

The Messenger

March 2026

The Parish Of Dursley



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70p each or £7 annually

The Ewelme Benefice

**The parish of Dursley
and**

the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield

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A Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

Welcome to our March edition, of the Messenger.

If the rain gets too much for you, you can always sit indoors, in the dry and read the March edition of the Messenger.

Please note views and opinions expressed within these pages are the writers own personal observations.

From Valerie and Judith (editors)

Front Cover: theme for 2026

'In and around Dursley Parish'

*Photo this month is of
St James bathed in sunshine by
©Steve White*



MARCH 2026

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DEADLINE FOR APRIL 2026 ISSUE

IS SUNDAY 15th MARCH 2026



Revd Ian Gardner writes...

Dear Friends,

If you were to question what is significant about each month in the year, then someone is bound to say, "well it's my birthday on such and such a day!" Every month is a month of potential celebration and March is no different. Whatever age we are, birthdays are surely still significant and should be remembered and hopefully celebrated. If nothing else, I always feel that we have to say a huge thank you to our Mum's, who gave birth to us all those years ago and note too that we celebrate Mothering Sunday on the 15th March!

March is also a month that celebrates the lives of three significant saints, David, Patrick and Joseph the father of Jesus. St David, Patron Saint of Wales, Saint Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland are more than just figures that provide a national focus for their populations once a year. Their stories and lives were about taking the Christian message to remote communities centuries ago. With a backdrop of ignorance, indifference and some hostility, they prevailed and with a determination that people should hear about Jesus, so that they might make choices about how to live their lives.

Like David and Patrick, the life Joseph lived was changed because he responded to a call from God. A man who seemingly lived in the shadows of a the greater story, he was an observer of the life of his son as Jesus grew. "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55) Whatever Jesus achieved in his life it seems important to acknowledge that the great teacher of the world was also taught by his father a simple and vital skill, carpentry. Extraordinary to think of Jesus, with such a profound message to give to the world, making objects and structures that enabled people to live in greater comfort too. There is clearly a metaphor there to explore!

March is also a month that other faith communities celebrate significant festivals in their faith year. March 4th is HOLI in the Hindu year. A festival of colour and light, it marks the beginning of spring and is a joyous occasion, with singing, dancing and throwing powder paint and coloured water. The Sikh community also celebrate on the same day, HOLA MOHALLA and is a gathering to demonstrate the Sikh traditions of martial arts, poetry and community togetherness. March

21st is marked in the Islamic faith by the ending of the Holy month of Ramadan, EID AL-FITR (Festival of Breaking the Fast). As it comes after a month of fasting, sweet dishes and foods are often prepared and consumed during the celebration. The Eid prayer is followed by the [khutbah](#) and then a [dua](#) asking for God's forgiveness, mercy, peace and blessings for all living beings across the world.

Celebration is by definition joyful. People, traditions and memories are a common thread in all of our lives. What do people, tradition and memory mean to each of us? How do these shape and influence our living?

As we end March we enter Holy Week. How many times have you celebrated this holiest of weeks? What might be different for you this year?

The message will be the same: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* John 1.

Yours in Christ - Ian



SAFEGUARDING

Heather Arnold is
the Safeguarding
Officer for the
Parish of Dursley

Tel: 07757 468371

Email: arnoldheather@icloud.com

Treasurer

From 17th May 2026 we will no longer have a treasurer in Dursley when Sally Pearson stands down.

Please come forward if you are able to take on this role, Sally will guide you. The job can also be shared with others.

March Thoughts from The Benefice Office.... by Clare White

This month the clocks change and we will have useful daylight in the evening. A time of year I really look forward to, it means we can go for a walk in the daylight or get out in the garden after dinner.

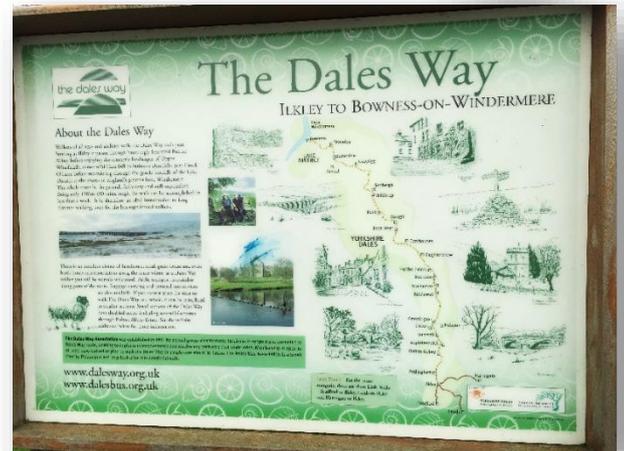
Winter never fills me with joy – unlike spring. My favourite time of the year.

Steve and I once walked the Dalesway from Ilkley, Yorkshire to Bowness on Windemere, Cumbria. It's a distance of 81 miles, I will add that we didn't do it all in one walk we took it in stages when time allowed.

But one of the most enjoyable parts was walking from Ribbleshead down into Dentdale, there were catkins hanging on the trees, full of pollen and daffodils glowing golden, and the promise of new leaves on the trees.

The fields were so busy with farmers tending to new born lambs. They were racing across the fields on quad bikes to attend to the next new birth, which seemed to be relentless.

It made me reflect on how God tends to us. God's love of us is shown in a farmers love of their animals, I know it's their income but they have to be dedicated and caring, there is no chance to say "Not today, sheep". I feel that God looks on us in the same way, even when we do stupid things and need to repent, I'm so glad our Lord doesn't say "Not today, Clare!" when I have done something I'm not proud of.



