

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

8 March 2026

3rd Sunday of Lent

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.
For information about us please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



Christ and the Samaritan Woman

Duccio di Buoninsegna

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3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17.1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5.1-11 John 4.5-42

The tragedies of Shakespeare cut that much deeper if you get the jokes. If the contrast of light and shade in the text is allowed to have its effect. Famously - the murder of King Duncan in *Macbeth* is immediately followed by the comic turn of the porter with his interlude of lewd ramblings, topical jokes, puns about equivocating Jesuits and the like.

It works both ways. The best comedies are likewise often laced with pathos or have a tragic subtext. What is Basil Fawlty - if not a sad figure? Or Malvolio, or Mr Bean, or David Brent? And where would slapstick humour be if you could not have your protagonist fall in the water from time to time. Or let the clown fool the audience into thinking he's in the process of throwing a bucket of water over them.

Water is fun. But water is also a serious matter of life and death. Water is necessary for life. Drought is a killer. As the climate emergency bites more severely year by year, we learn the hard lesson that too little water and too much can both be a deadly problem.

In Exodus we hear of the people of Israel agitating against Moses and the Lord because there is no water. So just as Moses raised his staff over the waters to part them as they escaped from Egypt, now he reverses the process and strikes the rock to get the water back.

Thirst is very powerful. Water is necessary for life. No wonder they quarrelled and tested the Lord when there wasn't any. Water remains a source of hostility wherever it is in short supply. If you think oil-based conflict around the Middle East has been bad enough, just wait until water-based conflict comes along in the wake of climate change.

As often in John's gospel this story of Jesus's encounter with a woman of Samaria is a multi-layered thing. Profound theological points are being made about who Jesus is and what his project will mean for those he encounters. The details in the story signify the rival religious standpoints of Jew and Samaritan.

The marriage image is often found in the Jewish scriptures, particularly the prophets, to express the relationship between God and Israel. So the fairly extreme number of husbands the woman has had points towards the Jewish view that the Samaritans have been unfaithful, have gone after other gods.

In the previous chapter of John's gospel, Jesus has referred to himself as the bridegroom. In terms of that marriage imagery, that's a Messianic claim - a claim which Jesus makes again here and which, by the end of their conversation, the woman is finding convincing enough for her to be able to convince others in her community that it is so.

Political issues are embedded in the narrative, and the sour and antagonistic relations between Jew and Samaritan, which went back centuries, are symbolised by the conversation that takes place. Those issues are there to challenge any inclination we might have towards tribalism or hostile nationalism.

Tribal issues have no place in the kingdom, Jesus says. This encounter embodies a strong call for an inclusive Christianity.

But these very big issues, important as they are, both then and now, don't prevent the encounter from being truly human. And there is a lacing of humour in it, too, if we care to notice. Banter which serves to illuminate, in sharp relief, the points being made.

Jesus is the clown without a bucket, as the Samaritan woman reminds him, loitering in futile fashion beside a deep well in the heat of the day, ending up having to transgress entrenched cultural and religious barriers and ask a favour of a woman who is, apparently, no better than she should be.

Maybe she's making a wry point about gender relations, too. It's women's work to collect water from the well. So why *would* he have a bucket?

This man can turn water into wine - but today he can't get at the water.

But there is a serious point beneath the surface irony. A point we should notice as we move through Lent towards Easter. He thirsts. He will thirst again at the crucifixion. But, of course, he has something over and above to offer: "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The thirst of crucifixion is to be transformed - into the fountain of living water, of resurrection.

She accepts this and is impressed by the insight he has brought to her own life and situation.

And for us, of course, water also means baptism. Baptism forms an important part of our worship at Easter. When we gather for our Easter Vigil during the evening of Holy Saturday, one of the things we shall do is to renew our baptismal vows, reflecting the fact that, in the early church, baptism was something that happened at Easter, and enabling us to remember that this water is necessary for our life.

When the woman leaves, she goes back to the city, putting her water jar down and leaving it behind. Perhaps that's a symbol that her life has been transformed and now she *has* the living water.

