

Seek



March 2025

The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge
www.stmarksnewnham.org

A Message from Church Warden, Nigel Porter

Dear All

On Sunday 2nd March the two parishes of St Mark's Newnham and St Mary's and St Andrew's Grantchester will come together to celebrate God's love and mission, but more specifically we will come to say a very sad farewell. At the end of this service we shall say a goodbye to an amazing person who will be finishing her time with us. Yes – Bethan, our fantastic curate.

Bethan first came to us in July 2022 to support Rachel Rosborough. Little did we know how much she would give, life and soul, to our parish. Her enthusiasm, determination, her conversation, her explosion of ideas, her joy in God's love and her vision of where we should be going have been such a delight and so uplifting for us all. However, her determination to remain as curate after the departure of Rachel was her most amazing gift of all.

Speaking as a Churchwarden through the period of the latest vacancy, Bethan's help, support and advice have kept me going and I cannot thank her enough. Not only has she been a huge force for good in our churches and parish life but she and her husband have also joined in local community life forging links with a number of groups within our parishes.

So, we shall miss her enormously as we remember all she has done for us. She will leave a huge gap in the life of our church communities. We thank her for the times of joy, for her laughter and, just occasionally, for being told off - I still bear the marks (only joking!).

So, I end this short piece with a message of love to you, Bethan. We all wish you joy in your heart and joy as a mother. May the peace and love of God be with you always wherever you go.

Nigel Porter

A Letter from Bethan, our Curate



Dear Friends

It doesn't seem very long ago that James and I came to meet Rachel, in December 2021, to look round these two parishes and see whether they might be the place God was calling us for my curacy training. Somehow, here we are just over three years later as my role as curate here comes to an end! Time flies!

My last Sunday ministering in these two wonderful parishes, Grantchester and Newnham, will be the 2nd March, which may well have passed by the time you read this. If it hasn't, please do join me at St Mark's at 9:30am for my final service and a bit of a celebration of the last three years. We won't be moving immediately from the area as we will be welcoming our first child in April and continuing to live here through my period of maternity leave. I'm sure we'll see many of you around during that time.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you who has welcomed us here and been part of my curacy. I have learnt so, so much from each of you. My expectations, from when we first arrived, of journeying alongside you, gradually dipping my toes in, then beginning in the learner pool under Rachel's guidance and supervision, very quickly

changed as it became the deep end when a year into my curacy she left. It has, however, been an amazing opportunity to learn and to grow alongside a much greater range of teachers than had Rachel been in post my whole curacy.

I've had the privilege of not just one Training Incumbent but three! Thank you to Rachel, James Shakespeare and Jim who has helped me tie loose ends and reflect over the last eight months. But I have also been able to work much more closely with Tom and Andrew too. We are blessed that they choose to serve our churches in addition to their other jobs and commitments. It has been great to learn from each of them and be part of the team. Thank you both.

The vacancy and shape of the last three years in these parishes has meant that I have worked even more closely with many of you and it has been a privilege to be part of the different ministries you offer from Toddles, Junior Church and Pizza by Candlelight to policy discussions at PCC or journeying together when you have welcomed me to hold space for your families at times of grief. It has been a privilege to be alongside you.

I've learnt a lot about church identity too as you have transitioned from one vicar, through the vacancy and parish profile process, to a new vicar. Trying to articulate one's identity is perhaps one of the hardest tasks to do. Sometimes it takes someone from outside to tell us what is visible to them in our actions and manner, which to ourselves are so familiar we cannot see it.

The readings for the last Sunday I will be leading are about the Transfiguration, Jesus's appearance being

changed on the mountain top in the presence of Peter, James and John (Luke 9:28-36). Jesus' face shines and his physical appearance is transformed to reveal his identity as God. This amazing story is reflected upon in the second reading, 2 Corinthians 3:12-4.2. We are reminded in that reading, that it is through our actions and the way we live and work together, our identity, that Christ can be revealed to others.

This poem by St Theresa of Avila, comes to mind:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

I am excited to see how you continue to find your identity as the worshipping communities of Christ in this place and serve in and with your communities.

