

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

26 July 2026

8th Sunday after Trinity

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



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8th Sunday after Trinity

1 Kings 3.5-12 Psalm 119.129-136 Romans 8.26-end Matthew 13.31-33,44-52

Listening to the Little

I recently read an intriguing slender Japanese novel by Naoko Higashi, titled *The Soul Catchers*. It is based on a Japanese folk belief that a deceased person, or more accurately their soul, can inhabit an object. In the book, this is the means for the dead 'someone' to continue to see what is happening in the lives of their loved ones. There is even a ghostly *Officer for Assigning Objects to Lost Souls* to assist with this.

Objects as large as a climbing frame are inhabited (a child's request) to something as small as a hearing aid. The results are deeply moving: such short chapters pack an emotional punch of a response. Something small having great effect; keep that in mind.

Now of course I am a Christian priest, so while I admit to having had a curious moment or two contemplating which object I would ask to inhabit (!), for the benefit of doubt, I do believe in the 'sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life' (as we say in the Prayer of Committal).

Sticking with the realm of storytelling, remember Jesus, our enigmatic teacher, opens his mouth in parables and confuses, delights, even shocks us in equal measure, often using everyday objects/things to reveal a truth. In the Gospel reading we find a smattering of parables, some very much located in the realm of the hidden and the small, yet concerning a kingdom - though this is not just any kingdom, but the kingdom of heaven. These are tiny parables with a vast subject matter and a side-helping of subversion.

Remember that parables are to be played with, even wrestled with, and they'll reward with new vistas of interpretation. Remember too we hear them two thousand years later, so we are in a completely different context to the original listeners, where Jesus was right in front of them; maybe this adds a little something.

On this occasion, I am leaving to one side the good and bad fish; they are a partner to the wheat and weeds which was the Gospel reading last week, so let them swim there! First off, let's appreciate the small and 'listen to the little' - the mustard seed, the yeast, the treasure, the pearl. All containing the voice of the Kingdom (rather than a deceased soul!). What do they say to us?

The mustard seed: I am small, so small. I am here but you would not know it to begin with. When sown in the soil I barely register. My existence seems precarious amid the soil, the plants, the insects. I have potential though. On a scale not dreamed of. The sower has long gone. Off sowing elsewhere. Guerilla gardening in both the hospitable and inhospitable terrains. Here, I root and shoot and grow against the odds. I become a shrub. The sort some think is a nuisance, an invasive bit of greenery, for once I take hold, I spread outwards. Now I become a tree. A place of security and welcome, for anyone who wishes to shelter in my branches can do so. A home for the lost and the found, the big and the small. Especially the small. I know what this is like. You can flock to me.

The yeast: I am forever hidden away – tossed buffeted invisible infiltrating vast quantities of flour. Some don't like yeast in the house, but here I am. And as the woman throws me about, mixes in the water, works the dough, I do my job: setting in motion, the rising, swelling, proving. Puffed up, heat applied and now there are quantities of the best bread. An abundance – for there is more than enough to go round and I take joy in knowing that the hungry are fed.

The treasure: I lie here hidden in the darkness. Tickled by the roots of the grass reaching downwards towards me. Above is the field, is the sky. I wait to be found. No, I long to be found - though I do not remember who I belong to! I simply have a sense of my worth. I know I am costly. It will be a huge undertaking to unearth me. For the one brave enough to do so, I can promise joy. And that's grace, isn't it? Like I implied – it is not cheap!

The pearl: I know I am precious. Not everyone sees it. Some merchants lack skill and wisdom. Some are impatient, and do not take the time to look carefully enough. I am confident, however, that one day, someone will appreciate my fine self, will recognise my value, and will have me at all costs – sacrificing everything they own in fact. I may be small, but I am worth it.

Listening to the little: what is revealed about the kingdom of heaven? God's kingdom is for all God's children, not just the ones that may look or think or talk like me, even you (and this applies to Church – remember we are not gatekeepers). In God's kingdom we help each other to feel secure and welcome; we extend God's loving embrace.