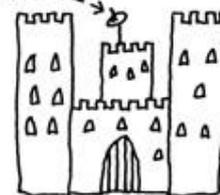
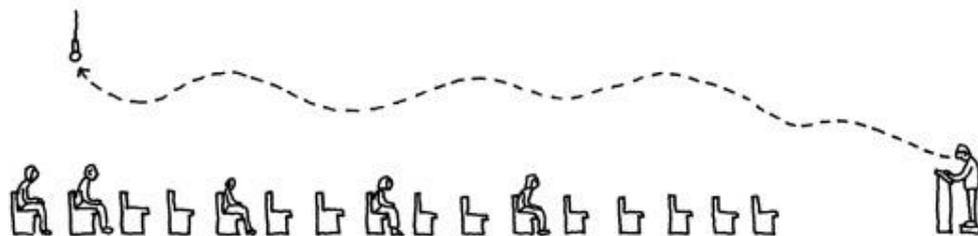
A transformation we also can seek from the holy clown who waits for us by the well, without a bucket, in the heat of the day.

Adrian Mann

THE LECTIONARY

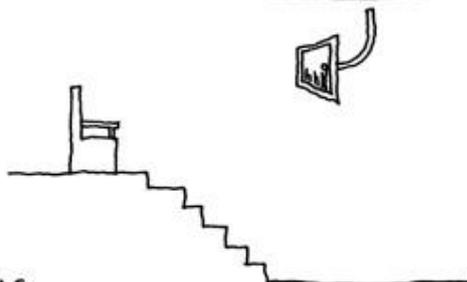
THE PERILS OF DEPARTING FROM IT

A SPECIAL
MICROPHONE
WILL
DETECT
THE
ANOMALY



THE
INFORMATION
IS BEAMED
TO THE
ARCHBISHOP'S
PALACE

IN THE
THRONE
ROOM
A SCREEN
SHOWS
THIS
WEEK'S
TRANSGRESSIONS



FORTUNATELY THE ARCHBISHOP IS TERRIBLY
BUSY WITH SERMON PREPARATION, ETC



YOU WILL PROBABLY GET AWAY
WITH A FIXED PENALTY

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 8 MARCH

SUNDAY 8 March 3rd Sunday of Lent

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Culford
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Lackford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Monday 9 March

Tuesday 10 March

6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Wednesday 11 March

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 12 March

9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Adoration and Benediction	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Friday 13 March

5.15pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Stations of the Cross	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Saturday 14 March

10-11.30am	LVNB Lent Course: Lentwise	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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SUNDAY 15 March 4th Sunday of Lent

Refreshment / Mothering Sunday

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) followed by breakfast	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW) preceded by breakfast	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Matins (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW) preceded by breakfast at 9.15am	West Stow
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Wonder Club at Lackford

Ali Miller



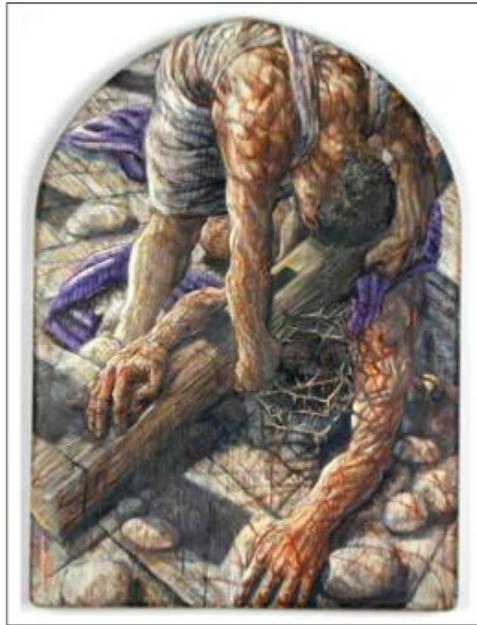
At Wonder Club we had a Lenten theme. We heard the Godly Play story called 'The Faces of Easter' and we saw how the mystery of Easter means the crucifixion and resurrection are so close together that they cannot be pulled apart!

We made nests out of branches and moss; decorated kindness jars and thought about acts of kindness we can do and have received; got creative with scratch art crosses; and some of us enjoyed building blocks. After the final pieces of liturgy, our feast consisted of Spring themed cupcakes and a lemon Bundt cake to round off the session!

We meet for an Easter theme Wonder Club on the 12th April at 3pm.