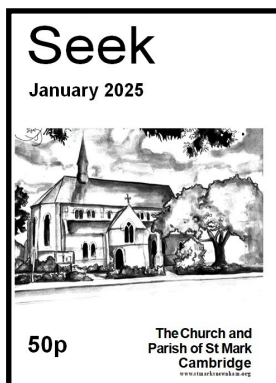
I, too, will be getting used to the new part of my identity as mum and in searching for the new context in which I will minister now I have finished my training. I'm not sure yet what it might look like or where it may be. But I hope that it will be a place

where Christ shines through the hands and feet, the eyes and the faces of each person in that community and inspires me to live in the same way.

As I take these steps on the next chapter of my journey, please pray for me and for James and the safe arrival of our new baby, as I will be praying for each one of you.

Bernan

SEEK for 2025



This is a very belated thank you to all our distributors who, month by month, ensure that over 200 copies of SEEK are circulated throughout the parish, and to thank, especially, Sue Wagner who coordinates this distribution.

It is a good time too to thank our printers, Parrot Print, for their helpfulness and efficiency. We never cease to be amazed by how quickly they get Seek ready for publication.

Please be ready to pay your distributor the annual subscription of £5.00.

Cambridge Money Advice Centre : Charity of the Month



Our Charity for the Month is sponsored by Shev Roser who asks you to donate generously. The collection Sunday will be the 16th March, not the 9th when access to the church will be limited by the Cambridge Half Marathon.

This article has been written by Fiona Charge, the Centre Manager.

"It was so fantastic to meet you all. I left feeling very empowered and happy to be starting the journey to get the control back. Honestly, I slept better last night than I have for a long time. I will get working on my figures. Thanks again..."¹ Julie

Here at Cambridge Money Advice we know one of the hardest parts of getting help is making the first contact and coming to our office. Despite the continual increase in need for debt advice and frequent content in news programmes there is still a huge amount of fear and shame involved in seeking help. *Julie* had finally realised that, after 18 months of just hoping it would all go away, she needed help to sort out the debts related to the breakdown of her relationship. She gave this quote after her first meeting with her two advisers.

We work with people living in and around Cambridge who are struggling with unmanageable debts to get things back under control. As a regulated debt advice charity we can work with creditors to find a solution – either a payment plan or, when appropriate, a debt write-off by providing evidence about the actual situation. We stand in the gap between the creditor and the debtor and help each to understand the other. All this is free to our clients; this is why we need to ask for financial support from people such as yourselves.

When someone comes to us the first step is to look at the income and expenditure and the debts; this may take several meetings as the

¹*Sent by a client after their first meeting with permission but a changed name.*

lives of our clients are complex and debt may be only one of several areas they need help in. We then stabilise the situation, contact creditors and finally make recommendations for solutions. We will then help our clients put these into place whilst also ensuring that they are managing their money to the best of their abilities.

So much debt advice is now available via other agencies but it requires phone or internet capabilities and for the clients we see the complexity of their issues makes these methods too difficult to deal with. Many of our clients do not have computers or so called smart phones to be able to engage successfully and, for others, their anxiety is heightened by using the phone.

Over the last year we have supported people fleeing abusive relationships, people whose relationships have broken down or who are going through mental or physical health issues or who have lost jobs and homes, and those for whom written communication is difficult. We see people who contact us directly and those who are signposted or referred by other agencies. We will work with someone for as long as it takes and as long as they remain committed to the process, and this is why we get results and is also why we regularly have a waiting list.

Sadly, most of the people we see delay seeking help so the situation grows more complex with threats of eviction, court action and bailiffs often being the prompt to take action. Like *Julie* they are just not ready to get help; however these delays lead to increased cost and complexity in their cases. It is not unusual for a client to have more than 12 debts and the average amount of unsecured debt is running around £12,000.

We have an amazing but small team of trained and experienced volunteer debt advisers. They show an amazing mix of compassion and care to the clients they help, whilst also being willing to challenge creditors to get the best for the clients. They have an eye for detail and they are able to apply the principles of debt advice to complex situations. This year we want to grow this team once more so if you would like to come and join us please do get in touch or apply via this link <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/opp/debt-advisers>. I should warn you it will change your life in many ways!

