

# FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

this month's church family thanks and prayers

Walton-on-Thames  
**St Mary's and St John's**



## **Lent...**

**A personal journey**

**...exploring the wilderness**

**...searching for God**

**Starts Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

# Key Information

## Clergy:

Vicars: Rev Cathy & Rev Jonny Blair (off duty Friday) 01932 917 736

Assistant Minister: Rev Caroline Merrick (avail Tue, Thu & Fri) 07419 827 739

Curate: Rev Vlada Rakin vlada@waltonparish.org.uk (off duty Saturday)

Curate: Rev Dave Bixby dave@waltonparish.org.uk (off duty Friday)

**Church Warden:** David Henderson, Scott Hay, Janet Todd (St John's)

**Youth Minister:** Sarah Dunn (off duty – Friday & Saturday)

**Pastoral Assistants:** For enquiries of a pastoral nature email vicar@waltonparish.org.uk

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** Katharine Scott

Wendy Fitch, Louise Turner (Vulnerable adults)

safeguarding@waltonparish.org.uk

**Safeguarding Administrator:** Julia Gorrie (part time flexi hours)

safeguardingadmin@waltonparish.org.uk

**Treasurer:** Alastair Duke - treasurer@waltonparish.org.uk

**Assistant Treasurer:** Julia Gorrie - assistant-treasurer@waltonparish.org.uk

**A full list of Parish Officers can be found on our website.**

Information about weddings, funerals and baptisms can also be found on our website [www.waltonparish.org.uk](http://www.waltonparish.org.uk)

## Church Office

**Administrator:** Sam Harrison

St Mary's Church Hall,

Church Street, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2QS

The office contact hours are

**Closed Monday.**

**Open Tuesday - Friday 10.00 am – 12 noon**

Telephone - 01932 224238      Email - office@waltonparish.org.uk

**St Mary's Church**, Church Street, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2QS

**St John's Church**, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 3JQ

## VICARS' BLOG

### Lent... A personal journey

It has been a cold start to the year with the frost creating some exquisite patterns on the leaves and twigs around us. God is so wonderful in his design of such intricacy and beauty. It is hard to imagine that every snowflake is different. Every snowflake is unique and there is an infinite number of possible shapes they can form. That is wonderful!



So how hard is it for us in our cold climate to think of Jesus entering the hot, dry desert, where he was tempted by the devil at the start of his ministry?

Or maybe our winter landscapes can also be bleak and inhospitable, much like the wilderness in Israel. The forty days up to Easter are known as Lent in the church calendar and this has been a special time for Christians to deliberately seek out an inhospitable environment and break our dependency on the comforts of life in order to seek God. So, wilderness is actually more a state of mind and an expressed desire for holiness than concerned with the weather.

What signs of life are there in our spiritual lives? What will help us come closer to God this year?  
Music? Walks with the Lord?  
Giving up some luxuries?





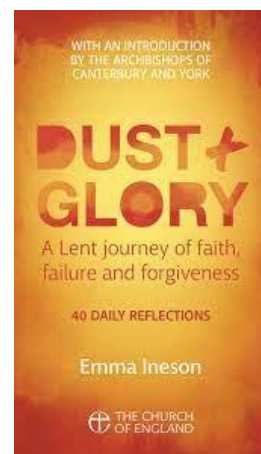
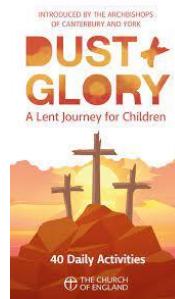
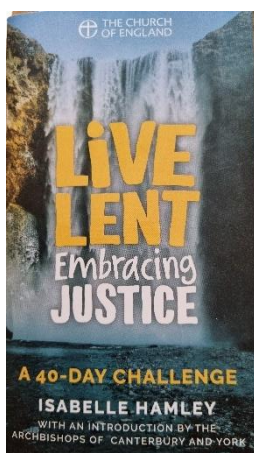
Taking a lunch-time a week for prayer with a friend?  
Reading and praying daily? We are all different and God longs for us to spend a little more time with him.

We are recommending two of the Church of England devotional Lent booklets. 'Live Lent - Embracing Justice' by Isabelle Hamley, and "Dust and Glory" in which Bishop Emma Ineson shares reflections on faith, failure and forgiveness. Refreshingly honest, she says

messing stuff up is part of our lives. Our lives are a mix of dust and glory. There is also a children's booklet with daily activities. These are all available from Church House Publishing and there will be some copies at the back of church from mid February. Just pop £2 in the Giving box at your service.

