

What's On in April 2023

Follow the link from our web site for live streamed services:

<http://www.stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk/>

Sunday 2nd April – Palm Sunday

- 8:30 am BCP Communion – in-person only
- 10.00 am Service of the Word – in-person and live-stream on Facebook
Leader: Revd David Cattle
Preacher: Geoff Windus – “This is the Lord’s Doing and It Is Marvellous
in Our Eyes!”
Readings: Psalm 118:13 – 29; Matthew 21:1 - 11

Special Holy Week Services:

- Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th 7:30 pm – Compline (Evening Prayer) – on Zoom
- Wednesday 5th 7:30 pm – The Way of the Cross – in Church
- Maundy Thursday 6th 7:30 pm – Service of Holy Communion – in Church
- Good Friday 7th 8:00 am – Meditation on the Cross – in Church
11:00 am – High Street Open Air Service – in City Centre

Sunday 9th April – Easter Sunday

- 5:30 am Easter Sunday Dawn Service at St Luke’s, Gloucester Avenue
- 10:00 am Family Communion – in-person and live-stream on Facebook
Leader: Jane Harpur
Preacher: Revd David Cattle – “He is Risen!”
Readings: Matthew 28:1 – 10

Sunday 16th April – 2nd Sunday of Easter

- 8:30 am BCP Communion – in-person only
- 10:00 am Service of the Word – in-person and live-stream on Facebook
Leader: Fiona Selden
Preacher: Travers Harpur – “A Miraculous Deliverance”
Readings: Exodus 14:10 – 31; Acts 2:14a and 22 – 32

Sunday 23rd April – 3rd Sunday of Easter

- 8:30 am BCP Communion – in-person only
- 10:00 am Service of the Word – in-person and live-stream on Facebook
Leader: Travers Harpur
Preacher: Revd David Cattle – “On the Road to Emmaus”
Readings: Zephaniah 3:14 – 20; Luke 24:13 – 35

Sunday 30th April – 4th Sunday of Easter

- 8:30 am BCP Communion – in-person only
- 10:00 am Service of the Word – in-person and live-stream on Facebook
Leader: Geoff Windus
Preacher: Chris Selden – “The Shepherd and His Flock”
Readings: Psalm 23; John 10:1 – 10

Services During the Week

Weekly Morning Prayer on Tuesdays via Zoom at 9:30 am

NB. Please note there will be no Morning Prayer on 4th April (Evening Compline being held instead).

Important dates in April

- Saturday 1st 10.00 am-12.00 – Coffee Morning in Church
Wednesday 5th, 2.15pm – Wednesday Fellowship. Easter Special with readings and poems (followed by afternoon tea!)
- Saturday 8th 9.00 am - 12.00 – Churchyard Tidy-Up
Sunday 9th, 10.00 am – Easter Sunday
Wednesday 12th, 9.00 am – Praying Together (in Church)
Monday 17th, 8.30 pm – Worship Planning Team meeting (via Zoom)
Thursday 20th, 7.30 pm – PCC meeting (in Church)
Monday 24th, 1.00 pm – MLT meeting (Fiona's house)
Wednesday 26th, 9.00 am – Praying Together (in Church)
7.30 pm – Lynchpins meeting (St John's Church, Moulsham)

Future dates in May

- Thursday 4th, 7.30pm – Licensing of Revd Hannah Robinson as Priest in Charge of St John's Church, Moulsham (at St John's)
Sunday 21st, 11.30am – Annual Parochial Church Meeting (in Church, and on Zoom)
Sunday 28th, 10.00 am – Pentecost

NOTICES

Good Friday (8th April)

There will be a service here at St Michael's starting at 8am called Meditation on the Cross. There is also a service on the High Street in the City Centre at 11am. Many of us will want to join other Christians in the Walk of Witness from our churches to the event. David and others will join with those from our partner churches, starting the Walk at 9.20am from the Church of the Holy Spirit in Forest Drive in Widford. No need to book – just turn up!