Fridays in Lent
at 6pm
from
20th February
to
27th March

St John's Church
Bury St Edmunds



Stations of the Cross

Reflections following
the narrative
of Christ's passion
using the pictures
created by Iain McKillop

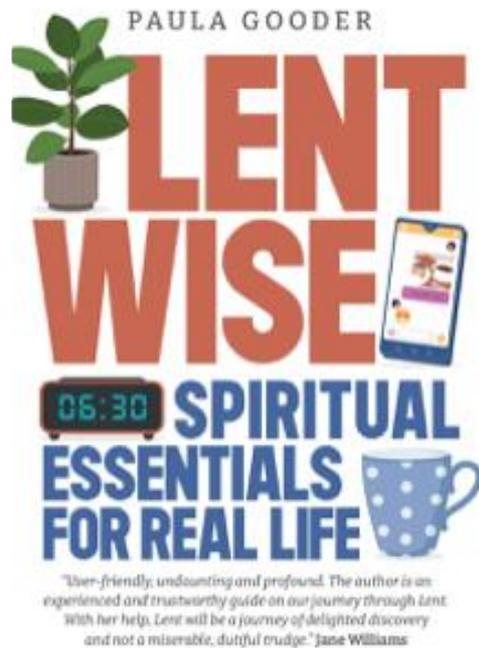
Help needed!

Some of our churches need assistance in compiling a general church risk assessment. We are looking for willing volunteers to help with this.

If you have some spare time and are happy to assist, please let me know.

Contact Mthr Ali - teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com

LVNB Lent Course



It is time to make our Lenten journey together and this year our course is from Paula Gooder's updated book, Lentwise.

The session titles are Compass, Nourishment, Light, Shelter, Water.

Each week the journey is aided by passages from John's Gospel.

It is not necessary to purchase the book.

And don't worry if you cannot make every session – just come to what you can.

Saturdays: 21st, 28th February, 7th, 14th, 21st March

10-11.30am St John the Evangelist, St John's St, BSE

**Simply turn up, or, to express interest, contact Mother Ali
teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com**



Giving up on giving up ...

Mary McGuire

With Lent looming this year, having just had my second knee replaced, it occurred to me that giving up something for Lent might be a bridge too far. So, I decided to do something instead.

Enter the lovely peeps at Alzheimer's Research who have set up a fundraiser. Hoorah! Both my parents had dementia, Mum's was vascular, most likely, exacerbated by the stress of Dad's struggle with Alzheimer's, which came first. As a result, it's a cause close to my heart. That's why I'm knitting every day in Lent. In memory of my parents, my uncle and for the one million people that are living with dementia in the UK today.

Alzheimer's Research set a target of £150 for each person to raise. It felt daunting initially, but amazingly, the amount of donations is getting close.

Will you join me in supporting a good cause?

Every penny you donate (minus the processing fees) goes towards the search for a cure. I've included links and QR codes below.

If you want to see what I'm knitting (socks mostly) and watch my progress you are welcome to follow my daily updates on Facebook and Instagram. Just the thing if you're suffering from insomnia, or are running out of paint to watch dry!

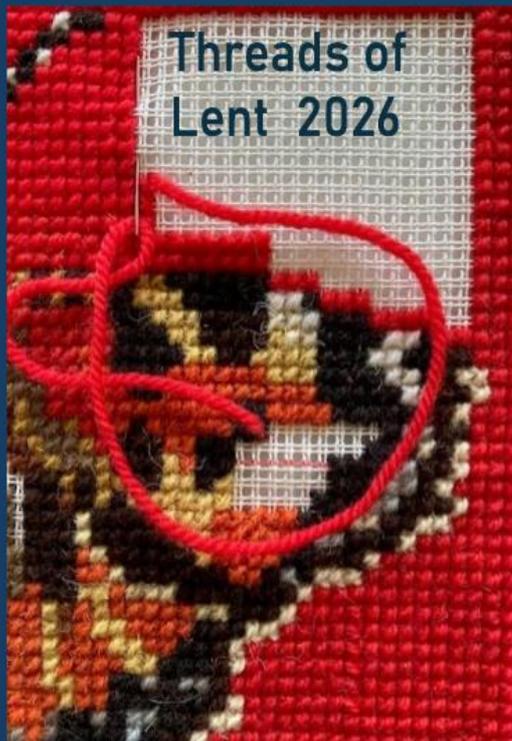
If you're reading on a phone or computer, you should be able to click on these links to donate.

Just Giving Page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mary-mcguire-1771350600>

Facebook Giving Page:

<https://socialsync.app/fundraiser/cr-93oj85qyr3wn>



Threads of
Lent 2026

Calling all Crafters!

Are you wanting to have a sort-out for Lent ?
Nurture your creativity?
Complete a half-done project?
Try something new?

