

# together

The parish magazine of the United Benefice of  
St Andrew's Cobham and St Mary's Stoke D'Abernon



*The Conversion of Saul - read more inside*

*Christ Has Died  
Christ Is Risen  
Christ Will Come Again*

Issue 38 ▪ April 2018

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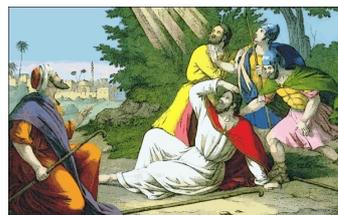
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## Church websites:

[www.standrewscobham.org.uk](http://www.standrewscobham.org.uk)  
[www.stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk](http://www.stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk)

Copy Date for May  
Wednesday 11th April



Cover picture  
The conversion of St Paul to Christianity  
by M Bogdon  
from [www.marysrosaries.com](http://www.marysrosaries.com)

## *Easter Thoughts* *from Revd Godfrey Hilliard*

*For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

*Galatians 2: 19-20 NRSV.*

Paul is an interesting Christian to consider during the Easter season. Here is a man whose life was turned upside down by his conversion on the Damascus road. Let us recall the story from Acts 9: 3-6 NIV.

*As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"*

*"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.*

*"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*

Saul became Paul and the chief persecutor of the Christians became their leading exponent. His mission to the Gentiles mainly and to the Roman Empire is well recorded in the New Testament and his writing contributes hugely to the canon of scripture. Paul responded to the call of God and this is the plea that he makes to the backsliding converts in Galatia. There was a tension that Gentile Christians should accept Jewish ways. There was tension between Peter and Paul on the subject. Paul had seen how deep a hold the Jewish law had on circumcision and the food laws and other Jewish customs.

For Paul this was an affront to the Gospel and detracted from the saving grace of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. For Paul a lot is at stake. Was Christianity just a regenerated form of Judaism, more open and accessible to Gentiles or was it something radical and new?

Paul argued that it was radical and new, and available to Jews and Gentiles alike and in his despair for the quarrelling Galatians he spells out his own interpretation, which is the mystical heart of the gospel, that through his death on the cross we have, in Jesus, the one who has become the inner life of every believer.

As the theologian, Angela Tilby put it,

*"Our selfhood is not grounded in our achievements, however worthy, but in only in his grace and love."*

Through the Resurrection we are "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven" as the hymn writer, Henry Francis Lyte, put it. The Resurrection story deals in not just God's transcending love of his creation but the hearts and minds of the believers. But not only does it affect us as individual Christians but also as his Body, the Church.

Like the early Christians that Paul encountered and influenced we too are surrounded by tensions and differences of theological emphasis and interpretation. I am sure that one of the many benefits of the study groups this Lent organised by Churches Together is that we get into conversation with Christians from other denominations. On that note it was particularly good to see the increased involvement this year from our friends at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic church in Cobham.

Easter and the Resurrection can transform and change lives - but only if we are prepared to be changed by that saving grace. Paul in very robust language tells the Galatians:

*“And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Easter not only is the foundation of our faith, Easter also invigorates our hope. Hope draws our eyes upward, where God resides. Paul encourages us:

*Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.*

*Colossians 3:1-4*

On Easter Sunday, let us all join with the chorus of the faithful as we proclaim,

**“Alleluia, Christ is risen”,**

let us boldly reply in the tradition of Paul,

**“He is risen indeed, Alleluia.”**

**With Easter blessings**  
**Godfrey Hilliard**

See page 18 for an interview with St Paul
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## PARISH REGISTERS

**28<sup>th</sup> February - 31st March**

**BAPTISMS - We welcome into God's family:**

**At St Andrew's**

Harry Patterson

Thea Layton

**At St Mary's**

Henry Young

**WEDDINGS - We offer our congratulations to:**

**At St Andrew's**

Asa Saunders and Savannah Scott

**FUNERALS - We offer our condolences to the family & friends of:**

**At St Andrew's**

Fiona Webster

Basil Gray

Jean Corbett

Viv Glover

Gillian Wilcox

Kenneth Purssey

Margaret Hope

Mark Hume

**at St Mary's**

Eric Jackson

Margaret Wayt

## RECTOR VACANCY UPDATE

We have some disappointing news, following our interviews for a new Rector.

After prayerful consideration, and with full agreement of the interviewing panel, Bishop Jo approached one of the three candidates interviewed last Thursday in order that his name be put forward to the Archbishop of Canterbury as the next Rector of Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon.

After much thought and prayer from the individual concerned, he declined the offer due to personal circumstances.

The panel agreed that out of the three candidates only the individual approached had the necessary gifts and qualities and that should he decline, we would need to look again for a new Rector; we continue to put our trust in God for this.

To this effect, Archdeacon Paul Bryer will meet with the PCCs Tuesday evening, 3rd April 2018.

Please continue to pray for our search for new Rector and thank you for your support.

**The next Vacancy Prayer Meeting is on Wednesday 18th April,  
8pm in Church Gate House lounge**

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### ST ANDREW'S

### **SPRING GARDEN MAINTENANCE**

**Saturday 12th May 8.30am to 12.30pm**

8.30-10.20 ADULTS ONLY with power and hand tools for pruning/weeding etc.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE THERE BY 8.30 IF YOU HAVE THIS KIND OF EQUIPMENT.

Also bring rakes, shears, large builders carrying bags, gloves, secateurs, saws, brooms.

10.20 Drinks and biscuits for ALL, including children who wish to join the team.

10.50-12.30 Families, including children, to join in weeding, sweeping, tidying.

