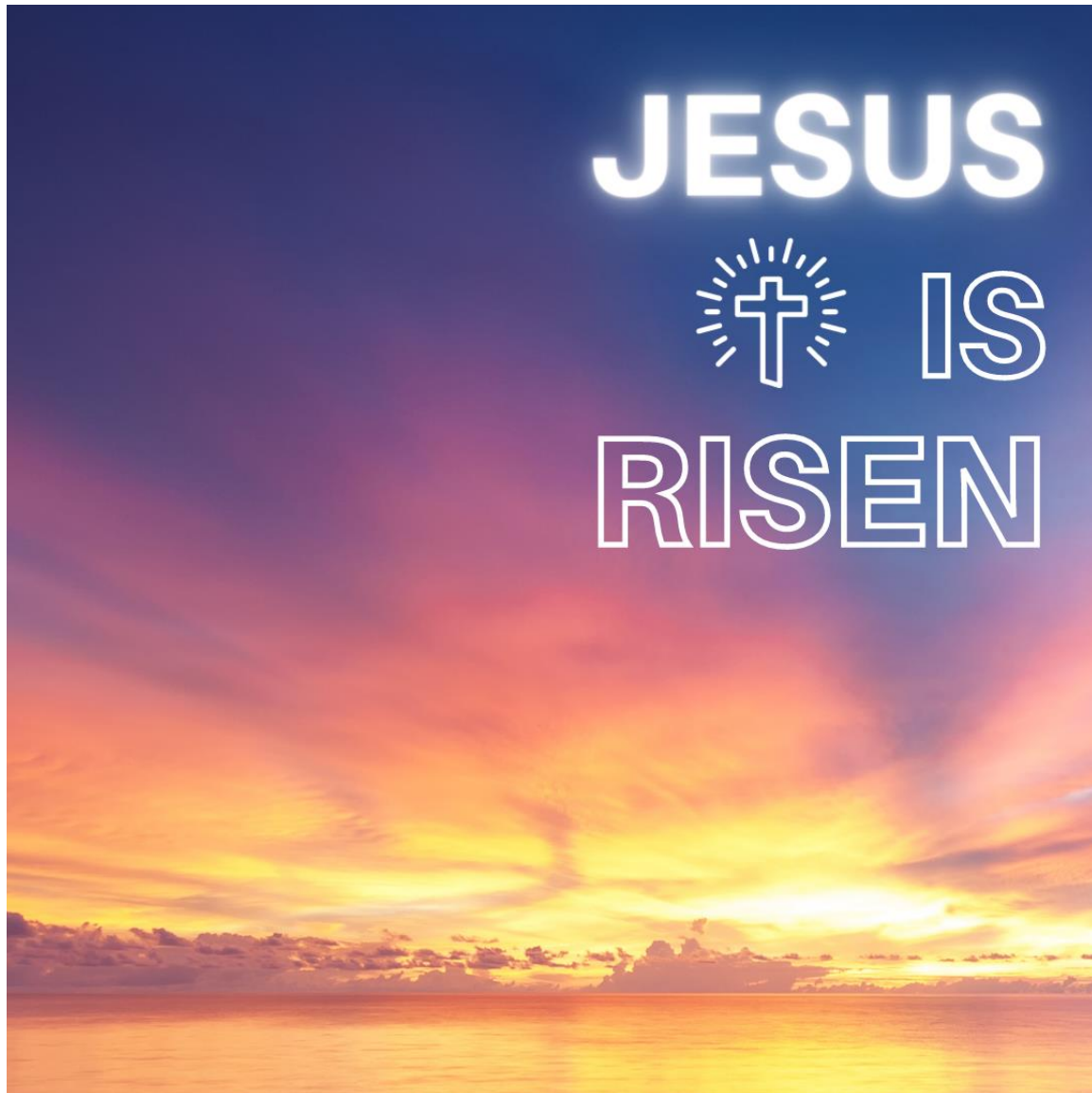


MARCH NEWSLETTER

this month's church family thanks and prayers



Easter Sunday 9th April

**God's Love is amazing
When life is tough, Hope is at hand**

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

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

Whatever next?

As we look at our world, we may wonder what is going on. It is a year on from the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, there is huge suffering following the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, others suffer from famine and still others from floods. We attended a study day on Climate change last week and the science paints a frightening picture about global warming and the future of the planet. The Church of England is wrestling with the issues of sexuality and marriage and we may well want to ask 'What is going on?' and 'Where is God in all this?'