Opposite you will see an item about how to give to the church. Our priority is employing a Children and Families Minister. Please consider a specific standing order to provide this person's salary for two years. We want to invest in children and youth of our church. Thank you and many blessings,

***Revs Cathy and Jonny***



## **World Day of Prayer International 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023**

***"I have heard about your faith"***  
*Led by the Christian women of Taiwan*



**Service: 10am at St Erconwald's Church,**  
Esher Avenue, Walton on Thames  
Light refreshments served

**All welcome** to join for this lovely service

# Our Church Finances : **Headline News**

- In 2021, we broke even for the first time for many years
- In 2022, we have been on track to break even, with current spending
- In the future, we want to increase ministry, which needs extra money
- Our next priority is to employ a Family and Children's Minister to address a real need in ministry to primary school children
- We continue the Biblical principle of giving 10% of what we receive to mission at home and overseas. See overleaf

***We continue to work out our vision of  
Taking our next steps towards  
deeper faith in Christ,  
welcome & belonging and shining God's light***



## How can I give?

### Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk)



A direct debit scheme that you control and minimises administration. It is run on behalf of the Parish, including claiming Gift Aid. The scheme also offers the option for your payments to be increased every year in line with inflation.

See **[www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk)** to find out more.

Our scheme number, required to register is: 170617147

### Standing Order or One-Off Gift

As for other payments, simply instruct your bank. You are in control of what you give. A regular donation helps us to budget.

If you are a taxpayer, please do complete a Gift Aid form.

**Standing Order Mandate**

Please send 10 of the original of this form to your bank, and keep the other 9 for your records.

**Your Account Details**

Account Name	Sort Code
Bank/Building Society	Account No.
Branch Address	
I agree to pay the sum of £ <input type="text"/> per month/quarter/annually by Standing Order to the account details above.	
Signature	Date
Please print your name and address in full.	

Thank you

Bank Account: Walton-on-Thames PCC

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Acc Number: 0001 3192

Reference: Initial+surname/WoTPCC  
(i.e. JSMITH/WoTPCC)



**ChurchSuite** allows you to make one-off gifts as well as set up your regular giving and process your giving for Gift Aid.

**You can also give now using this QR Code**



### Card Giving / Apple & Google Pay



Use the contactless giving station which is currently available at St. Mary's. Give £5; £10; £20; £50. Register for Gift Aid the first time, then it is quick and easy in all subsequent uses.



# Focus on Mission

## Outward Giving 2023

*Sharing the love of Jesus  
with all people* Matthew 28:16-20

This month we are focusing on Barnabas Fund, one of our Mission Partners for 2023.

**Barnabas Fund** works to provide hope and aid for the persecuted Church, from Christians, to Christians, through Christians. It does this by providing practical help and support to persecuted Christians across the world, using local churches to identify who should receive the aid.



Within the UK, Barnabas Fund provides both a bi-monthly magazine and a daily prayer diary to supporters. A copy of the latest version of both the magazine and prayer diary can be found at

<https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/pray/prayer-diary/>

Previous prayer diaries and a brilliant booklet titled 'Praying for the Persecuted Church' (which has brief summaries of prayer needs for nearly 40 countries) can be downloaded at

<https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/resources/prayer/>

In the most recent year for which figures are available, Barnabas Fund:

- Educated 13,900 children in 137 school/institutes
- Provided leadership & theological training to 9,700 people
- Supported 54 evangelists and 5 pastors
- Gave 3,000 New Testaments and 28,000 Christian books
- Helped 495,000 disaster victims in 40 countries
- Helped 13,000 people in 9 medical projects in 6 countries
- Helped 19,000 people with small business livelihood projects
- Helped 36,000 victims of violence and injustice
- Helped 900 converts in 6 countries
- Assisted 29,000 people with regular feeding programmes



For example, in Nigeria last year over 6,000 Christians were killed by Islamists (Boko Haram, Fulani tribesmen and Islamic State West Africa Province). That is the equivalent of one Christian being killed every 1½ hours. Barnabas Fund provided a variety of help to Christians whose homes had been attacked or crops destroyed, such as food, sleeping mats and blankets, zinc roofing sheets and roofing nails.

