

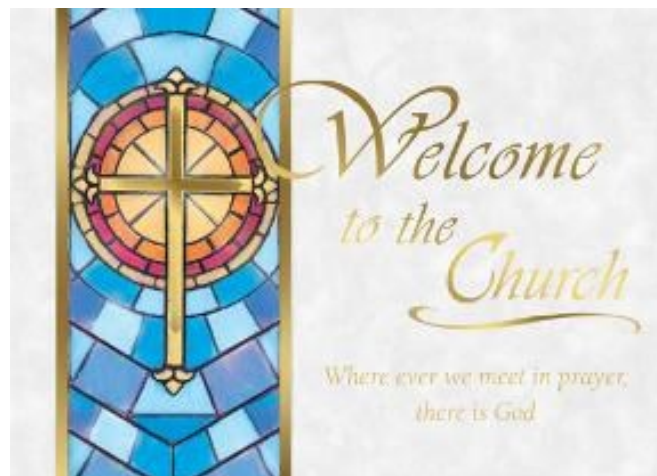


MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE
PARISH CHURCH OF
St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, RUNCORN.
www.runcornstmichaels.org.uk

ISSUE 180

MARCH 2025

Growing Together



In GROWING TOGETHER THIS MONTH:
HUMOUR NEWS

PUZZLE PAGE

SERVICES FOR MARCH
CELEBRATIONS

Vicars Message

Would you believe, it is nearly here, Lent !

It feels like only yesterday that Lent was on the doorstep and yet, here it is again. To some, this is somewhat of a heavy time as it brings forward heavy thoughts for the weight of the Easter preparations, to others it is a time of great Joy as the anticipation of Easter is fast approaching. For me it is all of the above yet with huge anticipation for the sacredness of this time within the Liturgical calendar.



Lent, to me has always been a sacred and very important time. A time where I look inwardly a little more and dig a little deeper into my own personal devotions and spiritual life. Lent is, to me, a return to the desert on my annual pilgrimage, a pilgrimage for which I must prepare. I wonder if I can invite you to also prepare for your own pilgrimage this Lent.

I find that as the pace through the desert this time of year quickens, it is more important than ever to ensure that this pace is controlled by certain spiritual exercises and tools, and I wonder if you have similar ideas of preparation yourself as you prepare for Lent?

Sacred Spaces- (Matthew 6: 5-8) This is the first and most important. Creating sacred spaces is Key to growing over Lent. These can be a dedicated place at home or just side-lining a sacred space in your heart at a specific time of the day to be with God. Regarding Home sacred spaces, I'd like to challenge you to create a sanctified space at home, a place to retreat, reflect and pray this lent.

Prayer – (Matthew 6: 9) It seems so basic, doesn't it? Yet you will be surprised how many people I come across who say, "I just don't have time to pray". Well, my reply, respectfully is, if you have a couple of hours each day to watch TV, or go out with friends, you have time to pray !

When questioned about prayer time struggles by our teens group the other night, I shared a practice called the Holy Hour Devotion, have you heard of it? Basically at the hour that Jesus Died, (Luke 23: 44-46) having set an alarm, we stop what we are doing no matter where we are and we pray for a couple of minutes, or preferably longer. This Holy Hour is a wonderful way of engaging in the discipline of prayer and reflection without and clashes that occur morning or evening?

Scripture- (John 5:39 – 40) Finally there is scripture. As I have said many times, if you are not reading your bible at least once a week you are missing the mark. Scripture fuels us in life and helps us keep focus on that which really matters. Specifically the desert scriptures are beneficial at this time of year. Have a look through the Gospels and see if you can find Jesus journey through the desert.

Then there are other practices you can follow for Lent such as Lent fasting, various devotions and reading spiritual books, but preparation at its very basic includes sacred spaces, prayer and scripture. These really are the best building blocks. If you need any more information or would like to explore these things further then please do make contact and I would love to come and visit you.