Any questions- contact Richard Hollington  
07991501231 or  
richard.hollington@36south.com

## **FORTHCOMING CHORAL SERVICES at St Mary's**

### **Sunday 1 April : Easter Sunday**

Choral Eucharist 10am

Mass in C K317 'The Coronation' – Mozart

### **Sunday 22 April**

Parish Eucharist 10am

Introit : Christo Resurgente – François Couperin

Anthem : Risen Lord – Rose

### **Sunday 6 May**

Choral Eucharist 10am

Communion service in E minor – Darke Scio Enim – Lassus

### **Thursday 10 May : Ascension Day**

Joint Benefice Choral Eucharist 8.30pm

Missa Brevis – Gabrieli

Ascendit Deus – Phillips



### **Sunday 20 May – Pentecost (Whit Sunday)**

Choral Eucharist 10am

Introit : If ye love me - Tallis

Anthem : Listen, sweet dove – Ives

*Choral Eucharist is sung on the first Sunday of each month, except in August.*

## **For Your Diary**

**Tuesday 3rd April** - City Walk with Stephen Chater, start at Bank 10.30am.  
Contact [stephenchater@btinternet.com](mailto:stephenchater@btinternet.com)

**Friday 13th April** - St Andrew's Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
8pm in Church Gate House

**Thursday 19th April** - St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
7.30 pm in St Mary's Hall

**Monday 23rd April** - St George's Day Luncheon Concert 1pm in St Mary's Church

Christopher Herrick, one of the world's leading organists, will play works by Bach, Beethoven and Schumann.

Also William Shakespeare's Birthday (see back page)



## **Spiritual Cinema**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 7pm in Church Gate House

## St Andrew's Church, Cobham

### SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am		Holy Communion
10am	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month	Family Worship
	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Parish Communion

### WEEKDAY SERVICES

9.00am	Tuesday and Wednesday	Morning Prayer
5.00pm	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Evening Prayer
10.30am	Friday	Holy Communion

*Enquiries: Baptisms - contact Revd Charleen Hollington*  
*Weddings - contact Parish Office*

## St Mary's Church, Stoke D'Abernon

### SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am		Said Communion
10.00am	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month	Choral Eucharist
	2nd Sunday	Family Service
	3rd, 4th, 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Parish Eucharist
11.30am	3rd Sunday	Mattins
6.00pm	Every Sunday	Evensong

### WEEKDAY SERVICES

9.00am	Thursday	Morning Prayer
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For all enquiries about the Church, please contact:  
*The Parish Administrator on 01932 866005*

## At Guildford Cathedral

From the Dean, the Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams. The People's Cathedral project is now completed. The Cathedral is looking stunning – a place of tranquillity and peace that is awe-inspiring.



From April there are Guided Tours and Tower Tours to welcome visitors. Dates and booking details on the Cathedral website.

The Gin Festival runs from 26th – 29th April in the marquee.  
[www.ginfestival.com/events](http://www.ginfestival.com/events)

## REMEMBERED - *There But Not There*

*"I do commend this creative and imaginative project very warmly. I hope that many churches will want to engage with this during this next year. As we commemorate the end of the First World War it is vital that we remember and this project allows us to do so in a way that will engage with the imagination and be a real exercise in remembrance."*

The Most Reverend & Right Hon. The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

*There But Not There*, the 2018 Armistice Project of the charity **Remembered**, will be the abiding concluding image as we commemorate the end of the First World War. Over the coming months ghostly figures of First World War Soldiers ("Tommies"), representing the 888,246 servicemen who fell in the Great War, will be springing up all over the United Kingdom as part of a new fundraising campaign led by former Chief of the General Staff, General The Lord Dannatt.

The charity hopes to inspire communities to purchase and install half-body sized silhouettes of their local Fallen and to buy small Tommy figures. **Remembered** is set up to educate all generations about why the ultimate sacrifice was made by so many and to raise substantial funds (we have a target of £15 million) to help heal those suffering from the hidden wounds of war. One of our Patrons is Bishop Tim Thornton who is Bishop to the Armed Forces and our benefit charities are:

The Royal Foundation: Heads Together  
Walking with The Wounded  
Combat Stress  
Help for Heroes  
Project Equinox: Housing Veterans and  
Medical Students  
Commonwealth War Graves Foundation

In church these clear acrylic life size silhouettes would sit in pews to commemorate the fallen of the parish and to bring them home. Each silhouette costs £42.

Members of the public will also be encouraged to buy their own 10 inch version of the Tommies, made by veterans. These cost £29.99 each (including VAT) and will be delivered in a presentation box. This box includes a voucher whereby, included in the price, the Tommy may be taken to any branch of Timpsons to have the name of a particular fallen soldier engraved on the stand. A 6' Tommy can also be bought by businesses for £750.

For more information and to see both the silhouettes and the Tommies please go to the website [www.therebutnotthere.org.uk](http://www.therebutnotthere.org.uk)

Vanessa Richards – Trustee, Remembered.

## Response to REMEMBERED from our churches

At St Mary's we have 17 names on the memorial plaque and very much hope that members of the parish will offer to sponsor a silhouette. It would be fabulous if we could have all 17 sitting in our church in November. If you are interested please send a cheque £42, payable to St Mary's PCC, to Godfrey Hilliard, so that a bulk order may be submitted.

At St Andrew's the PCC has decided to buy one life-size silhouette to sit in a church pew in November, to commemorate the fallen of Cobham, whose names are recorded in the Memorial Chapel. Also a special Sunday collection will be arranged for parishioners who would like to contribute to the "There But Not There" Armistice project.

## St Mary's Community Outreach Project

### *The Launch of ... Befriending Seniors*

At St Mary's PCC Away Day in 2017 a major output was to build a community outreach programme for St Mary's. This programme will include the befriending of seniors (retired people) in our community. We aim to build a safe and welcoming community where seniors living in and around Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham and Oxshott can meet with each other and have an enjoyable time together.

Initially we plan monthly coffee and cake mornings in April, May and June with the intention of finding out whether we are meeting a demand and what kind of activities attendees would like us to build into these events. Befriending Seniors is aimed at churchgoers and non-churchgoers.

***If you are a senior we would love to see you at these events.***

Equally if you have family members, friends or neighbours who could be interested do please encourage them to come.