## **Diocese of Guildford Link with Nigeria**

The Diocese of Guildford is linked in a partnership with the Church of Nigeria in what is the longest standing companion link in the Anglican Communion.

Today, Nigeria is one of the largest new centres of Christianity; the Anglican Church of Nigeria alone has over 20 million members. It is a vibrant and fast-growing church increasing by over 70 dioceses within the past two decades. Over this time, we have exchanged mission visits and clergy for training and parish placements. We now have Nigerian clergy serving in some of our parishes.



*Archbishop Justin with  
Nigerian Visitors to Canterbury*

Keith Malcouronne, who chairs our diocesan Nigeria Link Committee, describes the link as exciting but not always comfortable. He writes: “We are committed as Church and diocese to mutual prayer and learning between Guildford and Nigeria. We work in very different social and cultural contexts - community divisions, extensive poverty, corruption and the widespread persecution of Christians is something that our Nigerian friends face day to day. Nevertheless, we have much to learn from one another. Our mission and prayer can be enriched and strengthened by our continuing Link and by the deeper understanding it enables between sisters and brothers from such diverse cultures.”

The Diocese has asked Parishes to consider forming a link with the Church in Nigeria. We have started conversations to explore whether we could have a constructive and mutually beneficial link. This is in the very early stages of exploration and consideration. Your prayers about this would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

***Mission Committee***

***New services at St Mary's and St John's  
The first Sunday of the month will look a bit different.***

**We are family...**  
**Together at 10**  
**First Sunday of the month**



***From 5<sup>th</sup> February***

***Morning:***

***We are trialling a monthly Joint service at 10am at St Mary's in place of the 9am St Mary's, 10.15am in the hall and 10.30am at St John's. It's an opportunity to join together to worship God.***

***Afternoon:***

***We are trialling a monthly afternoon service at St John's. An opportunity for families with older primary aged children to explore and experiment in faith together. Starts with tea and cake at 4pm, Service starts at 4.15pm.***

***There will be an opportunity to feedback thoughts on this in July 2023.***



1st Sunday of the month

Walton-on-Thames  
**St Mary's and St John's**

the



EXPLORING JESUS TOGETHER

**4pm | Tea & Cake | Informal Service**

**NEW SERVICE**

**St John's Church**

[www.waltonparish.org.uk/services](http://www.waltonparish.org.uk/services) | 1 The Furrows (Corner of Ambleside Ave)

# Connections 2023

An opportunity to meet together with other retired people for tea, coffee, cakes, games, crafts, general chat and a short thought for the day

## EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

**Saturdays at 11.30 am**

**St Mary's Church Hall, Church Street**

January 14th

February 11th

March 11th

April 1st



**Thursday Morning Communion Service**

A said service with a short sermon

10.30am Thursdays at St Mary's

## St John's Community

### Play and Chat

**Tuesday mornings** – searching for more helpers

Please contact Amy Maddocks

[amy@waltonparish.org.uk](mailto:amy@waltonparish.org.uk)

to help with any of our projects in the community

**Play & Chat**  
9 - 11.30  
Come & join us at St John's Church on a Tuesday morning  
For any parents/carers with preschoolers  
Meet friends, make some new ones & enjoy a free healthy breakfast while the small people play!  
In order to keep us all safe we would ask that you book a place for each adult attending, you can book on the day however priority will be given to those who book in advance. To book visit - [www.waltonparish.org.uk](http://www.waltonparish.org.uk)

BOOK NOW  
[www.waltonparish.org.uk](http://www.waltonparish.org.uk)

**Save the Date**  
**Messy Church**  
**CRAFT, FAITH**  
**FOOD, FUN**  
**3.30 - 5.30 @ St John's**  
**Sat 28th Jan**  
**Sat 25th Feb**  
**Sat 25th March**  
Sign up at  
[waltonparish.org.uk](http://waltonparish.org.uk)

## Messy Church



# LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

**Living In Love & Faith**

**24 January 2023**

**Bishop Andrew** writes:

This has been a challenging week in the life of the Church of England, with the release of the long-awaited Bishops' Response to 'Living in Love and Faith'. A leak

on the Tuesday evening didn't help anyone, setting off a series of rumour mills, which morphed into spinning machines when the full details emerged. And the atmosphere has been somewhat febrile ever since, though not for everyone or in every church community.