There are so many examples in our bible and teachings about us all being God's sheep, for example in our communion service the *Angus Dei* we say/sing *Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.*

In John's gospel (1: 29) it says – "*The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of*

God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

We also have the example of the shepherd and his sheep in one of the parables Jesus told : *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'* I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (Luke 15: 3-7)

We are all God's lambs, cared for, and nurtured, wanted and remembered. Our part is to remember the Lord and pray that we know when we should repent.

Lent is the perfect time for reflection, when we should spend our prayer time reflecting on how Jesus suffered to take away our sins.

This prayer is based on the 23rd Psalm-

Father, I thank you because you are my Shepherd and I lack nothing. Thank you Jesus for making me lie down in green pastures and for leading me beside quiet waters.

Father, I thank you for refreshing my soul and for guiding me in the path of righteousness for your name's sake.

Lord, I thank you for delivering me from the darkest valley.

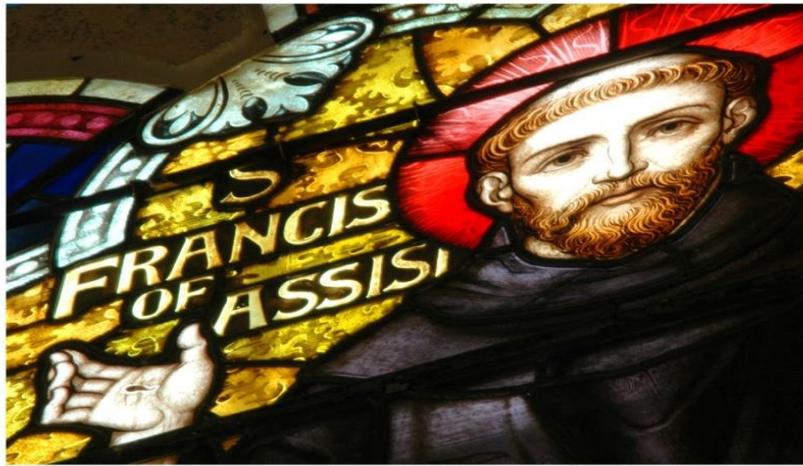
Thank you Jesus because your rod and staff comfort me. Amen.

A comforting prayer which brings me back to the fields in the green pastures of the Yorkshire Dales, where lambing will be taking place again with great fervour.

I'm always grateful to be one of God's flock.



St Andrew's, Dent The Sun Inn, Dent



Ewelme Benefice

2026 Lent study course on Zoom

“The way of the Franciscans A prayer journey through Lent”

There will be 6 evening sessions when we will be reflecting on St Francis’ simple desire to live the gospel more fully and follow Christ more closely. We will be thinking how that can have resonances for us today. Not only will we be looking at St Francis himself but also some of his followers who continued in his footsteps.

We will meet on zoom at 7.30pm for an hour on each occasion.

Themes:

February

- 19. St Francis: Solitude and relationship
- 26. Clare of Assisi: Poverty, contemplation and the cross

March

- 5. Bonaventure: Prophecy and everyday mysticism
- 12. Angela: Love of Christ, love of the world
- 19. Duns Scotus: Discovering God and our true self
- 26. The way of the Franciscans continues

Each session will be made up a short Bible passage and a reflection on that, with some questions for discussion.

Zoom details: Meeting ID: 811 3331 8043. Passcode: 346570

Please contact David Vonberg if you are interested or if you want to know more.
(revdavid.vonberg@gmail.com)

Becoming Church Together



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SHINE!

10am Sunday Morning

Dates for 2026

- 15th February
- 15th March
- 19th April
- 17th May
- 21st June
- 19th July

Venue:

Dursley CE Primary Academy,
School Rd,
Dursley GL11 4NZ

Everyone Welcome



SHINE! is aimed at families with primary school aged children. It's a chance for families to come together to play, sing, eat and learn for about an hour or so on a Sunday morning once a month.

St James the Great, Dursley

Music for Passiontide

29th March 2026

*Palm
Sunday*

6.30pm

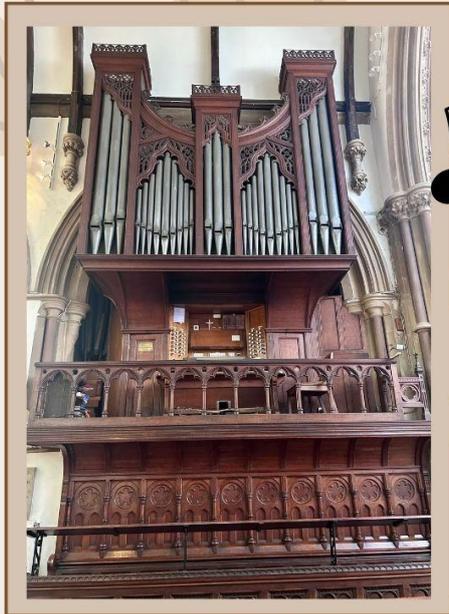
with St James' choir
featuring music by
Louis Vierne, Bob Chilcott and
selections from Handel's "Messiah".

