

# CANALSIDE NEWS

## for MARCH 2026



### Thought from the Rectory

Our Benefice theme for Lent this year is Discipleship. A lot of people who come to church don't necessarily like words like Christian or even religion. They all have a lot of overtones that can be unhelpful: when someone hears I'm a Christian, they often give me a look that suggests they're worried I might be infectious, followed by a look that means they think I'm probably mad. Most of all, they make assumptions about me, that I am probably judgemental, patronising, close-minded and quite annoying. Well, yes, I know I can be all of those things, but that isn't the point. The point is that it is not a word that sits comfortably with me, so I more often think of myself as a disciple.

At the time of Jesus, it was very normal for a rabbi to have disciples who would take on his "yoke", his teachings that harnessed his followers together, just as oxen were yoked together to work the land. Normally, the disciples were the best of the best, the smartest, brightest students in the village, who would be selected to follow a rabbi. We only have one record of a rabbi who chose people like fishermen, tax collectors and the sort of people Jesus regularly sought out.

To think about being disciples, we'll be exploring sitting at Jesus' feet, walking in his footsteps, taking on his teaching and being sent out by him. That movement is really deliberate: I think it's the journey we take. We start by sitting at Jesus' feet and just being near him, then move to standing and taking on his yoke, his teaching. From standing, we start walking. Walking in Jesus' footsteps is to ask the old question of "What Would Jesus Do?" that sums up a Christian's active discipleship and working out how to live our lives, how being a disciple makes a difference to us. And that means being sent out, trying to make a positive difference in the world. This is what we'll be exploring through Lent as we get ready for Easter.

Whether or not you consider yourself a Christian, or a disciple, all of us can recognise thoughts about where we sit — where we fit in the world — and what we take on as lessons to live by, who we choose to follow or to be inspired by and what we do when we go out our front door.

But I have a final thought about discipleship that has been on my mind as I've been getting ready for this. One of the things I find particularly significant when reading the gospels is to read the experiences of the disciples and to be encouraged that most of them, as far as we can tell, were a bit rubbish. Peter puts his foot in it absolutely constantly; Thomas always sees the worst possible outcome; Judas, well, a bit of money and a bit of greed and I've always guessed a bit of disillusionment. It is so reassuring to see that the disciples Jesus had when he was actually walking around on earth were not shining examples of people who had it all together. So there's no expectation for us to have it all together, either. It's why discipleship is a journey: we're not expected to be perfect, just to try to be better than we were yesterday, and that is certainly an encouraging thought. *Rev. Chris Hunter*

## Jumble Sale Success

Our first fundraiser for St Michael's and St Mary Magdalen's was a great success. The total raised currently stands at £710 ! This was mainly due to the hardwork and planning put in by Alison and Janet. We are very grateful to them both plus all their helpers beforehand and on the day. Thankyou also to those who donated the Jumble – a mountain of it and all who came along on the day to spend their money. A great start to the year – THANKYOU everyone.



## Pancake Day

On the eve of the first day of Lent we gathered at St Mary Magdalen's to mark Shrove Tuesday with delicious pancakes. Thankyou to those who provided pancakes but our special thanks must go to Joy who spent 5 hours that afternoon preparing pancakes for us at her home.

## Eco Event Evening

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March, we will be holding a bring and share meal and Eco-Event at St Mary's Church. We will also be joined by Nick Orman from Wroughton Parish Church. Nick will be sharing details of Wroughton's journey as an Eco-Church, easy first steps and their experiences of embedding this part of our mission. We would love this to be a significant part of our work and worship going forwards, so it would be great to see as many people as there as possible to reflect on what Eco-Church means and how we can get started on this journey. If you would like to join us please sign up on the sheet in church and let us know what food you will be providing or send Michael and email.