My very best wishes as you prepare for a blessed and Holy Lent

With every blessing,

Rev'd George



MARCH CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2nd March (Sunday before Lent)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Style Church



Wednesday 5th March (Ash Wednesday)

10.00am Holy Communion



Sunday 9th March (1st Sunday of Lent)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 12th March

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 16th March (2nd Sunday of Lent)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion



Wednesday 19th March

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 23rd March (3rd Sunday of Lent)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 26th March

10.00am Holy Communion



Sunday 30th March (Mothering Sunday)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

BIBLE READINGS FOR MARCH

Sunday 2nd March

Exodus 34: 29-35
Luke 9: 28-36

Sunday 9th March

Psalms 51: 1-18
Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

Sunday 16th March

Philippians 3: 17, 4: 1
Luke 13: 31-end

Sunday 23rd March

1 Corinthians 10: 1-13
Luke 13: 1-9

Sunday 30th March

Exodus 2:1-10
John 19: 25-27



APRIL CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 2nd April

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 6th April (5th Sunday of Lent)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Style Church



Wednesday 9th April

10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 13th April (Palm Sunday)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion



Monday 14th April

3.00pm Meditation Service

Tuesday 15th April

3.00pm Meditation Service

Wednesday 16th April

10.00am Holy Communion

Thursday 17th April (Maundy Thursday)

7.30pm Holy Communion & Vigil

Friday 18th April (Good Friday)

3.00pm Stations of the Cross

Saturday 19th April (Easter Eve)

8.00pm Service of Light

Sunday 20th April (Easter Sunday)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 23rd April

NO SERVICE TODAY

Sunday 26th April (2nd Sunday of Easter)

8.30am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 30th April

10.00am Holy Communion

St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

Upcoming Events for your diary

April 5th: Organ Recital Tickets £10 (inc light refreshments)

April 11th: Easter Bingo Tickets £1 or pay on the door (bring your own nibbles and drinks)

May 10th: Quiz Night Tickets £7 (inc refreshments) (but bring own drinks)

July 12th: Summer Fayre

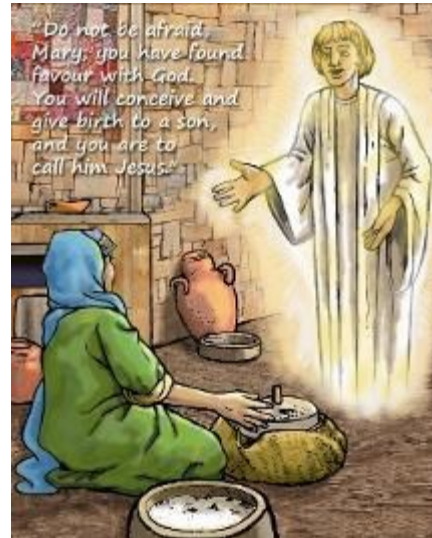
November 29th: Police Band Concert Tickets £12 (inc Mulled wine and mince pie)

Watch this space for more upcoming events

Prayer for March 2025

Dear Lord,
In this month when Lent begins, we remember the difficult journey Jesus made to the cross, to take upon Himself our sins and the sins of the whole world, to bring us the hope of eternal life by His resurrection. Lord, we bring to You our own journeys through our daily lives. We bring our disappointments, our bewilderment, our pain, as well as our happy times. We thank You that You are with us in and through all of it. We thank you that the message of Christmas is the message of Lent and the message of every day – You, our God, are with us always, giving us hope and life, because of Jesus.
Thank You that He made that journey for us, and all we have to do is trust in Him. Help us to do that and to share His good news with others, especially those in distress. We pray in His name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



Why you love your mother

Gratitude is a large part of Mothering Sunday. So, this month why not spend a few moments thinking back, and ask yourself this:

What quality or wisdom did your mother bestow on you in childhood, for which you are most grateful now?

Or you could go to the Sunday School, and ask the children for their response to this:

What does your mother do each day that makes you think that she loves you?

Activities at St Michael's Church

St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

Tea & Toast in the Church Hall

Next Tea & Toast is on 5th April & 3rd May

@ 10.00am to 12.00 noon

Admission: £2.00

Crafters Group

Crafters Group meets in the Church Hall every Tuesday from 10.00am to 12noon.

