Seek

November 2026



The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge

www.stmarksnewnham.org

The Vicar's Letter



Dear Brothers and Sisters

I am recently returned from Barcelona. Thanks to Arabella being on maternity leave, we were fortunate enough to be able to take advantage of the half-term break for once. Barcelona is a place I have been to before, but not for over twenty years. The first time I went was on a school football tour, where I got to experience what it is like to play for England, by being soundly and repeatedly thrashed by the Spanish.

But Arabella had never been, and Aubrey is learning Spanish at school, so it seemed a good way of inspiring him in that endeavour. Also, I had unfinished business. When I was last there, as a teenager, the great basilica, the Sagrada Familia, was not yet finished. I can remember distinctly the sight of the cranes reaching out over the half-formed towers. You certainly couldn't go in. You can now and many do: you need to book tickets weeks in advance. The church was formally completed when it was consecrated by the Pope in February of this year, an entire century after the tragic death of the building's visionary artist, Antoni Gaudi.

Gaudi's work is highly distinctive, combining the traditional, awe-inspiring Gothic, with the naturalistic, even slightly psychedelic curves and colours of the Art Nouveau style: a combination that makes the Sagrada Familia feel highly contemporary - or even timeless - despite the fact that work began on it in 1883. (To mark this auspicious year, a new book has just been published on Gaudi by Peter Stanford, and I can recommend it.)

It is a unique building architecturally, and also the tallest church in the world. But it is the incredible story of its long and troubled construction that makes the Sagrada Familia such a powerful place. It is a sermon in stone. It was conceived in adversity: the idea was to push back at the



growing anti-Christian views of the time by inviting people to contribute financially to the new church. And this is how it was funded. Everything about it was an act of faith: faith that people would give and faith that the craftsmen could deliver. And despite the resignation of the first architect and the unexpected death of the second (Gaudi himself), and decades of turbulence, with the Spanish Civil War at the centre, the church now serves the people of Barcelona in a world wholly different from that when the first stone was set in the ground.

What is true of the Sagrada Familia is of course true of the Church in general: planted in first century Palestine, and still, in various forms and expressions, nurturing encounters with the God of love the world over.

Gaudi, who was a most devout man, once said, when challenged about the length of time his church was taking: 'My client is not in a hurry'. God's time is not like our time. The Sagrada Familia stands as a monument to the glory of God at work among us. And also as a monument to the positive action and imagination and vision of generations of Christians, who, like Gaudi, never saw the completion of their labours.

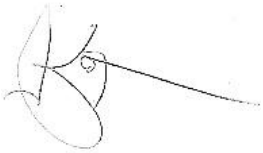
These are all themes which November invites us to reflect on. The month begins with All Saints' Day, which is similarly a memorial to the great, living, communion of the faithful who have all uniquely contributed towards the building of something beautiful, the Church. And that communion includes those who have passed beyond this mortal life, and it includes us, who are earlier on our journey. As the wonderful collect prayer for All Saints' puts it, we are 'knit together' in 'one communion and fellowship, the mystical body' of Our Lord.

And just as poignantly, in November we also gather around other memorials, erected to ensure that we do not forget the sacrifices made before us and for us, in the midst of human conflict and in pursuit of peace. Like the Sagrada Familia, peace-building (which is the same

thing as church-building) is a long and occasionally tortuous process. But we stand on the surest of foundations.

In friendship and in faith,

Jim



Foodbank Dates

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

Or leave them on **Friday 13th November**, 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 December Edition of Seek

Contributions are always very welcome. Please send your items to Jane Plows at janemp@virginmedia.com (01223 350120) by Sunday 15th November.

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Charity of the Month : Combat Stress

Our charity this month is sponsored by Miles Elliott who has supplied us with Combat Stress's summary of its work and mission.