### ***St Mary's Church Hall - 26th April - 10.30-12.00***

(in grounds of Parkside School opposite Squires Garden Centre on Stoke Road)

***All seniors from Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, Oxshott and surrounding areas welcome***

Please come and bring senior friends. Do let us know if you need transport. There will be no charge for attending.

For further information and to confirm attendance please contact our parish office 01932 866005, [admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk)

NB if you would like to help with this event as welcomers, drivers, coffee makers, table hosts etc., please let our Parish Office know (as above).

## **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD, STOKE D'ABERNON, SURREY**

Notice is hereby given that it is the intention of the Secretary of State for Justice, acting on an application by the incumbent and churchwardens, to apply to the Privy Council for an Order requiring the discontinuance of burials in the above churchyard.

Provision would be made for the following exceptions:-

- a. in any vault or walled grave in the churchyard, burial may be allowed but every coffin in such vault or grave must be separately enclosed by stonework or brick work properly cemented;
- b. in any existing earthen grave in the churchyard, the burial may be allowed of the body of any member of the family of the person or persons previously buried in that grave, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave;  
and
- c. in any grave space in which no interment has previously taken place, the burial may be allowed of any person for whom, or any member of the family for which that grave space has been reserved and appropriated, with the exclusive right of burial there, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave

Any representations about the proposed closure should be sent to the Coroners and

Burials Team, Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ (quoting reference OPR/075/378) within 21 days of this publication.

### **An idea for a Spring Visit :**

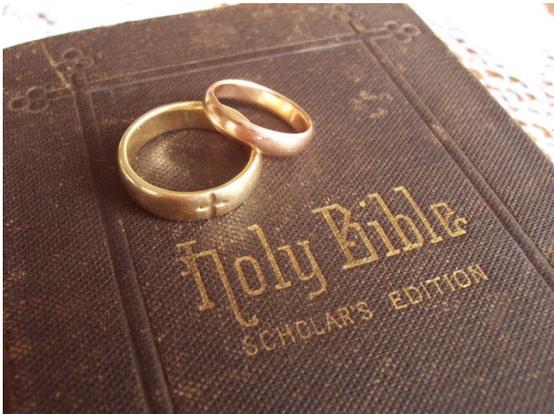
#### **A Christian House Chapel in Lullingstone Roman Villa**

In the ruins of a Roman villa in the village of Lullingstone in 1939, archeologists discovered chunks of plaster which had fallen off the walls. Piecing it back together revealed a large wall painting of Christian priests at prayer, wearing coloured chasuble style robes decorated with the cross. They are holding up their hands in prayer, facing the congregation. This gesture denotes that the priest is praying for the world.

The Chi-Ro monogram appears in the painting. (A symbol of an X with a P superimposed, the first two letters of 'Christ' in the Greek.) This chapel is one of the oldest structures purpose built for Christian worship, above an abandoned pagan shrine, in the fourth century after the Roman Emperor Constantine legalised Christianity in AD 313.

To reach Lullingstone exit M25 at junction 3, then take A20 and A225 to Eynsford.

# PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE



Preparing for your wedding day is hard work, taking many months in an effort to try and ensure the perfect day.

However, preparing for a lifetime of marriage is even more important. During the Vacancy, we invited Rev Hugh Grear (Rector of Ockham) and his wife Tina to lead a Marriage Preparation Day on Saturday 24th February. Most of the couples getting married at either St Andrew's or St Mary's this year came and enjoyed a day discussing

questions like "how do you express love, and how does your partner express love?" and "what difference is getting married going to make?" and "why do you want to get married in church?" We looked with both honesty and humour at the 6 hot topics of Communication, Money, Time, Sex, Children and Conflict.

Following an excellent lunch, there was then an opportunity to meet the priest marrying each couple, and to discuss the finer details of the service itself. The purpose of the day could be summed up in the prayer that we all prayed together at the end,

*"Heavenly Father, marriage is of your making. It is you who join us together as husband and wife. We pray that, throughout our married life, you will give us grace at all times to be true to one another, to consider one another's needs, to support one another in trouble, to forgive one another's mistakes, to love one another to the end. In this way, may we as husband and wife enjoy your constant blessing, and live together in your love, now and always. Thank you for your help in this. Amen."*

Most of the wedding couples will be present in church on a fairly regular basis leading up to their wedding day. Please ensure a warm welcome for them, and continue to pray for them, praying especially that they will have the wisdom to invite God into their marriage and into their lives.

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"A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences." - Dave Meurer

"Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow Internet to see who they really are." - Will Ferrell

*Quotes from marriagesuccess.com*



# Letter from St Andrew's Primary School

from Jo Mitchell, Co-Head designate

The Spring Term at St Andrew's Primary has, as usual, been jam-packed with events! We continue to expect high standards and strive to ensure all our children become confident and happy, effective learners, excellent communicators, and responsible citizens, so that they can 'live life in all its fullness'.

In January, the Governors, with assistance and guidance from Esher Learning Trust and Guildford Diocese carried out a shortlisting process for a permanent Head Teacher. This was followed by a two-day interview process, resulting in the appointment of myself and Bethan Thomas. We shall act as Co-Heads from after Easter.

Co-Headships are becoming more familiar in Surrey and beyond. London Leadership Strategy writes:

*"We strongly believe that there are far-reaching benefits to a Co-Headship model as a partnership, which binds the expertise of two reputable leaders that have the potency to rival any traditional model of Headship. The synergy of two Head Teachers permits the role to be strategically shared amongst two like-minded practitioners whose leadership skills and experience complement each other".*

Bethan and I are very much looking forward to working together; to share our vision with parents, staff and children, and to make it a reality.



Other very significant events for our children included a trip to the O2 in February for Key Stage 2 Choir to perform at Young Voices 2018. Nothing can prepare you for the sound of 8,000 voices singing along with professional singers and musicians to friends and family. It truly is a magical occasion, and we plan to do this on a bi-annual basis.