Easter Sunday Dawn Service (9th April) – 5.30am, St Luke's, Moulsham

Our group of churches will be hosting a traditional Dawn Service on Easter Sunday. It is a very beautiful service, which starts outside in the dark, just as the sun is rising. We light a fire in a brazier, and light a new Paschal Candle from it, and then we go indoors for the rest of the service. It is a great way to greet the risen Saviour! David will preach the sermon, and there will be a cooked breakfast after the service. If you would like to go, please let David know, since we need to know approximate numbers for the catering.

Job Opportunity: New Children, Youth and Families Leader

We are just starting to advertise for a new Children, Youth and Families Leader. The purpose of the role is to help children, young people and families become part of the worshipping community here at St Michael's, and to grow in the Christian faith. We need someone who has a passion to see children, young people and families coming to know Jesus, who can relate well to the full age range of children and young people, and who is committed, organised and can work well with light-touch supervision leading a team of volunteers. The hours are 8.6 hours per week on average (depending on the time of year), at £13 per hour (which equates to an annual salary of £5,824). If you would like to know more, or know someone who you think might be interested in the role, please see David. (The closing date for applications is Sunday 30th April.)

Friendship+ needs a new Leader!

Friendship+ is our group for carers and toddlers, which meets in the Keene Hall every Wednesday morning during school term-time. It is a project run by the Church, and it is one of the ways in which we bless our community. It is also a way of helping people to connect with our Church at a deeper level. David attends most weeks, and it is planned that our new Children's worker (when they are appointed) will also attend. Carole Evans has led the project for a number of years, and has now decided that this summer is the right time for her to step down. We thank Carole for everything she has done over these years – she has done an amazing job.

We now need a new Leader for the project (or perhaps two people working together). If you would like to know more about the role, please speak to Carole or David, and we can let you know what is involved.

Leadership Away Day Report

On 11th March, members of the PCC, MLT and some others met in the Octagon Room in Maldon for our annual Leadership Away Day. We spent time worshipping God, and talking about our plans and priorities for

the coming twelve months, and we finished with a fantastic pub lunch at the Queen's Head on Maldon promenade.

We looked at the nine priorities that were set last year. One is completed (we now open the Church building during the week), and one was added (reviewing sung worship). We shared updates on the rest, and came up with ideas for all of them. David will present these priorities and some of the ideas at the Church's Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday 21st May. As ever, if anyone has any questions about this, please speak to David or another Leadership Team member.

Church Electoral Roll Revision

Every year we update our Electoral Roll. This is the official Church membership list, which all Church of England churches need to compile. If your name is already on the Electoral Roll, you don't need to do anything – you will stay on automatically (unless you would like to come off; if so, please contact us). If you are not yet on the Electoral Roll, please do consider joining.

I would recommend joining the Roll because:

1. It allows you to vote at our Annual Meeting, which takes place on Sunday 21st May this year.
2. It allows you to stand for election to the PCC or Churchwarden.
3. It is about belonging. It is a way of saying, this is my Church family and I belong here.

You can join the Roll if you are:

1. Aged 16 or over.
2. Resident in the parish OR worship with us regularly (or would usually worship with us, but are prevented from coming to Church, perhaps because of age or illness).

There are set dates for the revision of the Roll. The revision opens on Sunday 9th April (Easter Sunday) and closes on Sunday 30th April. There will be forms available during this time for those who wish to join the Roll. Please speak to our Electoral Roll Officer, Jane Dougan, for more details (jmd8@post.com).

Praying Together in Church on a Wednesday

This is an informal time of prayer at 9.00 am in the Church on the second and fourth Wednesday each month. It's a time of quiet reflection listening to God and to each other. All are welcome as we explore together the wonderful mystery of prayer. See Sue Kitson for more details.

