

Seek

June 2026



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

www.stmarksnewnham.org

The Vicar's Letter



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Since I last wrote, we have welcomed a baby girl into our family. I am immensely grateful for all the help provided over the Easter festivities when the vicar was needed at home; and for all the incredible warmth that has been sent our way in the form of cards, gifts and good wishes.

The first thing everybody asks - once it has been established that everybody is well, of course - is, 'what is she called'. Her full name is Cora Mary Macrina. Cora is an alternative name for Persephone, the ancient Greek goddess whose annual return from Hades every Spring was taken on by Christians as a symbol of the Resurrection. Mary probably needs no explanation, but is one of the dedications of Grantchester Church, where she will be baptised this month. Macrina is an early Christian female theologian, who gave her name to the Orthodox student centre in Oxford where I met my wife.

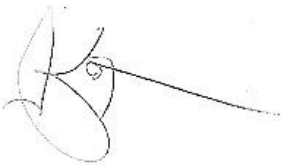
This follows the pattern which we have loosely applied to the boys as well: three Christian names because three initials sounds much more convincing when opening the batting for England. So my eldest is A.J.W Robinson. His name earned him some early notoriety. He is Aubrey, because we liked it; John, after both his grandfathers; and Wulfram because I was at the time working in St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, and he was baptised there. My grandmother put the birth notice in the Telegraph, and, clearly in a low news week (remember those?!), a journalist noticed it and wrote an article in the Spectator about silly names. It included the line, 'these days you can't even call a child John without sandwiching it between Aubrey and Wulfram'.

I am named after my great-grandfather, a Lincolnshire farmer who delighted in the name James (Jim) Riggall Auckland. My father has always regretted not calling me Riggall, but even I might have found it a bit much being the Reverend Riggall Robinson.

All of which is to say that it is a weighty responsibility to give somebody a name. It was the task God gave to Adam in Eden (Genesis 2.19-20), as a way of showing him - and us - that human beings are made to be stewards and guardians of creation, rather than the profiteers we sometimes behave like. I am currently preparing candidates for confirmation. In the old days this would have involved learning the catechism, a series of questions and answers which addressed the fundamentals of the faith. Whilst these days we tend to focus more on learning through discussion, rather than by rote, there is something about the directness of the catechism which shouldn't be lost. The first question it poses is, 'What is your name?' Not, 'what do you believe' or 'what do you think about this or that'? What is your name? This may be surprising. It is not a difficult question to answer. But think how disorientating it is when somebody gets our name wrong. Our name conveys so much. It is one of the first gifts we receive. It so says where we come from, our parentage, both human and - because of the connection with baptism - divine. It reminds us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, and yet are not lost within it, but known and held by it. As we read in the book of Isaiah: 'I have called you by name, you are mine.' (Isaiah 43:1). God knows us by name.

Speaking of being called, we will soon be celebrating the ordination of our curates, Becca and Kennedy. On Saturday 4th July, Becca will be ordained deacon in the morning, and Kennedy will be ordained priest in the afternoon, ready to celebrate Holy Communion for the first time the next day. This is obviously a special time for both of them, and I urge you to hold them in your prayers.

In friendship and faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim

Rowan Humberstone : Charity of the Month



If you have wandered down to Sheep's Green recently, you may have noticed the beautiful wooden sculpture marking the Learner Pool. Created by Rowan

Humberstone, St Mark's Charity of the Month for June, in collaboration with pupils from Newnham Croft Primary School, the sculpture has quickly become a favourite feature on local walking tours. Rich in detail, it celebrates Newnham's long connection with outdoor swimming while also highlighting the wildlife and biodiversity of Sheep's Green.

Rowan is a remarkable charity, supporting adults with learning disabilities through creativity, nature, and community. Based just across the river in the De Freville area of Cambridge, Rowan has provided a welcoming and inspiring environment since 1984, where people can build confidence, develop practical and artistic skills, form friendships, and express themselves creatively.



Children from Newnham Croft Primary School varnishing the sculpture in time for a new swimming season

The charity offers workshops in ceramics, woodwork, textiles, printmaking, drama, music, movement, and forest school activities. More than simply teaching creative skills, Rowan focuses on each person's strengths and potential. Small group sessions allow students to work closely with tutors, take part in exhibitions and community projects, and gain a real sense of achievement and independence. Rowan also plays an important role in reducing loneliness and offering support and respite for families and carers.

Running Rowan costs over £800,000 each year, supporting specialist staff, wellbeing activities, workshop materials, and the creative spaces that students rely on every day. Donating to Rowan means helping adults with learning disabilities access friendship, creativity, confidence, and opportunities that can genuinely change lives. It is a charity that brings lasting benefits not only to its students, but to the wider Cambridge community as well.

