

# Seek

**March 2026**



**The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge**

**[www.stmarksnewnham.org](http://www.stmarksnewnham.org)**



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year, the month of March is given up entirely to the holy season of Lent. For my Lenten reading, I am spending time with the English mystic from the fourteenth century, Julian of Norwich. Her *Revelations of Divine*

*Love*, the earliest writing in the English language that we have by a woman, record a series of visionary experiences she had whilst seriously ill. One of the most famous of these 'showings', was of a hazelnut: *'he showed a little thing the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand as it seemed to me, and it was as round as any ball. I looked therein with the eye of my understanding, and thought: "What may this be?" "It is all that is made." I marvelled how it might last, for it seemed to me it might suddenly have fallen into nought for its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: "It lasteth and ever shall, because God loveth it. And so hath all things being by the love of God."*



The tiny nut represents 'all that is made'. The vision corrects our own sight and sense of perspective - a helpful process in this season of Lent. The things we consider big are themselves dwarfed by the immensity of the divine reality. The things we consider small are no less significant, for all things exist because of the divine love.

I preached recently on the importance which Jesus attached to being 'little'. It is a word which, when you start looking for it, fills the New Testament. It is remarkable how often and how tenderly Christ refers to his followers - to us - in this way: 'do not be afraid little flock; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' [Luke 12.32].

We might also think of chapter 10 in Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus says, 'if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones

who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward’.

And in chapter 18, ‘If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck’.

The early Church adopted this. And so the 1st Letter of St John addresses his own flock as ‘my little children’.

And, in this 800th anniversary year of his death, we might also recall St Francis of Assisi, who founded an order of friars whom we call the Franciscans, but whom he called the order of Friars minor: The little brothers. And who himself, in his lifetime, was given the nickname “Il Poverello,” *the little* poor man.

I could go on. Littleness, in the Gospel, and in the Church, is not a negative term. It does not simply mean ‘not big’, or ‘not big enough’, or ‘not big yet’. Neither does it have any association with being worthless. It is its own thing - something to aspire to. A mark of spiritual maturity. A fundamental understanding of our identity as a follower of Jesus.

The word is there to remind us that the Christian does not compete with the world on its own terms. We do things differently, and our Lord’s insistence that we embrace that identity of being ‘little’ is a gift, given to help us do so.

Firstly, because it is a term of affection. To be God’s little ones, of little faith, is to be his beloved, into whom the breath of life was deliberately spoken. And not a day should pass when we don’t pause and think of that. It is the littleness which empowers us to call upon God not as Master or Overlord, but Father.

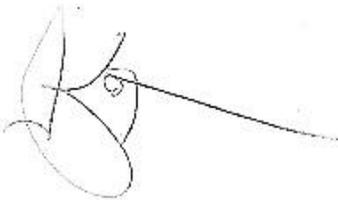
To be little is to listen to those around us, to our own inner voice.

It is to make space, for others, for changes, movement. The best way out of a hole or a dark place is often to make ourselves smaller: to climb

down from our high horse. To make the first move of reconciliation. To admit fault and say sorry.

This littleness is a solvent to arrogance, pride, respectability, and the lust for power; it is the means by which we faithfully fulfil the sacred task given to humanity at our creation: to 'fill and subdue the earth' [Genesis 1.28] - to fill and subdue it with love; for we are made in the image of the God of love. To grow, as we hope to do this Lent, we must become more fully and trustingly God's 'little ones' and place ourselves into his outstretched hands.

In friendship and faith,



Jim

## Charity of the Month in March



Please note that, because of the Cambridge Half Marathon, this month's Charity Sunday will be the 15th March, not the 8th. As many of us know from bitter experience access to the church is severely limited on the half marathon Sunday. So be ready to learn more about Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and to make your contribution on the 15th March.

# HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

29th March - 5th April

**Palm Sunday**  
(29th March)

**9.30am St Mark's, Newnham**

Blessing of the Palms and procession into Church for the performance of the Passion story and Holy Communion.  
*We gather by the war memorial in front of Church for the Procession.*

**Monday and Tuesday**

**7pm, St Mark's, Newnham**

Compline (Night Prayer)

**Wednesday (1st April)**

**7pm, Grantchester Church**

Tenebrae (Readings by Candlelight)

**Maundy Thursday**

**7pm, St Mark's, Newnham**

Eucharist of the Last Supper

**Good Friday**

**10.30am Grantchester Meadows**

(beside the cricket pitch)

Outdoor service followed by Hot Cross Buns in Grantchester Village Hall.