Everyone welcome, especially newcomers.



VML

Sing-along sessions on Tuesday nights @ 7.00pm in the Church Hall. So come along have a cuppa and a sing-along for just £2.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



March Birthday

Congratulations Stephanie Ashley, Lizzy Ratcliffe and George Done who celebrate their birthdays on March 1st, to Rhi Lawton who celebrates her birthday on March

2nd, to Joan Clare who celebrates her birthday on March 15th and to Barbara Houghton who celebrates her birthday on March 30th.

New Kitchen and redecorated Church Hall

At the beginning of January work started on our new kitchen in the church hall. The original kitchen had been there from when the Church Hall was built back in **1993/94**. It took approx: 3 weeks to complete the kitchen. As you see on the photo on the right its been decorated and new carpet tiles. The next stage is to replace the tables and chairs with more modern items.



LENT LUNCHES and PRAYER TIME 2025

During Lent we will be holding Lent prayer times and lunches on Mondays in the Meeting Room from **10th March until 7th April**. The prayer times will be half an hour of creative prayer, easy to join in with, **starting at 12.00noon**. The prayer time will be followed by a bread and soup lunch, kindly provided by Robbie and VML helper's **at 12.30 p.m.** Donations this year will be sent to the Runcorn Food Bank.



ALL WELCOME, WHENEVER YOU CAN MAKE IT



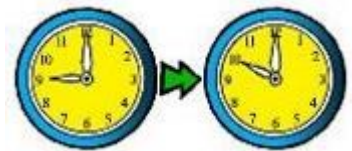
"No, not the steeple, the roof or the organ – it's for the vicar's post-Christmas-pre-Easter recuperation holiday-break."

Why a glass of milk may help save your life

Drinking a glass of milk a day could cut the risk of you getting bowel cancer by almost a fifth. So say researchers at the University of Oxford. They have found strong evidence that calcium protects against the deadly disease. According to the data, it takes only an extra 300mg of calcium a day (found in a large 240ml of milk, or a couple of pots of yoghurt) to result in a 17 per cent lessening of the risk of bowel cancer. Currently, one in 20 women and one in 17 men in the UK will be diagnosed with bowel cancer during their lifetime. It affects around 44,000 people each year in the UK.

