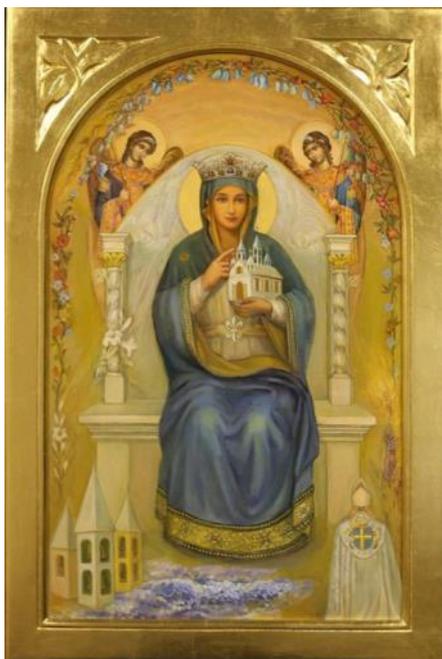


Welcome

Welcome to the March issue of Monthly News from the Wardens and Ministry team.

In this edition we focus on events in the Church in this season of Lent which will help us to strengthen our faith in God's faithfulness to us in sending the Angel Gabriel to Mary celebrated on the 25 March and at the same time we celebrate "Mother Church" on the 22 March, the halfway point in our journey from Ash Wednesday to the glorious feast of Easter.

40 DAYS 40 NIGHTS LENT



Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Although it's often called Mothers' Day it has no connection with the American festival of that name. Traditionally, it was a day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family.

Today it is a day when children give presents, flowers, and home-made cards to their mothers.

Most Sundays in the year churchgoers in England worship at their nearest parish or 'daughter church'.

Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area.

Inevitably the return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home. (It was quite common in those days for children to leave home for work once they were ten years old.)

And most historians think that it was the return to the 'Mother' church which led to the tradition of children, particularly those working as domestic servants, or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit

their mother and family. As they walked along the country lanes, children would pick wild flowers or violets to take to church or give to their mother as a small gift.

Another thought is that the name comes from one of the Bible readings for that day, which refers to motherhood in a different way.

"But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all,"

Galatians 4:26

The writer of the text wanted to explain to the Galatian community what their relationship as Christians was to the Jewish Law.

In the full passage (Galatians 4:21-31), the two children born by Hagar and Sarah to Abraham are seen as symbolising two promises from God.

One is the Law (or Torah), which is restraining and earthly. The other is the Gospel, which is spiritual and liberating. The Galatians are told to regard themselves as children of Gospel.

The attitude that the passage displays to Judaism is uncomfortable to modern readers, but made perfect sense to its intended audience at the time it was written.



Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



The feast of the Annunciation marks the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, during which he told her that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is celebrated on **25 March** each year. More importantly, since it occurs 9 months before the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, the Annunciation marks the actual incarnation of Jesus Christ - the moment that Jesus was conceived and that the Son of God became the son of the Virgin. The festival has been celebrated since the 5th century AD. The festival celebrates two things:

God's action in entering the human world as Jesus in order to save humanity. Humanity's willing acceptance of God's action in Mary's freely given acceptance of the task of being the Mother of God.

The story of the Annunciation has produced three important liturgical texts, the Ave Maria, the Angelus, and the Magnificat.

The angel's greeting to Mary, which is traditionally translated as

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,"

(in Latin *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*)

is the opening of the Ave Maria, and a part of the Rosary prayers.

The Angelus consists of three Ave Marias, together with some additional material. It is said three times a day, at 6am, 12 noon and 6pm. The Angelus can be heard ringing on the bells within St. Mary's church tower at these times each day.

The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is the poem with which Mary responds to the Annunciation and celebrates the power of God.

Writers have many different interpretations of the visitation of Gabriel. Some groups see Mary as powerless before God, others show her instead as a woman who makes a free choice to accept God's task for her - a task she could have refused.

Mary's acceptance of the role of servant is not, they teach, demeaning, and they point out that Jesus also regarded himself as a servant. And taking up the example of the disciples, they see Mary, through her act of faith, exercising her right to believe what she wants and to cooperate with God in his plan of salvation - a plan that he cannot carry out without her.

Some theologians and writers suggest that the story of the Annunciation emphasises the status of women, since in the Incarnation God enlists the help of a woman to create a child of vast importance, and gives men no part to play in

this important work.