When I come to see you in March I will share some of our clients' stories in more detail. We are able to make a huge change in people's lives, taking them from a place of darkness back toward hope. You will have heard many times on the news about the cost of living crisis or the choice between heating and

eating – we are seeing it in real life here in Cambridge more and more.

For those who like numbers our annual report for 2023 can be found here: www.cambridgemoneyadvicecentre.org.uk/documents/MAC_CC_Annual_Report_2023.pdf. Each case we help is a life improved and in some cases a life saved. This past year we will have seen a similar number of clients with even more debt.

Our funding comes from churches and individuals, and grant funding from the council and local charities. Our main cost is to pay me as Centre Manager and I am our only paid member of staff. My role is to do all I can to keep things running smoothly, handling some of the admin and also ensuring we remain compliant to the various FCA regulations which underpin our work, whilst also supporting the volunteers and doing some debt advice myself and triaging new potential clients. The remainder of our budget goes on paying for our membership to Community Money Advice, our various insurances, training and room rental and communication costs.

Finally, I want to thank you in advance for your support both financially and also in prayer – what we do can be challenging as well as rewarding.

Fiona Charge, Centre Manager

Contact details <https://www.cambridgemoneyadvicecentre.org.uk/> or 01223 727455

A final quote from another client

"I have spent all my life through childhood trauma and my mother in fight or flight mode unable to teach me debt management. Through Cambridge money advice my debts are getting resolved and I am managing my money. That has given me a sense of pride and my self esteem has skyrocketed. I almost look forward to my bills going out of my bank as I feel like a responsible adult. I got treated with patience, time, empathy, non-judgmental and overall I felt safe in the hands of the team that dealt with me. Forever thankful"

Pill Packets

I apologise for having to withdraw the St Mark's very successful pill (blister) packet recycling service. Superdrug is no longer able to take our large amounts due to lack of storage. After much research it is clear the one national recycling organisation, Terracycle, is now only collecting through Superdrug.

A small number of packets can still be dropped at Superdrug (by the pharmacy counter). By the way, 'all foil only' (no mixed materials) packets can go in our Blue bins (recyclable).

Eleanor Jones

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The Four Loves : A Lenten Course on Love for St Mark's

'God is love' says St John (1 John 4.8, 16); 'All you need is love' sang John Lennon. But what does love really mean? Sixty-five years ago C. S. Lewis published his classic book *The Four Loves*, an expansion of a controversial series of radio talks he gave in 1958. Lewis discussed four Greek words for love (eros, storgē, philia and agapē), and this coming Lent four gifted speakers will be exploring their themes in one-hour sessions on Sunday afternoons from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Our speakers and themes are as follows:

9th March eros (romantic love/desire) Mike Thompson

16th March storgē (family love/empathy) Debbie Whitton Spriggs

23rd March philia (friendship love) Andrew Hurst

6th April agapē (New Testament/Christian love) Jim Robinson

Each session will begin with an address of between 15 and 20 minutes on the given type of love. People are not expected to read Lewis's book in advance; the speaker will unpack helpful insights from the relevant chapter and add their own thoughts to its ideas and themes. C. S. Lewis will thus be a resource rather than the focus. The speaker will then lead a discussion, taking questions and posing others to allow discussion by the audience. We will close each session with a short service of evening prayer and then have tea at 4.00 pm.

Come and join us as we seek to learn more about the love God calls us to!

PCC News

The PCC had its regular meeting on the 30th January. Excitingly, the meeting began with singing of *Amazing Grace*, before a more typical time of reflection on Romans 11.

Sandi, our interim treasurer, shared the annual accounts; the phenomenal work that has gone into these is greatly appreciated.

Dates were set for the annual meetings and Felicity outlined the procedure and timetable for drawing up the new electoral roll.

A central topic of discussion was the formation of Junior Choir, for which the PCC voiced wholehearted enthusiasm.