## BENEFICE DATES FOR DIARIES

**Details of some events are yet to be confirmed but for now make a note in your diaries and we will keep you posted if and when those details change**

Month	Day	Date	Time	Event details	Location
MAR	Fri	6 <sup>th</sup>	1030	WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR NIGERIA (see notice)	St James' Trowbridge
	Mon	9 <sup>th</sup>	1800	ECO EVENT with NICK ORMAN and a BRING and SHARE BUFFET SUPPER (see notice)	St Mary Magdalen's
	Sat	28 <sup>th</sup>	1000-1200	CHURCH AND CHARITY COFFEE MORNING (see poster)	St Mary Magdalen's
APR	Sun	19 <sup>th</sup>	1500	CONCERT BY THE EBONITE CLARINET ENSEMBLE (full details in April newsletter)	St Mary Magdalen's
	Sun	26 <sup>th</sup>	1145	HILPERTON AND STAVERTON PARISH APCM after Morning Service	St Mary Magdalen's
MAY	Fri	8 <sup>th</sup>	1930	QUIZ NIGHT	St Mary Magdalen's
JUN	Sat	6 <sup>th</sup>	TBC	ENTERTAINMENT EVENING	TBC
	Sat	13 <sup>th</sup>	TBC	HILPERTON VILLAGE FETE	Hilperton Village Hall
	Sat	27 <sup>th</sup>	1400	SEMINGTON VILLAGE FETE	Brook House, High Street and Village Hall
JUL	TBD	TBD	TBD	POSSIBLE FUNDRAISING/SPONSORSHIP EVENT	TBD
AUG	Sun	23 <sup>rd</sup>	1200	BARBECUE AFTER MORNING SERVICE	St Mary Magdalen's
SEP	Sat	12 <sup>th</sup>	TBC	SEMINGTON PRAYER DAY	St George's Church
	Sat	19 <sup>th</sup>	1000-1200	COFFEE MORNING	St Mary Magdalen's
OCT	Fri	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1900	HARVEST SUPPER	St Mary Magdalen's
NOV	Sat	21 <sup>st</sup>	1000-1200	CHRISTMAS FESTIVE FAYRE	St Mary's Magdalen's
	Fri	27 <sup>th</sup>	1900	QUIZ NIGHT	St Mary Magdalen's

# Holy Week and Easter 2026 in Canalside



## **Monday 30th March**

6.30pm: COMPLINE / NIGHT PRAYER @ St Mary Magdalen's



## **Tuesday 31st March**

6.30pm: COMPLINE / NIGHT PRAYER @ St Michael's



## **Wednesday 1st April**

10am: MIDWEEK COMMUNION @ St Michael's

6.30pm: COMPLINE / NIGHT PRAYER @ St Michael's



## **Thursday 2nd April ~ MAUNDY THURSDAY**

7.30pm: HOLY COMMUNION with Foot Washing  
@ St Mary Magdalen's



## **Friday 3rd April ~ GOOD FRIDAY**

10.30am: HOLY COMMUNION at St Michael's

2pm: LAST HOUR AT THE CROSS @ St Mary Magdalen's

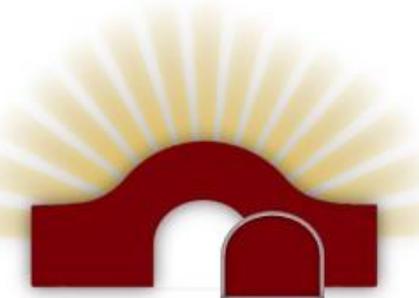
## **Sunday 4th April EASTER SUNDAY**

Dawn: **EASTER DAWN COMMUNION**  
@ St Mary Magdalen's, Hilperton

9.15am: **EASTER HOLY COMMUNION**  
@ St George's, Semington

10.30am: **EASTER HOLY COMMUNION**  
@ St Michael's, Hilperton

3pm: **EASTER HOLY COMMUNION**  
from the Book of Common Prayer  
@ St Mary the Virgin, Whaddon



# Happy Easter

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

## Real Easter Eggs

I am ordering Real Easter Eggs again this year. They are the only ones with Fairtrade chocolate and a copy of the Easter story. They support charitable projects, and sadly no supermarkets stock them. The cost is £5.50 each if we order 18 or more (like we did with the Advent Calendars, thank you!), otherwise £6.00 each to cover postage. More details from <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk>. Easter is early this year, so to make sure I can get them to you by Easter Day I will need orders by Sunday 8th March please. *Bev Woodward* [jackbev.woodward@gmail.com](mailto:jackbev.woodward@gmail.com)



## Used Postage Stamps

Don't forget to let us have all your used postage stamps. It would be great if you could save all your stamps and pass them on to Bill and Marilyn Stubbs who in turn pass them on to the Bible Society. Just pop them into the Storehouses boxes in the church porches and we will pass them on for you.