Churchyard Tidy-Up

Do join us if you can for our monthly churchyard tidy-up on the second Saturday each month, 9.00 am to 12.00 pm. For April it's Saturday 8th. See Anne Pepper for more details.

Recent Rock Choir concert

Those of us who were there had a great time at the concert on Friday 17th March, and we raised just over £1,000 for our Building Fund! A huge thank you to Beryl and the team for their vision and hard work.

Home Communion

If anyone can't get to Church, for whatever reason, and would like David to visit them in their home for Holy Communion, please let David know (contact details on the back page).

Prayer Chain

If anyone has an urgent need, please be aware the Church has a small group of committed members ready and willing to support you in prayer. Please contact Jane Windus, the Prayer Chain Coordinator (janewindus@gmail.com), who will circulate your request amongst the team. Furthermore, if you would be willing to join the team and commit to supporting others in this important and privileged ministry, again please contact Jane.

Homegroups – would you like to join one?

Lots of our Church members are already part of a homegroup. Homegroups are small groups that meet in people's homes, perhaps once or twice each month, where we study the Bible, pray, support each other, and enjoy ourselves with friends. They are places where people grow in faith, and find encouragement for the journey of life. We have a variety of styles of homegroup – some lean more towards serious Bible study, while others more towards friendship and support. Everyone is welcome to join a homegroup, and if we need to start more homegroups we will do that. Travers Harpur is our homegroup co-ordinator. If you would like to think about joining a group, please contact Travers for more details: travers.harpur@gmail.com

Thought for the Month by Chris Selden

Happy Birthday

I've just had a birthday – and it happened to be one of those ones that put a 'zero' at the end of my age. Perhaps that causes a person to reflect on the passage of time; to reflect on what has happened in the previous decades of their life; to wonder how many more decades are yet to come, and what that time might bring.

As I look backward I still remember past mistakes, and some of the most painful parts of life are always waiting to leap out and drag me down, while various other memories fade (until my wife helpfully reminds me of some detail which unlocks the synapses and we can share a moment of joint nostalgia).

But overall I feel very fortunate with how my life has panned out, and an overwhelming sense that – for all the plans I might have made over the years – I really haven't been the author of the story. My planning didn't bring this about, because my own plans can only really affect what I do with whatever time, resources, health, and opportunities I am given.

I am responsible for my thoughts and attitudes; I am responsible for how I act and interact with others; I am responsible for putting potential priorities into the right order; I am responsible for being a good steward of the things entrusted to me. Such responsibilities mean I have choices. I am not simply a pawn being moved around a cosmic chessboard by some invisible hand which dictates my every movement.

And yet I cannot shake the sense that the journey of my life has been guided and directed by God. It's not a new thought; around 2,600 years ago the prophet Jeremiah put it like this: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

I find that an encouragement at all times; that God is making plans for me, and that His plans are infinitely better than my own. But we must also remember that my mistakes, my choices, or my rebellion might prevent or delay parts of God's plan from being released into my life. God's love is freely offered to all – but we are each responsible for our own response to His offer, and our choices can prevent or delay God's best future from being realised in our lives.

Jeremiah gave these words to people that were going through hard times. Israel was in exile in Babylon. The words above are part of a broader encouragement that the exile would not last forever; the people would be able to return home. And in the meantime, the people needed to turn their focus back to living their lives according to God's priorities: *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity.*

What might my own next decade bring? Well it is likely to bring huge change as my children leave home, making more independent choices (and hopefully see steps along God's plan for their lives); I must expect grief and sadness as we are likely to lose older relatives; it will bring me closer to retirement and the great riddle of what to do with time when I am no longer in full-time employment (a far greater independence than I have known so far). But mostly the next decade is unknown. Yet I know the God who has led me this far, and I know I can trust Him as I go forward.

The deadline for articles for May is Sunday 23rd April. Please send them to Geoff Windus (geoffwindus@gmail.com).

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