

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

MAGAZINE INFORMATION

Please submit any information, articles,
poems, pictures etc. for:

APRIL MAGAZINE

by

MONDAY March 17th

Magazines will be ready to collect from Saturday 29th March

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It is important that MAG is included in the reference so that the subscriptions can readily identified on the bank statements. Thank you.

On Sunday 2nd March we are celebrating MICHAEL GRAVE, our church organist, who has served us for 50 years. After the service there were refreshments in the Parish Centre. The music played is listed below

Introit music before the service from 0945

The first piece was played at St Mary's for my audition and the second an early piece that I learned as a teenager and my Mother's favourite: I played it at her funeral.

Elegy by George Thalben Ball **Air and Gavotte by Samuel Wesley**

The sermon reflection - **O come ye servants of the Lord by Christopher Tye**

An anthem I used to sing at secondary school on Founders Day remains a strong favourite. An important role of the choir is to sing the praises to God. The wellbeing, training and love for the choir has been most important to me in my 50 years here. **O**

come ye servants of the Lord by Christopher Tye

The anthem in Communion. **Ave verum corpus by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

This is a fine and much-loved piece for the church music by one regarded as the finest composer. As a teenager, I learnt to accompany it on the organ. I feel it is especially important at Whickham where we hail, Christ the true body born of the Virgin Mary. **Ave verum corpus by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

To conclude the service, the piece of organ music everyone has heard of and love. A challenging early career piece as a teenager. I never tire of it, and of course, Bach, to any organist and many musicians, is the greatest composer ever. A most moving experience for me was to stand over his grave in St Thomas' Church, Leipzig. **Toccata and Fugue in D minor**

Michael says "In passing, I have chosen as the final hymn for the service "How shall I sing that majesty", the words of which, in my opinion, is guidance to a choir director. I hope you enjoy these music choices today and can I say that the reason I have been at St Mary's for 50 years is down to you all, the Clergy, the PCC, the Choir and the Congregation. Thank you"

NOTICES

MARCH 3rd Group 67 meet at St Mary's Centre at 1.30 for an afternoon of table-top games. At the meeting names and a £5 deposit will be collected from all who would like to have lunch at Gateshead College on Tuesday April 8th.

March 7th World Day of Prayer service will be held in St Mary's RC Church, Dockendale Lane at 1 30pm. Everyone is welcome

March 10th Mothers Union meet in St Marys Centre at 1 30pm for a short service followed by a talk entitled 'Life of a Listener'

PCC meets at 7pm – see report

March 22nd GLITZ concert

Saturday 1st March 2025	10am – Noon Prayer Space	
Sunday 2nd March 2025 Sunday next before Lent	8am Holy Communion 10am Sung Eucharist 3pm Gidside Choral Evensong	Exodus 34.29-end 2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2 Luke 9.28-36(37-43a)
Monday 3rd March 2025	1.30pm Group 67	St Mary's Centre
Wednesday 5th March 2025 ASH WEDNESDAY	10am Holy Communion	
Friday 7th March 2025	1.30pm World Day of Prayer	St Mary's RC Church, Dockendale Lane
Saturday 8th March 2025	11am Baptisms	
Sunday 9th March 2025 1 st Sunday of Lent	10am Sung Eucharist	Deuteronomy 26.1-11 Romans 10.8b-13 Luke 4.1-13
Monday 10th March 2025	1.30pm Mothers' Union	St Mary's Church & Centre
Wednesday 12th March 2025	10am Holy Communion	
Sunday 16th March 2025 2 nd Sunday of Lent	10am Sung Eucharist	Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18 Philippians 3.17-4.1 Luke 13.31-end
Wednesday 19th March 2025	10am Holy Communion	
Saturday 22nd March 2025	11am Baptisms	
Sunday 23rd March 2025 3 rd Sunday of Lent	10am Sung Eucharist 3pm Evensong	Isaiah 55.1-9 1 Corinthians 10.1-13 Luke 13.1-9 Genesis 28.1—19a John 1.35-end
Wednesday 26th March 2025	10am Holy Communion	
Sunday 30th March 2025 MOTHERING SUNDAY	10am Sung Eucharist	Exodus 2.1-10 or 1 Samuel 1.20-end 2 Corinthians 1.3-7 or Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.33-35 or John 19.25b-27

THE PARISH OF ST MARY'S, WHICKHAM

NEW ELECTORAL ROLL FOR 2025!