For many the battle continues

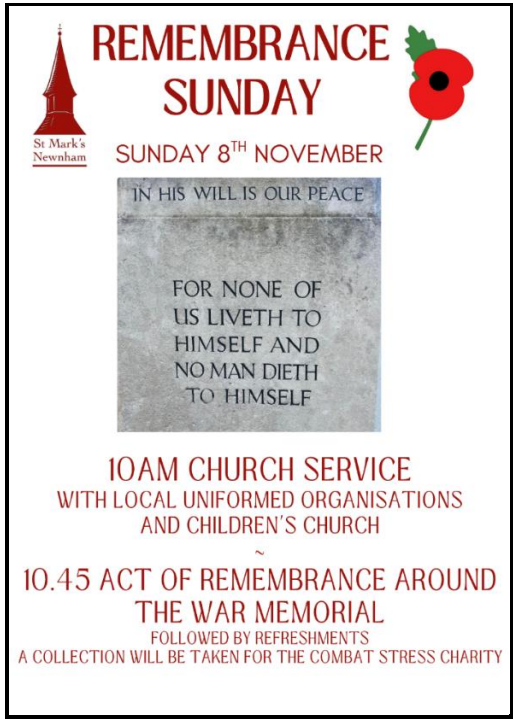
As we approach Remembrance Day, it's important we remember the extraordinary lengths military veterans have gone to, all to keep us safe at home. Because for many, the psychological trauma some experience during military service takes a terrible toll, tearing their lives apart. Veterans may have left conflict behind, but the battle continues.

We at Combat Stress, the UK's leading charity for mental health, believe that military trauma shouldn't destroy the lives of veterans and their families. And so every day, our clinicians provide life changing treatment to help those veterans with complex mental health issues, like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

At the moment demand for our services remains high. Thousands of veterans rely on the care and support only Combat Stress provides. Over 17,000 contacts were made to our helpline this year and the age range we support stretches from 20 to 92. We must be there when people with PTSD reach out, lives depend on it.

Please give a gift this Remembrance Sunday, 8th November, via our Charity of the Month scheme to help more veterans to get the specialist mental health treatment they need to process the past and take on the future.

Miles Elliott

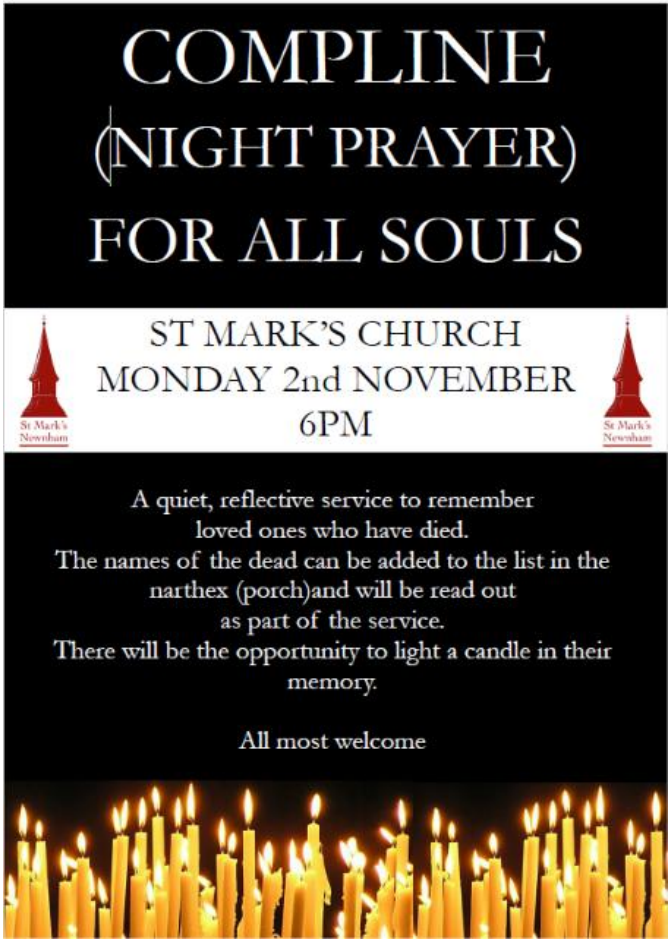


Around and About

Many congratulations to Eleanor Jones who will celebrate her ninetieth birthday on the 17th November. We wish her a very happy birthday.

We thank Derek Cummings for inviting us to join him after the 9.30 service on the 11th October in celebrating his 95th birthday. Just a day or two before the actual event, he plied us with cakes made by his family and a glass of wine.

Last month we wished bon voyage to Ross Smythe who left to join Kris and Emma who have relocated to Texas where Emma can pursue her dream of becoming a pilot. We will miss Ross's enormous enthusiasm and the way he took on and tackled the church fête and the Christmas fair.