## Readers / Intercessors / Welcomers and Coffee makers

We are always looking for more people to help us in the above areas. Sometimes people can feel that they have been overlooked and think to themselves – I could do that but they have never asked me to. Don't wait to be asked just let Michael know.

## Flower Arrangers

Although we are now in the season of Lent, a time when traditionally flowers aren't displayed in church, we are looking for volunteers to help with the flower arranging through the year at St Mary Magdalen's and at St Michael's. If you can help please contact Michael.



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**  
A service for everyone!  
**Friday 6 March**  
*I will give you rest, come*

**Nigeria 2026**

**SERVICE AT  
ST JAMES' CHURCH  
TROWBRIDGE  
AT 10.30AM**

**INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION**  
24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led  
wwdp.org.uk Registered Charity Number 233242

## Lent Lunch

By all accounts everyone greatly enjoyed the Lent Lunch at St Mary Magdalen's on 25<sup>th</sup> February especially the variety of delicious homemade soups being served. Thankyou to everyone involved especially the cooks.

## QUIZ SHEET FOR SALE – IT'S A CON



Val Sims has produced another of her Quiz Sheets to raise funds for Dorothy House. This time it's called "It's a Con" 60 questions where each answer contains the letters CON consecutively possibly at the start, middle or end. If you would like a copy please contact Michael. Entry Fee £2. Cash prizes. NOTE: for those who have already bought a Quiz Sheet it should be noted that Question 1's answer should be 8 letters and NOT 7.

**SATURDAY 28th MARCH**

**CHURCH  
& CHARITY  
COFFEE  
MORNING**



**St Mary Magdalen's  
Church Hall, Horse Rd, Hilperton**

**10am — 12 Noon**

**£2 Admission includes  
Coffee/Tea Biscuits**

**50% Proceeds to St Michael's  
and St Mary Magdalen's and  
50% to**



**the official NHS charity of the RUH raising funds to  
buy a new PET-CT Scanner costing £4 million**

## Prayer Requests



It is important that we pray for all who seek our support. Please let Michael know of anyone who particularly needs our prayers. Do ensure that you have their permission.

### ***This month we pray for..***

+ Alison Meader  
+ Amelia-Lily and family  
+ Andrew Margetts  
+ Audrey Sheppard  
+ Barbara Tucker  
+ Bob Cradock  
+ Catherine  
+ Cathy and Ian  
+ Chloe Stevens  
+ Colin  
+ Colin Jackson  
+ Collette Miyagawa  
+ Colston Carpenter

+ Dave, Rosemary, Matthew & Family  
+ Eve and Jim Banks  
+ Hannah, Ash, Oliver & baby Leo  
+ Heather  
+ Helen Thomas  
+ Hilary & Mark Heaton  
+ Irene Hicks  
+ Isabelle & Family  
+ Jeannette  
+ Joanna Martin  
+ Laurence & Family  
+ Maggie & Family  
+ Mark Johnson

+ Maureen Mitchell  
+ Michelle  
+ Mike Aldridge  
+ Mitchel and Divine  
+ Richard Marshman  
+ Roger Emes  
+ Rosa Light  
+ Shirley Epps  
+ Tanya  
+ Val, Phil and family  
+ Viv and Jan



- We pray for all those who are mourning the loss of a loved one at this time especially the friends and family of Mavis Franks.
- We continue to pray for the people of Sudan at this time of conflict, including Archbishop Ezekiel as he leads the Anglican Church there.



Together with many other Foodbanks across the country both Melksham and Trowbridge are desperate for more donations, as the demand is very high at present, so please give as generously as you are able.

