her education beyond that, but she found work that enabled her to pursue her interest in the sciences as an assistant analyst at Murex in Rainham. By this time June was quite an accomplished cyclist and would cycle every day to and from her work. She very much believed in the importance of education and wanted to ensure that opportunity was available to all; she was incredibly proud to see all four of her grandchildren attend university, coincidentally all ending up in the same city of Nottingham.

June never lost her interest in learning or her curiosity about the world around her. At the age of 19, she took her first holiday abroad with her friend Ann (who was later her bridesmaid) in Austria, beginning a lifelong passion for travel.

June first met Tony at a Rangers' Dance in the Old Windmill Hall. Tony had gone along looking to recruit leaders for the 1st Upminster Cubs but the recruitment

drive ultimately led to something more permanent. Sometime later, Tony invited June to his 21st birthday party and the rest, as they say, is history. After a courtship of some 4 years they were married here in June 1961 by the then Rector, Hyla Holden, whom many of you will remember. We were all delighted they were able to celebrate their Diamond Wedding anniversary in June 2021 – a real achievement in the world today.

June and Tony briefly left Upminster to begin married life in a flat in Gidea Park, but moved back a few years later to a house in Sunnyside Gardens, where Sarah was born and then Richard. June was an active member of what was then known as the 'Young Wives' group at St Laurence, which organised regular speakers, social and fundraising events and she played badminton in the church hall on a Tuesday for many years. A little later on, she also enjoyed weekly yoga classes in the Bell School hall.

Due to the long hours Tony worked, June was almost solely responsible for the day-to-day work of running the home and looking after the children. She held a part-time job as a laboratory assistant at May & Baker for some years after Richard started school but Sarah and Richard say they barely noticed this at the time, so constant and significant were their mum's presence and care while they were growing up.

The family moved to Stewart Avenue in 1982. Sarah recalls fondly the daily ritual established there while she was studying for her A Levels of coming home to find June waiting for her with a cup of tea and sympathetic ear, ready for a chat about the day. Richard's recollections at that time, having started an apprenticeship, were more focused on coming home and being fed, always very well fed!

Family holidays were organised by June and were often spent with June's brother John and his family, alternating between the West Country and Wales in the main. Sarah and Richard remember these holidays with great fondness – especially the delicious homemade cakes, biscuits and treats packed along with the rest of the luggage by June and John's wife, Pam, both of whom must have spent weeks baking in preparation. Indeed, June was an extremely accomplished home cook, as many of us who enjoyed her dinner parties and Sunday lunches over the years will recall.

Her love of cakes and desserts was legendary and some of us will remember fondly the time when she was glued to the window of a pâtisserie in Paris trying to decide what delicacy she would like to buy.

Volunteering was part of June's nature, from serving lunches with the WRVS in the café at the artificial limb centre at Harold Wood Hospital to stints in the Children's Society charity shop, always looking to help where she could.

When Tony retired, he and June were given a trip on the QE2 to New York with a return on Concorde and that is when their travelling really took off.

June was the mastermind behind their far-ranging itineraries, researching travel brochures and articles. Crete, the Caribbean, the Royal Clipper, the Star Flyer all played a big part in 'getting away' and it is thanks to June and Tony that Nancy and I were introduced to St Lucia where on one occasion, we were able to share three days with them. Cruising then became more of the norm in later years with one trip taking them right up the Amazon to Manaus and another through the Panama Canal.

June was a member of Harwood Ladies Probus Club for many years. She and Tony went on many trips organised by their respective Probus Clubs and June continued to attend her Club's lunches and trips after Tony sadly died in 2021.

June's faith was hugely important to her and perhaps one of the biggest parts of her life, other than her family, was here at St Laurence, where she worshipped throughout her life. She preferred to remain in the background, providing enormous practical and moral support for Tony's work as church warden, Deanery Synod rep, member of the PCC and Chair of the Building Committee (among other things). In addition, she spent hours helping in the Church office and was a stalwart caterer and washer-upper at many a Harvest Supper, Parish Barbecue and other Church events. On that note, I can recall her specialty at barbecues were the onions!

June also enjoyed the annual camping week at Sizewell Beach in Suffolk and for many years she and Tony would join the band of campers under canvas. Even when camping became difficult they would still hire a static caravan or just come up for the day – she did not wish to miss out.

June was kind and generous to everyone she met. She was sincere, unaffected, often self-deprecating and, her children say, sometimes infuriatingly (from their point of view) indecisive. She was also fiercely intelligent, independent- and open-minded and determined. She had a surprisingly dry, wry sense of humour which would emerge quietly out of the blue. She had a great sense of fun too. It became a family joke that her son Richard and son-in-law Steve had to dodge her well-timed kicks to their shins under the table during family mealtimes if

they teased her, which due to the wooden indoor shoes she typically wore at home, could sometimes be somewhat painful!