More recently we came second in the Parkside KS1 football tournament and were the only team in the history of this competition to win all our games in the qualifying rounds. Our team played incredibly well and scored 14 goals, but most importantly displayed great sportsmanship, determination and courage, working together as one.

We also celebrated Mothering Sunday with our traditional SASA Mother's Day sale, where every child in the school selects a donated gift for someone they love in their family. We are ever grateful to our parent association for this special occasion that

allows our children to say thank you to their significant carer. We also celebrated Mothering Sunday by joining in the Family Service at St Andrew's Church. Key Stage One Choir and Prayer Club marked the occasion with songs and prayers of love and thanks, as well as helping Esther, Children and Youth Minister, act out the story of Moses in the basket.

Within school, we held many of our annual events: Maths Week, Bedtime Stories for Key Stage One children, Bake Off for Year 6, Bikeability for Year 6, Starry Sleepover for Year 5, and a 3 day residential to Sayers Croft for Year 4. We celebrated World Book Day, went back in time for a Year 4 Tudor Day and a Year 6 World War Two Day, held several Showcase Mornings where parents are invited in to see their child's learning.

We look ahead to Easter Pause Day and our Easter Service at St Andrew's Church, before breaking up for Easter Holidays.

### ***Happy Easter to everyone.***



Parents and children both enjoyed the open morning at the end of Maths Week



Despite the snow most of the children arrived at school dressed as characters from a range of books on World Book Day



Year 6 enjoyed learning about life during World War 2



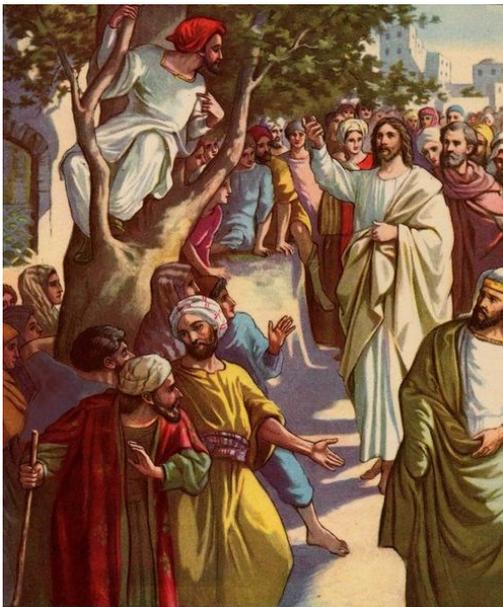
Year 3 children went back in time to the Tudor period participating in an Elmbridge Museum workshop

# A Bible Character I Would Like To Meet

The Editor invites you to choose a Biblical character who you would like to meet. Please write a short article about their personality and their part in the Bible story, explaining why you would like to meet them.

## Zaccheus

by Leonard Beighton



I should like to meet Zacchaeus. After all we were members of the same profession, admittedly at different times and in very different circumstances, but both of us concerned to take money out of the pockets of those who would prefer to keep it.

We had to pluck the goose with the minimum of hissing.

He did not have the advantage that much of the tax was deducted before it reached people through Pay As You Earn and, until recently, from interest and, in effect, from dividends. But even so in the United Kingdom there is plenty of room for disagreement and need for enforcement, although our methods are not

quite the same as those available to Zacchaeus and the tax collectors who worked under him!

There are two questions I should like to ask Zacchaeus. I can well understand why he wanted to see Jesus, but why did he run ahead? In his time respectable men did not run, which is also one of the reasons why the action of the father in running out to welcome the younger son on his return from squandering his wealth was so striking.

The other question is: why it was that his change of heart and ways was so sudden and complete? The disciples apart, there is no-one else who we are told had such an immediate and total transformation of life as did Zacchaeus. It was sufficient for him that he met Jesus. But Jesus meets each one of us every day: why is it that I do not respond to him in a similar way to Zacchaeus? Maybe I could learn from him.

Biblical reference: *Zaccheus* Luke 19: 1-5

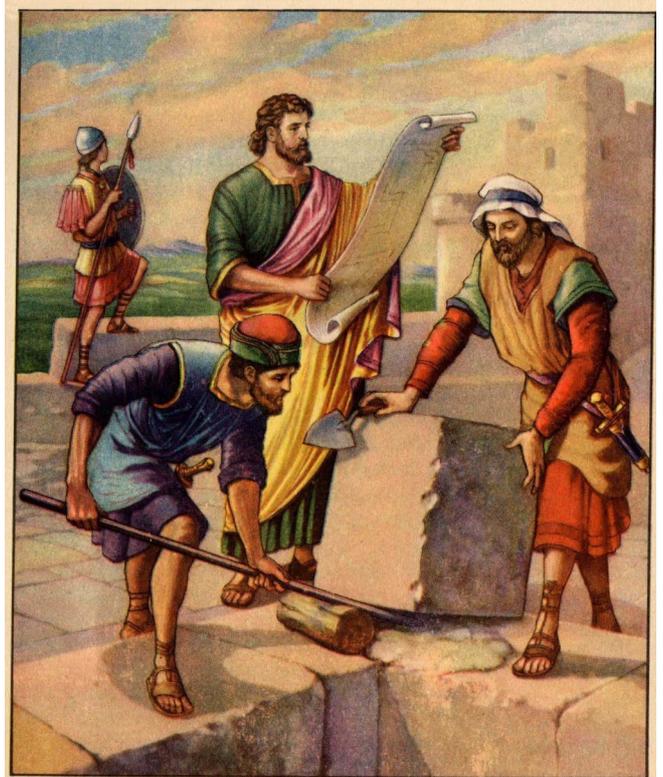
*Editor's Note. Leonard spent his career in the Civil Service, for most of which he was in the Inland Revenue, as it was then called.*

# Nehemiah

by Peter Kelly

The book of Nehemiah tells the story of a Persian king's cupbearer who heard news of the destruction of Jerusalem and the terrible plight of the Jewish people, c.445 BC. Nehemiah was over a thousand miles away, living a comfortable life in modern-day central Iran. Yet, he was so greatly distressed with the news that he sat down and wept and then spent a number of days in prayer and fasting. Months later he was still carrying the grief with him and the King asked what was the problem. After praying in the moment, Nehemiah shared the news and in the ensuing conversation was released from his duties, given permission to go to Jerusalem to lead the rebuilding effort, and to take timber from the King's forests along the way. It was a remarkable and transformative conversation.