Our New Ordinands

We are delighted to welcome Brian Craig and Joanna Davey who are on placement with us this year and written a little about themselves for us. We hope they will enjoy their time with us and look forward to getting to know them better.

Brian Craig



I'm very pleased to be having my church attachment at St Mark's Newnham and St Andrew and St Mary Grantchester, and I'm looking forward to getting involved in the life of the church. I have just started my second and final year at Ridley Hall. Before moving to Cambridge for training for ordination, I lived in South London (which is also where I grew up) and I worked as a Conveyancer (Property Lawyer) for many years.

I now live in Trumpington with my wife, Madeline (who is a trauma informed developmental coach and writer/editor). I enjoy the outdoors and walking, and I'm enjoying having Trumpington Meadows and Grantchester Meadows nearby. I also like books and coffee shops. Outside of term time, we like to visit family in Cornwall and in Armenia.

Brian

Joanna Davey



Hi everyone, I'm Joanna but please call me Jo. I am studying the BTh (Bachelor of Theology for Ministry) via St Catharine's, and training for ordained priestly ministry at Westcott House. I am very happy to be attached to the parishes of Grantchester and Newnham for my second and final year. Thank you to everyone I've met so far – you have made me feel so welcome. It's delightful to be with you and I am already enjoying learning from Rev Jim and the rest of the clergy team.

I grew up just outside Stratford-Upon-Avon in rural Warwickshire and went to school in Warwick. I studied Classics at university and then moved to London to work in publishing. I was a commissioning editor at Hodder & Stoughton on their popular theology list, Hodder Faith, before being recommended to train for ordination. As well as serving at church – mostly in hospitality sorts of roles – I did lots of volunteering

with rough sleepers, at a women's refuge and in the foodbank, and it was through these kinds of initiatives that I found my calling to ministry. Aside from working and volunteering, I love to cook and bake, especially deceptively vegan puddings(!), and attempting to propagate plants. I am also low-key *obsessed* with The Archers, but don't tell anyone!

Jo

Quiet Day 2026

On the 12th September eighteen members of St Mark's met at Ferrar House, Little Gidding for our annual Quiet Day. For many the name of the village is familiar from the fourth poem of T S Eliot's Four Quartets written in 1942.

Now a Retreat House, Ferrar House in Little Gidding is named after Nicholas Ferrar who bought the manor of Little Gidding in 1626. A newly ordained deacon and fleeing a turbulent political life in London, he moved there with his mother. His sister Susanna and his brother John and their spouses and children followed. The household had a strict religious routine with short services held hourly in the Great Chamber of the house, from 6 am in the morning until 8 pm at night, during which the entire Psalter was recited. In addition, prayers were said in the church twice in the morning, and Evensong was conducted in the afternoon.

Led by Jim and entitled "Entering the Cloud of Unknowing" our day followed a gentler pattern with two periods of reflection on The Cloud of Unknowing, a work written in Middle English by an unnamed 14th century Christian mystic, periods of prayer and space to reflect, pray, meditate or explore the beautiful surrounding countryside in addition to shared meals and Eucharist in the neighbouring church.

Many thanks to Jim for leading this uplifting and refreshing day.

Thanks are due too to Richard Bauckham who submitted the poem below to Seek. He began writing it at Little Gidding on the Quiet Day and we are delighted that he finished later and is sharing it with us here.

Little Gidding, September 2026

The blustered trees like shakers yield themselves
to uncontrollable desire for God.
Light-hearted as they seem we know
that they are rooted deep below.

As though the months of drought that drained us dry
had not encroached on this Edenic space,
abundant green engrosses those
who know that grace still overflows.

But we are here to wander on a path
poets and preachers stumble to describe.
Negating is the way to know
the love that will not let us go.

Richard Bauckham

ST MARK'S CHURCH, NEWNHAM, CAMBRIDGE

Music and spirituality



Four leading scholar-musicians explore faith in word and sound



6th September 2026
Jonathan Kimber (cello)
Tuning in: Music, Attentiveness and Spirituality

27th September 2026
Tim Boniface (saxophone)
Swing and the Spirit - Jazz Improvisation, Freedom and Mystery

1st November 2026
Malcolm Guite (guitar)
The Poetry of Music and the Music of Poetry

6th December 2026
Jeremy Begbie (piano)
What made JS Bach the most influential Christian composer of all time?