Beneath the spin, the reality is that the bishops have declined to change the doctrine of the Church of England, whilst simultaneously providing potential prayer resources for the qualities or 'goods' of permanent, faithful, same-sex partnerships, to be used by those who feel able to do so. To some that is a sensible compromise, to others – on both sides of the divide - a disappointment or cause for deep concern.

The report is clear that the bishops themselves have been far from unanimous in our conclusions, a theme that won't surprise anyone (except that previous reports have generally been less honest). Maintaining our inherited doctrine of marriage is, for some of us, a red line issue; for others it is negotiable. The suggested prayers, for some of us, go too far; for others, not far enough. We have all met Christians who identify as L, G, B, T or I and who haven't felt welcomed in the life of the Church – so that our apology is genuine and shared. We have equally met LGBTI Christians who have taught us much about the grace of God on which we all depend, for whose fellowship and ministry in the life of our parishes we are profoundly grateful.

The Bishops' Response isn't the end of the story. It is simply the next stage in a process which will now lead to February's General Synod and need considerable work thereafter. So could I ask, at this point, that we don't jump to premature conclusions or get taken in by the spin. Could I encourage us to be gentle with one another in an area which has such great sensitivities for so many. And could I invite you to pray for me and our General Synod reps in the weeks ahead, and for the whole Church of England during quite such a stormy time.

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## **We're recruiting... Could you be our next OPERATIONS MANAGER?**

This important role will provide us with the organisational culture, structure, and support that will enable our church to continue to grow and develop in these exciting times. For more information contact [jonny@waltonparish.org.uk](mailto:jonny@waltonparish.org.uk)

Please pray for the right person to apply.

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## **In Memoriam February**

Please pray for the families and friends of those who have died in times past whose anniversary falls at this time:

7<sup>th</sup> David Stannard

13<sup>th</sup> Judy Seale

17<sup>th</sup> Judy Turner

21<sup>st</sup> May Rose

23<sup>rd</sup> Alison Florence

25<sup>th</sup> Bill Lampkin

Peter Chessman



FEBRUARY 2023	St Mary's and St John's Services	Jesus – the true light for all people	
For details of all Services, Events and Youth groups see <a href="http://www.waltonparish.org.uk">www.waltonparish.org.uk</a>			
Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>3 before Lent</i>	<b>10am Joint Service with Communion</b>	St Mary's	<b>Let your light shine</b> <i>Isaiah 58:1-12 Matt 5:13-20</i>
	<b>The 4pm Service</b>	St John's	<b>Just another snowflake?</b>
Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.30am Morning Prayer	St Mary's	
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>2 before Lent</i>	<b>9am Service with Communion</b>	St Mary's	<b>Seek God's kingdom</b> <i>Psalms 136 Matt 6:25-34</i>
	<b>10.15 am All Age Service</b>	St Mary's Hall	
	<b>10.30am Holy Communion</b>	St John's	
	<b>6.30pm Evening Praise</b>	St Mary's	
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>Sun before Lent</i>	<b>9am Service with Communion</b>	St Mary's	<b>Dazzling light</b> <i>Exod 24:12-18 Matt 17:1-9</i>
	<b>10.15 am All Age Service</b>	St Mary's Hall	
	<b>10.30am Morning Praise</b>	St John's	
	<b>6.30pm Evening Praise</b>	St Mary's	
<b>Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb</b>	<b>7.30pm Ash Wednesday</b>	St Mary's	
Thurs 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>Lent 1</i>	<b>9am Service with Communion</b>	St Mary's	<b>Testing in the wilderness</b> <i>Gen 3:1-7, Matt 4:1-11</i>
	<b>10.15 am All Age Service</b>	St Mary's Hall	
	<b>10.30am Morning Praise</b>	St John's	
	<b>6.30pm Evening Praise</b>	St Mary's	
Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March</b> <i>Lent 2</i>	<b>10am Joint Service with Communion</b>	St Mary's	<b>Nicodemus - born of the Spirit</b> <i>Gen 12:1-4, John 3:1-17</i>
	<b>The 4pm Service</b>	St John's	<b>One big mess?</b>

Please note that Thursday Midweek communion will be at St Mary's



**YouTube**

[www.waltonparish.org.uk](http://www.waltonparish.org.uk)