In the Magnificat itself, Mary becomes the herald of Salvation, and takes Christianity into the spheres of politics and justice as the first spokesperson for the marginalised people who were the focus of Jesus, and are now the focus of Christians and the Church.

In a time of Vacancy



A statement from your Parish representatives:

We have been very grateful for the support that has been offered during this interregnum and have always wanted to keep you as up to date as possible with how things have been progressing. This week we received the disappointing news that the vendors have withdrawn from the purchase of the

Lenten Prayer

Lord may Lent be a time of inward searching that makes me more able to look with compassion at the needs of the world. Help us to draw near to you in praise, stripping away all that distracts us from worship, building up your Kingdom, here and now. Amen

house which was due to be the new Rectory. Understandably this will cause a little more delay in Shaun's arrival, however the diocese are already urgently exploring other housing options. We look forward very much to Shaun's arrival and we are very grateful for Adele and Carole here at St Mary's and those visiting priests who have supported us in preaching and presiding during the interregnum. We would ask for that continued and valued support for us and for each other as we journey a bit further through this vacancy. This is a great church, with good people. Shaun is still coming and God remains entirely faithful.

Heritage Restoration Update



This Phase of work on this ancient holy place to repair and replace parts that have stood the test of time for, in some cases 800 years, is coming to completion.

Work began in 2017 to prepare a scheme and apply for grant aid and permissions, culminating in the physical work commencing in October last year.

The recent bad weather has hampered some of the stone repairs, but not seriously. Work is ongoing in the Lady Chapel and elsewhere in the interior to repair areas of flooring dam-

Gospel Readings

8 March Lent 2

John 3: 1-17

15 March Lent 3

John 4: 5-42

22 March Mothering Sunday

John 9

25 March Annunciation of the BVM

Luke 1: 26-38

29 March Lent 5 Passion Sunday

John 11:1-45

HOLY HOUR



Eucharist to the Blessed Virgin Mary

11am

Last Saturday of the month
In Church

aged by the ingress of water, both recent and long term.

We thank you all for your patience during these essential works which were classed as urgent in the last quinquennial report and we would like to thank the cleaning team, who have worked long hours each week to make services and events within the church as clean and comfortable as possible. You may even notice the increase in volume and bright-

Breathing Space

“A time for you
with God”

2nd Wednesday of each
month

Next 11 March

8-00pm to 8-45pm

in church

See Rev.Carole for details

ness of the organ now that it is not enclosed in a plastic bag. The total cost figures for the project are not yet complete but is expected to be £166K.

A big thank you to Buttress and to Heritage Conservation & Restoration for their patience and help during the restoration.



Regular worship at St Mary's Sunday

8.00am Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist

Tuesday

7.30am Morning Prayer**

8-15am Eucharist

Wednesday

7.30am Morning Prayer**

8-15am Eucharist

Thursday

7.30am Morning Prayer**

*9.10am Eucharist in St Mary's School

*10.00am Pre-School Praise

Friday

7.30am Morning Prayer**

8-15am Eucharist

*during term time

** suspended whilst restoration continues



What's on



- 1 March Lent 1 All Age (normal service times)
- 5 Mar PSP 10am (check twitter)
- 8 Mar Lent 2 (normal service times)
- 10 Mar PCC meeting 7-15pm
- 11 Mar Breathing Space 8pm
- 12 Mar PSP 10am (check twitter)
- 15 Mar Lent 3 (normal service times)
- 19 Mar PSP 10am (check twitter)
- 22 Mar Mothering Sunday (normal service times)
- 26 Mar PSP 10am (check twitter)
- 28 Mar Holy Hour 11am (no Eucharist)



St Mary's parish prayer
Loving Father, we pray your blessing on our parish. Help us to have hearts open to your Holy Spirit.
Give us the courage to follow the way of Christ. Strengthen us to be faithful in prayer and loving service. Help us to play our part in building up your Kingdom here and now. Amen.



CHOIR PRACTICE

Thursday evenings
7-30pm till 9-00pm
Please see Gary for details



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SUPPORTING OUR RESTORATION

Study Course

During Lent
Each Friday Evening
7-30pm
See Rev. Carole
For details
Limited numbers
for catering purposes