You are welcome to our "Threads of Lent" Group
at: All Saints Church, Bury St Edmunds
On : Thursday afternoons from 2pm

26th February, 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th March

Easy parking
Tea and coffee
Bring your own materials

Enquiries to Sarah Gull seg30@cam.ac.uk

BURY ST EDMUNDS OLD SCHOOL FUND GRANTS

The Bury Old School Fund is a small local charity which provides modest grants to students in both secondary and tertiary education to assist with costs such as travel and educational materials.

Applicants, or their parents or guardians, must live within the town boundaries of Bury St Edmunds in order to be considered for a grant and be under the age of 25, although discretion by the Trustees may be considered if an Applicant is situated outside of the boundaries of Bury St Edmunds, but attends (or attended) a School within the boundary.

For an Application Form please e-mail
osfclerk@greene-greene.com

All Applications for the 2026/27 academic year must be received by the clerk by close of business on 31 August 2026.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

WOMEN LED + GLOBAL + ECUMENICAL

“I will give you rest”

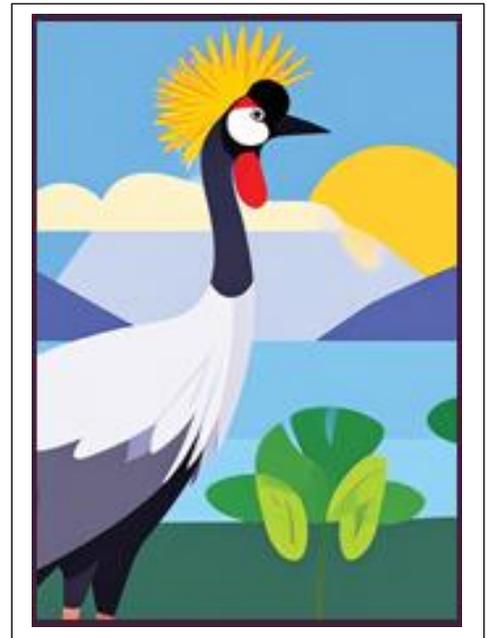
2026 NIGERIA

Our sisters in Nigeria invite us to join them for the World Day of Prayer on Friday 6 March 2026. The service they have prepared reflects on the theme, "I will give you rest."

The World Day of Prayer is an international, women-led, ecumenical movement that shares the hopes, concerns, and prayers of women around the globe. Each year, women from a different country craft a service, sharing their unique spiritual journey and culture. For 2026, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their faith and experiences in a world filled with struggles and anxieties.

The preparation for this day is extensive. The writing country and theme are chosen years in advance, and the service then travels to the international committee in New York for translation and dissemination to national committees in over 120 participating countries. From there it is adapted and shared locally, culminating in gatherings at hundreds of churches every March.

This day is a powerful demonstration of global solidarity. It begins in Samoa and moves across the world in a continuous wave of prayer, finishing 38 hours later in American Samoa. It truly is a worldwide day of prayer!



St John's Church, IP33 1SP
Southgate Church, IP33 2QA

Friday 6 March
10.30am
7.30pm

St George's invites you to join us and

The MEAD SINGERS

who present

"Near to God"

A programme of music and meditation reflecting
on "Christ's journey to the Cross" with
congregational participation

Conductor: Michael Phillips

Accompanist: David Honeyball



at St George's Church, Anselm
Avenue, IP32 6JZ

on

Sunday 22nd March at 3pm

Followed by refreshments

Forthcoming dates at St George's for your diary

Maz Callaby

Bingo ~ 18th April, 6th June and 5th September

Cream tea ~ 4th July

Harvest Festival ~ 11th October

Christmas* Fayre ~ 14th November

* First sighting of a Christmas event in 2026.

Blackthorn blossom by the River Lark in Bury St Edmunds



3 March 2026



Eco tip for MARCH

Take part in a local litter pick or beach clean during The Great British Spring Clean (Friday 13-Sunday 29 March), the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign.

Litter picking benefits the environment by removing rubbish that can be hazardous for wildlife and helps bring people together.

See if there's a litter pick in your local area or consider organising your own - after church on Sunday for example.

Pray for your local area as you do the litter pick and ask God for opportunities to share why you are doing it.

Find out more and pledge to pick up a bag at keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean

Contacts

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Revd Ali Miller	01284 728714	teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com
Team Office	01284 700400	NBTLVB@outlook.com

We also have assistance from our Assistant Priest, Sarah Gull, and from priests within the benefice who have permission to officiate.

Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton NBTLVB@outlook.com
and the 'Viral Bulletin' adrian.mann@btinternet.com

have news and details of events which have happened
as well as events which are coming up at your church.

And your photographs are always welcome.