Following Tony's death in 2021, June continued to live independently in the family home in Stewart Avenue, see family and friends, attend services at St Laurence and participate in Probus Club lunches and trips. When she moved to Hutton View in July this year, she finally took a well-deserved break from housework and enjoyed eating well and joining in new activities. She remained interested in everyone around her and everything that was going on in the world. Her final, short illness came as a shock to us all but she bore it with her usual fortitude and grace and her last hours were spent peacefully with Sarah and Richard at her bedside.

June's love of her family was paramount. She was Tony's rock throughout his life and never more so than during his years of declining health. She was proud of Sarah and Steve, Richard and Fiona, and their long and happy marriages, which she and Tony spoke of being especially pleased about. As a grandmother she spoke often with much love and affection about Emma and Tim, Alexander and Alice, not forgetting her brother John and his family.

We shall all miss June greatly: her love, friendship, kindness, humour and wisdom. I am sure that even now she is trying to make up her mind as to whether the chocolate fondant or coffee and walnut cake is the proper dessert in heaven.

June, from all your friends and family, thank you for your life, love and friendship – may you rest in peace and rise in glory.

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An Urgent Message from The National Churches Trust

In the latest newsletter from Sir Philip Rutnam, Chair of the National Churches Trust, he writes about the very real concern about our church heritage, now at risk.

‘England has some of the most historic and beautiful churches to be found anywhere in the world. But this priceless heritage is in danger as never before: 53 cathedrals, churches, chapels and meeting houses were added to the Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register in 2024. Our fear is that many of the new churches and also those already on the Register will simply be left to rot and decay as there is a desperate shortage of money to look after this heritage.

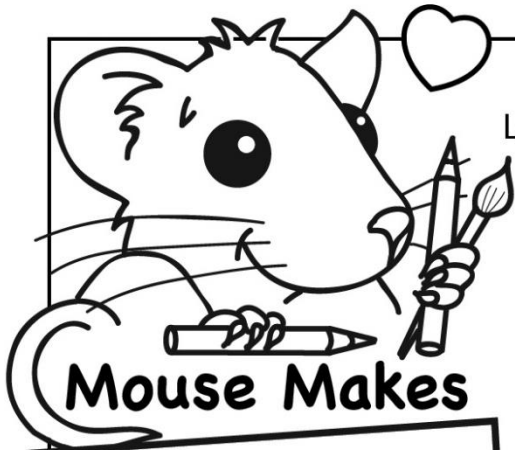
The crisis affecting church heritage could even get worse in the coming months if the Government refuses to renew the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, a financial lifeline which allows historic churches to claim back the VAT on the cost of repairs.

We understand that a decision about the future of the scheme will be made by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the next few months. The spending settlement that the DCMS received from the Chancellor in the Budget is less generous than some other Government departments and tough spending decisions lie ahead.

If the VAT scheme, which has been in place in its current form since 2004, is not renewed, the costs of repairing a historic church to enable it to stay open would have to increase by a fifth.

We fear that if the scheme were not renewed, more historic churches will close. There is already a major financial crisis affecting church buildings: the Church of England alone has a backlog of repairs to parish churches estimated at over £1 billion with the annual repair bill estimated at £150 million. I urge the Government not to make the situation any worse.’

Note to our readers: We have urged all our congregation to write to their MP about the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (VAT reclaim scheme). There is a suggested template letter on the National Churches Trust website, plus plenty of positive items about how churches contribute to wellbeing, and the estimated costs the churches save for the NHS, as just one example. If you would like further information do speak to Rob Brabner or our Rector, Susannah.



Mouse Makes

"Love is

_____ ,
love is _____ .
 It does not, _____
 it does not _____
 it is not _____ .
 it does not

_____ others, it is not self -

_____ it is not easily

_____ it keeps no record of

Love delights in

_____ it always

_____ ,
 _____ ,
 _____ ,

from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The steadfast **love** of the Lord never _____ ;

His _____ never come to an end; they are new every _____ .

Lamentations 3:20-23



I pray... you will understand... the greatness of Christ's **love**,

how _____ and how _____ and how _____ that **love** is.

Ephesians 3:18-19

God is **love**.

whoever _____ in **love** _____ in God, and God _____ in them.

1 John 4:16

Give _____ to the Lord, for He is _____ his steadfast **love** endures

Psalm 136:1

HOW DOES GOD LOVE ME?

God sent me a saviour:

He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him.