If you can donate any food or hygiene items PLEASE, pop them in our trolleys or come on down and bring them to us. If you are a little flush; you can do online shopping with ASDA as they will deliver to us on your behalf. Please drop into the building as we now do a breakfast for the homeless so eggs are always needed plus cheese, butter bacon etc as we have a fridge freezer, and fridge. Fruit and vegetables are always welcome but do not put in a trolley. Please continue to donate to us so we can keep blessing the people of Trowbridge. Thank you all.

**Please use the collection boxes in the porches of St Mary Magdalen's and St Michael's to drop off food donations etc. A BIG thankyou to Tony Roddis for taking on the collections for us from Bill Stubbs.**

If you prefer you can make a one off financial donation or support Trowbridge Storehouse regularly, please follow the link below and select storehouse.

<https://westwiltsvineyard.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/zk54op3a>

**Storehouse is always in need of carrier bags**

Melksham Foodbank continue to need all items, especially tinned meats and vegetables. The demand for support is very high (please ensure all items are well within the best before date). They can also take large bags of rice, tea bags, sugar & pasta as these can be decanted into smaller bags for distribution. Thanks to the support of everyone, Melksham foodbank was able to distribute 7991 food parcels in 2025! Please take your donations to the porch at St George's, Semington before 6pm on Wednesday.

Our continued support of Melksham FoodBank and Trowbridge StoreHouse is vital, and a part of our response to God's generosity to us.



# CANALSIDE DIARY

Please pray for all events taking place in the next few weeks

Day	Date	Time	Event details	Location
<b>MARCH 2026</b>				
Su	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT</b>		
		1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1500	<b>Service of BCP Holy Communion</b>	St Mary the Virgin
		1800	<b>Reflective Service</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Tu	3 <sup>rd</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89678887943?pwd=IKy2vBYNviwibNcoWUpqTtf4hpwQTA.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89678887943?pwd=IKy2vBYNviwibNcoWUpqTtf4hpwQTA.1</a>	Online
		1450	<b>Collective Worship</b>	St George's School
W	4 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1100	<b>Ministry Team</b>	The Rectory
		1430	<b>Collective Worship</b>	Hilperton School
F	6 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1030	<b>World Day of Prayer Service</b> see poster	St James' Church Trowbridge
Su	8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</b>		
		0915	<b>Breakfast Church</b>	St George's Church
		1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
M	9 <sup>th</sup>	1800	<b>ECO Event with Nick Orman</b> see separate note	St Mary Magdalen's
Tu	10 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		1450	<b>Collective Worship</b>	St George's School
W	11 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Morning Worship</b>	St Michael's
		1430	<b>Collective Worship</b>	Hilperton School
		1430	<b>Open the Book Rehearsal</b>	St Michael's Room
Th	12 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88553953942?pwd=1EHGGg18bBqqYKytMMRbYvZ5JZFZnm.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88553953942?pwd=1EHGGg18bBqqYKytMMRbYvZ5JZFZnm.1</a>	Online
		1430	<b>Friendship Group</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1445	<b>Collective Worship</b>	Staverton School
F	13 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Su	15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>MOTHERING SUNDAY / FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>		
		0915	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St George's Church

		1030	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>	St Michael's
Tu	17 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperon/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
W	18 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1430	<b>Open the Book</b>	Hilperon School
Th	19 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		1000 1200	<b>Community Café</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1140	<b>Open the Book</b>	St George's School
		1445	<b>Open the Book</b>	Staverton School
Su	22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>		
		1030	<b>'Explore' Service</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
M	23 <sup>rd</sup>	1000	<b>Mead Community School</b>	St Michael's
Tu	24 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperon/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		0930	<b>St George's School Easter Service</b>	St George's Church
		1450	<b>Collective Worship</b>	St George's School
W	25 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperon School Easter Service</b>	St Michael's
		1000	<b>Midweek Morning Worship</b>	St Michael's
Th	26 <sup>th</sup>	0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
F	27 <sup>th</sup>	0930	<b>Toddlers@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Sa	28 <sup>th</sup>	1000	<b>Church and Charity Coffee Morning</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1200	See poster	
Su	29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS</b>		
		<b>PALM SUNDAY</b>		
		1030	<b>Benefice Service of Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1600	<b>Tea@theTin</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		1800	<b>Reflective Service</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
M	30 <sup>th</sup>	1830	<b>Compline</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Tu	31 <sup>st</sup>	0930	<b>Hilperon/Staverton Morning Prayer</b> <b>(NOT online – IN PERSON)</b>	St Michael's
		1830	<b>Compline</b>	St Michael's
<b>APRIL 2026</b>				
W	1 <sup>st</sup>	1000	<b>Midweek Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1830	<b>Compline</b>	St Michael's
Th	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>		
		0900	<b>Semington Morning Prayer</b> Use link above	Online
		1100	<b>Chrism Eucharist and Re-affirmation</b>	Salisbury Cathedral