Sunday afternoons at 3pm, St Mark's Church, Barton Road, Cambridge CB3 9JZ. Tea and biscuits

A War Grave at St Mark's Burial Ground

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was founded to mark, record and maintain the graves and memorials of members of the military who died in the 1st and 2nd World Wars. It is currently responsible for the continued commemoration of 1.7 million deceased Commonwealth personnel in 153 countries. Also, it is currently responsible for over 23,000 separate burial sites and of more than 200 memorials worldwide.

The commission was founded by Sir Fabian Ware and constituted in 1917 as The Imperial War Commission. The change to its present name took place in 1960.

By 1918, some 587,000 graves had been identified and a further 559,000 casualties were registered as having no known grave. A report which was published in November of that year recommended that the bodies should not be repatriated and that uniform memorials should be used to avoid class distinctions. This report caused enormous disquiet but was lessened a little by an article by Rudyard Kipling which showed illustrations of the cemeteries with trees and shrubs softening the harsh landscape. Three eminent architects, including Sir Edwin Lutyens were commissioned to design memorials and by 1920 three experimental cemeteries had been built. Having consulted with garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, the architects created a walled cemetery with uniform headstones in a garden setting, augmented by Blomfield's 'Cross of Sacrifice' and Lutyen's 'Stone of Remembrance'. By 1927, when the majority of the construction was completed, over 500 cemeteries had been built.

The Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium, was the first memorial to the missing completed in Europe and was unveiled on 24 July 1927. Since then, the Last Post Ceremony has taken place every evening at 8 p.m., except during the German occupation in the Second World War. As the Ypres memorial could not accommodate every name, a further 34,984 are

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inscribed on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, including two names from our war memorial.

The work of the Commission had only just been completed when the 2nd World War began. This time there was a systematic effort to record all deaths and graves and, as soon as fighting stopped, the 1st World War cemeteries began to be restored. However new ones needed to be constructed including those in the Far East. The 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment was based in Singapore when it fell to the Japanese in 1942 and three of the soldiers are remembered on The Singapore Memorial. Other soldiers who died as prisoners of war in Thailand and Myanmar are remembered either in cemeteries or memorials in these countries.

The sole woman remembered on St Mark's War Memorial is Helen Valentine. She was a Leading Wren whose ship was torpedoed by the Japanese on its way from East Africa to Sri Lanka. Her name is also inscribed on the large Portsmouth Naval Memorial situated on Southsea Beach.

Finally, St Mark's Burial Ground contains a special grave for two RAF pilot brothers who died during the Second World War. The younger brother, Harold Allgood, joined the RAF in 1931 and was therefore an experienced pilot by the Battle of Britain in 1940. On the 10th October, while based at Kenley in Surrey, he was patrolling at 20,000 feet over Maidstone with nine other Hurricanes when his aircraft suddenly entered a steep dive and crashed into houses on the outskirts of the town. Sergeant Allgood was killed, along with two mothers and six children. The cause of the crash remains unknown, although oxygen failure is considered a possibility because he made no attempt to bail out.

Harold's older brother Edwin also served in the RAF. Flight Sergeant Allgood was a rear gunner stationed in Stornaway on the Outer Hebrides when his plane took off on 28 May 1942 for a reconnaissance flight to northern Norway searching for the German battleship, Tirpitz. The plane was spotted by four Messerschmitt fighters and Edwin was hit and died in his turret. Four members of the crew survived the crash and eventually made their way back to England.

Their grave is not the standard Commonwealth War Grave design, but we have applied for it to be recognised, and we hope that a sign will be erected at the Burial Ground soon.

Sue Wagner

11th/9th Newnham Scouts Trick or Eat Food Drive

2nd November 18:00-20:30

Scouts
11th/9th Cambridge

For Halloween this year, the Newnham Scout group will be spending the evening collecting food donations for the homeless and those in need (for both Jimmy's Cambridge and the Cambridge City Food Bank), rather than getting sweets for themselves. We are seeking donations from the Newnham community. Please note that we can only accept non-perishable, ambient food that is in-date. In mid-October, orange leaflets will be placed through the letterbox in our collection zone (roughly described as Barton Road, the area south of Barton Road, Barton Close, and the Gough Way area).

We will collect donations between 18:00 and 20:00 on the 2nd November. Please attach the leaflet to your donation and leave it visible from the road, or attach the leaflet to your door or window if you prefer us to knock to collect donations. Between 18:00 and 20:30, we will accept donations dropped off at Newnham Scout and Guide HQ, Chedworth Street, CB3 9JF.

