

Seek

April 2026



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

www.stmarksnewnham.org

50p

The Vicar's Letter



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Like many Anglicans, the Book of Common Prayer is a keystone to my faith. For those with longer memories than me it would have been the only form of liturgy which they would have experienced when growing up. It was

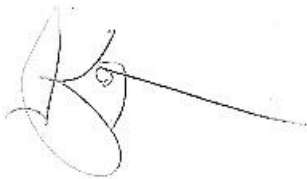
no less foundational to me, as I encountered it in my early days as an Anglican, in Oxford, at a Church where it was still the only form of worship in use. They had good reason: theirs was the Church where the author of the Prayer Book, Archbishop Cranmer, had been held prisoner, shortly before being martyred outside, as his fortunes reversed and a new monarch - Mary Tudor - attempted to restore the Roman Catholic faith.

Posterity has bestowed upon her the unflattering title 'Bloody Mary,' but the truth is that both 'sides' were guilty of appalling violence. It is telling that the Prayer Book, which is celebrated for providing Anglicans with an orderly, stately, and dignified means of approaching God, was the product of such a disordered and tumultuous time. The famous Preface to the book recalls, with charming understatement, the 'late, unhappy confusions' which the nation had passed through. That was a reference not to the Reformation but the Civil War a century later. Under Cromwell, the Prayer Book had been outlawed. Robert Sanderson, who composed the Preface, had once been shot at in the pulpit for doggedly using it in his Lincolnshire parish church. At the Restoration of the monarchy, the Prayer Book was reissued, with a few updates. It is thus the product of a sustained period of turmoil and uncertainty; the product of a people desperate for calm, but very aware of humanity's vulnerabilities. The past is not such a distant place, and the Prayer Book

continues to speak to us of our human condition, and to help us speak to our divine maker and redeemer.

If I had to save one prayer from it, it would be the prayer of General Thanksgiving. This was one of those additions which were inserted after the Restoration in 1660. Interestingly, though, the man who wrote it, Edward Reynolds, was very much a Puritan, meaning he was on the losing side (although he ended up as Bishop of Norwich - whether as a reward or a punishment we cannot tell!). The prayer therefore carries a great Christian nobility within it: it is the offering of a beaten man, like Cranmer himself, whom fortune has not favoured, but who can still ground his being in thanksgiving for the greater sacrifice of Christ, and 'the means of grace, and the hope of glory' which no one can take away from us. It is a very Easter prayer, and, as those called to be an Easter people, I encourage you not to let a week pass by without using it.

In friendship and faith,



Jim



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.

The General Thanksgiving

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.

We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

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

Staffing Update

I am delighted to be able to let you know that we have appointed Xanthe Langley as our new Treasurer and Community Centre Manager, and Haden Bell as our administrative assistant.

Xanthe is known to many of us already, but is taking on a wider role, overseeing the running of the Community Centre, and the financial operations for the whole church.

Haden will manage the Church office. The office will be open Mondays 1 – 3 pm, Tuesdays 1 – 4 pm and Thursday 1 – 4 pm.

Both have written short pieces to introduce themselves. Do make them feel welcome, as they find their feet, especially as - God-willing - I will be on paternity leave for much of April...

Jim



From Xanthe:

I have been part of the St Mark's community for the past 10 years and feel very happy to be continuing my journey here while developing further in this new role. During my time at St Mark's I have really enjoyed being part of such a welcoming and supportive environment, and I look forward to continuing to grow in my role. I grew up in Newnham and have strong ties to the local community. Outside of work I am a proud mother of three young children, which certainly keeps life busy and fun. I am also very grateful for the opportunity to take on this role and continue developing as part of the St Mark's team.



From Haden:

Hello, St Mark's! It's wonderful to meet you, albeit at a bit of a remove. Jim asked me to write a brief introduction about myself so you could get to know me a bit, though do feel free to drop by the church office during the office hours and I'd love to meet in person!

I'm here from the U.S. getting my PhD in English literature – specifically in early modern poetry and theology – from Cambridge. I'm finishing up my third year and heading into a fourth (nearly there!), but I am also in the discernment process for ordination in the Church of England. If all goes well in that process, I'll begin ordination training in September 2027, a few months after I finish my PhD! I've been drawn to the intersection of academia and ministry for nearly 15 years now, so College or university chaplaincy is the current area of ministry I am pursuing. But I've been involved in church ministry in some capacity since I was about 18, and parish ministry is also close to my heart, so I'm really looking forward to being a part of this community as your administrator.

