

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

# VIRAL BULLETIN

15 March 2026

4th Sunday of Lent / *Mothering Sunday*

*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](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)



*LVNB Course: Lentwise, 7 March 2026*

*Photo: Gina Robertson*

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# 4th Sunday of Lent ~ Refreshment Sunday

*1 Samuel 16.1-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5.8-14 John 9*

## Mothering Sunday

*Exodus 2.1-10 or 1 Samuel 1.20-end Psalm 127.1-4 or Psalm 34.11-20  
2 Corinthians 1.3-7 or Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.33-35 or John 19.25b-27*

In 1914, the US Congress set up Mothers' Day and decreed that it should be held annually on the 2nd Sunday in May: a secular festival in honour of mothers. Sadly, this name now tends to get used on what we pedants mark as Mothering Sunday. And, in fact, Mothering Sunday is *just one* of the names given to the fourth Sunday of Lent.

It may be called Mothering Sunday because in the sixteenth century this was the day when people would try to worship in the mother church of the diocese - the cathedral. Or because later it became the day when servants, apprentices and other young workers living away from home would be given a day off to visit their mothers, picking spring flowers along the way.

It's also called Refreshment Sunday, carrying the idea of taking a bit of a break from the rigours of Lent and perhaps spoiling yourself with a slice of Simnel cake. And Laetare Sunday - O be joyful Sunday, in other words. Maybe we could add Google Sunday - in deference to all those preachers who look this sort of stuff up on the internet to pad out their sermons. Underlying this there are some important themes - of honouring Jesus's mother Mary and of valuing our mother the Church - to be found amongst today's readings.

If, firstly, we think of Mothering Sunday in the sense of our mother the Church nurturing us and sustaining us and growing us up, the passage from Colossians provides us with an eloquent account of what life in the Christian community should be like.

We are to clothe ourselves with - to consciously adopt - an attitude of compassion, of kindness, of humility, of meekness, of patience. Being realistic about ourselves and giving way to the needs of others. 'Bear with one another' and don't forget the key ingredient of forgiveness, often the hardest thing of all, but quite essential.

Paul says: 'just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.' Think of how that echoes the Lord's Prayer and those words we slip and slide over, and take for granted, without quite registering how tough they are: 'Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive those who trespass against us.*' Paul reminds us that we are only to ask for forgiveness to the same extent that we are prepared to offer it. We should think about it.

And so: 'above all, clothe yourself with love', 'let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... And be thankful.'

It's a pretty good summary of our calling as a worshipping community, of what being together as Church should be like. So our mother the Church has these features and is a place of love and forgiveness, a kind place.

Not that we live up to all of this - we know we don't. Goodness knows, that's why we need forgiveness. Not even that the Church somehow lives up to it on our behalf. We know, sadly, that it doesn't. Not always. But it does sometimes. And it aspires to do so most of the time, and that aspiration is always active in many sundry places.

Jesus spoke of the kingdom as being like a pearl of great price. Maybe we can think of the Church as being a gnarled, rough, ungainly-looking oyster. A long way from being a pearl of great price, but very necessary ... the place where you do have to look if you want any hope of finding a pearl at all.

The short reading from John 19.25b-27 takes us to stand at the foot of the cross with the tiny fragile community gathered there. And to John's account of words spoken by Jesus as he neared his death. We take a lot of notice of what people say when they are about to die. I can clearly remember my father, as he neared his death, entrusting the care of my mother to me.

Jesus does something similar and, this being John's gospel, the account has more than one layer of meaning and various possible interpretations have echoed down the years.

'Here is your son.' 'Here is your mother.' At the obvious, but none the less vital, human level it is a poignant expression of love and parting, showing Jesus experiencing human emotion to the full. His humanity is total and his divinity does not protect him from the pain of that parting.

Mary is fulfilling an important role at the end of his life, just as she had at the beginning. Here we find, at the heart of the Crucifixion events, the love Paul describes, 'which binds everything together in perfect harmony.'

This is not the chocolate-box love of Mothers' Day, but the tough love of Mothering Sunday, of death and resurrection, the lacerating love which broke Mary's heart as the spear pierced her son's side, and as the sword pierced her own soul, too (Luke 2.35). Such is the price of the love we have been given.

This is costly love, calling out from us the response of compassion, love and forgiveness which is described by Paul. This love calls us to be the Church. So a further layer of meaning sees these words of Jesus casting Mary as mother of the Church, just as the Church is personified by the beloved disciple.

Jesus' concern for the future of his beloved disciple leads him to entrust that disciple to Mary. The same Mary who loved and nurtured Jesus can now love and nurture that disciple, and therefore all disciples, with a love which can nourish and sustain their faith.

Whatever we draw from these few verses, we can see that there is a distinction to be made. It is worth adhering to Mothering Sunday. There is much more to it than there is to Mothers' Day.

For Mothering Sunday speaks of a mother who bore a son two thousand years ago and who stood and watched him die thirty-something years later. A mother who, in doing so, ushered faith and hope into our lives and, above all, the love of God in Jesus that forgives us and saves us.