*A walking party will leave from St Mark's at 9.45am sharp!*

**2pm St Mark's, Newnham**

'Last Hour on the Cross'

Service of Readings, Reflections and Music

**Easter Day (5th April)**

**7am Grantchester Meadows**

(beside the cricket pitch)

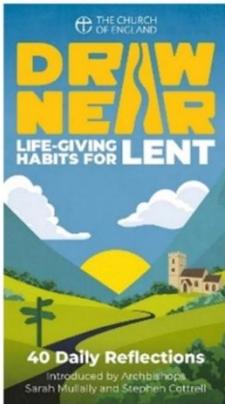
Sunrise Service and Easter Fire

**8am and 9.30am St Mark's, Newnham**

**11.15 Grantchester**

Eucharist for Easter Day

## Let's Draw Near



This year the Education & Discipleship team at St Mark's is planning a Lent programme based on the Church of England's *Draw Near: Life-giving Habits for Lent* course. Before Lent begins, we will be distributing at church for everyone a copy of *Draw Near*, a booklet of 40 daily reflections. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, each day's page includes a scripture reading and reflection on a theme of discipleship. The daily content will take less than five minutes to read, and we are encouraging everyone to try this short discipline each day for Lent this year.

Each week's material in the booklet is based on a particular theme. Beginning on Sunday 1st March and continuing for four more weeks, we will be having an informal twenty-minute meeting after coffee each week from 11:15-11:35 am in the Community Centre to hear feedback on the week's reflections. The sessions are intended to be opportunities to share questions and experiences and a chance to encourage each other as we seek to maintain the new Lenten discipline. It will be an experiment in faith, and we urge everyone to take part, whether or not they are able to attend the Sunday feedback sessions. Let's Draw Near!

**Mike Thompson**  
for the Education and Discipleship Team

## The April Edition of Seek

Contributions are always very welcome. Please send them to Jane Plows at [janemp@virginmedia.com](mailto:janemp@virginmedia.com) (01223 350120) by Sunday 15th March.



**Dasha Tenditna**  
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## ARHC : Charity of the Month



Arthur Rank Hospice Charity is for adults in Cambridge and the whole county, its entire purpose being to give specialist end-of-life care and holistic support not only to the patients with serious advanced illness or life-limiting conditions but also to their families and their carers. They care for over 3,800 patients each year at their Hospice in Cambridge, the Alan Hudson Centre in Wisbech and across the Fens in patients' own homes. And all this care is free of charge.

The Hospice's environment also offers privacy, space for meaningful conversations and the opportunity to create lasting memories together. Some of us will have had at least some contact already, perhaps through friends, relatives or neighbours who have all been helped. All who visit the Hospice are impressed by it as a place of light and life, peaceful, with an amazing atmosphere of calm and companionship. What also comes over strikingly and straightaway is the total dedication and enthusiasm of all those who work there. Everyone wants the patients and those close to them to live as fully as possible, and to make the most of the time remaining. Everyone wants to make every moment count.

The Living Well service provides many ways of helping this to happen: occupational and craft sessions, recreational opportunities, emotional, psychological and spiritual back-up, and bereavement counselling, too. There is pastoral care for those of all faiths, and of none. Alongside the care provided by the Inpatient Unit, Living Well services and Hospice at Home teams, patients can access: patient and family support; Lymphoedema care; physiotherapy, occupational, complementary and creative therapies; medical and pain outpatient clinics, Clinical Nurse

Specialists within the Specialist Palliative Care Home Team or via the Palliative Care Hub (111, Palliative and End of Life Care option).

All in all, then, the charity's work has given great comfort and support, and much hope, too, to thousands of patients, their families and carers, throughout the county, in all sorts of ways, over the last few years. But this vital work rests upon fragile financial foundations.