Clearly, Nehemiah identified with his brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. But he had a life of position, power and comfort in the King's city of Persepolis. What was it about the story of the broken and suffering city that drew him to a role in its restoration? Did it ever occur to him that God would surely raise up a local leader who understood the clear and present need? Did he have a sense of a personal calling? Did he possibly feel guilty in his position of power while his people were suffering? And then there is the four-month delay between the news and the conversation with the king. Did the plight of the people in Jerusalem haunt him during this time? Was he restless at not having a way to act or possibly resentful at the thought that he might be needed by God to make a huge sacrifice? Was the four-month period preparation or procrastination?



I take inspiration from Nehemiah not because I know the answers to these questions. I am sure there was uncertainty and doubt in his wrestling with these issues. My inspiration comes from the way he acts when opportunity presents itself. When the king asks what is wrong, Nehemiah takes a moment to pray to God for direction on how to respond. Nehemiah is clearly a person of patience and waiting upon God. I would so like to know how this period of waiting shaped his life and opened the door for the great reconstruction of Jerusalem.

Biblical reference *Nehemiah Chapters 1 and 2*

# Jacob

by Michael Elson

## Introduction

Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, presents Abraham as the very model of faith. Abraham trusts God completely and gives God unquestioning obedience. He even agrees to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, to God. Such unconditional obedience to God is, for Paul, the ultimate proof of Abraham's faith. But then I think, 'What would I do, if I believed that the God that I worshipped was asking me to kill my own child?'

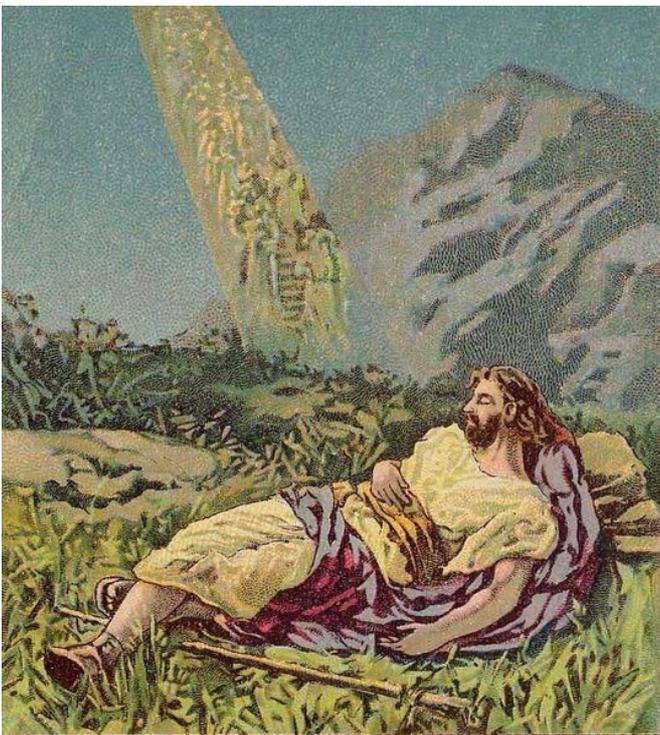
The person that I like is Jacob, Abraham's grandson. His expectations of God are entirely different. Self-interest, not self-denial, is his motivation. He wants the LORD to look after him and keep him safe. In return Jacob undertakes to make the LORD his God. Jacob wanted evidence! One can almost hear him say, 'Can't be fairer than that!'

## The birthright

God had promised to bless Abraham's descendants. So Isaac, Abraham's son, decided to pass on God's blessing to Esau, the elder of his twin sons. Even before their birth the two sons had struggled together in the womb. Rebecca, their mother, had heard from God that Esau, the elder, would serve Jacob, the younger.

Favouritism lies at the heart of this story. Isaac loved the game that Esau hunted and cooked. Rebecca overheard Isaac saying that he would bless Esau before he died. With the help of his mother Jacob defrauded his brother of the blessing by deceiving his dying father. Esau decided to kill Jacob.

## Jacob's vision



Jacob left home at once. On his journey he stopped to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a ladder up to heaven, with God at the top and angels going up and coming down. Knowing that he had slept in a sacred place, Jacob woke up full of fear. He said, 'How awesome! This is the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.'

Jacob then made a promise. 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.' God fulfilled Jacob's hopes, far more than he could ever have expected. Jacob became a rich and prosperous man, with four wives and many children.

## Jacob's wrestling

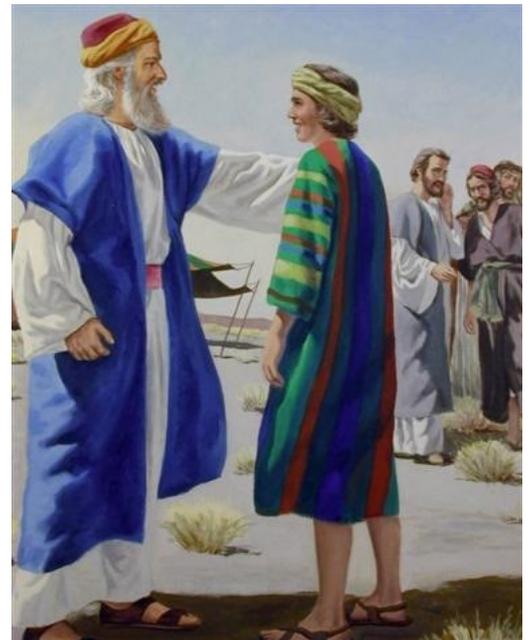
Twenty years later Jacob decided to return home. He feared that Esau would still be angry with him. On his way back he spent the night before he was due to meet his brother on his own, wrestling with 'someone'. In the morning the 'someone' blessed Jacob and gave him a new name. The name was Israel, which means, 'Someone that wrestles with God.'