I'm so excited to be here. Do drop by and say hello; I'd love to put faces to names and get to know the members of the parish.

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Gombe Diocese : Charity of the Month

The Anglican church in Nigeria has been prominent in the news in the past few weeks. Headlines have pronounced that the Anglican church world-wide “is splitting,” and claimed that the cause of this has been a group of African countries, prominent among them is Nigeria. Over the past 15 or more years we have regularly supported the northern diocese of Gombe there. Whether those high level decisions should affect that support is a question we may need to discuss. But it is time once again for Gombe to be our charity of the month.

We have been concerned for Gombe for good reasons. Firstly it is one of the poorer states in Nigeria. It doesn't have access to the possible oil wealth of the southeastern part of the country and its climate is not as beneficial to farming as is the tropical centre of the country. Gombe state is in the position where Nigeria begins to be affected by proximity to the Sahara Desert. Politically it has been deeply troubled by inter-religious strife: the terror group Boko Haram has bequeathed to the state a legacy of criminal behaviour that affects all communities: for example, the kidnapping of school children with demands to their parents that ransoms be paid for the children's release.

The church has been a target for some of this criminality and the previous bishop could tell stories of how he has been physically attacked and his house invaded. Some of the Anglican Churches' congregations have lost significant numbers, as those able to have moved to the south of the country.

We began to support Gombe Diocese because the former bishop, Henry Ndukubah, had been a personal friend of Dan and Perrin Hardy, since he was Dan's student at Durham university. We were impressed by Henry's vision for the Anglican church to have a positive effect on the social and economic development of the area. The local congregations had an enabling vision for projects that benefitted their communities. This motivation came from their faith in what it meant to be living as servants of God in that place and at this time. I well remember on a visit

to Gombe that we called into the site of a growing secondary school and, though it was a bank holiday, we met the Head Teacher and two of his colleagues digging the foundations of a planned extra classroom! Fifteen years later that school is now a busy secondary school serving the south of the state. A project that is in progress at present is the creation of a long-desired College of Nursing and Midwifery, also in the south of the state.

Communications with Gombe became more problematic when we lost Stuart Lingard, but thanks to the hard work of Sarah Squire and Xanthe Langley we are hoping that better communications have now been re-established. There is no doubt that our relationship with Nigeria has left its mark here. The people of Gombe are genuinely grateful for the support we have given them and they have written to us with thanks and enthusiasm. Two gifts of Nigerian leatherwork hang in the church as a token of this. We have also benefitted from their prayers for us and the relationship is a mark of our identity as members of the world-wide church.

Andrew Watts

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Easter in Carving



Their appearance is deceptive. The wooden panels depicting Biblical scenes in the upper section of the choir stalls in Ely Cathedral may look as if they are part of the original construction. In fact they were added some 500 years later.

The stalls themselves are a magnificent example of medieval art dating from 1338-1348. They are now in their third location having been reset to the east of the octagon in 1850 as part of a reordering carried out by the eminent Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott. Edward Bowyer Sparke (1805-1879), the son of a bishop of Ely and a canon and benefactor of the Cathedral for fifty years felt the then blank upper sections needed enhancing and commissioned carved reliefs of Old and New Testament scenes which were created between 1857 and 1869 by Michel Abeloos of Louvain in Belgium. Abeloos is not well known and usually worked in traditional styles. Among his other works is an altar in the Basilica of the Holy Blood in Bruges.

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

He carved 45 panels for Ely; the exception is the first or sample panel of the Nativity which is by J B Phillips. The 23 panels on the south side depict Old Testament events (Jonah and the big fish is particularly good) and the 23 on the north show scenes from the life of Jesus moving chronologically from west to east. After the Nativity, the wedding at Canaan and the Transfiguration the final 13 sections here tell the story of the first Easter. These start with Christ washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper followed by the betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane and the appearances before Pilate and Herod. The actual crucifixion, deposition, when the dead Christ is removed from the cross, and resurrection are especially moving. The final three show the supper at Emmaus, doubting Thomas and the Ascension.