Indeed, you may have read in the local Press that in September ARHC received 6 months' notice of devastating cuts of £829,000 to the annual funding they receive from the Cambridge University Hospitals (CUH) to take effect on 1 April 2026. The planned funding cuts would impact the Inpatient Unit at the Cambridge Hospice, nearly halving its bed capacity from 21 to 12.

Essentially, this would mean that over 200 people a year would no longer have the option of being cared for in the comfort of the Hospice and instead would sadly be dying in a busy hospital without the level of privacy for lasting memories, nor the expertise and outstanding care provided by experienced, compassionate palliative care nurses.

The news provoked a public outcry, whilst the Charity launched a Protect our Care Campaign, and said it had been overwhelmed by the heartfelt reaction of the Cambridgeshire community, with people making life-changing donations and organising events, local businesses and community groups offering financial support and individuals providing regular gifts and offers of gifts in kind. As a result, Arthur Rank have announced that enough funds have been raised to keep the beds open for another 12 months, which will give them some time to explore other options. This support means families can stay with their loved ones without the additional concerns of parking fees, and restrictions on visiting hours or numbers – for the next 12 months.

But the clock is ticking. It therefore would be good to give them our support again to help them to continue their vital work into the future by giving donations, visiting their range of 10 charity shops, supporting

the Bistro which serves high quality food for patients, staff and visitors alike. It's the hub of the hospice open to all for coffee, snacks or lunch daily from 9am-4 pm. Free parking is available at nearby Babraham Park & Ride, linked by a paved and lit footpath.

Who knows? We might, any one of us, one day need Arthur Rank's services and their help ourselves.

For more information, please see: <https://www.arhc.org.uk>, Tel. 01223 675777

Please give generously under Gift Aid if possible. Donations may be made via the St Marks Church, Newnham's website. Alternatively, if you wish to give via bank transfer, contact Xanthe Langley on [treasurer@stmarksnewnham.org](mailto:treasurer@stmarksnewnham.org) .

**Tina Wilson**

## Easter Flowers



**Lilies** - If you would like us to remember someone with lilies at Easter, please fill in the form in the narthex and give the money to Sue Payne- £3.00 per lily.

**Decorating the Church** - We shall be gathering at 9.30 am onwards on Saturday 4th April to decorate the church in our usual joyful fashion. Apart from the lilies, if you would like to contribute fresh garden greenery and some late spring flowers they would be very much appreciated and would add greatly to the joy and vivacity of the church at Easter.

**Wendy Walford**

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## Cantus Singers Concert

The next concert at St Mark's Church  
by the Cantus Singers will be on

**Saturday March 28th at 8pm**

### Requiem in C Minor by Cherubini

**together with a selection of motets appropriate for the  
Lenten season**

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### St Mark's Church Mission Statement

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

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## **Lent Lunches 2026**

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 on page 14.

Please note that this year, in a change from the usual pattern, not all the lunches will be held on a Wednesday.

## **Foodbank Dates**

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 1st March.

Or leave them on Thursday 5th March 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 12.00 noon at the Gough Way island with the postbox. In addition donations may be left up to the Thursday evening in the black plastic box on the driveway of number 14 Wootton Way, the home of Sarah Smalley and Martin Richards.

There is a collection point at the Co-op too.

## Bound by Love

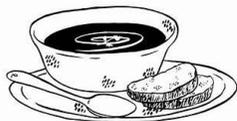


It was good to have Jane Bower at St Mark's again on Friday 13th February to present a programme of readings and music on the eve of St Valentine's Day. Her aim was to present aspects of love 'heartfelt to humorous'. Jane did the readings, with a few words about each of them; each was followed by a musical item performed by Peter Britton on the grand piano and Philippa Jones on the 'cello. It was a delightful occasion, very warmly appreciated by a large audience in the church.

Aspects of love included Love in Childhood, Love and Beauty, Romance (not always going well and sometimes satirised), to Things we have loved' and included poems by A E. Housman, Rupert Brooke, W.B. Yeats and Edward Thomas, among many others. I was pleased to hear again poems that I have always loved, as well as others I did not know or had forgotten. Many were moving and it was good to laugh as well, with poems by Dorothy Parker, Joyce Grenfell and Richard Stilgoe and also to hear two of Jane's own poems.