Jacob also gave the place a new name, Peniel, which means, 'Face of God'. He said, 'I have seen God, face to face.' When Jacob met Esau, he said, 'Truly, to see your face is like seeing the face of God, with such favour have you received me.' To find peace with his brother, Jacob had had to wrestle with God.

## Jacob's family

Jacob ended up with twelve sons and the favouritism in the family continued. Jacob's favourite wife was Rachel, and his favourite son was Joseph. Like his father, Joseph had dreams, but Joseph's dreams were about his own importance. His brothers bitterly resented their father's favouritism and Joseph's self-importance. They sold him as a slave.

The merchants took Joseph to Egypt, where he did very well. With his ability to interpret dreams, he rose to become second only to the Pharaoh in the whole of Egypt. When famine came to Canaan, however, the brothers had to go to Egypt to buy food. Joseph recognised them but, not wanting revenge, he forgave them. They then brought Jacob to Egypt.



## Election

Jacob is a fully human person. He shows all the faults of favouritism, yet he was God's choice. Without their father's favouritism his sons would not have sold their brother into slavery. Without their action, God would not have come down to rescue his people from Egypt. Jacob's role in the story is pivotal. He is the bridge between Abraham and Moses, between Canaan and Egypt. I love that he had to struggle with God and with his own family.

A more theological word for favouritism is 'election', God's choice of people for a purpose. Let Paul have the last word, 'When Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she was told, "The elder will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."' (Romans 9:10-13)

Biblical reference *Genesis Chapters 25-33*

# An Interview with ... Paul

by Michael Levitton

**Interviewer** *“Thank you being with us tonight, Paul, and making room in your busy schedule. I’m just sorry there aren’t more of us here to listen to you.”*

**Paul:** *“Oh, don’t worry about that! I’d far rather be with twenty followers of Jesus who are on fire than a hall full of luke-warms.”*

**I:** *Well, I’ve got a set of questions I’d like to ask. The first is “How did you become a Christian?”*

**P:** *“That’s an easy one to answer. I was on my way to Damascus to seek out and imprison Christians when Jesus met me. As far as I knew we’d put him to death but there he was. It blew my mind and, from then on, I followed him with all my heart and strength.”*

**I:** *Well, that’s certainly an unusual way to start your Christian life. So, what were you before you became a Christian?”*

**P:** *“You’ve caught me on a sore spot there.*

*I was awful. I thought I was doing ok.*

*I mean I was a full-blooded Jew, studying at the feet of Gamaliel.*

*I knew, like we all did, that we’d screwed up in the past by*

*worshipping gods other than Jehovah. So I set out in a major way to be as good a Jew as I possibly could. Obeying every precept you could come across. I wouldn’t have been sitting here talking with you like this, for example. You were a sinner and I was a Jew and proud of it. Talk about religious. I’d have won a prize. Actually, I think I may have done!”*

**I:** *“And what are you like now you are a Christian?”*

**P:** *“I would like to think that I am a totally changed person. Humility would be the first word to come to mind. Humbled by the fact that the Son of God, no less, died for me – and you. Humbled by the fact that he took me from a wretched and angry life to one of peace and contentment, irrespective of the circumstances. And then privileged because he made me an apostle and allowed me to preach the Gospel just about everywhere – even here.”*

**I:** *“Finally, what would you say to someone who was thinking of becoming a Christian?”*

**P:** *“I urge that person to take that step of faith. Listen to those who have already done so. Believe what you read in the Bible. Place yourself in the hands of Jesus. He won’t let you down and glory awaits.”*

Biblical reference Acts 9:1-20



*Saint Paul  
by Bartolomeo Montagna*

# Oh, To Be In England!

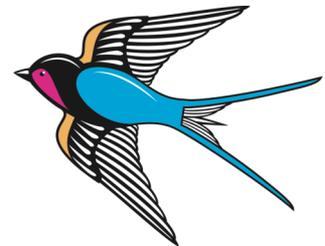
## HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Robert Browning (1812- 1889) was living in Italy with his wife Elizabeth Barrett, when he wrote this poem of longing for the birdsong and blossom of an English spring.

*Oh, to be in England  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf  
Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
In England-now!*



*And after April, when May follows,  
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows-  
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dew-drops- at the bent spray's edge-  
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first fine careless rapture!  
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
The buttercups, the little children's dower,  
Far brighter that this gaudy melon-flower!*



The song thrush lives up to its name magnificently. Its song consists of a loud, rich succession of musical phrases, some of which are repeated many times. It often sings from a high perch such as a tree-top and can be heard almost any time during the year on fine days.

Sadly, the population in England declined by more than 50 per cent between 1970 and 1995. This decline was most pronounced on farmland, where the population decreased by about 70 per cent, probably due to intensive arable farming methods. Because of this decline, the song thrush is red listed as a bird of serious conservation concern.

## PILGRIMAGES VI

### Lourdes by Dominic Combe

**Lourdes** is a small town in the foothills of the Pyrenees in south-western France with a fixed population of about 15,000 people. Before the mid-19th century, it was a garrison town known for its castle on a rock.



The **Soubirous** family were loving and close, but had fallen on hard times and the father, a former miller, was a labourer seeking employment day by day. They dwelt in a damp, former gaol with just one room. **Bernadette**, the subject of this account, was born in 1844. She had contracted cholera as a child and suffered with severe asthma. On the 11th February, 1858, she went with her sister and a friend to the common to collect firewood. As she was taking off her shoes to cross a stream, she heard a gust of wind, but the trees stayed quite still. Only a wild rose in the Massabielle grotto stirred. The common was strewn with rubbish and branches washed up by the river. Bernadette heard the wind again, and looking towards the grotto, she saw a Lady in a white dress with a blue girdle and a

yellow rose on each foot. The Lady held a rosary with white beads on a golden chain. Surrounding the apparition was a dazzling light. Bernadette was terrified and tried to make the sign of the Cross but could only tremble. The Lady smiled and bade her pray the rosary with her.