1 John 4:9

God gave me His spirit:

He has given you the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His **love**.

Romans 5:5

God called me His child:

See what great **love** the Father has for us that He would call us His children.

1 John 1:3

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus told us to:

LOVE the Lord your God with all your **heart**, all your **soul** and with all your **mind**.

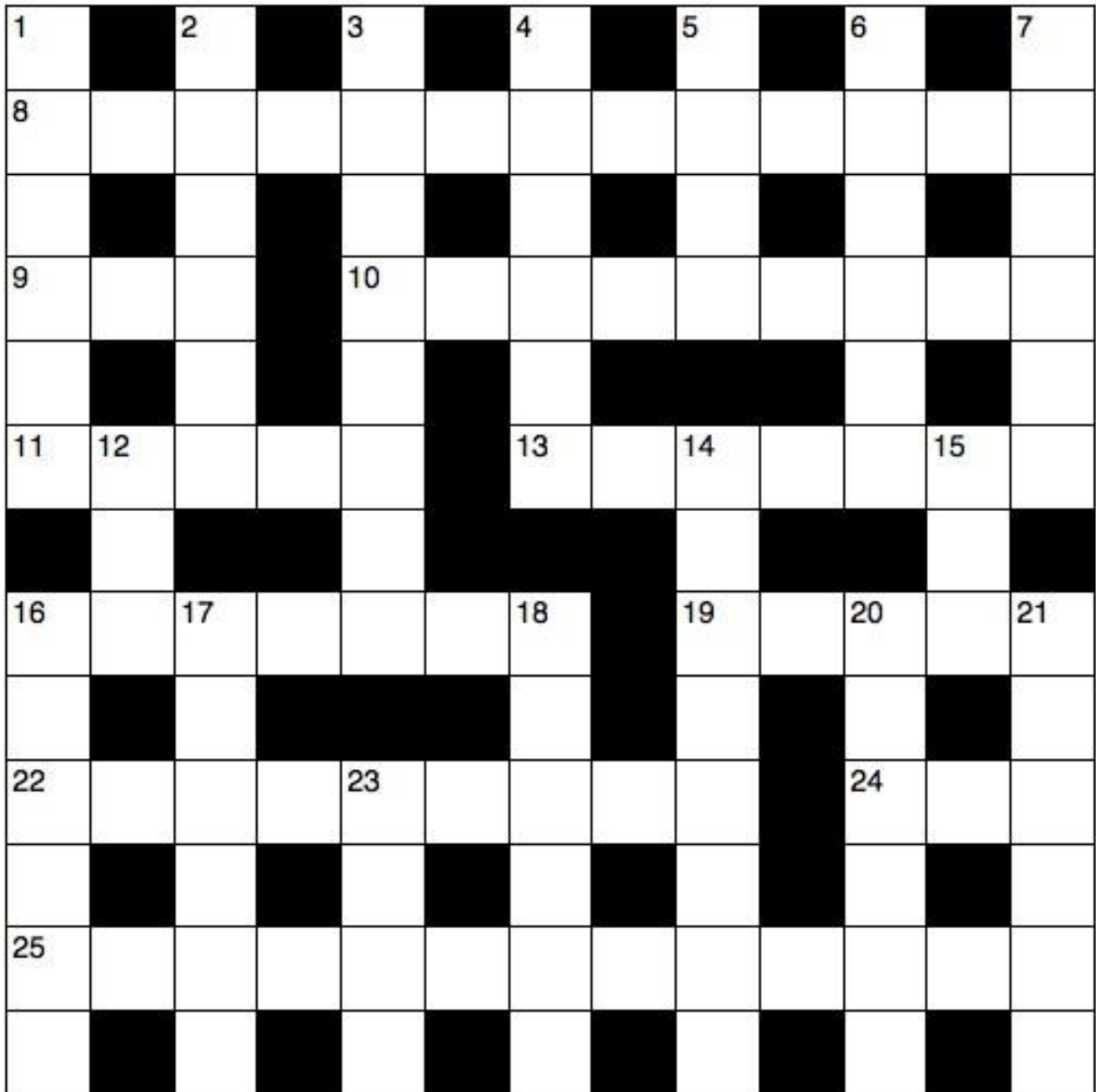
Matthew 22:37

LOVE your neighbour the same as you **love** yourself.

Matthew 22:39

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

GOD • LOVE
 PATIENT • KIND
 GRACIOUS • PEACE
 JUST • TRUTHFUL
 TRUSTING • LOYAL
 HOPEFUL
 PERSEVERES
 ENDURES
 HUMBLE
 SELFLESS
 PROTECTS • DEFENDS



Across

8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)

9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)

10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)

11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)

13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)

16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)

19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)

- 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)
 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

Answers to December/January Crosswor

ACROSS: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.