The fantastic piano and 'cello interludes were equally well-chosen and wide ranging, from Bach, Debussy and Faure to Gershwin and Benjamin Britten. The evening ended very appropriately with George Herbert's fine poem *Love bade me welcome*, first read by Jane, then as put to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Finally, a reading from Corinthians 13. Great entertainment, smoothly presented, for which hearty thanks to Jane, Peter and Philippa. I would like to mention also the beautifully printed and easy to read glossy programme, a pleasure to handle!

**Derek Cummings**

**Lent Lunches 2026 : 12.30 pm – 2.00 pm**

**Monday** 23rd February – Sarah and Jon Perry  
Charity: Fauna and Flora International  
07778 809803 [sarahperrywarden@gmail.com](mailto:sarahperrywarden@gmail.com)  
11 Trumpington Road CB2 8AJ (look for the large white rock)

Wednesday 4th March – Sue and Chris Wagner  
Charity: UMOJA UK  
07738 698884 [susan.wagner1@ntlworld.com](mailto:susan.wagner1@ntlworld.com)  
58 Gough Way

**Sunday** 8th March – Nigel Porter  
Charity: Age UK  
01223 366976 07920 242717 [nigel.porter@rocketmail.com](mailto:nigel.porter@rocketmail.com)  
11 Eltisley Avenue

Wednesday 18th March – Sue Elliott and Sue Payne  
Charity: The Arthur Rank Hospice  
01223 560150 01223 328966 [susanruthpayne@gmail.com](mailto:susanruthpayne@gmail.com)  
16 Eltisley Avenue

Wednesday 25th March – Julia Bevington and Marie Miller  
Charity: Centre 33  
07977 560445 [bevington@btinternet.com](mailto:bevington@btinternet.com)  
18 Lammas Field

Wednesday 1st April – Jane Plows  
Charity: Parkinson's UK  
01223 350120 [janemp@virginmedia.com](mailto:janemp@virginmedia.com)  
48B Selwyn Road

## **Tony Palmer at 100**

It was a delight to share in the celebration of Tony's 100th birthday at St Mark's on the 15th February. Tony's actual birthday had been a week before and he had marked the day with his family. On the 15th he was once again in his accustomed place in the choir and at the end of the service Roy Murray gave a brief tribute and presented him with a gift from the congregation. Roy told us that Tony had first sung in a choir in Norwich Cathedral in 1939 and had sung in church choirs ever since.

After the service Tony treated us all to sparkling wine and birthday cake in the Community Centre and made a short speech. He spoke about living on his own and looking after himself – his most frequently used kitchen gadget being the tin opener – with greatly appreciated support from his daughter, Sarah, who is on hand to help him with domestic issues, and son in law, Phil, who sorts out computer problems.

We wished him many happy returns.

**Jane Plows**

## **Wildlife Trust BCN update: Mar 2026**

Climate change is affecting amphibians. This year's mild February and unpredictable weather caused them to wake early, when there was less food available, and put their spawn at greater risk of being frozen. Connecting your garden to your neighbours' and leaving areas wild can help improve their hunting ground, and providing even a small amount of water can make a difference. March is a busy time for amphibians. They might only spend a short time at their breeding pond, so can sometimes be seen around dusk on warmer wetter evenings migrating to or from their terrestrial feeding grounds, which might be gardens or wilder green spaces.

## Common frog or common toad?



- Common frogs and common toads are about the same size
- Female frogs and toads are bigger than males (up to 13 cm for females, 8cm for males)
- Frogs have 2 creases (like folds of skin) down their back, and their skin is wet, toad skin is very warty and drier
- Frogs have a circular mark behind the eye and often have a black eye stripe, toads have a rugby-ball-shaped lump behind the eye
- Frogs have long legs with obviously webbed back feet, and move mostly by jumping, toads have shorter legs with less webbing and move by crawling



- Frogs are more likely to breed in small garden ponds, both frogs and toads can be found in larger ponds and lakes (and both can be found in gardens)
- Frogs lay eggs in clumps, toads in long strings

## Common (smooth) or great crested newt

- Both male smooth and great crested newts have an orange belly
- Smooth newts are up to 10cm, great crested newts are up to 15cm
- Smooth newts look brown in and out of water, great crested newts look black out of water, and dark brown in water
- Smooth newts are smooth! Great crested newts have warty skin with tiny white dots

Please consider submitting official wildlife records of any amphibians you see via the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records centre website. Please email if you come across large numbers dead on a road.