Other points covered were the introduction of card payments at church fairs, church social media and the possibility of livestreaming services.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

The next PCC meeting will be on Tuesday, 1st April.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held after the 9.30am service on 18th May and a shorter PCC meeting will immediately follow this.

Felicity Parker

Parish Treasurer Needed

Do you have experience of working with finances?

Might you be able to fulfil this important role for the parish?

We'd love to hear from you.

For an informal chat or for more information please contact the vicar:

revjerobinson@gmail.com 01223 455 463.

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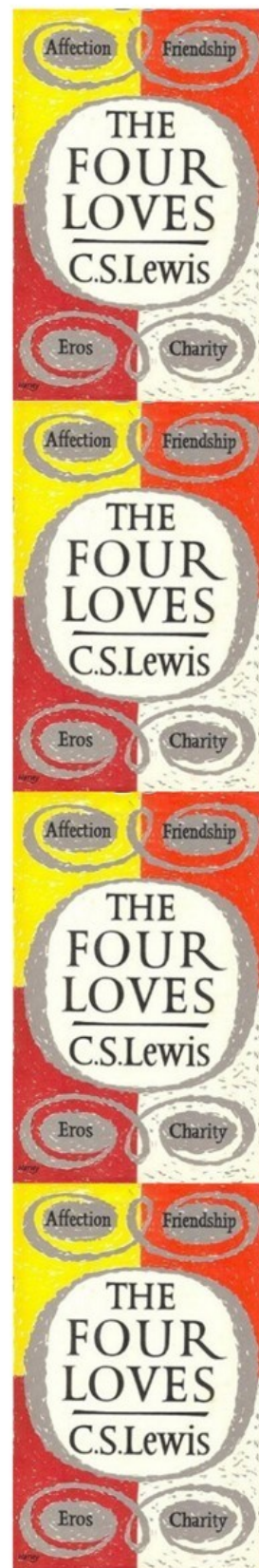
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The Beloved Son

The inspiring story of the Dutch Catholic priest Henri Nouwen who became one of the greatest spiritual writers of the Twentieth Century.

Written and directed by Murray Watts

Performed by Andrew Harrison

St Mark's Church – Friday 14th March at 7.30 pm

(Free entry – donations welcomed)

On the prayer page (page 20) you will find that Felicity has included one of Henri Nouwen's prayers in her choices of prayers for the month.

We need to put up the temporary staging for this event. Would you be able to help us do this? We're hoping to assemble the staging at 4.00 pm on Thursday 13th March. If you can join us, or would like more details, please contact Nick Warburton at njw364@gmail.com.

Margaret Wiseman

Margaret died peacefully on the 13th February at Thorpe Wood Care Home in Peterborough where she had been a resident for several years. Her funeral will be held in St Mark's in a few weeks time. Margaret and all her family were fully involved in parish life and are remembered with affection. Amongst her wide ranging activities, she was in charge of the flowers at St Mark's for many years

and coordinated and organised some ambitious and successful flower festivals. She was also Chair of the Community Centre Committee which she steered with her usual efficiency and eye for detail. Both church and community have reason to remember her with gratitude.

We extend our condolences to her daughters, Jenny and Liz, and all the family.

The Electoral Roll

The electoral roll lists all members of our church who have voting rights at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The number of names on the roll also determines how large a church we are considered to be, which in turn affects various points of church governance. Therefore it is important to have an accurate and up to date roll. For this reason, every six years all parishes in the Church of England are required to draw up a completely new electoral roll. 2025 is one such year.

If you wish to be included on the new roll (irrespective of whether or not you were on the previous one) you must complete an application

form and return it no later than Friday 25th April. The earlier the better! There are blank forms in the narthex, or you can find a digital copy [here](#). Forms can be given to Felicity in person, left in the administrator's in-tray in the vestry, or emailed to administrator@stmarksnewnham.org.

Message from the vicar

As well as being the basis for church governance the Electoral Roll is a vital pastoral resource. It is the primary means by which I am able to keep in touch with you, and also provides the list of names we use to pray for members of our congregation at morning and evening prayer throughout the week.

St Mark's Church Mission Statement

To be the people of God in this place and to work to make God more real for our community.