**There will be an
Open Garden @ No 52 Woodmancote again
this year, with cream teas and one of Philip's
tantalising quizzes. Sunday 31st May 2026
It's never too early to pray for a lovely warm
sunny day!!
*Judith and Philip***



St James the Great, Dursley

Coffee, Cake and Music 2026



10.30am coffee,
tea and cake
11-11.40am
Recital



There is no charge, but a retiring
collection will be taken, the proceeds of
which go to the work of
St James' Church

Recitalists

April 25th Stephen Power

(Monmouth Parish Church)

May 30th Tim Selman

(Organ Scholar Lincoln Cathedral)

June 27th Keith Hearnshaw

(Concert Organist)

July 25th Piers Maxim

(Malvern Priory)

August 29th William Reynolds

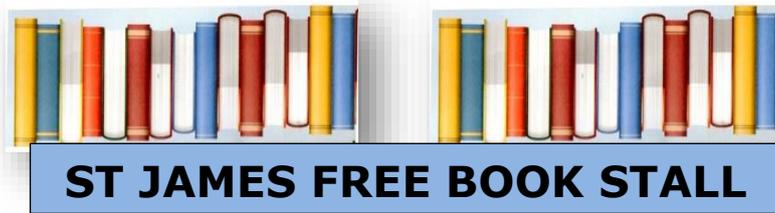
(Minster Church of St Mary, Swansea)

September 26th Andrew Millington

(Former DoM at Exeter Cathedral)

October 31st Bernard West

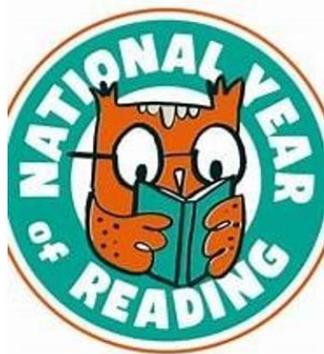
(Oxford)



Bookstall report for Messenger March 2026

I can't believe it's March already and this is the first report, in 2026, on the progress of "The Books."

Its popularity in the town continues to grow and we now have a brand new banner advertising the stall and linking it with the 'National Year of Reading' initiative.



St James Church

FREE BOOKS

Over 3,000 books ~ all free
Saturdays 9.00am – 12.00pm

This banner is certainly attracting more people in to see what it's all about.

We continue to support small local charities by giving them all the donations we receive on the second Saturday of each month. In the final six months of last year we were able to give a total of £1160.

In February we supported Aura's Dogs, a small, independent dog rescue organisation focussing on the rehabilitation and rehoming of abandoned and abused dogs.

Next month we shall be supporting the GL11

Although fund raising is no longer the main focus of the bookstall, with many coming in just for refreshments and a chat or listen to local musicians playing in the background, we have had a most encouraging start to 2026 and have been given over £750 in our first five weeks.

Now the plea!!

The logistics of putting out over 3,000 books on a Friday afternoon and packing them away again on a Saturday lunchtime is becoming more difficult. We don't ask for a regular commitment (although you may get hooked!) but if you could spare 30 minutes on any Friday at 3.30pm or Saturday at 12.00pm it would be really helpful. You don't have to "sign up" just appear. There is no lifting involved you just take books out of boxes.

Hope to see you soon and thanks for your continuing support.



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MUSIC NOTES FOR MARCH.....by Nigel Davies

It's official! Choral Evensong is good for the soul (or "well being" as one of the current most over-used terms would have it). In fact some churches are just discovering its existence. Tring Parish Church on "Facebook" are advertising their "first ever choral evensong" and a campaign has just been started, led by the Cathedral Music Trust to give choral evensong and the English choral tradition World Heritage Status. I'm not sure how that would actually work.....

Bijan Omrani, writing in the Daily Telegraph says "Ordinary people whether practising Christians or not, recognise the deep value of traditional evensong. Above all, it feeds a spiritual longing. In the splendour of our churches and cathedrals, people appreciate the power of the beautiful music, scripture, and rhythms of the Book of Common Prayer, which speak of the divine mystery without resort to sermons or wordy instruction. In the words of Canon Angela Tilby, people "come for God... relieved that no one is going to get at them." There is much in Canon Tilby's statement as sometimes churches can be over welcoming, particularly when people just want a quiet reflective moment. There is a huge difference between the bustle of the 10.00am Sunday Sung Eucharist with lots of movement, hand-shaking (or hugging), the chance to chat over a cup of coffee, and the quiet calm of Evensong. It has become fashionable to inject pauses in the Eucharist in order, I suppose, to instil a moment of reflection. But because the Eucharist is a drama which builds up during the service, these pauses lose the rhythm of the service, and rather than "calm" create a feeling of uncertainty as to what is happening.

But at Evensong, you can happily retreat into your shell and be immersed in a truly spiritual atmosphere. As a student, when possible,

I used to attend midweek evensongs at Llandaff Cathedral along with a congregation of just a handful, a fine choir and no sermon. It was absolutely wonderful with the feeling that it was "just for you" with the time and space to contemplate. A similar experience was attending the candle-lit Evensong at Magdelene College Oxford where you felt taken out of the humdrum of frenetic life and given the opportunity to feel revived.

Alexander Armstrong (of "Pointless" fame) was recently on the Radio Four chat programme on a Saturday morning, and he was asked about his taste in music. It seems he has a very wide understanding of all sorts of musical styles, but he was insistent that much of his love of music came from his boy choristership at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh, and particularly from Evensong which had "some of the finest music ever written". He continued his love of church music at Cambridge where he read English but had a choral scholarship to the prestigious Trinity College.

These days, St James' choir sings for two evening services a month, and when other important services in the calendar take precedent (Remembrance, various Carol Services, and Churches Together during Lent etc) we have no Choral Evensong. So when it is available (Easter Day is the next) please come and have a bit of spiritual renewal and enjoy the "still small voice of calm".