You know Jesus! He mixed with the unwell, the ostracised, those deemed 'other'. In this kingdom all are welcome. And all can be fed. Remember Jesus ate with all manner of people, invoking shock and criticism at the time:

friends including women, but also sinners, tax-collectors, and the like. The table remains open. So, as we wait for the fullest realisation of the kingdom (patience is required), we come faithfully to the altar, whoever we are, to be fed with the Eucharist.

Perhaps too, we contemplate our desire for this kingdom. This holy pathway to true joy. But to grasp it with both hands we need to let go of other things first – to shed our obsessions and possessions on physical and mental level, so that we can see God's treasures in front of us. What are we prepared to give up? How much does the kingdom ask of us? It will look different for each of us.

If the kingdom of heaven is here and now, then in a world that is burning, that is living the effects of climate change, then changing our habits and sacrificing our consumeristic ideals may be a saving grace. And it may be something we need to attend to again and again. The preciousness and worth of the kingdom of heaven is enough and more than enough.

So, these tiny stories create big questions for a lazy weekend morning and you may want to chew on such privately or maybe aloud over a meal with your friends or family, and you may let the subversive little stories invade your prayers before bed and see what God reveals to you through your thoughts and even dreams. Listen to the little.

I wonder if you, if I, have understood these parables? Rather hilariously, Jesus asks the disciples this very question: have you understood all this? And they (the disciples) answer 'Yes.' The very last verses in today's Gospel could be described as a parable too!

'A scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.' Through the scriptures we find old and new treasures that can help us as we seek out God's kingdom and as we share it with others.

We worship the God who is endlessly creative:

God who works with and through the small and undesirable and yet in time cultivates a safe, secure and welcoming space where all will be fed;

God who desires us to know and love our Lord Jesus and the infinite riches this brings to our lives;

God who offers us freedom, who asks us to reassess what is precious and valuable in our lives as we gaze on the treasure that is the Kingdom.

Mother Ali

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 26 JULY

SUNDAY 26 July 8th Sunday after Trinity

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)	Fornham St Martin
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Culford
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12 noon	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton

Monday 27 July *Brooke Foss Westcott, bishop, teacher of the faith, 1901*

Tuesday 28 July

6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Wednesday 29 July *Mary, Martha and Lazarus, companions of Our Lord*

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 30 July *William Wilberforce, social reformer, Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson, anti-slavery campaigners, 1833, 1797 and 1846*

9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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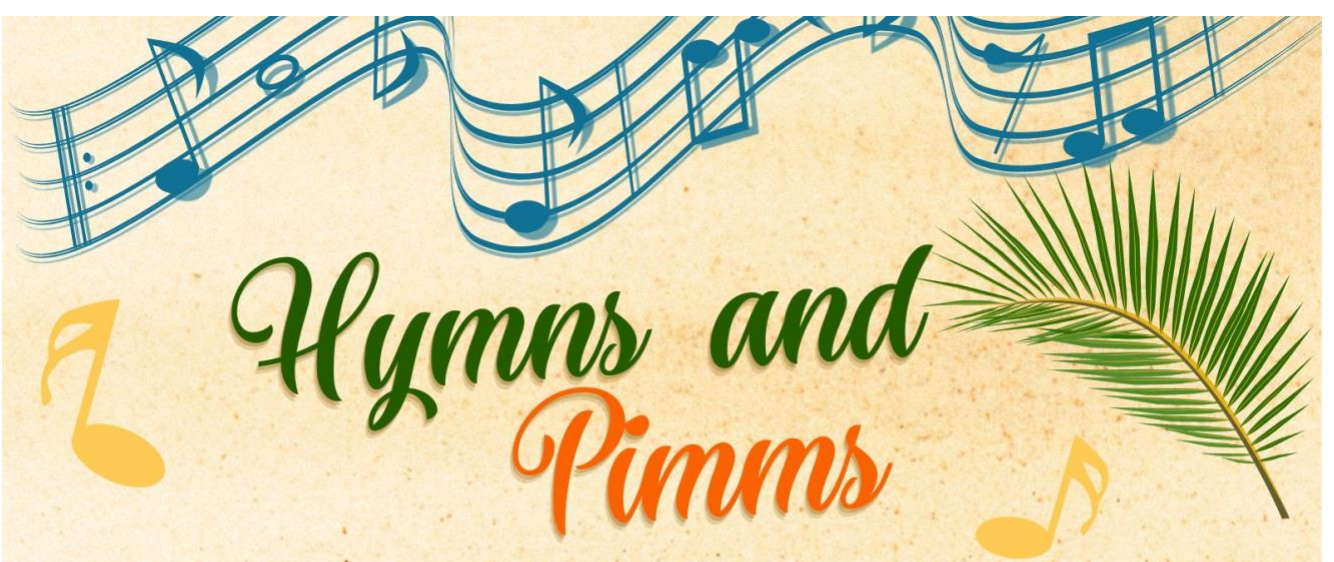
Friday 31 July *Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, 1556*