Well, first, God is not surprised by any of this. Jesus said: *"You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains."* Matthew 24:6-8.

Secondly, I am comforted that Jesus is there in the midst of the suffering with people in their troubles and, as Easter Sunday every year reminds us, Jesus died and rose again to bring hope to every one of us. He goes on to say: *"but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."* As followers of Jesus, we do not bury our heads and pretend all is well. As we stand firm in faith, we can also reassure those around us. We can embrace the present with joy because we have Jesus with us. We can face the future with hope, knowing that **God's Love is amazing.**
When life is tough, Hope is at hand.

We hope you find one of the Lent booklets "Dust and Glory" or "Embracing Justice" helpful to strengthen your faith during Lent. Details of Easter services are in this letter as are Bishop Andrew's response to General Synod, Fairtrade Fortnight, Fusion Mission Partners, Ashley school Prayer space and ways to pray about the Earthquake.

Blessings,

Jonny and Cathy

TURKEY-SYRIA EARTHQUAKE – Our Response

There is a collection taking place for the Disaster Fund through Tear Fund. Donations can be made in cash or through the church Bank account with a note to designate your gift. Below are some suggestions on how to pray and it is good news that 50% of the Bishop of Guildford's Lent Appeal will also go to this Fund.

Tear Fund Guide on How to pray for the Turkey-Syria Earthquake

What to pray for...

There are **four** areas to focus our prayers on:

Pray for the emergency response

- Pray for energy and strength for first responders as they work around the clock to save lives.
- Pray for good weather so the rains and snow do not slow down the response.
- Hospitals in the areas affected are overflowing. In Syria, many hospitals have not been rebuilt since they were destroyed in the conflict there. Pray for resilience for health workers as they respond; pray for capacity to treat people who are injured and for resources – medicine, equipment and hospital beds – to be readily available.



Pray for people affected by the earthquake

- Pray for comfort for those who have lost their loved ones and healing for people who are injured. Pray that vulnerable people will be protected.
- Pray for provision of safe shelter, food, clean water and warmth for people who have lost their belongings, homes and livelihoods. Ask God to give them courage and strength to face these new challenges.

Pray for our church partners in Syria

- Tearfund's local church partner is responding now. Pray for wisdom and resources as they respond to people's immediate needs and plan for how they can support communities in the long-term.
- Pray that the work they are doing to support others will inspire other churches across the region to unite in action to care for communities in need.

Pray for peace

Conflict broke out in Syria in 2011. Much of the country now lies in ruin. The city of Aleppo, which was badly hit by the earthquake, is home to millions of people who have already faced devastating conflict. Many people in northern Iraq, who are rebuilding after years of conflict, and in Lebanon, also felt the earthquake tremors.

- Pray for a lasting peace and recovery for Syrians who have suffered more than a decade of conflict.
- Pray for peace and comfort as people are further traumatised by the earthquake and already are feeling anxious, depressed and fearful. Pray that people will not lose hope – even in these challenging times.

Ashley school news

Rev Cathy and Rev Dave open the new Prayer Space

31st January was an exciting day for our Faith Group. We invited Reverend Cathy in to officially open our Prayer Space. The Faith Group have been working with Mrs Harris, Mrs Nawaz and Mrs Goodfellow to develop this space in the nurture pod which is situated in the courtyard. Reverend Cathy cut the ribbon and the Faith Group showed her the space and she said a prayer with us all. Every lunchtime, the Faith Group kindly take it in turns to help welcome children into the prayer space. Children can write a prayer for the prayer tree, build crosses with lego or do some mindfulness colouring. As the year progresses the activities will change.





Focus on Mission

Outward Giving 2023

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

[fusion] SPAIN

Olli and Jo Davies, pioneers of Fusion Spain, have written this update as one of our mission partners in 2023.

Come and hear them speak *in person* at Evening Praise on Sunday 19th March 6.30pm.

Mission Committee

New open doors: we're beginning to get invites to do small groups and mission training with some churches - like these guys in Bilbao in the photo who are keen to release their students in leadership and see the small group they have grow and multiply!



Granada Relationships: we'll be helping run student alpha this term with the fab team pictured and the new brilliant, charismatic priest who has taken on the catholic student group in Granada. It has been paused for a while, but we are hoping to see a thriving, missional community there, and to learn in the process how to start a catholic student ministry from scratch to help others.