Music for March

1st	am	Ave Verum - Byrd	Byrd/Modal Mass - Shaw
8th	am	Ave Verum - Mozart	Missa l'Ora Passa - Viadana
15th	am	Informal Worship	
22nd	am	God so loved the world - Stainer	Darke in E
29th	am	O Saviour of the World - Goss	Stanford in Bb
	pm	Music for Passiontide	

Some recognisable faces in this 1966 Dursley Grammar school photo, but do you know who they are?



A scenic landscape photograph showing a stone bridge with five arches crossing a river. In the background, there is a large white domed building surrounded by lush green trees and rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The bottom portion of the image is overlaid with a solid green gradient.

Ian Venables Requiem
Elgar Te Deum / Benedictus
Finzi Lo, the full final sacrifice

📅 Saturday 28 March 2026, 7pm

📍 Tewkesbury Abbey

Jonathan Hope Conductor
Carleton Etherington Organ
Gloucester Choral Society

Book now at gloucesterchoral.com
Box Office **01452 768928**

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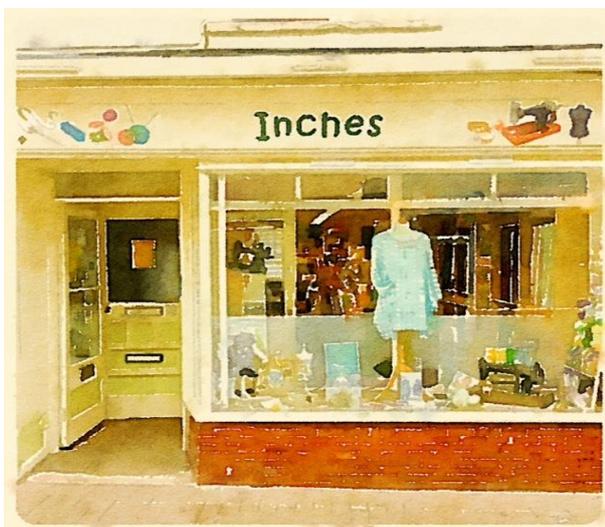
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Another Adventure Begins.... *by Joyce Lombarde*



Well, here I am at Cheltenham General at 7.30am and the adventure has already begun.

The alarm didn't go off at 5.30am, as planned (oversight on my part), so I had 5 minutes or so before my transport arrived. Panic!! Most things were ready, but I wasn't! Mustn't forget mobile and charger, finger prick equipment (diabetic) and letters and travel instructions.

No time to wash hair or shower, had put clothes out night before, no time to empty waste bin and take to the recycling etc.

Grabbed everything but forgot hearing aids(duh!!) Driver, old friend Bob Callaghan, calm and practical, good driver and although setting off late (10 mins) we arrived safely at 7.30am as requested, after busy morning work traffic.

I've been interviewed medically and given suitable clothing for the ward which I'd been told would be 'Tivoli' which my nephew pointed out was almost 'I love it' backwards (but see update at the end).

Then comes the crunch. I'm informed that my surgeon has d and v (diarrhoea and vomiting, for the uninitiated), so my op is cancelled, and they don't know when I can be fitted in, because they are all very busy.

So, they give me tuna sandwiches and a cup of tea and wait until 10.30am to ring Red Cross for transport back to Dursley (Bob having returned 2.1/2 hours before and I know that he's busy). I settle down to wait, doing word puzzles which I'd packed to do post op.

Various interviews with staff, signed up, form to save time at next appointment. More tea and the good news that Red Cross can take me home later in the morning.

I've been checked on regularly by various staff (including volunteers) to check that a) I'm still here, b) I don't need any more tea and c) that I haven't passed out or popped my clogs. However, when I return – Friday (3 days away) at the last report, I will be in HDU (High Dependency Unit) not Tivoli.

As Arnie says 'I'll be back!' – watch this space.

PS Joyce has had her operation and is doing well and we look forward to seeing you in church again before too long. Get Well Soon.



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DIGNITY
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

March 2026

(Joining Zoom details on Ewelme Benefice website)

Sunday 1st March – 2nd Sunday of Lent

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

6pm Lent Service at The Tabernacle

Monday 2nd March

12non Light Lent Lunch in the Parish Centre

Wednesday 4th March

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 5th March

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

7.30pm Lent Course via Zoom

Sunday 8th March – 3rd Sunday of Lent

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

6pm Lent Service at the Quarry Chapel

Monday 9th March

12noon Light Lent Lunch in the Parish Centre

Tuesday 10th March

2pm Communion at Holly Oak Care Home

Wednesday 11th March

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 12th March

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

11.15am Communion at Henlow Court

7.30pm Lent Course via Zoom

Sunday 15th March – Mothering Sunday

8am Said Holy Communion at St James

10am Reflective Worship at St James

10am Shine! Family Service at Dursley Academy School

6pm Lent Service at Dursley Methodist

Monday 16th March

12noon Light Lent Lunch in the Parish Centre

Wednesday 18th March

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 19th March

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

7.30pm Lent Course via Zoom

Saturday 21st March

9.30am Peal attempt

7pm Dursley Rock and Pop Choir Concert

Sunday 22nd March – 5th Sunday of Lent

10am Benefice Holy Communion at St James

6pm Lent Service at St Dominic's, Dursley

Monday 23rd March

12noon Light Lent Lunches – Parish Centre

Tuesday 24th March

2pm Communion at The Hollies Care Home

7.30pm PCC Dursley at St James

Wednesday 25th March

9am Dursley Academy School, end of term Easter service at St James

6pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

Thursday 26th March

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

7.30pm Lent Course via Zoom

Sunday 29th March – Palm Sunday

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

6.30pm Music for Passiontide at St James

Monday 30th March

7pm Stations of the Cross at St James

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CASTLEGATE



**Meetings on the
3rd Wednesday of the month
9.45am to midday
at The Community Centre,
Rednock School.**

COME AND JOIN US

We have interesting speakers and time to socialise. Most months we organise to go out to lunch after the meeting. We have Coffee Mornings each month as well.