DOWN: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.

Charity of the Month for Lent – WaterAid

Seven hundred and three million people in the world – almost one in ten – don't have clean water close to home.

WaterAid's mission is to transform the lives of the people who have been left furthest behind by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.



With their partners and supporters, they have made a huge difference over the last 40 years. Over the coming decade, with communities, civil society, governments, the private sector and financial institutions, they will focus their efforts in four key areas where we will have the biggest impact.

- Achieve universal, sustainable and safe access in focused geographic areas to influence wider change
- Prioritise WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) across the health sector to improve public health
- Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change
- Increase the quantity and quality of financing

And finally...

Poster found in a church in France (translated).

'When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear "the call of God"'

However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile.

Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him.

If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving.'

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Parish Diary for February

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

Sat	1 st	<i>Brigid, abbess, c525</i>
Sun	2 nd	Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 6.30pm Choral Evensong and Benediction
Mon	3 rd	<i>Anskar, archbishop, missionary, 865</i> 7.30pm PCC Meeting, Parish Office
Tues	4 th	<i>Gilbert, founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189</i>
Thurs	6 th	<i>Martyrs of Japan, 1597</i> 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	7 th	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sat	8 th	11.00am Wedding with Baptisms
Sun	9 th	4th Sunday before Lent, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom
Mon	10 th	<i>Scholastica, abbess, c543</i>
Tues	11 th	10.30am Adventurer's Leader' Meeting, Parish Office
Thurs	13 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	14 th	<i>Cyril and Methodius, missionaries, 869 and 885, Valentine, martyr of Rome, c269</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning
Sat	15 th	<i>Sigfrid, bishop, 1045, Thomas Bray, priest, founder of SPCK and SPG, 1730</i>
Sun	16 th	3rd Sunday before Lent, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom
Mon	17 th	<i>Janani Luwum, archbishop, martyr, 1977</i>
Wed	19 th	11.00am Morning Prayers
Thurs	20 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	21 st	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sun	23 rd	2nd Sunday before Lent, 12.00pm Baptism, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom
Mon	24 th	9.30am Footsteps in Church
Tues	25 th	7.00pm February Feast, Top Meadow Golf Club
Thurs	27 th	<i>George Herbert, priest, poet, 1633, 8.00pm Choir Practice</i>
Fri	28 th	10.30am Coffee Morning

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

Parish Diary for March

See inside front cover for regular Sunday service times

Sat	1 st	<i>David, bishop, patron of Wales, c601</i>
Sun	2 nd	Sunday next before Lent, 1.00pm Quinquagesima Lunch, Main Hall, 6.30pm Evensong on Zoom
Wed	5 th	Ash Wednesday, 11.00am and 8.00pm Mass with Imposition of Ashes, 4.15pm No Evening Prayer
Thurs	6 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	7 th	<i>Perpetua, Felicity and companions, martyrs, 203</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning
Sat	8 th	<i>Edward King, bishop, 1910, Felix, bishop, 647, Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, priest, poet, 1929</i>
Sun	9 th	1st Sunday of Lent, 6.30pm Compline on Zoom
Thurs	13 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	14 th	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sun	16 th	2nd Sunday of Lent, 9.30am Parade Service Mass, 6.30pm Compline on Zoom
Mon	17 th	<i>Patrick, bishop, missionary, patron of Ireland, c460</i>
Tues	18 th	<i>Cyril, bishop, teacher of the faith, 386</i>
Wed	19 th	Joseph of Nazareth
Thurs	20 th	<i>Cuthbert, bishop, missionary, 687,</i> 8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	21 st	<i>Thomas Cranmer, archbishop, Reformation martyr, 1556</i> 10.30am Coffee Morning
Sun	23 rd	3rd Sunday of Lent, 11.00am PCC Accounts Meeting, Parish Office, 6.30pm Compline on Zoom
Mon	24 th	<i>Walter Hilton, mystic, 1396, Paul Couturier, priest, ecumenist, 1953, Oscar Romero, archbishop, martyr, 1980</i>
Tues	25 th	Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary
Wed	26 th	<i>Harriet Monsell, founder of the Community of St John the Baptist, 1883</i>
Thurs	27 th	8.00pm Choir Practice
Fri	28 th	10.30am Coffee Morning
Sun	30 th	Mothering Sunday, 6.30pm Compline on Zoom
Mon	31 st	<i>John Donne, priest, poet, 1631,</i> 9.30am Footsteps in Church

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



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