Seek



May 2025

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

The Vicar's Letter





Dear Friends,

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

I write on Easter Monday, having just had the privilege of accompanying our Church through the Holy Week liturgies and devotions for the first time. And, seeing as Easter is celebrated for fifty daysuntil Pentecost, this letter is unapologetically Eastery!

My first job was as a verger in an old church situated right in the middle of Oxford High Street. It was a location that the church generally made the best of, ministering to businesses, shoppers, beggars and tourists. But I remember Good Friday as presenting a particular challenge. Inside the faithful had gathered in a church stripped bare, rendered tomb-like for that most solemn of days. Outside it, a bank holiday, with businesses doing a roaring trade, tourists, coffee drinkers, street magicians. I remember a difficult discussion with buskers, who struck up a particularly lively repertoire right against the church walls, just as we began our Good Friday liturgy.

And I think of that verse from the Book of Lamentations, which is often set to music and sung in Holy Week:

'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?'

That verse is used because it expresses something of what Christ felt. For all his fame and notoriety, in the violent times in which he lived his was just another crucifixion. I remember once seeing a painting of the crucifixion: except you had to look really carefully to see that it was a painting of the crucifixion. What you saw at first glance was a busy, populated landscape with all sorts of people going about their daily business. And in one corner, in the distances, three crosses pricked the horizon. Unnoticed. Insignificant.

Such dissonance between what we celebrate within the walls of our churches, and what goes on outside of them; between the Good News in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and the actual news on Radio 4; between what we believe and how we actually feel this can be painful.

'Is it nothing to you?' Is it nothing?

But then let us remember what the Resurrection is. Not just the end of a story, but the beginning of a totally new way of life. For us.

As St John Chrysostom preached in his famous Easter Day sermon around 1600 years ago

'Let no one grieve at his poverty,

for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;

for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Saviour has set us free.

He has destroyed it by enduring it.

O death, where is thy sting?

O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated! Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!

Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!'

And all this was achieved when most people's backs were turned, with their minds on other things. This event upon which all of history hinges took place away from the headlines. When those few who cared - be they Jesus' enemies or his friends - could see in him only failure, helplessness, and misplaced hope.

God did not wait for an appreciative audience to roll away the stone. He was at work, he is at work, among us, whether we know it or not; whether we are able to feel it or not. He will always find a way of letting the light back in. His love cannot be conquered or contained. He is rolling back stones still, now. And evil is always being outflanked. And we are never out of God's sight, or mind, or beyond the reach of his resurrection power. For Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Jim

Christian Aid Week 11th - 17th May 2025



Christian Aid is St Mark's charity of the month for May, to coincide with the National Christian Aid Week, 11-17th May. Christian Aid was started soon after the end of the second world war and has been committed for 80 years to ending for good the injustice of poverty in the world. Its work and focus aim to create a world where every person can live a full life, free from poverty. It is a global movement of people, churches and local organisations who passionately champion dignity, equality, justice and love worldwide.

In 1945 its work began by raising money to provide humanitarian aid for the many people left as refugees after the war. Sadly, wars and violence still occur in many parts of the world, as do natural disasters, and the need is great. Christian Aid is a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee, and you may have contributed to their recent appeals following the earthquake in Myanmar, also for the devastation and suffering caused by war and conflict in the Ukraine, in Gaza and in the Sudan.

This year the focus of Christian Aid week is to encourage awareness of the effects of climate change. Global warming has led to widespread problems of fires, deforestation and crop failure, as well as reduction in water available for drinking and for crop irrigation. Guatemala is among the 10 countries in the world rated most vulnerable to disasters and climate emergencies. The Indigenous communities there have done the least to cause the climate crisis, yet they endure its impact the most.

If you can give, please give as generously as you are able. The need is very great. Every gift, act and prayer count and can help our brothers and sisters who are in need.

Please donate directly at church, or via the treasurer (treasurer@stmarksnewnham.org) with a note to say the donation is for Christian Aid. Also, please ask for Gift Aid to be claimed if that is possible for you.

Thank you in advance for your generous response.

Susan Chester

Christian Aid Service: Sunday 18th May

You are invited to a unique service of
Thanksgiving and Reflection
to mark Christian Aid's 80th anniversary.
at 2.30pm on Sunday 18th May at Great St Mary's
Dr Rowan Williams will be preaching
Loretta Minghella, master of Clare College and former CEO of
Christian Aid, will be there also.