You will in fact find many contacts in St James on a Sunday.

**Come and meet us at the Societies Fair at
the Chantry Centre
on 28th March 2026.**

Contact:

President:

Glenys Muir 01453 543391

Secretaries:

Val Sheen 01453 545596

Judith Staddon 01453 544312

**WE ARE ALSO CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO PUT
OUT TABLES AND CHAIRS IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE AT
9am AND PUTTING THEM AWAY AT 12 noon,
JUST ONCE A MONTH
(SEE ABOVE) WE WILL PAY!**

Bellringing *by Elizabeth Byrne*



We held our AGM on 29 January, 17 ringers present, with Rev Juliet in the chair. All the officers were re-elected:

Ringing Master – Isaac O’Shea

Deputy Ringing Master – Philip Pope

Secretary – Elizabeth Byrne

Treasurer – Anne Pope

Steeple Keeper – Andrew Ward.

We welcomed Alice Franklin as a new member of the band, having transferred from Stone, as she and Isaac are moving to Dursley.

As Isaac and Phil may sometimes be away at the same time, it was decided that we should have three other assistants, Andy Binstead, Jane Bull and Liz Byrne, who can fill in when necessary. Dates for the outing and tower dinner were decided.

Most of the band have now completed at least the Basic Awareness training safeguarding course.

We were delighted to congratulate Isaac and Alice on their engagement, announced on Saturday 31 January. Was it the fact that Juliet, at the AGM, had commented that there had been no weddings at Dursley for some time which spurred them on ...

To celebrate the engagement of two of our ringers.

At St. James the Great, Tenor: 19.5 cwt in E-flat

On Sunday, 8 February 2026, In 49 minutes

1344 Changes of Yorkshire Surprise Major

1 Andrew Bull

2 Anne Pope

3 Jane Bull

4 Alice Franklin

5 Andrew Ward

6 Tony Natt

7 Philip Pope

8 Isaac J. O’Shea (Conductor)

Specially arranged and rung as an engagement compliment to Alice Franklin and Isaac O’Shea, with the best wishes of the band for a long and happy union.



Handbells

We have a set of large handbells in the ringing room. Does anyone know their history – were they donated by somebody in memory of someone else. We would like to sell them and buy a smaller set which will be more useful to us. We cannot sell them until we know more.



Snowdrop Litanyby Canon Richard Morgan

We thank you, God, for all the beauties of nature, and now especially for the snowdrops, flowers of winter time, flowers of hope, pure white, springing from green, and opening to show green at heart.

As snowdrops bloom in the hardest time of year, thank you for all the hardships Jesus suffered for us: give us strength to endure through difficult times, the light of your truth in dark times, the warmth of your love when life seems cold and hard.

As snowdrops bloom before the spring, yet point us towards it: may we live by hope and share it with others.

As snowdrops' flowers are pure white: give us purity of hearts and lives, the purity of Jesus' love.

As snowdrop flowers bend down: may we live Christ's humility.

As snowdrops' stems and leaves are green, and their opening flowers show green at heart,

The colour of life and growth in most plants: may we grow in Jesus' life, by the power of your Spirit, and show your life and share it with others.

As snowdrops grow in spreading clusters: help us to be with others in love and care, and may your Church grow and spread, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Amen





The Big Plastic Count 9 - 15 March

During this week, I, along with thousands of people from households, schools and communities across the country will take part in the UK's biggest people-

powered

investigation into household plastic waste. You can go online at thebigplasticcount.com to sign up. By taking part in The Big Plastic Count (counting all the different plastic items you throw away or recycle in that week), you'll help gather important evidence to show the true scale of the crisis – and to tell the government we need them to produce less plastic.



How we show care for the environment at St James.

Our church toilet is kept well

stocked with toilet rolls manufactured in the UK in an environmentally friendly way from recycled paper. There is no cost to the church, as the rolls are gifted to us by a generous benefactor. All printing in the Benefice office is done on recycled paper.

There is a large container of environmentally friendly hand soap (also gifted to us) in the cleaning cupboard opposite the toilet, from which the small container by the wash basin can be refilled as necessary.





The cupboard also contains wood polish which is kinder to the environment. Environmentally friendly cleaning products are used in the Parish Centre too.

In the kitchen, we use environmentally friendly washing-up liquid (which is kinder to hands, too), and get the bottle refilled at a refill shop, which is cheaper and uses less plastic. Using washable crockery rather than plastic or paper cups cuts down

waste (thanks to our washer-uppers!). There is a box for recyclable materials (cardboard, paper, rigid plastic bottles and trays, glass jars and bottles), and a bin for food waste (tea bags, coffee grounds etc) which are emptied into our council recycling bins each week. We serve fairly traded coffee, tea and sugar, which not only ensures a fair price for producers, but also helps them to adopt farming methods that benefit their environment and mitigate the effects of climate change on their crops.