A Church Electoral Roll is a list of the names and addresses of every person who can vote in the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Through baptism we are made members of Christ's worldwide church and joining the Electoral Roll helps us play an active role in our local church in Whickham. The Electoral Roll is a list of people who consider themselves members of our congregation. To be eligible for the roll you must be sixteen years of age or older; baptised and a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it; resident in the parish or, if not, have regularly attended public worship at St Mary's for at least the past six months.

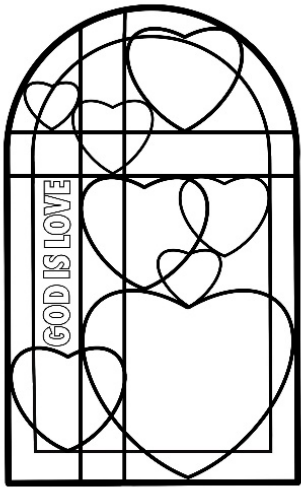
Being on the Electoral Roll means that you are eligible for election to the office of Church Warden, or to join the Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is also helpful for the church to be assured of your commitment to us, as you pledge to play a part in the life of our congregations. This can be by joining in our worship and other activities, supporting us financially, and standing for election or voting at the APCM on 27th April 2025.

Every six years a completely new Electoral Roll is prepared in the two months leading up to the APCM – and **2025 is the year for a new roll!!** So, during February and March this year **EVERYONE** will be asked to complete an Electoral Roll Application Form which will be available in Church and from the Parish Office, where you can return it once complete. The present roll has 250 members and it would be good if as many folk as possible who are on it re apply – and introduce new family members or friends who would like to join us!

Any questions please contact:

St Mary's Electoral Roll Officer - Sue Gornall

on 07980 883585 or asgornall@hotmail.com



There are so many ways and times that God is there to help us; ways that we don't always appreciate , and, sometimes we are not aware

Love can be expressed in 5 different 'languages': words of encouragement, quality time, gifts, acts of service and touch. Do you have a preferred language of love? As we think about St Valentine during this month, let's consider how God's love language is expressed in the word agape. This is exclusively found in the New Testament and

is uniquely defined by Jesus: *'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.'*

Jesus' giving of His life on the cross provides the model for how we can demonstrate God's love in our relationships with others.

It is self-giving: are we ready to put the other person first, as Jesus did when He died for us in our place. Are we generous with our time, words, money and service, whatever the cost?

It takes the initiative: are we ready to show love to those who don't deserve it or who we find hard to love? Do we have eyes of compassion to see their needs and a heart to love and serve them?

It is intentional: are we ready to get close to those in need around us, irrespective of the time we have or how we feel?

The story is told of Jesus asking a little child, 'how much do you love me?' The child replied *'lots and lots and lots!'* Then they asked Jesus how much He loved them. Jesus stretched out His arms wide and said *'I love you this much'*, as they nailed Him to a cross.

Trust - God's plans are perfect and never late. Sometimes, we feel that our time has come, but God's response seems

to be delayed. This isn't because He ignores our needs. Instead, it may reflect God's deeper care and preparation for us. His plans are always rooted in goodness, and His delays often give us the time we need to be ready for the challenges ahead.

After the Israelites left Egypt, God didn't lead them on the shortest path; instead, He took a longer route because He knew that facing war too quickly might scare them and make them long for their former life as slaves. This story teaches us that God sometimes delays our progress, not because He is unkind, but because He understands what we can handle and what we cannot. God's "no" or "not yet" doesn't mean He is being harsh or angry; it means He is looking out for our best interests. Trust in God; His plans are perfect and never late.

And then there is the situation when -

THE MAN whispered, "God, speak to me" and a meadowlark sang.

But, the man did not hear.

So, the man yelled, "God speak to me" and the thunder rolled across the sky.

But, the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God let me see you" and a star shined brightly.

But, the man did not see.

And the man shouted, "God show me a miracle" and a life was born.

But, the man did not notice.

So the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God", and let me know you're here" whereupon God reached down and touched the man.

But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

PCC Report – The members of the PCC meet every 2 months to manage the finances, our buildings and their maintenance and any other issues related to our church. Recently we have had many extra meetings to discuss the appointment of a new Incumbent. We have met with Swalwell PCC, who are part of our parish, we have had 2 meetings with the Archdeacon and the last meeting was with a Growing Mission Enabler – employed by the Diocese of Durham. He gave us thoughts to consider ways of directing our thoughts/ideas of what the parish needs to consider in advertising for an Incumbent. This is an ongoing situation which, hopefully, will be resolved for us all successfully. Chris left us with this parable, which we want to share with you all Anne Lindsley, Lay Chair of the PCC

The Parable of the Geese

A certain flock of geese lived together in a barnyard with high walls around it. Because the corn was good and the barnyard was secure, these geese would never take a risk.