The service will last about an hour, and will be followed by a reception to which all are welcome.

It will be an opportunity to connect with members of Christian Aid's past and present leadership, as well as with other members of the congregation.

Please come, you will be very welcome.

Lent Lunches 2025



Thank you to all those who hosted and all those who supported the Lunches this year. The amount raised was £2,000.

Sue Payne

Meet Our New Curate, Kennedy Emokpaire



Greetings friends.

My name is Kennedy Emokpaire and I am deeply grateful to God and thrilled to be getting ordained this June and serving curacy St at Mark's Grantchester Newnham and church under the leadiership and training of the Revd Jim Robinson. I am married to Soraya, and we are parents to two daughters Emikhe Ebony, aged 11 and 8.

Something about my journey

Born to Nigerian parents in the city of London, my family relocated to Nigeria when I was six years old. After a time living in Northern Nigeria we travelled, fleeing the riots fermenting in Kano at the time, to Makurdi in Benue state. It was there that I and most of my family embraced the Christian faith and I was raised in the Pentecostal tradition there. My mother's faith, one of simple and sincere devotion, was especially exemplary for me growing up in Nigeria and has been a guiding light for me down the years. She died some years ago.

I returned to England in my late teens. In my twenties, after a few years lapsing from belief and then being renewed once again, I went to East London university where I studied media and cultural studies. I did so because for as long as I can remember, I have always been drawn to the world of storytelling and imagination and music. By studying media I wanted to explore the world of imagination in media and popular culture of film, music and literature. The course itself turned out to be more about exploring the ideas and theories that inform film and popular culture, but on the whole university turned out to be a defining moment for me in more ways than one.

In the end it really afforded me the opportunity to think more deeply and critically about the role of Christianity in culture and society at large; the devotional life, historic teachings and traditions of the church had to be reckoned with and articulated in a language perceptible to people in the everyday context of an increasingly secular culture. (This I guess is at the heart of my vocational impulse.) More time of reflection and conversation along these lines eventually led to looking at the Anglican church. My family and I began attending St Peter's church in Ditton, Aylesford, Kent and it was there after a few years that thoughts of ordination and training really came to the fore. After some time of discernment, I was recommended for training and finished theological studies at Ridley Hall in 2024.

Present day and hopes

While trying to secure the right curacy post in the past year I've been working as a TEFL teacher, I will be a self-supporting curate going forward. In the past much of my work has been with children and young people in clubs, churches, schools and community projects. My hope ultimately, is for an ordained ministry that also makes room for enabling Christian thinking and feeling in the arts and media engaging with those within and without the confines of the church.



My wife, Soraya works as a teaching assistant for Shirley Community school in North Cambridge, which is also where daughters go. Soraya also has a passion for music, with years of experience in gospel singing and in the last two years overseen gospel

choir and concert at Christ Church Cambridge. Baking is another delight of hers, both for pleasure and as a side business. Her parents are of Caribbean and Guyanese origins. Having grown up in Kent and resided there most of her life, the last few years have been a major change for her as we've journeyed together in response to the call of the ministry. We've been married since 2008 after having met at a church in Kent. We are grateful to God that we were blessed with children some years later.

Both our girls are equally keen on music and sports, Emikhe loves running, singing and writing stories. Ebony attends a gymnastics club, loves to dance and sing, also loves writing, and has what seems a relentless liking for all 'princessy' stories and films!

Concluding

I am thankful for the conversations with the diocese and Rev Jim especially which has led to this point. So, we come to St Mark's and Grantchester church trusting in God's mission and work in this place, that here, there is an open door for holiness and learning in the love of Christ, for growth and friendship with fellow Christian pilgrims, and a share in the service to the men, women and children in these communities. I in particular come eager to learn, and I also come (when reflecting on the weight of the call) with a measure of trepidation. Please pray for me and the family at this time, I expect in time to be doing more praying for you and with you.

With Christian affection,

Kennedy



Volunteers are needed run stalls, serve teas and assist with games.