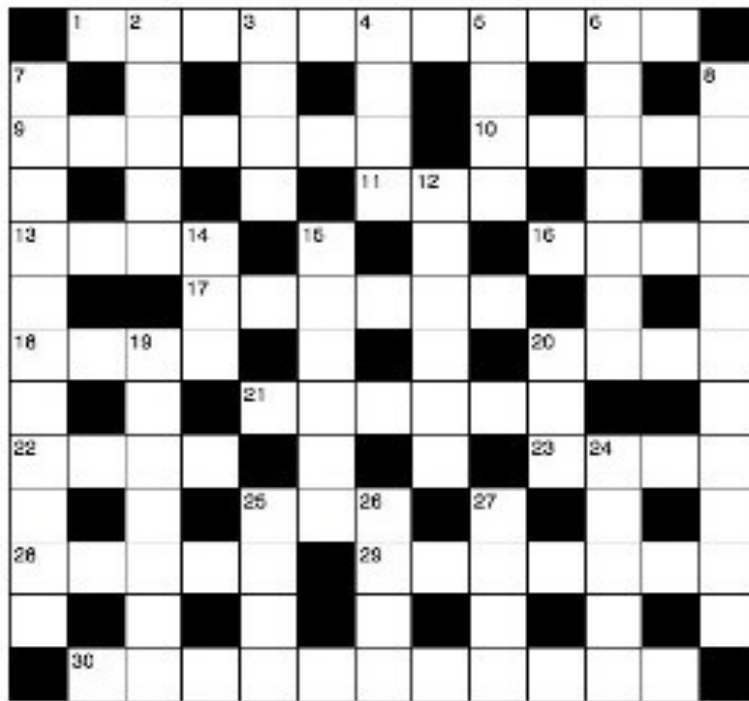


**DON'T FORGET TO PUT YOUR
CLOCKS FORWARD
ON SUNDAY 30th MARCH**



Hundreds of churches are part of networks offering 'warm spaces' to people

This past winter the Church of England has provided warm spaces for people struggling to pay energy bills. The C of E has been offering not just a refuge from the cold, but in many cases, food, activities and a chance to make friends and be part of a community. A total of **485 Church of England churches** so far have signed up to a **Warm Welcome Spaces** campaign – a UK wide network of more than **5,000 venues** across the country including libraries and churches – offering a warm place for anybody in the community. Nearly 400 Church of England churches are also part of the **Places of Welcome** network, coordinated by Church Urban Fund, which encourages community groups to provide their neighbourhoods with venues to meet every week all year round. As one volunteer in the scheme explained: "The cold is less of an issue for many of the people who attend – they are more concerned about isolation and the need for company and conversation. We also have some limited emergency funding to buy food parcels for people who are in need."



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

See how you get on with this crossword. There is no prize, but whoever gets it back to the Editor by March 22nd will be entered on a Roll of Honour in the next edition of *Growing Together*.

Across

- 1 These letters come between Romans and Galatians (11)
- 9 'You will not — me to the grave' (Psalm 16:10) (7)
- 10 King of Moab to whom the Israelites were subject for 18 years (Judges 3:14) (5)
- 11 Town possessing mineral spring (3)
- 13 Mede (anag.) (4)
- 16 High-fidelity (abbrev.) (4)
- 17 He succeeded his father Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kings 14:31) (6)
- 18 A son of Simeon (Genesis 46:10) (4)
- 20 Controversial religious book of the 1970s, The — of God Incarnate (4)
- 21 'He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you — — and hear' (Acts 2:33) (3,3)
- 22 'You — me together in my mother's womb' (Psalm 139:13) (4)
- 23 Edit (anag.) (4)
- 25 'Who has believed our message and to whom has the — of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1) (3)
- 28 Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:23) (5)
- 29 'When Mordecai learned of — that had been — , he tore his clothes' (Esther 4:1) (3,4)
- 30 Sympathetic (Proverbs 11:16) (4-7)

Down

- 2 'That was why his parents said, "He is — —; ask him"' (John 9:23) (2,3)
- 3 Integrated Services Digital Network (1,1,1,1) 4
- 4 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his — of thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7) (4)
- 5 Concept (John 8:14) (4)
- 6 'Do we, then, — the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law' (Romans 3:31) (7)
- 7 Industrious (2 Timothy 2:6) (11)
- 8 'I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be — in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you (Ephesians 1:18) (11)
- 12 'Out of the same mouth come — and cursing' (James 3:10) (6)
- 14 This was how many of the Jewish leaders described Jesus (John 10:20) (3)
- 15 Vitality (Job 20:11) (6)
- 19 He urged David to kill Saul at Hakilah (1 Samuel 26:8) (7)
- 20 'So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul — with the church and taught great numbers of people' (Acts 11:26) (3)
- 24 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord — — ' (Deuteronomy 6:4) (2,3)
- 25 Parched (Matthew 12:43) (4)
- 26 'In the image of God he created him; — and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27) (4)



Crossword answer
February

ROLL OF HONOUR

Two people got the
crossword
answer and they were

Jim & Shelagh Goffin
&
Wendy Sefton



If you are new to church or you have been coming to church a long time and you think an Alpha Course is for you. Then put your name on the sheet please at the back of church (if you come church) or if not, and you would like to register on the course email Revd George Roach at vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com



CONGRATULATIONS



to
Tom & Una Booth
who celebrate their
Wedding Anniversary
on
26th March 2025

Mothering Sunday: 4th Sunday in Lent

There is an old Jewish saying: *God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.*

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday' - as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century. In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church. During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families - which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day. In recent years the holiday has changed and in many ways now resembles the American Mother's Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day.