One day a philosopher goose came among them. He was a very good philosopher, and every week they listened quietly and attentively to his learned discourses. ‘My fellow travellers on the way of life,’ he would say, ‘can you seriously imagine that this barnyard, with great high walls around it, is all there is to existence? I tell you, there is another and a greater world outside, a world of which we are only dimly aware. Our forefathers knew of this outside world—for did they not stretch their wings and fly across the trackless wastes of desert and ocean, of green valley and wooded hill? But alas, here we remain in this barnyard, our wings folded and tucked into our sides, as we are content to puddle in the mud, never lifting our eyes to the heavens which should be our home.’

The geese thought this was very fine lecturing. ‘How poetical,’

they thought. 'How profoundly existential. What a flawless summary of the mystery of existence.' Often the philosopher spoke of the advantages of flight, calling on the geese to be what they were. After all, they had wings, he pointed out. What were wings for, but to fly with? Often, he reflected on the beauty and the wonder of life outside the barnyard and the freedom of the skies.

And every week, the geese were uplifted, inspired, moved by the philosopher's message. They hung on his every word. They devoted hours, weeks, months to a thoroughgoing analysis and critical evaluation of his doctrines. They produced learned treatises on the ethical and spiritual implications of flight. All this they did. But one thing they never did. They did not fly! For the corn was good, and the barnyard was secure!"

Three nuns died and went to heaven

St Peter said " you have been so good and pious during your life. I am going to let you go back to earth as anyone you would like to be.

The first one said " could I go back as Madonna?" Yes

The second one said "Could I go back as an old film star – Sophie Loren?"

Yes

The third one said "Could I go back as Sara Piperlina ?"

St Peter said "I don't know her.

The nun replied " she's on the front page of all the newspapers

St Peter went to get the newspapers.

He said "No, no my dear that's not Sara Piperlina.

That's - the Sahara Pipe Line.

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Like many traditions and festivities, Mothering Sunday began with a religious purpose.

Held on 4th Sunday in Lent, it was originally a day to honour and give thanks to the Virgin Mary, also known as Mother Mary. Such celebrations required people to visit their 'mother' church – the main church or cathedral in a family's area.

The spread of Christianity throughout Europe in the 16th century increased the celebrations and firmly put Mothering Sunday on the calendar. It was believed to be essential for people to return to their home 'mother' church to make it a true family-honoured occasion. The gatherings reunited families and gave children, who worked as domestic servants, or apprentices away from home, the opportunity to have the day off to join their family and see their mother.

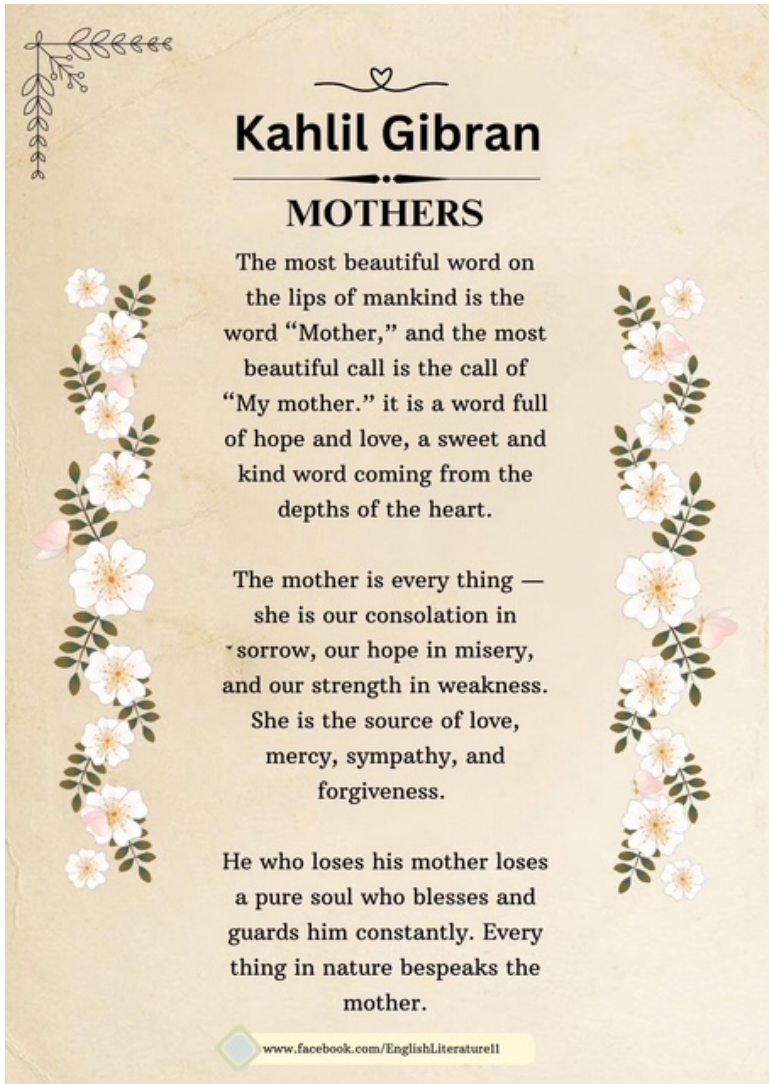
Throughout the year in England and Ireland people would regularly visit their nearest chapel, their 'daughter' church, whereas on Mothering Sunday, as well as baptisms, people would visit their 'mother' church loaded with offerings of thanks. Such celebrations were similar to the Roman ceremonies of the Mother Goddess. The religious day increased its scope from thanking Mother Mary to a 'mother' church celebration and finally opened up as an occasion to thank and appreciate all mothers, thus creating Mothering Sunday.