For more information, please see https://www.newnhamscouts.org.uk/community-service/trick-or-eat or contact trick-or-eat@newnhamscouts.org.uk

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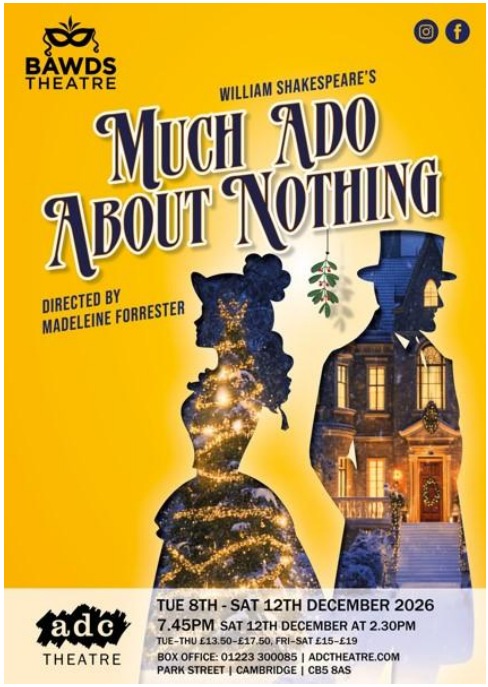
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Not So Bleak Midwinter 2

Those of us who enjoyed 'The Not So Bleak Midwinter' back in January will be delighted to hear the Cantores Singers and their friends will be returning to St Mark's in January next year for another afternoon of songs, readings and lovely music to brighten us all up at this most gloomy time of year. 'Not So Bleak Midwinter 2' will feature works spanning four centuries of beautiful choral music as well as entertaining turns from the junior choir and (adult) recorder players, and talented members of the St Mark's congregation - plus refreshments. Admission is free but there will be a retiring collection with all funds raised going to support the Church.

The concert starts at 3.00 pm on Sunday 10th January at St Mark's Church, Barton Road, Newnham, Cambridge CB3 9JZ



Cantus Singers Concert

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

Saturday December 12th at 8pm.

"In Dulci Jubilo"

Victoria: Motet and Mass 'O magnum mysterium'

Ronald Corp: A Christmas Mass

Settings of carols and chants for Christmas by Praetorius, Eccard and others

Tickets, £12 in advance, can be obtained from Margaret Hay (mmhay29@gmail.com). Otherwise £15 on the door or from https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cantus-singers-of-cambridge. U 18s free.

Newnham Croft Primary School

Christmas Tree Sale

Link to tree sale - **https://bit.ly/4B2X3nX**

Freshly cut locally grown trees.
Please order by 25th November 2026.
Collection will be at the school gate on Friday 4th December 3:15-4:15 or Saturday 5th December from 10am- 11am.

Nordman Fir
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* 5 foot — £50
* 6 foot — £60
* 7 foot — £75

Norway Spruce
Fresh conifer scent, a bushy feel and strong branches for decorating.
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* 7 foot — £45

Scan QR code for link to tree sale

All profits go towards supporting Newnham Croft Primary School
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Prayers through November

All Saints Day, 1st November

Gracious God, thank you for every person whose trust, courage, mercy, and quiet obedience have made your love visible. Help us receive their example with humble hearts, and show us how our ordinary choices can encourage someone else to walk faithfully with you. Amen.
From dailyblessful.com