Please contact Ross Smythe if you are able to help.

rwsmythe@me.com

Nonagenarian Alan Jones

Alan was born in the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford on January 8th, 1935. An only child, his mother was a housewife/bookkeeper, his father an electrician. They lived in east Oxford, where he went to the local C of E Primary School before passing the 11-plus and going to the City of Oxford High School for Boys. There he developed an interest in Classics and eventually won an Open Exhibition in Classics at Queens College, Oxford. While at school he joined the Scouts and with the help of an inspiring Scout Leader was selected to represent the UK at the first International Scout Jamboree postwar in Austria. He also enjoyed attending a lively evangelical youth club at St Aldgate's, Oxford.

Before taking up his College Exhibition, he was required to do National Service and was posted as Second Lieutenant to the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt. There, as a 19-year-old convoys officer, he had his first encounter with death, a profoundly moving experience which shaped his subsequent lifelong service of caring for the disadvantaged.

As with many young men, he found his period at Oxford University disappointing but remembers the time as valuable experience for life - making friends, studying, sport, and juggling ten different jobs at various times to help make ends meet!

After graduating, he knew he wanted to do something worthwhile, and in a meeting with the Head of Oxfam was encouraged to take up international voluntary service. As a result, he joined the charity United Nations Association International Service, and led work camps in Austria, Germany and Greece building houses for refugees, sometimes even making the bricks, and in the course of which he met Eleanor, his wife-to-be, who was also working for UNAIS.

This experience led naturally to a decision to undertake social service training back in the UK in the form of an inspirational Diploma in Social Administration course at the London School of Economics, along with Eleanor. In turn, this led to a first professional post as Head of Domiciliary Welfare Services at the City of Leicester, then a postgraduate qualification in psychiatric social work at Southampton University, a period as Team Leader in Hertfordshire Social Services, and finally appointment as Director of the City of Chester Social Services Department. At the time, Alan was the youngest such Director in the whole of England.

Alan and Eleanor, whose father was the Vicar of Grantham, were married in Lincoln Cathedral in 1964, and three children soon followed, Susan while they were in Southampton, Frances in Hertfordshire, and Christopher in Chester.

Alan's outstanding leadership qualities and social service expertise finally brought him (and the whole family) to Cambridge in 1974, as Director of Social Services for the newly created Cambridgeshire County Council, in charge of 2000 staff and a then annual budget of £20 million! He served in this very demanding role for nine successful years, being commended, inter alia, by the House of Commons for his department's response to severe local flooding in Wisbech. And he even found time to help found and chair CAMTAD, the Cambridgeshire charity for the hard of hearing, and serve as Trustee of the Cambridge Housing Society and Cambridge's Royal Albert Homes.

In 1983, seeking a new challenge and even wider responsibilities, Alan left Cambridgeshire Social Services to work for Hay Management Consultancy, undertaking over the next fourteen years a huge of high-level consultancy assignments throughout the UK and Europe, advising government bodies on key issues of pay, performance and organisational restructuring. Travelling widely in England, Scotland and Wales and to other European countries, and noted for his concise and clearly argued reports (finally the benefit of his classical education!), he relished the opportunity to help performance improve local government and effectiveness in the UK and abroad, until his retirement in 1997.

Alan has always been driven by his Christian commitment "to leave the world a better place." So having settled on their arrival in Cambridge in Grantchester Meadows, Newnham, he and Eleanor naturally joined St Mark's, then under Bill Lovelace, where he has been a pillar of, and outstanding contributor to, our parish church ever since. We all owe him a huge debt for managing and enhancing the fabric of both Church and Community Centre for many for his years, enterprise in master-minding successively the refurbishment and wholesale improvement of the Newnham War Memorial, and of St Mark's Church organ, heating and lighting systems, and for his wholehearted and practical commitment to the ongoing life of the St Mark's community.

Valerie and David Keeble

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

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.

The Art of Hope - A lunchtime concert for Christian Aid Week



Jane Bower and Alan Revill (live illustrations and readings)
Simeon Walker (piano)

A journey of trust and hope through live on-screen art techniques, words and music, this concert explores what is possible with hope and belief.

When: Wednesday 14th May, 1 – 2 pm

Where: Downing Place Church

(Downing Place, Cambridge. CB2 3EL; opposite the side of John Lewis)

Free admission, all welcome
Donations to Christian Aid
Refreshments available

Foodbank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 3rd May. Or leave them on Thursday 8th May at 19 Kings Road (Eleanor Scott) 9.00 am - 3.00 pm, or at 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).