It was once known as 'Refreshment Sunday', where fasting could be 'eased' for the day and people could enjoy a delicious meal together as a family. It was an opportunity to indulge in some special rich food for the day, breaking up the hard slog of Lent. Traditionally, after church, families would tuck into Sunday dinner of either roast lamb or veal and the mother would be made Queen of the feast. Similar to today, Mothering Sunday was about spoiling the mother.

Once known as 'Simnel Sunday', families would gather with freshly baked delicious Simnel cakes. Made of two rich fruit layers boiled in water and then baked, before having almond paste spread on

top and in the middle of the layers, the cake would have been decorated with 11 balls of marzipan to represent the 11 disciples (not including Judas), whilst sugar violets were also a popular decoration for the cake. Such a treat midway through Lent was greatly looked forward to.

I hope all MOTHERS enjoyed their day. We prayed for you



Hard choices at sea –

After a few of the usual Sunday evening hymns, the vicar welcomed a guest preacher, an old childhood friend. With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit to speak: “Some years ago a father, his son and a friend of his son were sailing off the British coast,” he began, “when a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright, and the three men were swept into the ocean.”

The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers near the back. For the first time since the service began, they looked vaguely interested. He continued, “grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the excruciating decision of his life....., to which boy should he throw the other end of the line. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian, and he also knew that his son’s friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched with the torrent of the waves. As the father yelled out, “I love you, son!” he threw the line to his son’s friend. By the time he pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beyond the raging swells of the black of night. His body was never recovered.

By this time the two teenagers were sitting straighter in the pew, aghast at what they had heard. “The father” he continued “knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus, and he could not bear the thought of his son’s friend into an eternity without Jesus. Therefore he sacrificed his son. How great is the love of God that he should do the same for us.”

With that the old man returned and sat back down in the chair as silence filled the church. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man’s side. “That was a weird story”, ventured one of the boys, “no really loving father would ever do that, give up his son’s life just on the hope that the other boy would become a Christian.” There was a pause. “Well”, the old man replied, glancing down at his worn Bible. A smile broadened his narrow face, and he admitted, “it sure isn’t very usual, is it? But I told you that story tonight, because it not only shows what it must have been like for God to give up his Son to die for us, but because the story is true – you see, I was the son’s friend.”

‘He gave us eyes to see them’: ‘Menorah’ by Roger Wagner

In the midst of the dreaming spires and Gothic splendour of Oxford stands the Ashmolean Museum. Its classic proportions are a contrast to the buildings around. Within, the addition of thirty new galleries has doubled the exhibition space, and the visitor to the museum will discover a wealth of beautiful and impressive works – Renaissance drawings, Eastern art and British paintings. The last category includes this month’s work: ‘Menorah’ by Roger Wagner. It was painted in 1993 and at that time it was the largest contemporary painting acquired by the Ashmolean. It is now on loan to St Giles’ Church at the northern end of the city.