And it speaks of the worshipping community - our mother the Church - in which we give thanks for that great love and in which we grow, are nourished and sustained.



*Adrian Mann*

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# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

## SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 15 MARCH

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

Monday 16 March

Tuesday 17 March Patrick, bishop, missionary, patron of Ireland, c460

10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Wednesday 18 March Cyril, bishop, teacher of the faith, 386

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

Thursday 19 March Joseph of Nazareth

9.30am	Eucharist (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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Friday 20 March Cuthbert, bishop, missionary, 687

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

Saturday 21 March Thomas Cranmer, archbishop, Reformation martyr, 1556

10-11.30am	LVNB Lent Course: Lentwise	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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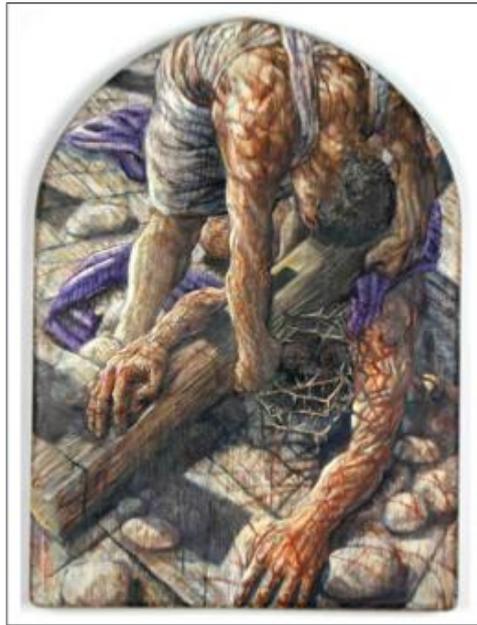
SUNDAY 22 March 5th Sunday of Lent *Passiontide begins*

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)	Culford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12 noon	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton
3.00pm	'Near to God' ~ The Mead Singers	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

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Fridays in Lent  
at 6pm  
*from*  
20<sup>th</sup> February  
*to*  
27<sup>th</sup> 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

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## 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](mailto:teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com)

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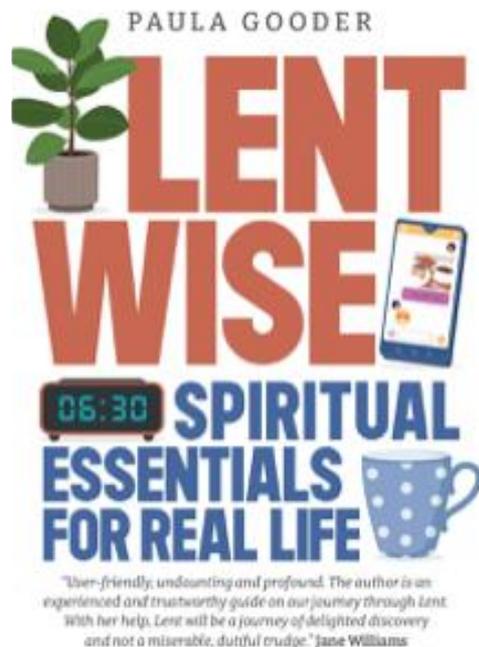


## The World Day of Prayer

Our sisters in Nigeria invited us to join them in prayer on Friday 6 March 2026. Their thoughtful service reflected on the theme, "I will give you rest." Thanks to Claire Rose for these photos from the morning service which took place at St John's. There was another service at Southgate Church in the evening.

This day is a powerful display 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.

# 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: 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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!

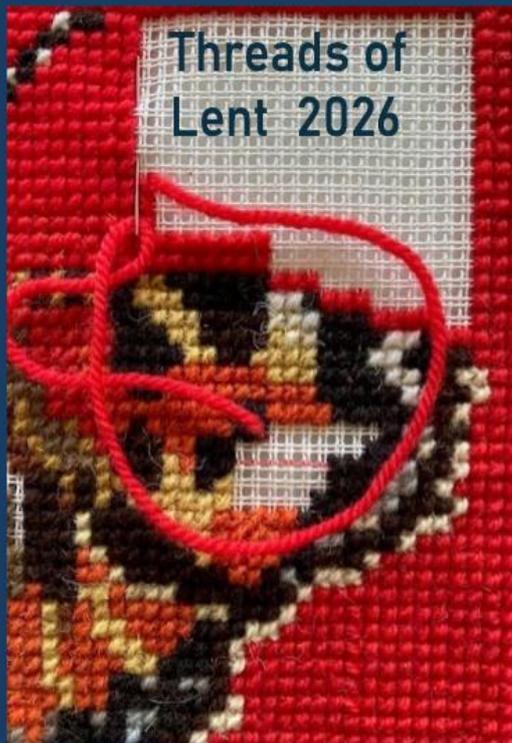
If you're reading on a phone or computer, you should be able to click on these links to donate.