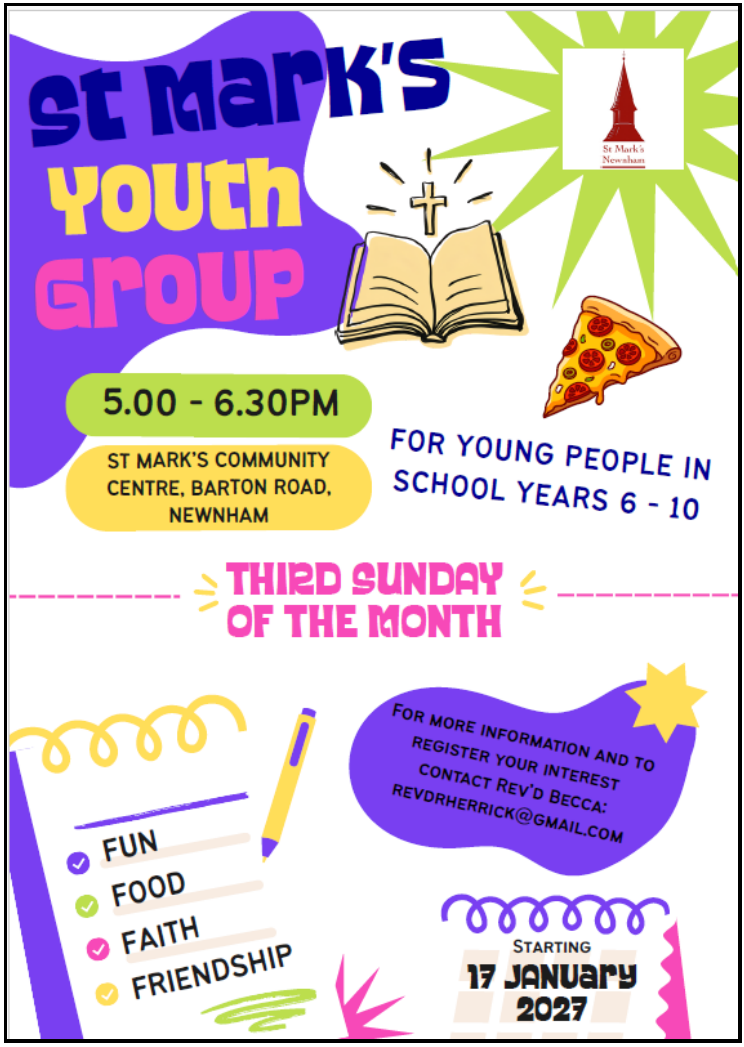
Remembrance Sunday, 8th November

Prayer in a time of hopelessness

We entrust to you, eternal God,
those times when we can see only shadows
and lose sight of the hope to come;
the times when suffering seems so senseless,
life so fragile, war so unstoppable and death so permanent.
Bless us with the assurance that you are in all things,
the tragic and the beautiful,
the nightmare and the dream,
the light and the darkness.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ
the peace of the world, today, tomorrow and forever.
Amen.
From Roots: Resources for Churches

Advent Sunday, 29th November

Lord of all hope, I come before you with my uncertainties. As the days grow shorter, may your light illuminate my path. Grant me the courage to face what lies ahead, and help me to lean on your strength. Let this season be a reminder that even in darkness, your love shines brightly, guiding me toward joy.
prayerfaithhub.com



From the Register

Wedding	3rd October	Eloise Curtis and Daniel Simonseu
Funeral	20th October	John Brady

Regular Children's Events

Toddles (our stay and play group) runs on Thursday mornings from 9.30 am-11.30 am during school termtime.

We have lots of toys, and (thanks to volunteers) can offer warm drinks to the adults. We welcome all parents, grandparents, and carers, with children aged 0-5.

Junior Church usually meets every Sunday of school term-time during the 9.30 am service. All children are welcome to join us, and they can bring their adult(s) with them if they like!

Junior Choir meets every Friday during school term, 5.15 pm-6.00 pm (with snacks from 5pm). All children aged 7-13 are welcome. There is no audition and no need to have prior singing experience.

In January a new St Mark's Youth Group (school years 6 to 10) will begin, taking place on the third Sunday of each month from 5.00 pm to 6.30 pm.

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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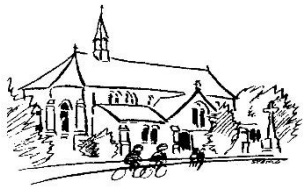
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Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham in November

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

1st November at **9.30 am**	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church
8th November at **9.30 am**	Remembrance Sunday Service
followed at **9.45 am**	Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial
6.00 pm	Choral Evensong
15th November at **9.30 am**	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church
22nd November at **9.30 am**	Parish Eucharist with Junior Church
29th November at **9.30 am**	Joint Parish Eucharist with Grantchester
Advent Sunday	Church with Junior Church
6.00 pm	Wolfson College Advent Carol Service

All Souls Day Compline

Monday 2nd November at **6.00 pm**

Regular Weekday Services

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

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

Wednesday is the Vicar's usual day of rest.

St Mark's Newnham

Faith working through *love*

Galatians 5.6