The June Issue of SEEK

All contributions are welcome. Please send them by Wednesday 14th May to Jane Plows at <u>janemp@virginmedia.com</u> (350120) or contact any member of the committee.



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On the Buses



First, some sad news for friends of the 199 bus: the present operators Myalls have lost the contract with the Council to run this service, from 1st July 2025. Myalls had submitted a tender to continue, but the contract was awarded to A2B Coaches, which runs the 75 bus through Newnham. It is good that the 199 service will continue, but the many local residents who use the bus will miss the efficient and exceptionally friendly service that Myalls has provided. I shall write to the Council to state our disappointment and express our great appreciation of the service provided by the company over the past 8 Years or so and give everyone the chance to add their signature.

Whippet have introduced their new timetable, and printed leaflets are available om U1 and 18/18A buses. The changes are minor, mainly amounting to a few minutes change in some of the times. I will update the combined timetable of buses from Newnham published in the March Seek. Stagecoach has also introduced new timetables and these, like Whippet, can be found on their websites or apps, or by typing into online search for example: Stagecoach Cambridge Bus adding Cherry Hinton or bus number,

if you know it. Stagecoach has a good Journey Planner and Whippet a good Service Updates site (good to be informed, but still too many cancellations, especially on the newer 18A service).

Smartphone apps are worth investigating and mastering bus tracking, so that you have real time information on the bus you are waiting for. The Council sponsors *My bus trip, which* covers all Cambridge buses. If you are eligible, do get a free bus pass usable on all local buses in England. You can now use it before 9.30am. A return trip at full fares using two buses each way now costs between £4 (Whippet buses only) and £12!

I believe we are very fortunate to have 50 buses each way stopping in Newnham. My main personal issues are:

- 1 Re-siting the main bus stop for passengers from town at Hardwick Street.
- 2 Replacement of the tatty bus shelters which deface the main roads through Newnham.

Derek Cummings

St Mark's Has Got Talent

The Arts and Events team is planning an for the afternoon of Sunday 8th June

at which members of the St Mark's family are invited to be part of the entertainment.

So, if you would like to be involved – by singing, dancing, reciting, performing a sketch, conjuring etc. – do let us know.

All ages welcome.

Speak to one of the team or email Nick Warburton at njw364@gmail.com to register interest.

WHIZZ KIDS WANTED. ANY AGE.



St Mark's Church is putting together a team to help backstage with its occasional arts and drama productions. You'd have to push a few buttons, flick a couple switches and sometimes wield a screwdriver - at the right time and ideally in the right order.









Experts preferred (!) but full training could be provided.

As well as a bit of fun.

Email: njw364@gmail.com to find out more.

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Rehearsals will be: Fridays in school term times, 5-5.45pm (snacks from 4.45), in the Community Centre, behind the Church. First rehearsal is on Friday 25th April.

To find out more or register an interest, please contact Marcus, our Director of Music: singing@stmarksnewnham.org

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 <u>love</u> 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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Prayers for Christian Aid Week 11th - 17th May 2025

Loving God,

Help us to hear the voices of those enduring extreme poverty.

It is hard to listen to stories of pain.

Show us how compassion for others can bring healing and fullness of life for all.

Help us to understand that we are one through your love, for every human being is loved by you, beyond measure.

Loving God,

you call on us to build your kingdom of justice, mercy, and truth.

It isn't a task for the faint-hearted.

When we lose our sense of purpose, fill us with faith. When we doubt or throw up our hands in despair, fill us with hope.

When we pass by our neighbour as though we did not know them,

fill us with the love that turns us back and takes us to their aid.

In Jesus' name, Amen

A prayer for peace in the Middle East

O God of all justice and peace we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

This prayer was written by The Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College Jerusalem..

Chosen by Susan Chester

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Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham in May

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

4th May at **9.30 am** Communion

11th May at **9.30 am** Morning Worship with Junior Church
18th May at **9.30 am** Communion with Junior Church
25th May at **9.30 am** Communion with Junior Church

Ascension Day

Thursday 29th May at **7.00 pm** Ascension Day Communion

Regular Weekday Services

Monday - Friday at 9.00 am Morning Prayer

Tuesdays

Weekly Communion (BCP) at **11.00 am** followed by refreshments



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, <u>aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk</u> or Mike Thompson, <u>michaelangelot99@gmail.com</u>

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.