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Regular Groups

Monday Bible Study

10:30am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 01223 563435

Tuesday and Thursday Home Groups

7:30 pm, weekly – contact: Andrew Watts, aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk or
Mike Thompson, michaelangelot99@gmail.com

Prayer Meeting

11.00 am every Friday at 10 Stukeley Close – contact: Anne Howie, 01223 356140

Choir

The choir normally sings on the first three Sundays of the month at our 9:30 am service. Rehearsals are 6:00 pm – 7:15 pm on the first and third Fridays of the month and from 9:00 am on Sundays.

On the Buses Update



I trust readers of Seek found useful the combined timetable of departures from Barton Road on weekdays heading inward, printed in February Seek. I would appreciate your comments and suggestions on this, as my aim is to make the

information as easy to read as possible. We have printed some A4 and A5 posters in colour, including a large A3 size print in the Community Centre. I am preparing a similar combined timetable for buses leaving Newnham in the opposite direction. We would like to distribute these more widely as a service to the local community, but we shall wait until it is clear what amendments, if any, Whippet make in their summer timetables.

I have been helped by Hugh Clough to establish who in the Combined Authority is responsible for bus stops and bus shelters and to meet with a senior manager at Whippet Buses to discuss some positive suggestions and proposals for the 18 and Ubus service in Newnham. Both of these tasks have proved very difficult to pin down but I hope we shall have something to report before long.

I am also investigating the bus tracker apps available on our smartphones, especially the ones

provided by Whippet and Stagecoach, for ease of use. I continue to recommend that you check online for 'Service Updates,' which give daily and updated details of cancelled services. We are luckier than most people living outside London to have over 50 buses a day stopping at Newnham in each direction. But, as I shall point out to senior management, a bus journey completed on time is appreciated and then forgotten, but a bus that fails to turn up, leaving you stranded at the bus stop, is remembered and commented on for days, if not weeks or months.

To end on a positive note, I successfully completed in February a journey using three different buses (U1, 905 and X5) from Newnham to Milton Keynes and back the next day and all six departures and arrivals were on time!

Derek Cummings

P.S. I have just seen on the Whippet website news that a revised timetable will be introduced on the 5th March. It includes four extra 18/18A buses on Saturdays and all the buses shown in the present timetables will be running, with a minute or two difference in some of the U1 times - well within the normal margin of error due to traffic conditions.



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Lent Lunches 2025

These lunches, hosted by Newnham residents and parishioners, have been a tradition at St Mark's for many, many years and are an enjoyable way for people to enjoy a simple lunch during Lent in return for a donation to a charity chosen by the hosts. Please contact the hosts at least three days before to let them know that you wish to attend. Please bring your donation as cash. The hosts, contact details, address and charity are listed below.

Lent Lunches : 12.30 pm - 2.00 pm

Wednesday 12th March – Val and David Keeble

Charity: Médecins Sans Frontières

01223 362291 dek1@cam.ac.uk

32 Barton Road

Wednesday 19th March – Sue Elliott and Sue Payne

Charity: The Arthur Rank Hospice

01223 560150 01223 328966 susanruthpayne@gmail.com

16 Eltisley Avenue

Wednesday 26th March – Angie and Tim Cole

Charity: Jimmy's Night Shelter

01223 352633 angie2cole@yahoo.com

100 Barton Road

Wednesday 2nd April – Sarah and John Perry

Charity: Woodgreen Pets Charity

07778 809803 sarahperrywarden@gmail.com

11 Trumpington Road CB2 8AJ (look for the large white rock)

Wednesday 9th April – Sue and Chris Wagner

Charity: UMOJA UK

07738 698884 susan.wagner1@ntlworld.com

58 Gough Way

Wednesday 16th April – Nigel Porter

Charity: TBA

01223 366976 07920 242717 nigel.porter@rocketmail.com

11 Eltisley Avenue



Foodbank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 2nd March.

Alternatively, on Thursday 6th March leave them at 19 Kings Road (Eleanor Scott) 9.00 am - 3.00 pm, or 1 Millington Road (Rosey Gardiner) 8.00 am - 6.00 pm.