If you would like to support Rowan Humberstone's work, donations of any size can make a real difference and help ensure this valuable community resource continues to thrive for years to come.

Dani Redhead

Ordinations

On Saturday 4th July, our incoming curate, Becca, will be ordained deacon, and our already curate Kennedy will be ordained priest. Please do hold them both in your prayers. Kennedy's service is at the Cathedral at 3.30pm and it would be really lovely if we could be there to support him. All are welcome and there is plenty of room!

Kennedy's first time celebrating Holy Communion will be the following day - Sunday 5th July. As this is an important event, at which we also welcome Becca and her family, both parishes will come together for the service. This will be at Grantchester, at 10.30am, followed by cake and fizz! Again, it would be lovely to fill the church to show support and appreciation.

The July/August Edition of Seek

Contributions are always very welcome. Please send them to Jane Plows at janemp@virginmedia.com (01223 350120) Sunday 14th June.

Please note that this edition covers two months so we need to know in good time about any activities planned for August.



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Christ on the Cross



It is a shocking image. *Christ on the Cross* was painted by the Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664) and is usually in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. Fortunately you do not have to travel that far to see it as at present it is in a marvellous exhibition dedicated to Zurbarán at the National Gallery, London until the 23rd August. As we pass Pentecost and leave Eastertide it is worth reflecting on.

The painting was commissioned by the Dominicans of San Pablo de Real Monastery in Seville as part of a wider contract to provide 21 pictures. It was painted in 1627 when Zurbarán was 29 and immediately made his reputation to the extent that the Seville City Council invited

him to settle there. He devoted himself mainly to religious images and his most characteristic works are single figures of monks and saints in meditation or prayer.

Christ on the Cross depicts the crucified Christ dying on Good Friday. I find it immensely moving. His body is illuminated against a sombre plain dark background which emphasises his figure. Unlike in many crucifixion scenes Christ is entirely alone; there are no women including his mother, the disciple John, onlookers or soldiers as is traditional. This isolation gives a sense of despair and hopelessness. You are reminded

of the cry in the Gospels 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Christ's emaciated body is illuminated by a source of light from the right highlighting his torment. The picture is large and deliberately hung quite high. One imagines the impact it must have had when first seen in the dimly lit monastery.

There are other crucifixion scenes in the exhibition, some with bystanders in them as well as a wide range of Zurbaran's work. If you happen to be in the vicinity of Trafalgar Square I strongly recommend a visit.

Chris Hammond

Foodbank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 7th June.

Or leave them on the following Thursday, the 11th June, 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.

An open boot collection takes place on **the first Tuesday morning of every month** from 11 am to 12 noon at the Gough Way island with the post box (not weekly as in the past).

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

**The King's Men in Concert at St Mary & St Michael
Sunday 21 June at 7.30pm**

A fundraiser for our reimagining project - don't miss out - buy your tickets now!

£20 (+ booking fee) - <https://kingsmen21-6-2026.eventbrite.co.uk> or scan the QR code



Merith Bond

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Donations of books, plants, cakes, unopened bottles (beer, wine, spirits, soda, water, washing-up liquid, etc) and vintage clothing (in good condition please) are requested. Deliver to the church in the fortnight before the fête.

Volunteers are needed to man the stalls, serve teas and assist with games. Please contact Ross Smythe if you are able to help. rwsmythe@me.com

Around and About

The directors of the Derby Stores will be moving on later this summer.

Thirty years ago Neera, Jean, Jack and Philip became part of the life of Newnham. Jack retired eight years ago and this summer Jean will retire fully. Neera, with Philip's assistance, will continue to supply the store with curries and will give the new owner support initially with the ordering. Munjeet, who runs three other shops, recognises that the Derby Stores is unique in its range of goods and services and wants to continue the tradition. At the moment the shop sources goods from about 20 different suppliers.

But, of course, all those of us who live in Newnham know that the Derby Stores provides us with more than a wide variety of produce. It is also a hub of the community. Jean, Neera and Philip pride themselves in knowing many of us individually and being some of the first people to know if a customer is experiencing difficulties or needs special help. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

We are pleased to welcome Clark and Son as our new butcher's on the corner of Chedworth Street. The Suffolk based family company has been in the wholesale business for 25 years and opened their first retail branch in Long Melford six years ago. Newnham is their next venture into retail. Charlotte's is the friendly face behind the counter and Leon, who is in charge at Long Melford, is helping out here at the moment as business gets established.

Their website says, "Serving a selection of fine quality meat, poultry, and game throughout Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire to a range of clients from traditional butchers to fine dining restaurants and pubs and with our vans travelling to Smithfield on a daily basis there really is nothing we can't provide". Charlotte says, "We can source most things. It's always worth asking".