Just Giving Page:

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

Facebook Giving Page:

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



## 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

26<sup>th</sup> February, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March

Easy parking  
Tea and coffee  
Bring your own materials

Enquiries to Sarah Gull [seg30@cam.ac.uk](mailto:seg30@cam.ac.uk)

# Farewell Jack Hodnett

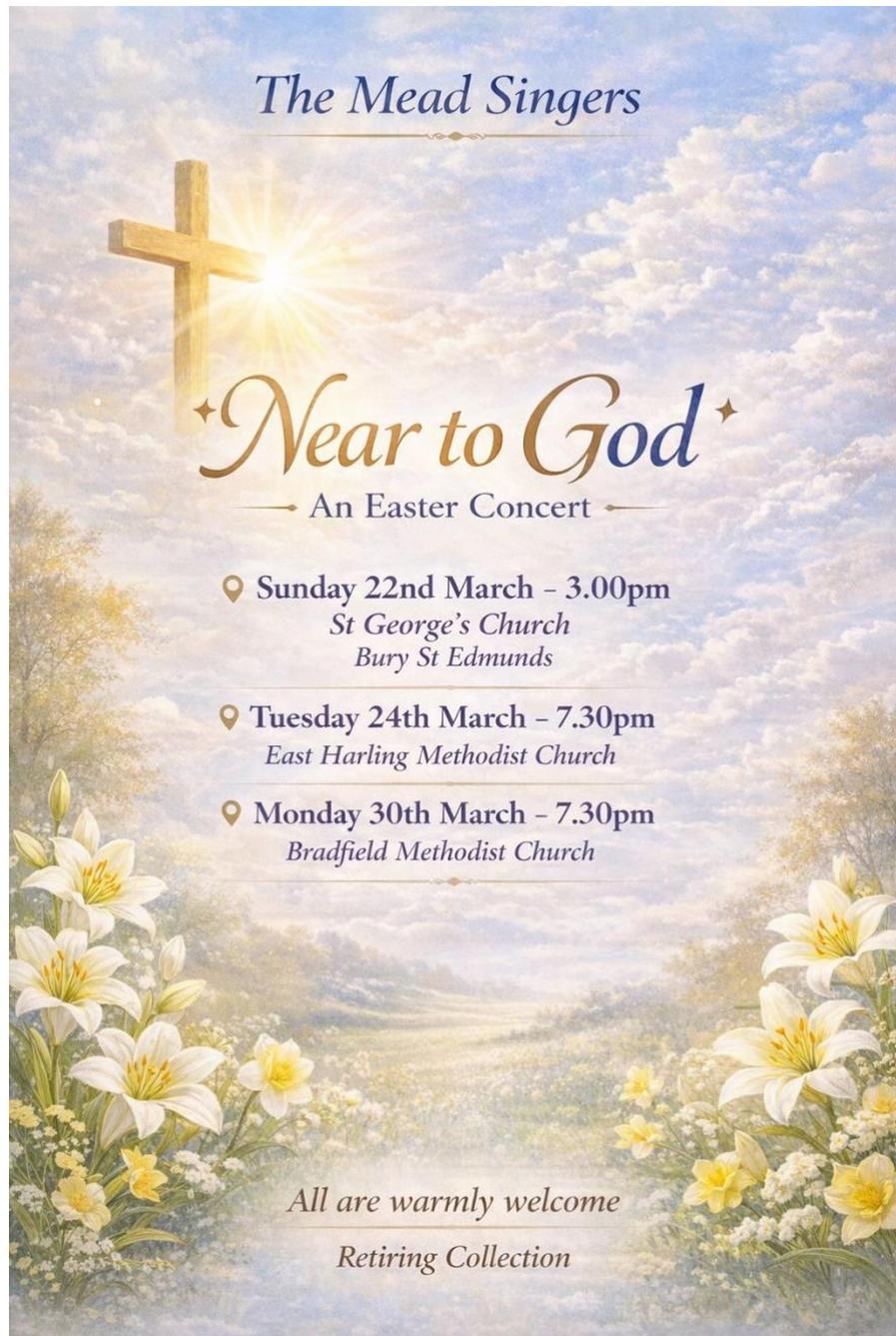
Jack will shortly be flying back to the States for some well-earned leave, before returning to Europe for his next tour of duty in Germany.

Here he is as Andy presents him with an icon of St John the Evangelist to express our best wishes for the future and the thanks of the people of St John's for his friendship and his much-valued contribution to the life of the parish whilst in the UK.



**St George's Church** invites you to join them and the **Mead Singers** on **Sunday 22 March at 3pm** for **Near to God**, a programme of music and meditation reflecting on Christ's journey to the Cross.

Conductor: **Michael Phillips**    Accompanist and Text: **David Honeyball**



## **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.



## 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](https://keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean)

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## Contacts

Revd Dr Andy Miller ....	01284 728714	<a href="mailto:teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com">teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com</a>
Revd Ali Miller .....	01284 728714	<a href="mailto:teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com">teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com</a>
Team Office .....	01284 700400	<a href="mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com">NBTLVB@outlook.com</a>

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

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## Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton [NBTLVB@outlook.com](mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com)

and the 'Viral Bulletin' [adrian.mann@btinternet.com](mailto: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.

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