In the hospitality area of the church, there are boxes which anyone can use to recycle certain plastic items, (such as empty toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes, makeup containers, hand cream tubes and spent biro and felt-tips), which can't be put into kerbside recycling bins, but which are periodically taken to special recycling collection points in Stroud.



Our Sacristan, Sheila, collects our candle stubs, melts them down, and turns them into new candles - fantastic! Our communion wine is also fair trade.

The flower arrangers are switching from using non-biodegradable floral foam, which can pollute soil and waterways with microplastics, to using a new type of foam which is biodegradable, or using alternatives, such as chicken wire and vases.

We are signed up to a 'green' energy supplier for electricity used in both the church and the Parish Centre. Unfortunately, we had no choice but to replace our old gas boiler with new ones, as all the 'renewable energy' systems we considered (heat pumps, 'halo' heaters, under-pew heaters etc) turned out, after we had consulted heating experts, to be incompatible with our large, mediaeval church. However, we do expect the new gas boilers to be much more efficient

than the old one. All light fittings in the church and Parish Centre use LED or low-energy bulbs.

We are always happy to consider ways of further reducing our environmental impact - do let us know if you have any suggestions - please email Jan at Janet.vonberg53@gmail.com, or speak to her or Gill Mather.

PS

*If people have **glass jam jars**, but they must only have been used once, please can you bring them to the Benefice Office so that the Heaven Preserve Us Team can reuse them when we produce our preserves for the Christmas Market and Rachel, Clare and Judith will be very grateful.*

Please can you help Dursley Good Neighbours?

Dursley and District Good Neighbours is a team of volunteer drivers who can provide transport to medical appointments for folk who live in Dursley, Cam & district - this extends as far as Slimbridge, Berkeley, Sharpness & Stone. (and all the little hamlets in between.)



Each month, thanks to the contributions of the volunteer drivers, we are able to provide in excess of 100 journeys. However, on average, about 10% of requests end up being unfulfilled due to non-availability of drivers. This means those patients need to make alternative arrangements, change their appointment, or book a taxi.

This is where you could come in – more drivers will mean we can offer more journeys.

What do we need from you? Your time, your willingness to help others in your community and the use of your car.

You need to be a calm, confident driver. All drivers will need to undergo DBS checking. Passengers pay for their journeys at a rate in line with current HMRC guidelines. All journeys are booked and coordinated through me, the transport coordinator.

If you think you may be interested in joining the team, please ring 07436 430269 for a chat and to find out more. (Or come and chat to me at 'Books' on a Saturday morning).

Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing from you.

Joy Bell, Dursley Good Neighbours Transport Coordinator



**From Michael Holligan's funeral.
Gloucester Crematorium 23/8/23
A tribute by John Evans.**

The down-trodden
and those afflicted with physical
or mental struggles
are, for us, flames to gather round.
Through their suffering
is evoked compassion and love.
It brings us all closer to the Word,
and the Word is born of eternal love.
God bless the infirm!
Amen.

Michael Holligan was a Dursley character, cruelly robbed of any career or ambition by a motorbike accident as a teenager. Though lacking effective communication skills, and far too fond of a liquid diet that meant he was often feral, always unsteady and at risk, he was a most caring and kind person and persevered to make me understand whatever issue he had noticed in town that needed fixing! As an adult he was a regular worshipper at St. Mark's Church until it closed in the 2000s and he always seemed content to quietly sit at the back on his own. Surprisingly he had no obvious mobility issues walking up to the Altar rail to take Communion! Almost as if he had a different persona for that special purpose! Temporarily healed, restored and whole!

One Sunday Service, when I had known him for some time, I chose to sit with him in his regular pew separate from the rest of us. He looked at me, without any obvious concern and I felt a sense of satisfaction and acceptance! Lady Bountiful springs to mind! A bit later in the service, he purposefully got up and found a seat close to others in the congregation, leaving me feeling exposed and painfully alone! I sensed he wanted me to experience just that, but often wondered if he was aware of what a powerful message he passed to me that day and for which I am eternally grateful!

His funeral was an interesting small gathering of family members who had not seen each other or been in touch for a very long time, but found, that day a measure of comfort, possibly fleeting but no less touching. That was, to me, a compelling reminder of the strength and frailty of human nature.

Two years later, I had the privilege of being one of four individuals on a beautiful sunny morning standing in a cemetery on a hill, overlooking the village where Michael had enjoyed his early life, when he was

carefree and able to roam without restriction. As we prayed and his ashes were gently and graciously interred, I felt we were restoring him to his youth and the unfettered joy of being a child of God, certain that he would be celebrated in Heaven and remembered here on earth. God bless the infirm.

Jennifer says....EXERCISE MY WAY CAN BE REWARDING!

Are you sitting comfortably?

I find the loo is a suitable, safe, solid seat, always in the same place and same height!

Start with both feet flat on the floor, sit up straight with both hands resting lightly on your head.

ACTION reminds me of PE at primary school, I take no credit for the original!

In turn, touch your head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees & toes.

Then ears and eyes, and mouth and nose.. head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes..

BE GENTLE TO START AND REPEAT A FEW TIMES TO KINDLY WARM UP MUSCLES.

It exercises them all!

Next: Get up slowly. **PAUSE BEFORE YOU PIVOT TO AVOID GIDDINESS.**

Put the kettle on for a refreshing cuppa while you sing a silly camp fire song:

There was a man in China Town called
Chickeracker Chickeracker Choo Chin Chow,
His head was big and his feet were small
And he could hardly walk at all, singing
Chickeracker,, Chickeracker choo chicken nora,
Coney nora, iddy widdy wig.