### The Visitations in the Grotto

On the 14th February, Bernadette returned with holy water to throw at the apparition to make sure it was not demonic. The Lady smiled and bowed. Bernadette's companions saw her in ecstasy and were fearful.

On the 18th February, the Lady told her to return over the next two weeks and told her that "She did not promise to make me happy in this world, but in the next." Her parents forbade her to go to the grotto again, but in vain.

On the 24th, the Lady asked her for "prayer and penitence for the conversion of sinners." On the 25th, the Lady asked her to dig in the ground to reveal a wellspring and drink from it. By this time Bernadette had a considerable following who were dismayed to see her dirty and humiliated by the apparent lack of water. But the water, muddy at first, soon flowed clean and wholesome and people drank for cures. Many claimed to have been cured, but there were many hoaxes and mere temporary reprieves.

The Church and secular authorities were concerned that things were getting out of hand, so the government seized the opportunity to close the source and fence off the cave. Lourdes and its spring became a matter of debate throughout the country, which resulted in the Emperor Napoleon III intervening to reopen the grotto in October 1858.

The Church stood back and observed. In the meantime, Bernadette got into the grotto after dark and on 25th March, the Lady revealed to Bernadette, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” She told her priest, who readily understood that she had no idea what that meant; for she struggled with even the basics of the Catechism. The Church investigated the matter and in January, 1860, her Bishop confirmed that “The Virgin Mary had indeed appeared to Bernadette Soubirous.”

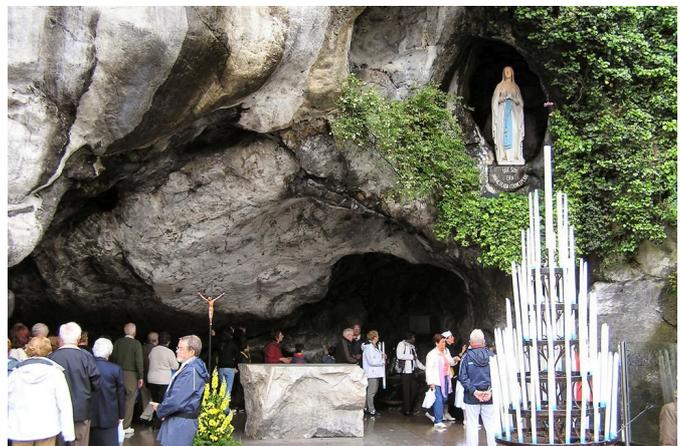
## Veneration and Cures

In all, Bernadette received 18 visitations. By 1860, a Professor Verges had confirmed seven inexplicable cures, and with these events the Marian veneration at Lourdes was established. Two years later, the Church Commission had examined Bernadette and all the details of the case including the scientific angle and confirmed that the “apparitions are supernatural and divine; consequently, what Bernadette saw was the most Blessed Virgin.” Sixty-nine cures have been verified by the rigorous Lourdes Medical Bureau.

In later life, Bernadette sought refuge in the Convent of St Gildard in Nevers where she worked as a nurse and later sacristan. She died of tuberculosis of the bone, 16th April 1879, aged 35. Pope Pius XI beatified Bernadette on the 6th June 1925 and canonised her on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th of December, 1933. Her body remains incorrupt.

## The Pilgrimage

Central is the Grotto with its little Chapel commissioned by the Lady. The main pilgrimage season runs from Easter through to October and typically, an average of 25,000 pilgrims gather each day at this shrine in the centre of Lourdes. A cathedral and several churches and basilicas run services throughout the day and evening. Great torchlight processions are a feature of the Lourdes pilgrimage and long lines of people pass through the grotto, leaving photographs, flowers and messages. Individuals of greatly diverse cultures and habits, together with groups holding banners celebrating their allegiances and communities, parade past the sacred places. From humble beginnings, Lourdes has become one of the most important Christian shrines in the World.



*By BRUNNER Emmanuel, Manu25 - Own work, commons.wikimedia.org*



## *St Andrew's Parochial Church Council met on 20th February 2018*

### **Finance**

Treasurer Malcolm Graham reported that our giving was lower than our expenditure. It was less than 65% of the Deanery average and less than 75% of the Diocesan average. Planned Giving had remained the same under the new approach taken by Peter Kelly. Bag collections at services had increased, but had dropped back in 2017. During the vacancy attendance had dropped by c. 10%. It had not been necessary to sell investments, due to lower costs for repairs.

Leonard Beighton said that legacies should be spent in accordance with the legator's wishes. He would circulate our parish legacy policy.

### **Outward Giving**

A donation of £1000 would be made to the Leatherhead Youth Project, which provided counselling in five local schools. This was instead of a donation to Young Futures, as we had been informed that that organisation worked in South London, which did not accord with our policy of some local funding.

### **Nave Altar**

The nave altar would be used 15 times in 2018, including the fifth Sunday in July. It was recognised that the new incumbent might have views on a gradual movement to use the two altars equally, as recommended by the Worship group.

### **Church Cleaning**

David Tipping reported that there were not enough volunteers in the cleaning team. It was proposed to arrange a Sunday appeal for help with cleaning, to include the Sunday coffee rota and the Welcome area.

### **General Data Protection Regulations**

Judy Franz said that good progress was being made towards the introduction of the GDPR by 25th May. St Andrew's Yellow Pages would need to be adapted to meet the requirements.