Each panel is about 40 cm wide by 60 cm high. Wisely no attempt is made to crowd out the scenes. Thus when the risen Jesus appears to Thomas there are just four disciples shown. The confined spaces provide a sense of intimacy. The Emmaus carving gives a feeling of peace and calm. New lighting in the cathedral means the panels can be viewed more easily, though when talking to a lady cleaning the choir stalls she mentioned she would love to get a cherry picker in to give them a thorough dusting. If you are visiting the cathedral I recommend you take time to pause and reflect on all the events portrayed so lovingly in wood.

Chris Hammond

Condolences

We are sad to record the death of Michael Wallis on the 26th February, only a short time after the death of Evadne his beloved wife of 66 years. Michael requested that he should have a private family cremation. We send our condolences to his family.

We also extend our sympathy to Tina Wilson and her family at the news of the death of her husband Tony.



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Lent Lunches 2026



These lunches, hosted by Newnham residents and parishioners, have been running very successfully again this year.

The final one of the year will be on Wednesday 1st April at Jane Plows's home, 48B Selwyn Road, at 12.30 am in aid of Parkinson's UK.

Please contact Jane (01223 350120 janemp@virginmedia.com) at least three days before to let her know that you wish to attend. Please bring your donation as cash.

Foodbank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 12th April.

Or leave them on the previous Thursday, the 9th April, 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.

Wildlife Trust BCN update: May 2026

April is an exciting time for wildlife. Some wildflowers will have been out since March, like primrose, lesser celandine, red deadnettle, and the rare oxlip (found in a few of our ancient woodland nature reserves), and others will just be starting like red campion, greater stitchwort, cowslips, wood anemones, and bluebells. At this time of year, you might

find three different types of violets in some of our woodland reserves. You can tell them apart by looking at the spur (the part of the flower that sticks out the back), and the sepals (these are the parts that protect the bud before it opens).



- Early dog violet has a straight spur which is darker than the main flower petals. The sepals are long and pointed.
- Sweet violet has a spur with a bent end, and blunt sepals (and smells nice!)
- Common dog violet has a spur with a bent end which is paler than the main flower petals. The sepals are long and pointed.

Resident birds like blackbirds, robins, house sparrows, starlings, goldfinches, blue tits and great tits will already be raising chicks. They might have been working on their nests since February. Common migrant birds like the chiffchaff, swallow, and blackcap, will just be arriving.

Wildlife Trust BCN events are a great way to learn about native wildlife, and tickets are cheaper for members. Here are upcoming events on Trumpington Meadows (other events, and booking links can be found at wildlifebcn.org/events)

Fri 24th April 11- 12.15 Seasonal stroll: spring wildflowers

Sat 25th April 10- 12 Wild in the Meadows: outdoor art

Please check our website for more information about which nature reserves have temporary closures. Note, the default for most of our reserves is that dogs must be on leads. There are some reserves where dogs are not allowed at all (Hayley Wood has just been added to this list), and some where there are very specific places where they can be off-lead (like parts of Trumpington Meadows).

Prayers for May

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
help us to see and know your love for us,
so that in humility, love and joy we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*Prayer for Holy Week from Draw Near: Life-giving Habits for Lent,
a Church of England booklet that we have been using this Lent.*

Thank you God, For new life in the springtime, for flowers and birds, for
bright green new leaves. Thank you God, for new life at Easter, For Jesus
who is with us, right now and every day. Amen.

Rachel Summers, Wild Worship

O ingenious God,
I rejoice in your creation,
and pray that your Spirit touch me so deeply
that I will find a sense of self
which makes me glad to be who I am
and yet restless
at being anything less
than I can become.

Ted Loder, Guerrillas of Grace

Chosen by Tim Verney



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Regular Groups

Monday Bible Study

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, awcam72@gmail.com

Choir

The choir sings every Sunday morning during term time and one Sunday evensong per month. Contact Marcus Cox at 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 April

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

5th April at **9.30 am** Eucharist for Easter Day

12th April at **9.30 am** Morning Worship

19th April at **9.30 am** Communion

26th April at **9.30 am** Communion

Regular Weekday Services

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday at 9.00 am Morning Prayer

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

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