O co, no co, hit him on the boe co,
Iddy wah, iddy wah, ing ping ping.

Now, he was married on his wife's wedding day
And a very nice match I'm glad to say,
He was born on the very first day of his life
And died on the very last day, last day
Singing.....

BY THIS TIME YOU ARE HELPLESS, FROM GIGGLING OR TOO MUCH SOMETHING, SO NEED TO GO OUT FOR A BREATH OF FRESH AIR. WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP SMILING. PEOPLE YOU PASS MAY SIMPLY THINK YOU ARE DOTTY, BUT AT LEAST YOU WILL NOT BE INVISIBLE! Especially if you walk tall with purpose!



WORD OF THE MONTH COMPETITION

Each Month there will be a new word which we need you to fit into a sentence. The sentence, which best conveys the meaning of the word and will be judged by the editors and Benefice Administrator, will be the winner. There will be a small prize.

The word for is **Mellifluous**

Send entries to the Office, Valerie or Judith by 20th

We thought all the entries were very good but after much deliberation we have chosen

Ennui: boredom.

Ennui, Ennui, Ennui,
How boring can each word be,
I'll cudgel my brain
It's meaning to gain
But nothing new's coming to me.

I'm bored, so bored, too bored
To fathom the heart of the word,
So, I'll sleep on my boat
Maybe dream while afloat,
And figure is out while aboard.

Congratulations go to Joyce Lombarde

The other entries.

Two tries at ennui. Not too boring, I hope.

Ennui

It often isn't hard to see
When folk are suff'ring from ennui.
Slumped in their chairs, they're half asleep,
They yawn and sigh and almost weep.
That is boredom, that's ennui,
And tedium and lethargy.

I'm Ennui the eighth, I am,
Ennui the eighth I am, I am,
I got married to the widow next door,
She's been married seven times before,
And every one was an ennui,
Ev'ry one a really tedious bore,
I'm her eighth old man who's an ennui,
I'm a tedious bore, I am.

Ennui - Bored

Sometimes when they give a sermon, - I feel ennui. Sorry Clergy, just having a bit of fun. Ha ha!

There was a great sense of Ennui amongst the audience as they left the theatre after an extremely long uninteresting performance!

In case ennui has got to you here's the Acrostic from Sally.



Acrostic Poem for March....by Sally Hayward

Many Daffodils, Crocuses, and Snowdrops
Always make a lovely display
Remember to put your
Clocks forward an
Hour and our evenings will gradually get lighter.





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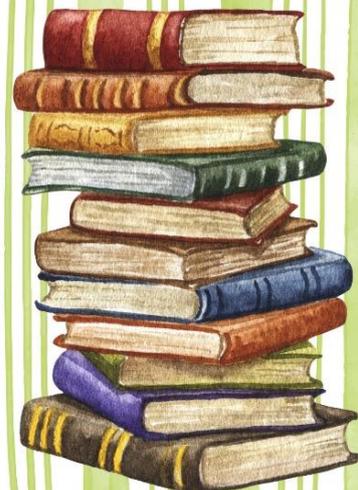
St James the Great, Dursley

Free Books

Here Every Saturday from 9am

ALL BOOKS ARE FREE

Everyone is welcome to come in



**Please leave book donations at the
back of church**

Caring for Creation together

Over the past 18 months, the Church House team has taken important steps towards caring more faithfully for God's creation. This has included understanding our carbon footprint, strengthening net zero carbon governance, and connecting long-term ambitions with the everyday life of churches, offices, and communities.



The next stage is about turning these plans into practical, visible action. Across the Church of England, one of the main ways this happens is through the Eco Church and Eco Diocese awards. The Diocese of Gloucester achieved Bronze Eco Diocese in 2021 and is now working towards Silver Eco Diocese, aiming to reach it this year. A key part of this process is encouraging more churches, schools and diocesan teams to engage with Eco Church.

Throughout Lent, we will be sharing reflections on the recent move to the new Church House premises, including the challenges and opportunities involved in working towards an Eco Office Silver award for our building. There is much to celebrate in the environmental features built into the refurbishment, as well as opportunities to continue improving.

Each week we'll take a look at one of the five Eco Church categories: worship and teaching, land, buildings, community, and lifestyle. Each week will also include a simple three-level challenge, offering ideas for what can be done with just five minutes, half an hour, or half a day. These are small, practical invitations to pause, notice, and take part in caring for creation, and to discover the joy and encouragement that often comes with it.

Sometimes 'Eco Church' can sound like an extra project, but it is often about noticing and building on what is already happening. Caring for creation shows younger generations that the Church takes its responsibility seriously, and for Christians, it is embedded in worship, teaching, and everyday discipleship.

Here are some tips for getting started:

- **Work together:** A small group of people with varied interests is enough to share ideas, plan actions, and encourage one another.
- **Track progress first:** The Eco Church survey shows what is already in place. Celebrate current achievements and focus on next steps without pressure to do everything at once.

Five-minute challenge: Be still and thank God for the ways nature supports life.

30-minute challenge: Take a gratitude walk in a garden or park, noticing five things you see, four you hear, three you feel, two you smell, and one you taste.

Half a day challenge: Join a friend for a litter pick, taking time to observe the beauty of creation.

Rory's faith story

We spoke to Rory Wilson, Church Buildings Support Officer for the Diocese of Gloucester about his journey to faith.

In 2004, just after his mother had died, Rory was sitting in her empty home and noticed a Bible. He opened it, started turning the pages and found that all the words that previously felt irrelevant suddenly made sense. Tears appeared in Rory's eyes as he remembered the sudden peace and understanding that came over him.