5.15pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Saturday 1 August

SUNDAY 2 August 9th Sunday after Trinity

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
9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	West Stow
10.00am	All Age Worship	Fornham All Saints
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds



Hymns and Pimms

FORNHAM ALL SAINTS CHURCH
SATURDAY 25TH JULY
6:30PM FOR 7:00PM

*Come and sing 10 hymns - one chosen
by each parish in the LVNB Benefice*

Enjoy a glass of Pimms or a soft drink

Free entry



Praying Together ~ August 2026

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

For the wider community and church

- 1 S For all with money worries
- 2 S The sugar beet factory
- 3 M The Job Centre Plus office
- 4 T Bury St Edmunds Library; The Lark Valley Library Van
- 5 W Bury Market
- 6 T Springfield Road housing area
- 7 F The Suffolk Regiment museum; The Territorial Army Centre
- 8 S The Leisure Centre
- 9 S The Westley Estate
- 10 M County High School (formerly Westley Middle)
- 11 T Adults and children with special needs
- 12 W Social Care Services & for all caring for relatives at home
- 13 T The emergency services, fire, police & ambulance
- 14 F The East Anglian Air Ambulance
- 15 S The Railway Station
- 16 S The Bus Station
- 17 M Local public transport
- 18 T Spring Lane & Thingoe Hill housing areas
- 19 W All who live in Hengrave
- 20 T St John Lateran, Hengrave
- 21 F Hengrave Hall
- 22 S Beetons Way, Tollgate Lane & Fornham Road areas
- 23 S The Howard Estate
- 24 M Newbury Community Association
- 25 T Tollgate Primary School
- 26 W County High School (formerly County Upper)
- 27 T St Benedict's School
- 28 F Howard Community Academy
- 29 S For all affected by family breakup
- 30 S For those who are lonely
- 31 M For those who have lost faith in the Church

SINGING FOR FUN WITH AFTERNOON TEA



ALL SAINTS CHURCH,
PARK ROAD, IP33 3QW

SATURDAY 1ST AUGUST

STARTS AT 2:30PM

ENTRANCE £5

COME AND SING SONGS FROM **THE MUSICALS**
OR JUST ENJOY THE MUSIC AND AFTERNOON TEA
IN GOOD COMPANY

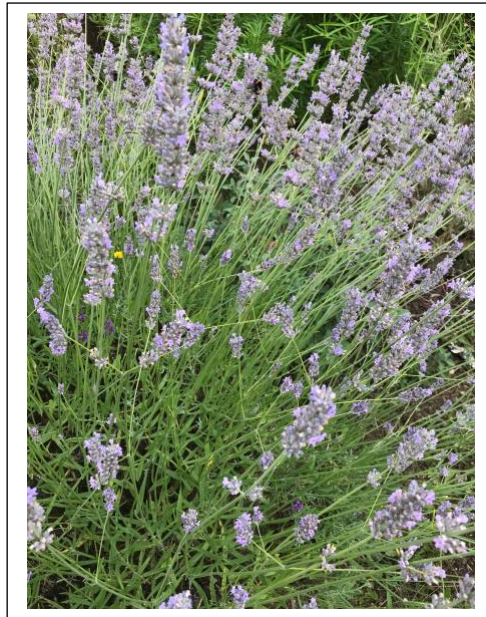
www.northburychurches.org.uk

All Saints', Park Road

7 August
from 4pm

Tidying of
Church grounds
~ any help
would be great!