At the time, Croft Lodge was a large double-fronted house with an extensive garden on the corner of Barton Road and Millington Road where the Croft Lodge flats now stand (The house was later owned by the eminent biologist Francis Crick and his wife. Rumour has it that Crick's Nobel Prize money was used to fund the demolition of the house and the construction of the flats in 1965).

In the Parish Magazine of 1933 we read, "In the passing of Miss Elizabeth Watson, we lose the oldest friend to St Mark's. She came to reside at Croft Lodge a year or two before the wooden church was erected, and for the first 80 years she was the mainstay of every activity in the district. For 20 years there was no resident clergyman, and Croft Lodge supplied the hospitality and friendliness that visitors required. As Voluntary Organist, Sunday School Teacher, Church Decorator, and Clothing Club Secretary, Miss Watson was an indispensable worker, gradually giving place to others, and as home duties, sick-room and nursing demanded more of her time and energy. For more than 30 years she has been confined to her house and garden, and for the last eight to her room, but her interest in St Mark's never slackened. The flowers of her garden were always to be had for the Church decorations, and she loved to be able to get special ones for the greater festivals. With it all there was a sweet homely outlook upon all that was going on. She never forgot old friends, but gave them the heartiest of welcomes when they called to see her. And to the last the friends who had the run of her room always felt that they carried away more than they brought of cheer and fellowship.

"There has been no one more deserving of a panel among the seven who served St Mark's during its first fifty years than our friend who will ever be remembered here as a lifelong friend of this District and Parish"

**Jane Plows**

## Prayers for March

*A prayer of Julian of Norwich whom Jim references in his letter:*

God, of your goodness, give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all.

*A prayer for Mothering Sunday (15<sup>th</sup> March) from Common Worship:*

Loving God, our heavenly Father, in our worship today we say thank you for all that our mothers are to us and for all that they do for us.

But we also know that for some people this is a difficult day holding hurt, grief and perhaps anger. We pray that you will draw alongside those who are hurting today to comfort them and surround them with your tender care.

*Bearing in mind, our charity of the month, ARHC, a hospice prayer:*

Loving and Compassionate God, we lift up the families and caregivers who walk alongside their loved ones in hospice care.

Grant them strength when their bodies grow weary, and peace when their hearts feel heavy.

Wrap them in Your comfort, reminding them that their presence, love, and gentle touch are gifts beyond measure.

Bless their hands as they serve, their words as they comfort, and their hearts as they carry both sorrow and gratitude.

May they find moments of rest, renewal, and quiet joy, knowing they are never alone - You are with them in every breath, every tear, and every act of love. Amen



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10:30am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 07738 698884

#### Monday Informal Men’s Group

10:30am, weekly – contact: Mike Thompson, 07957 735860

#### Tuesday Home Group

7:30 pm, fortnightly – contact: Mike Thompson, 07957 735860

#### Thursday Home Group

7:30 pm, weekly – contact: Andrew Watts  
aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk

#### Choir

The choir sings every Sunday morning during term time and one Sunday evensong per month. Contact Marcus Cox at [singing@stmarksnewnham.org](mailto:singing@stmarksnewnham.org) Rehearsals every Friday evening during school term time (*Junior Choir: 5:15 pm – 6:00 pm, Adult Choir: 6:00 pm – 6:45 pm*).

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**Services at St Mark’s Church, Newnham  
in March**

**Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday**

**Sunday Services**

- 1st March at **9.30 am**      Communion
- 8th March at **9.30 am**      Morning Worship  
**6.00 pm**      Choral Evensong at Grantchester
- 15th March at **9.30 am**      Mothering Sunday Communion\*
- 22nd March at **9.30 am**      Communion
- 29th March at **9.30 am**      Palm Sunday Communion with  
procession from war memorial

**Regular Weekday Services**

**Monday - Friday at 9.00 am**      Morning Prayer

**Tuesdays**

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

**Holy Week Services** can be found on page 4.

*\* Charity of the Month (ARHC) Sunday*

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