Roger Wagner was born in 1957. He graduated from Oxford and now worships at the Romanesque church of Iffley. He works on a small scale with book illustrations, but also creates large canvases that juxtapose traditional religious images with contemporary symbols in a startling and arresting way. The background of ‘Menorah’ is Didcot Power Station, which can be seen from the windows of the Oxford-London train. The central chimney and the cooling towers around form the shape of the seven-branched candlestick of Judaism. In front of them are the three crosses of Calvary. Around the scene of crucifixion we can see a couple consoling each other in the foreground and isolated individuals wandering in the mud in grief and perplexity. They are dressed in Hasidic robes.

An earlier work of Roger Wagner’s is ‘The Burning Furnace’ where angels are painted in the setting of a Victorian iron works. It is the same contrast of ancient and modern in this painting: the Good Friday of 2000 years ago and an industrial, bleak landscape of today. The artist is also contrasting the menorah of Judaism and the cross of Christianity – the suffering of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Saviour.

The menorah would burn in front of the Holy of Holies as a sign of God’s invisible presence. In the book of Revelation, St John describes his vision of Jesus the Lamb in the midst of the same seven flaming torches, moving with grace and glory. Here in ‘Menorah’ the figure of Jesus is

insignificant against the immense scale of industrial buildings spewing out pollution into the bright sky.

But it is that figure of Jesus on the Cross who draws us this month in Holy Week and draws us in this painting. The mourners around look like figures in a concentration camp: victims of man's inhumanity to man. The cooling towers are a vivid reminder of our violation and destruction of mother earth. And in the centre we see our crucified Lord. We hear Isaiah's song of the suffering servant that there is no sorrow like this sorrow. We also hear Jesus crying 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' And we can ponder this painting as we ask, Is it a sign of the absence of God, or, like the Menorah lit in the temple, a sign of the presence of God? There is human chemistry creating the destruction of life and earth as depicted by Roger Wagner. Can we proclaim a divine chemistry at work which will transform suffering and death into the new life of Easter in the power of the Resurrection?

VALUES..... One day a farmer's donkey fell into a well. The animal cried loudly for hours, while the farmer tried to find something to do to get him out.

Finally, the farmer decided that the donkey was old and the well was already dry and needed to be covered anyway; that it really wasn't worth pulling the donkey out of the well..

He invited all his neighbours to come help him. They each grabbed a shovel and began to throw dirt into the well.

The donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly loud. Then, to everyone's surprise, he quieted down after a few shovelfuls of dirt.

The farmer finally looked down into the well and was amazed at what he saw... with each shovelful of dirt, the donkey was doing something incredible: It was shaking off the dirt and stepping on top of the dirt. Very soon everyone saw, with surprise, how the donkey reached the mouth of the well, went over the edge and trotted out...

Life is going to throw dirt at you, all kinds of dirt... the trick to getting out of the hole is to shake it off and use it to step up. Each of our problems is a step up. We can get out of the deepest holes if we don't

give up...

Use the land they throw you to get ahead!!!

Remember the 5 rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hate.
2. Free your Mind of distractions.
3. Simplify your life.
4. Give more and expect less.
5. Love more and... shake the dirt, because in this life you have to be a solution, not the problem!

Values are passed on from generation to generation. What values are we teaching our children? Let us not teach our kids the wrong ways and means to win. Instead, let us pass on the beauty and humanity of a helping hand. Because honesty and ethics are winning!"

AN ANALOGY:

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere. Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!!"

Wrong answer.

You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup. Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea. Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

So we have to ask ourselves... "what's in my cup?"

When life gets tough, what spills over? Joy, gratitude, peace and humility?

Anger, bitterness, victim mentality and quitting-tendencies?

Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it.

Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation, resilience, positivity; and kindness, gentleness and love for others.

Source: Austin Tang



vocal trio

presents

threads of time

with John Treherne MBE, piano
and guest
Daniel Johnson

music including
Shropshire Lad song cycle by Butterworth
Handel, Tallis, Mozart and more

Saturday 22nd March, 7 pm
St Mary's Church, Wickham
admission free

retiring collection in aid of Christian Aid 

REGISTERS

Holy Baptisms

8 TH February	Myles William Jackson-Hind	Sunniside
23 rd February	Clara Barbara Franklin	Burnopfield

“May they grow in the faith which they have been baptised and come to confirmation”



"Miss Me But Let Me Go"

By Christina Rossetti

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not for long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that once we shared
Miss me, but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me, but let me go.

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