Please bring tools.
Thanks!



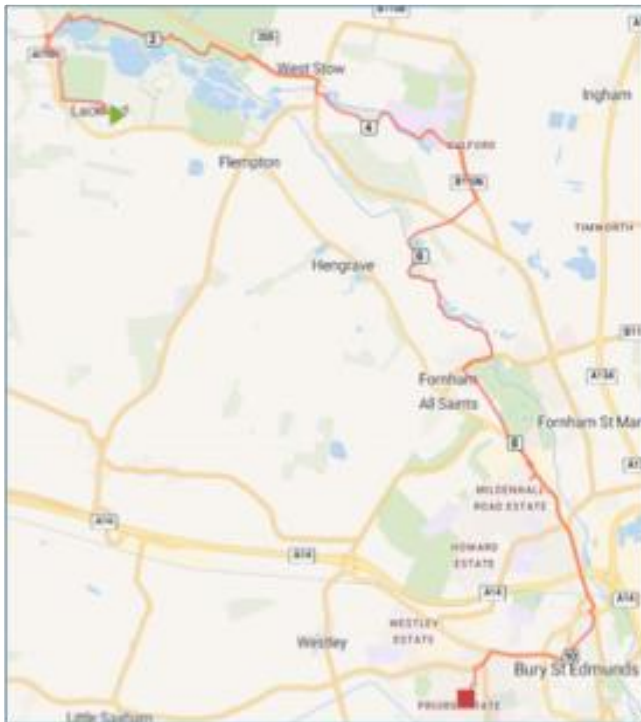
Don't miss the **Benefice BASH**



at The Rectory, West Stow
Sunday 16th August 6pm - 8pm

Benefice Pilgrimage Walk

22nd August 2026



Come and join us for a leisurely walk from Lackford into Bury St Edmunds. We will be stopping at:

- St Lawrence, Lackford
9am (meet from 8.30am)
- St Mary's, West Stow
10.30am
- St Mary's, Culford
11.30am
- All Saints, Fornham All Saints
1pm
- St George's, Bury 2.30pm
- St John's, Bury 3.30pm
- All Saints, Bury 4.30pm

You are warmly welcome to join us for a pilgrimage across the Lark Valley and North Bury Team Benefice. The total journey from Lackford to All Saint's Bury is around 12.6 miles (20.28km). The pace will be reasonably slow (2mph) to allow us to enjoy the beautiful churches and countryside along the way. You may wish to do it all, or journey with us for part of the route only.

We will start from St Lawrence church in Lackford at 9am. Please arrive at the church from 8.30am for a walkers' briefing and prayers. There will be several stops on the way for toilets and to refill water bottles. We plan to eat our packed lunches at Fornham All Saints. The route will be a combination of footpaths and pavements so will require comfortable walking shoes/boots and weather/nettle appropriate clothing.

To find out more information and fill out a registration form, please contact Sarah Gull, seg30@cam.ac.uk

Our Pets



TIMWORTH CHURCH Pet Service



Sunday 30th August
3pm



Lark Valley & North Bury Team Ministry

www.northburychurches.org.uk



THE HOT SUN
SCORCHES DOWN
UPON OUR HEADS



BENEATH OUR FEET
THE EARTH'S CORE
CONTAINS MOLTEN
ROCK BURNING AT
ONE MILLION DEGREES



THE GULF STREAM
BRINGS WARM
WATERS TO
OUR SHORES



IF THAT IS NOT
ENOUGH YOU CAN
ALWAYS TURN ON
A SMALL FAN HEATER

CartoonChurch.com

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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, but please don't forget to ask permission of those who may therefore appear in the Viral Bulletin.