"It was a moment of euphoria, when everything changed. I didn't know what to do but I had to speak to someone about it. I picked up the phone and called my mother's neighbour, Richard who I knew was a Christian. It's hard to grasp how different life was before I came to know God. I was reborn as a different person."

Rory now keeps a small cross in his pocket, made of New Zealand jade as a reminder that God is always with him. "It helps me to reframe my thinking and to prompt me to take moments of quiet in the day for prayer."

Read Rory's full story at <https://gloucester.anglican.org/2026/faith-stories-rory-wilson/>



Easter services near you

Looking for a church to celebrate Easter? There are many opportunities across the Diocese of Gloucester to join worship. Use AChurchNearYou.com to find a service in your local area, see times, and plan your visit.

Events and training

More details for all these events at gloucester.anglican.org/events

Living Christ's mercy, justice and hope, Abbey Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BU, 10 March Join Bishop Rachel for an in-person event for organisations, churches and individuals wanting to deepen their involvement or develop a Christian response to people in prison and those leaving prison.

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/save-the-date-living-christs-mercy-justice-and-hope/>

Cheltenham Bach Choir: Spring concert, Tewkesbury Abbey, Church Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RZ, 14 March. A concert from one of the leading amateur choral societies in south-west England.

<https://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.uk/whats-on/>

Riding Lights Theatre Company – Night Falls, St Catharine's, London Road, Gloucester, GL2 0RR, 18 March

A new passion play that retells the Easter story, blending music and drama alongside space for worship and reflection.

<https://www.stcatharine.org.uk/events/riding-lights-theatre-company-night-falls>

Chrism Eucharist 2026, Gloucester Cathedral, GL1 2LX, 2 April

A special service where ministers and congregations gather from across the diocese to renew their commitments to God. The service starts at 11am on Maundy Thursday, a day Christians remember for the last supper Jesus and his disciples shared on the night before he was crucified. <https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/chrism-eucharist-2026/>

eucharist-2026/

Have your say

Visit Facebook [f/Diocese.of.Gloucester](https://www.facebook.com/Diocese.of.Gloucester), email Katherine at kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk, follow us on Twitter: [@glosdioc](https://twitter.com/glosdioc) view videos on YouTube **Diocese of Gloucester** or visit our website

gloucester.anglican.org

Echoes

Footfalls echo in the memory.
Other echoes inhabit the garden.
And the voices...
And the heat barely moving.
And the garden seat in the
summer heat..
And fields spreading their
gossamer infinitely.
And voices...

"I'm sure you need a rest".

And looking into the heart
of darkness...
The fields unfathomable.
Still as an hourglass.
And the lane narrowing
through fields into
infinity at last.

Elizabeth Oakley
A Dursley Poet

*(the first two lines are from Burnt Norton
by T.S. Eliot*

The rest of the poem is inspired by him).



PASTORAL CARE

If people are in need,
unwell,
at home or in hospital
Please contact the
Revd Dr Juliet Jensen.

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**THE REV JULIET
PRACTICING
FLIPPING HER
PANCAKE
BEFORE THE
RACE ON
SHROVE
TUESDAY 17th
FEBRUARY.**

*Picture by
Clare White*



FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS.



FUNERALS & INTERMENT SERVICES:

**We share our thoughts and prayers
with the families of those who mourn
the loss of those they love.**

Hector Barrett 28th January
Richard Graham 29th January both at St James

YEAR'S MIND MARCH

2nd Gladys Gabb 1988, Frank Newman 1996
3rd Dorothy Bidwell 2005
4th Harry Phillips 1996, Charles Pearson, Donald Hollins 2013
5th Bernard Brown 2009, Sybil Cook 2011, Audrey Durn 2018,
Lester Newman 2018
6th Dorothy Edwards 2005, Phyllis Wilce 2006, Joan Haines 2017,
John Swann 2020
8th Rowan Burton, Stella Cocke 2002
10th Dorothy Workman (Chick) 2002, Leslie Haynes 2012
12th Albert Wareham 1980, Terry Bloodworth 2019,
Kenneth Savage 2020
13th Paul Kent 2008, Harry Stanley 2016
14th John Goodison 2016
15th John Iwanczuk 2015
16th Richard Baker
17th Bob Clegg 2009, Glenys Jeans 2016, Susanne Thompson 2018
18th Sylvia Wilson 2016
19th Hubert Cuff 1965, Sidney Bloodworth 2002, Rose Sharp 2021
20th Hilda Margaret Mack 2006
21st Bernard Snow 2004, Jacqueline Strange 2025
22nd Rachel Wheeler 2015, Kevin Pagett 2021
24th Betty Large, Sarah Hill 2001
25th Beryl Burton 2019
27th John Sirett 2015
28th Vera Mills 2013, Joan Goulding 2017
29th Sarah Lloyd, William Boyles 2006, Brian Burton 2020,
Tony King 2025
30th Victor Moon, Ken Griffiths 2017
31st Clifford Hopkins 1971

FLOWER ROTA

THERE ARE NO FLOWERS IN MARCH AS IT IS LENT.

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More from the Church Registers.

**We Welcome into our church family by Baptism
at St James on 15th February.**

Ronnie Carrier, Olivia Davies and Charlie Quinn-Luckett

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT
DURSLEY**

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TO BOOK THE PARISH CENTRE.

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E-mail: ewelmebenefice@gmail.com

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Elizabeth Byrne Tel: 07788 800849

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