Establishing Fusion Spain: We nearly have a website ready to go (woohoo!), we're ready to sell Victoria the Van (giving us a helpful small central fund!) & we may have found a loophole way of starting a charity. BUT we still need board members - the *right, committed* board members (ideally 3) in order to make any progress.

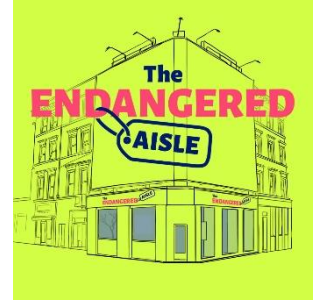


New Projects: we have begun to work on *culturally* translating our Prep for Uni material (helping youth prepare for university with bold faith - much needed here!) with a friend who works with Agape youth. Her cultural insight is helping us

dream up ideas together both for prep for university and engaging church leaders. *Watch this space...*

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- ***For 3 board members*** and a clear pathway (that we have peace or some confirmation on) for setting up a charity
- ***That the opportunities we're given to speak into churches would be fruitful and catalytic,*** so we could see more students find Jesus through them!
- ***For more open doors:*** we'd love to run a 'prep for uni' weekend in summer for youth around Spain, and a course on starting a student ministry for church & youth leaders next year, but these will take lots of answered prayers, right connections and things falling into place for them to happen & truly serve the church!



Did you know?

Coffee, bananas, chocolate could soon be much more difficult to buy?

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT February 27th to March 12th

This year the FairTrade Foundation Celebrates its Campaign

The Endangered Aisle with a simple message

- of urgent threats to the future of food we love and the livelihoods of the people who grow them for us as they face worsening effects of the Climate Crisis.
- to share some stories of people who grow our food and drinks, mine our gold and grow cotton for our clothing - people, who in this work are often underpaid and exploited.
- how FAIRTRADE continues to work for fairer pay and safer working conditions for workers ensuring local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers.

Hear more in Sunday services:

on March 5th 10am at St Mary's or 4pm at St John's or

on March 12th at St John's Church 10.30am

How can we be part of the solution in protecting our favourite food?

Also, during this year's FAIRTRADE-FORTNIGHT, campaigners are

running online **'Big fair-trade get togethers'**

to join the whole of the FairTrade movement, to hear directly from farmers and other experts on how we can have a sustainable future for our

favourite foods - see time options and sign up at action.fairtrade.org.uk

OR contact janet.todd@me.com directly if you would like to join me on either Saturday March 4th 1 -2 pm or Thursday March 9th 7.30-8.30pm.

We look forward to celebrating the work of the FAIRTRADE Foundation with you all.

Janet Eco Church Coordinator



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

Bishop Andrew's reflection on General Synod February 2023

“Dear Friends and Colleagues,

One of the benefits of the long debate on *Living in Love and Faith* in last week's General Synod is that all the cards were placed on the table and done so in a passionate but generally courteous way. At the end of it, a motion was passed which:

- Repented of the harm done to LGBTQI+ people by the Church
- Embedded the Pastoral Principles in the life of the Church of England; and
- Welcomed the decision made by the House of Bishops to replace 'Issues in Human Sexuality' in due course, and to refine, commend and publish 'Prayers of Love and Faith.'

Just one amendment was passed out of the 28 tabled, emphasising that nothing provided by the House of Bishops should depart from the doctrine of the Church of England.

The matter now returns to the House of Bishops who will need to decide the content of the prayers and pastoral guidance and bring the final package back to Synod; so that no further action is required at this stage in our parishes. The bishops will have a great deal to bear in mind, not least the continuing disagreements within all three Synodical Houses, and the wider ramifications of what we're doing within the Church, the Nation and the Anglican Communion; and the Archbishop of York opened up the idea of a 'settlement' towards the end of the debate – some kind of robust framework to protect consciences on all sides – which will require further consideration in the months to come.

Many thanks to our Guildford General Synod reps, who will be sharing their own reflections in a forthcoming meeting of our Diocesan Synod; and for our fellowship together across our own deep differences in this area. I suspect we all voted in different directions at different moments; but, speaking for myself, I was very aware that the cancellation of our first College of Bishops' meeting had contributed to a report that was put together at considerable speed and which left many questions unanswered; so I didn't feel able to support it in the House or in the subsequent debate at Synod.