(There is also a Tuesday morning collection point from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm at the Gough Way island with the postbox. In addition, there is a collection point at the Co-op).

Bible Reading Fellowship Notes



This is a reminder that in March I shall be renewing our church-rate subscription with the Bible Reading Fellowship, who produce a number of publications to "sustain people in their daily journey with the Bible".

Subscription rates apply from May 2025 .

- For busy people the most accessible of these is probably **New Daylight**. Each issue provides four months of daily Bible readings and comment, with a team of regular contributors drawn from a range of church backgrounds and covering a varied selection of Old and New Testament biblical themes, characters and seasonal readings. Each issue contains nine topics of fortnightly readings and is published three times a year in January, May and September. Available in regular and large-print editions, **a single regular copy costs £5.25, the large print edition £6.35**. By taking out the church-rate subscription from May 2025, you get a valuable saving of **3 issues for £15.75 postage free** for the regular edition, and **£19.50**

for the large-print version, whereas an individual subscription costs £21.30 and the large-print version £26.55.

- Another publication, **Guidelines**, also costing **£15.75** for an annual subscription, is aimed primarily for Today's Ministry and Mission,

If you would like to see samples of **New Daylight** and **Guidelines** I am very happy to supply you with some past issues on application. There is indeed a sense of Fellowship in knowing that others at St Mark's and beyond are studying the same passages as yourself, and we often compare impressions on the current topic of the week at our Bible Study meetings.

If you have any questions or would like to find out more, please do get in touch or contact me on **Cambridge 366988** or email tinahelenwilson@gmail.com . You can find out more about BRF on their website: [www/brfonline.org.uk](http://www.brfonline.org.uk) and www.biblereadingnotes.org.uk I shall be asking current subscribers if they are happy to continue with their subscriptions.

Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham in March

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

2nd March at 9.30 am	Communion (Joint Service with Grantchester)
9th March at 9.30 am	Morning Worship with Junior Church
6.00 pm	Choral Evensong
16th March at 9.30 am	Communion with Junior Church (Joint Service with Grantchester)
23rd March at 9.30 am	Communion with Junior Church
30th March at 9.30 am	Communion (Joint Service with Grantchester)
Mothering Sunday	

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 5th March at **7.00 pm** Communion (with ashing)

Regular Weekday Services

Monday - Friday at 9.00 am Morning Prayer

Tuesdays

Weekly Communion (BCP) at 11.00 am followed by refreshments

Prayers for March

A prayer of Anselm, 11th century Archbishop of Canterbury

O Lord our God, grant us grace
to desire you with our whole heart,
that so desiring we may seek and find you,
and so finding you, may love you,
and loving you, may hate those sins
from which you have redeemed us.

Since *The Beloved Son* is coming to St Mark's next month, here's one by Henri Nouwen:

Why, O Lord, is it so hard for me to keep my heart directed toward you? Why do the many little things I want to do, and the many people I know, keep crowding into my mind, even during the hours that I am totally free to be with you and you alone? Why does my mind wander off in so many directions, and why does my heart desire the things that lead me astray? Are you not enough for me? Do I keep doubting your love and care, your mercy and grace? Do I keep wondering, in the centre of my being, whether you will give me all I need if I just keep my eyes on you?

Please accept my distractions, my fatigue, my irritations, and my faithless wanderings. You know me more deeply and fully than I know myself. You love me with a greater love than I can love myself. You ever offer me more than I desire. Look at me, see me in all my misery and inner confusion, and let me sense your presence in the midst of my turmoil. All I can do is show myself to you. Yet, I am afraid to do so. I am afraid that you will reject me. But I know - with the knowledge of faith - that you desire to give me your love. The only thing you ask of me is not to hide from you, not to run away in despair, not to act as if you were a relentless despot

Take my tired body, my confused mind, and my restless soul into your arms and give me rest, simple quiet rest. Do I ask too much too soon? I should not worry about that. You will let me know. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

Chosen by Felicity Parker

The April Issue of SEEK

All contributions are welcome. Please send them by Sunday 16th March to Jane Plows at janemp@virginmedia.com (350120) or contact any member of the committee.