George saw his whole Parish
as a Mission Field

What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Psalms

This month we continue our examination of a selection of books from the Old Testament.

The Psalms have a unique place in the Bible, because most of the Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us (Athanasius of Alexandria).

The Book of Psalms contains 150 prayers or songs of praise, the majority (73) attributed to David, although some were composed later. They were mostly composed for liturgical worship. There are songs of praise, in which people joyfully express praise for God's work of creation and sustaining (eg 135 & 136). In others, the psalmist recounts a desperate situation and gives thanks for God's answer to his prayers (eg 30 & 116). There are a significant number of psalms of lament, both individual (eg 3-7; 22) and communal (eg 44), which begin with a cry for help. Some express deliverance from sin (51 & 130), or point to the certainty that the Lord has heard their prayer (7, but contrast 88). The theme of trust is central in many psalms (23, 62 & 91). The 'royal psalms' (eg 20, 21 & 72) point to the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus. There are also psalms teaching wisdom (eg 37, 49); 'torah' psalms, focussing on the law of the Lord (eg 1, 19 & 119), and psalms which celebrate the history of Israel and God's faithfulness (eg 78, 105 & 106). The psalms can help us in our own prayers, by providing us with models to follow, as they express our own deepest feelings as we approach God: *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul* (Psalm 23:1-3).



March
2025



Please Pray



Please remember the following people in your prayers throughout this month.

Graham & Nicola Aylett George Done
Helen Browne

Also please remember in your prayers anyone that you know who are home housebound or in hospital.

If you would like us to pray for someone close to you let the Pastoral Care Team know and they could visit someone at home don't hesitate to let them know.

....and the recently bereaved, especially any families known to you

Vera Parkinson Joan Fletcher
Cameron Perry Gerald Cook



If you have any antiques or collectables that need valuing please call and see James at Bridgewater Craft and Garden Centre for a valuation. Also if you are into Antiques or Collectable call in and see what is there.

INFORMATION

Revd George Roach
01928 832734

Email: vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com
Not on a Friday

Churchwardens

Robbie Littler 07718 133018

Rosemary Lunt 01928 569863

e-mail:

warden@runcornstmichaels.org.uk

If you want to book a wedding, baptism or funeral please phone this number 07718 133018 and ask for Robbie

A Lent Reflection

Somebody asked a Christian friend why he was eating doughnuts, when he had given them up for Lent! He answered, *'At the bakers I told God, that if He wanted me to buy doughnuts, He should provide a parking space in front. On the eighth time around, there it was!'* Rather than seeing Lent simply as a time to give things up, let's use it intentionally for self-examination, reading Scripture, penitence, fasting and prayer. At Jesus' baptism, God's voice says, *'You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.'* (Luke 3:22). The Holy Spirit then leads Jesus into the wilderness, where we find Him coming to terms with who He is. Satan's temptations challenge Jesus in key three areas of His identity: His divine sonship, political power and Messianic role (Luke 4: 1-13). It is as though Jesus was looking into the mirror at Himself to discern what kind of Saviour He should be. For us, Lent is an opportunity to hold up a mirror to ourselves and ask the question, *'who am I?'* It's a season of honest encounter with who we are, what we've done, and how we should live. What will we see when we hold up the mirror to ourselves? Keeping Lent, the 40 days running up to Easter, could mean taking time to read Scripture, studying a Christian book or spending five minutes each day in silence! We might fast by missing one or two meals, refraining from TV, alcohol, social media, or scrolling on our phones. All of these can help us to give more attention to God in our lives. Whatever we do, Lent is a season for self-reflection, as we put ourselves in a position to receive afresh the forgiveness and healing that God offers.

A prayer for Lent

We beseech you, O Lord, that as our bodies grow weaker for lack of food during the season of fasting, so our souls may grow stronger. May we learn to fight more valiantly against evil, and to strive more earnestly for righteousness. Thus, through abstaining from the fruits of the earth, may we bear more abundantly the fruits of Your spirit.

From the Gelasian Sacramentary (c. 500), the oldest official prayer book of the Western Church