Jane Plows

St Mark's Arts & Events
present

POETRY AFTERNOON

Readers and Contributions welcome



SUNDAY 12 JULY 3pm

ST MARK'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, BARTON ROAD, CB3 9J2.

TEA AND CAKES - Tickets free - Cash Donations

*If you would like to read or contribute a favourite poem or two,
please send your suggestions to Derek Cummings by Sunday 21 June
drcummings77@gmail.com*

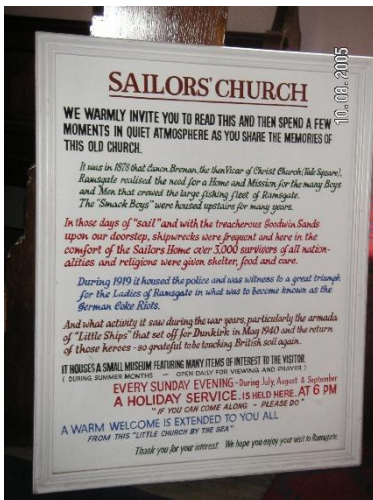
The Sailors' Church, Ramsgate



If you visit an interesting church over the summer, do let our readers know about it.

I found these photos the other day and remembered visiting the Sailors' Church in Ramsgate many years ago. We moored our boat in the Royal Harbour which lies below steep cliffs and went ashore. There, built into the cliffs is the church.

The Sailors' Church and Harbour Mission, close by the foot of Jacob's Ladder was built in 1878 by Canon Eustace Brenan, vicar of the nearby Christ Church. He saw the need for spiritual guidance and physical help for the men and boys who made up the crews of the sailing smacks who fished out of Ramsgate in the nineteenth century. It was dangerous, arduous work, especially for the young apprentices who were called Smack Boys. When the apprentices were ashore, they were provided with some comfort in the rooms above the church and later, in the Smack Boys Home next door.



In later years it provided refuge for the exhausted troops returning from Dunkirk. Nowadays it offers a few minutes of calm and tranquillity. It is still used regularly and also houses a small museum.

We would love to hear about other interesting places of worship.

Jane Plows



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.

'Having beaten my typewriter into a ploughshare,
I shall never be able to face going back to town life.'

Call me John



Enid Barraud went from capital to cornfield, living with war, disability, and as a man.

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Comments on Jane Bower's previous productions:

Congratulations on a mammoth effort – your technique is excellent, the line between reading and telling is often impossible to discern.

— Alan Bennett, after *A Letter from Paul*

...masterly. I should have known from the quality of your writing that your acting would be as good. Bravo.

— Maureen Lipman, after *My Name with Yours*

The concept and delivery is masterful. Integrity, talent and love run through it like Blackpool rock.

— Diane Sammons, after *Daddy's Diaries*



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APCM 2026

The APCM took place on the 24th May 2026, only a day before Seek went to press. A report will be included in our next issue.

Our Churchwardens, Nigel Porter and Sarah Perry, were elected for another year.

Richard Bauckham and Eleanor Toye Scott have completed their time on the PCC and have chosen not to stand again. Hannelore Hägele, Ross Smythe and Jenny Doyle will continue on the Committee and will be joined by Sue Wagner and Andrew Watts.


Margaret Banks has stepped down as a Deanery Synod Representative but Nigel Porter is continuing and will be joined by Lizzy Jarvis.

The meeting was followed by an enjoyable Bring and Share meal.

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Prayers for June

Your word, Lord, is a lamp for our eyes,
 You are the shepherd of those who go astray:
 In my doubt and uncertainty,
 Give me the grace to seek what you would have me do.
 By your Holy Spirit of wisdom and counsel,
 Save me from false choices:
 Grant that in your light I may see light,
 And that in walking your straight path I may not stumble.
 Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord, if this be not your will, frustrate it:
 Frustrate it fully and frustrate it quickly,
 And move my heart's desire
 Closer to the heart of your desire for me.
 But if it be your will,
 Then continue to open for me
 The generosity of heart, mind, and means
 That are needed.
 And may this generosity begin with me. Amen

God of Yesterday,
 we knew you then:
 your promises; your words;
 your walking among us.
 But yesterday is gone.
 And so, today, we are in need of change.
 Change
 and change us.
 Help us to see life now
 not through yesterday's stories
 but through today's. Amen

*From Prayers in Times of Change from Queens' College Chapel suggested
 by Perrin Hardy.*



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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 June

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

7th June at 9.30 am	Communion
14th June at 9.30 am	Morning Worship
21st June at 9.30 am 6.00 pm	Communion Evensong at Grantchester
28th June 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

Sunday 5th July

8.00 am Communion (BCP)

9.30 am **No service at St Mark's**

10.30 am Communion at **Grantchester** for both churches as Kennedy celebrates Communion for the first time and as we greet Becca, our new curate, and her family. There will be refreshments after the service.