### **St Andrew's Primary School**

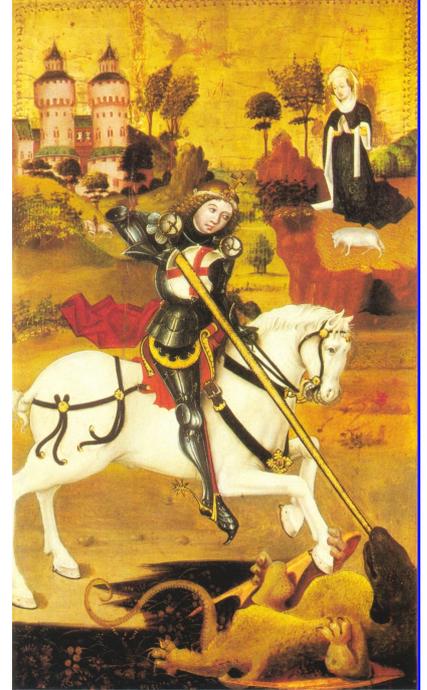
The new Head Teacher had been appointed from April. There would be a job share between Jo Mitchell, the present acting Head Teacher and Bethan Thomas. Cards had been sent to welcome them.

# SAINT GEORGE'S DAY— 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL

by Dominic Combe

## The Legend of St George and the Dragon

Silena, a city in the Roman province of Libya, was in great difficulties with its the water supply, a well or lake which was obstructed. A monstrous reptilian, call it a dragon if you will, had incorporated this well of life into its lair; and all attempts by the city's fighting men to slay or drive it off had been in vain. The creature healed from its wounds almost immediately and when it approached the city walls, its foul breath stifled anyone within reach. So the citizens resorted to giving the creature two sheep a day, in order to fetch water and keep the city safe. The city had few sheep and they soon ran short, so the king ordered that one sheep and one young person, chosen by lot, should be fed to the dragon. One day, the lot fell upon the king's daughter. Her father was devastated, but was warned by the populace that he must surrender his daughter, or be burned in his palace. Tearfully, he gave his acquiescent child his blessing, and, full of courage, she went to meet her doom.



A fine young Roman army officer, named George, came riding and met the victim on her way to the dragon. He saw her distress and swore in the name of Christ to help her. The dragon heard them and raised its head from the water. George armed himself with the sign of the cross, commended himself to God and went for the beast with his lance. He gave it such a blow, it fell to the ground. He bade the princess tie her girdle round its neck, whereupon it meekly followed her back to the city with George. The townsfolk fled, but George assured them God had freed them from the oppression of the dragon. "Only believe in Christ and be baptised, all of you, and I will slay your dragon." The people did as he told them and thousands were turned to the true Faith.

## The Life of St George c.275–303 Patron Saint of England

A young Christian, George went to Nicomedia in Turkey, applied for a career in the Roman Army and became a military Tribune in the Imperial Guard. The Emperor Diocletian later became savagely anti-Christian and George was tortured and put to death by the sword on 23rd April 303. In 494 Pope Gelasius issued a decree that St George was of "those saints who are justly revered among men, but whose actions are known only to God."



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April	Time	St Andrew's	Time	St Mary's
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> Easter Day	6am 8am 10am	Service of Light Holy Communion Parish Communion	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Choral Eucharist NO EVENSONG
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10am -12 noon	Holiday Club – Seaside Adventures	9am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10am -12 noon 10:30am 7pm	Holiday Club – Seaside Adventures Holy Communion during Lent at St Mary's 14+ Youth Club	9am	Morning Prayer
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10am -12 noon	Holiday Club – Seaside Adventures	9am	Morning Prayer
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Holy Communion		
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion SAY IT's Sunday	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Family Service Evensong
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	9am	Morning Prayer	12.30pm	WASPS lunch at The Running Mare
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	9am 7pm	Morning Prayer 14+ Youth Club		
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>			9am	Morning Prayer
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am 12 noon 8pm	Holy Communion Lunch Club APCM in Church Gate House	10.30am	Parish Prayers in the Norbury Chapel
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion SAY IT's Sunday	8am 10am 11.30am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist Mattins Evensong
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup>	7pm	Spiritual Cinema		
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	9am	Morning Prayer		
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	9am 10.30am 7pm 8pm	Morning Prayer Baby Talk 14+ Youth Club Vacancy Prayer Meeting		
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>			9am 12:30pm 7.30pm	Morning Prayer Parish Lunch APCM in St Mary's Church Hall
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Holy Communion		
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion SAY It's Sunday	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist Evensong
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April			1-2pm	Lunchtime concert in Church
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	9am	Morning Prayers		
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	9am 10.30am 7pm	Morning Prayer Baby Talk 14+ Youth Club	10.30am	Holy Communion
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	2pm 3:45pm	Mothers' Union Messy Church (URC)	9am 10.30am 3:45pm	Morning Prayer Befriending Coffee Morning Messy Church
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Holy Communion	10.30am	
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion SAY It's Sunday	8am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist Evensong

## ***Shakespeare's Flowers***

In **A Midsummer Night's Dream** Oberon, King of the Fairies, describes the bower where his Queen, Titania, sleeps:

*I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.*



In **The Winter's Tale** Perdita, the heroine, is speaking to Polixenes, the King of Bohemia:



*Here's flowers for you;  
Hot lavender, mints, savoury, marjoram;  
The marigold that goes to bed wi' the sun  
And with him rises weeping:  
These are flowers of middle summer, and I think  
They are given to men of middle age.*

At the end of **Love's Labours Lost** the schoolmaster and the curate sing a song they have compiled about Spring:

*When daisies pied and violets blue  
And lady-smocks all silver-white  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight.*



**William Shakespeare** was born on 23rd April 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon, and grew up in rural Warwickshire. The imagery in his plays reveals his affinity for flowers and gardening.

Elizabethan gardens were planted with the colours and scents of flowers complementing each other. So Titania's bower is perfumed by thyme, a herb which releases its scent when crushed, honeysuckle (woodbine) and roses. Herbs were important for their culinary and medicinal uses. Perdita speaks of lavender, mint, marjoram and marigold; these herbs are all in our gardens today.