Wherever we stand, though, let's continue to pray for God's wisdom and grace in the months ahead, and especially for those most affected by our thoughts and deliberations.

Every blessing, Bishop Andrew”

Next Service Sunday 5th March

1st Sunday of the month Walton-on-Thames
St Mary's and St John's



4pm | Tea & Cake | Informal Service

NEW SERVICE

St John's Church

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

Next Meeting Sat 11th March

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

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



International World Day of Prayer 3rd March 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

Big Baptism Day

An opportunity for Baptism and the reaffirmation of Baptismal vows by full immersion.

Special celebration **Sunday 2nd April** in the
Together at 10

service in St Mary's church.

If you are interested, please contact Rev Jonny or Rev Cathy Blair by Sunday 12th March.





Easter Services



Maundy Thursday 6th April

7.30pm St Mary's Last Supper and Communion

Good Friday 7th April

10am to 12 noon St John's Encounter Easter walk through
(Please book your slot on website)

12 noon to 3pm St Mary's At the foot of the Cross

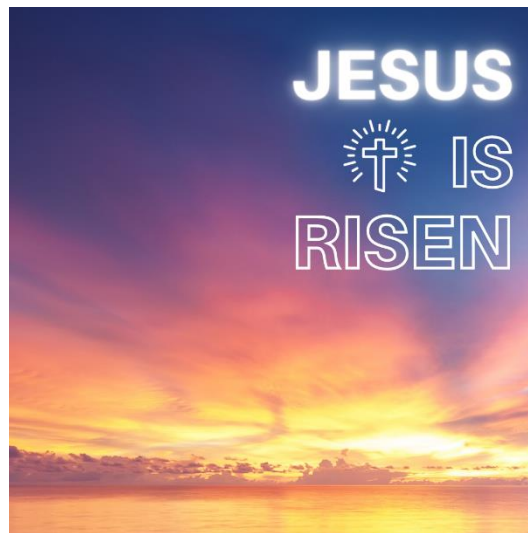
Easter Sunday 9th April

6.30am Sunrise service at Cowey Sale

9am St Mary's Easter Communion

10.15am St Mary's Hall All Age Celebration

10.30am St John's Easter Communion



Mothersing Sunday 19th March

A Space for God's Grace

We are offering a little space and time to reflect and be still any for whom Mothersing Sunday is a difficult day. There will be the opportunity to light candles and pause with God after the 9am Service in St Mary's church.

In Memoriam March

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

1st Cyril Rose

27th Derek Dean

MARCH 2023	St Mary's and St John's Services	Lent – The Upside down Kingdom	
For details of all Services, Events and Youth groups see www.waltonparish.org.uk			
Thurs 2 nd March	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sunday 5th March <i>Lent 2</i>	10am Joint Service with Communion	St Mary's	Nicodemus - born of the Spirit <i>Gen 12:1-4, John 3:1-17</i>
	The 4pm Service	St John's	One big mess?
Thurs 9 th March	10.30am Morning Prayer	St Mary's	
Sunday 12th March <i>Lent 3</i>	9am Service with Communion	St Mary's	Water in the wilderness <i>Exodus 17:1-7</i> <i>John 4:5-42</i>
	10.15 am All Age Service	St Mary's Hall	
	10.30am Holy Communion	St John's	
	6.30pm Evening Praise	St Mary's	
Thurs 16 th March	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sunday 19th March <i>Mothering Sunday</i>	9am Service with Communion	St Mary's	Kindness in the Kingdom of God <i>Colossians 3:12-17</i> <i>Luke 18:15-17</i>
	10.15 am All Age Service	St Mary's Hall	
	10.30am Morning Praise	St John's	
	6.30pm Evening Praise	St Mary's	
Thurs 23 rd March	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sunday 26th March <i>Lent 5</i>	9am Service with Communion	St Mary's	The dead will be raised <i>Ezekiel 37:1-14</i> <i>John 11:38-44</i>
	10.15 am All Age Service	St Mary's Hall	
	10.30am Morning Praise	St John's	
	6.30pm Evening Praise	St Mary's	
Thurs 30 th March	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sunday 2nd April <i>Palm Sunday</i>	10am Joint Service with Baptism and Communion	St Mary's	Hosanna to the King <i>Psalm 118: 19-29</i> <i>Matt 21:1-11</i>
	The 4pm Service	St John's	The Wonder of Easter