			<b>of vows</b>	
		1930	<b>Maundy Thursday Service of Communion with Foot Washing</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
F	3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>		
		1030	<b>Good Friday Service of Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1400	<b>Last Hour at the Cross</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
Su	5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>EASTER DAY</b>		
		Dawn	<b>Easter Dawn Service</b>	St Mary Magdalen's
		0915	<b>Easter Day Communion</b>	St George's
		1030	<b>Easter Day Communion</b>	St Michael's
		1500	<b>Easter Day Service of BCP Holy Communion</b>	St Mary the Virgin

## CANALSIDE CONTACTS

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<b>Office</b>	Michael Gamble	07795400262	<a href="mailto:canalsideoffice@gmail.com">canalsideoffice@gmail.com</a>
<b>Churchwardens</b>			
<b>Semington</b>	David Wildsmith	c/o 01380 870784	c/o <a href="mailto:jackbev.woodward@gmail.com">jackbev.woodward@gmail.com</a>
<b>Hilberton and Staverton</b>	James Newton	07803904947	<a href="mailto:jpnewton@churchmouse.org.uk">jpnewton@churchmouse.org.uk</a>
	Martyn Carpenter	07831309377	<a href="mailto:martyncarpenter55@gmail.com">martyncarpenter55@gmail.com</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://canalsidebenefice.org.uk">canalsidebenefice.org.uk</a>		
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/canalsideparishes">https://www.facebook.com/canalsideparishes</a>		

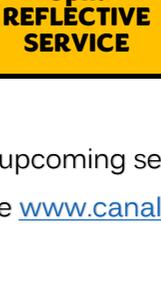
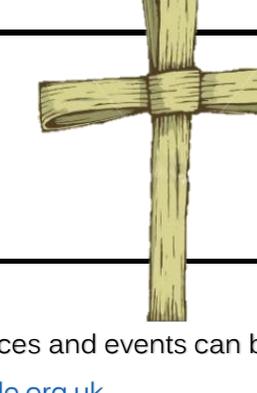


### **A PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE**

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

# CHURCH SERVICES *in* CANALSIDE BENEFICE *during* MARCH

	HILPERTON St Michael's	HILPERTON St Mary Magdalen's	SEMINGTON St George's	WHADDON St Mary the Virgin
1 <sup>st</sup> March <b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	<b>10.30am HOLY COMMUNION</b>	<b>6pm REFLECTIVE SERVICE</b>		<b>3pm BCP HOLY COMMUNION</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> March <b>Third Sunday of Lent</b>		<b>10.30am HOLY COMMUNION</b>	<b>9.15am BREAKFAST CHURCH</b>	
15 <sup>th</sup> March <b>Mothering Sunday</b>	<b>10.30am HOLY COMMUNION</b>	<i>Happy Mothering Sunday</i> 	<b>9.15am HOLY COMMUNION</b>	
22 <sup>nd</sup> March <b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>		<b>10.30am 'EXPLORE' SERVICE</b>		
29 <sup>th</sup> March <b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>10.30am BENEFICE HOLY COMMUNION</b>	<b>4pm TEA@theTIN</b> <b>6pm REFLECTIVE SERVICE</b>		



Full details of upcoming services and events can be found on our website [www.canalside.org.uk](http://www.canalside.org.uk)