

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

# VIRAL BULLETIN

22 February 2026

1st 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](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)



*Near the confluence of the River Lark and the Linnet, 14 February*

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# *1st Sunday of Lent*

*Genesis 2.15-17;3.1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5.12-19 Matthew 4.1-11*

I am guessing that we all know why the chicken crossed the road – to get to the other side. But why did Jesus go into the wilderness? That is the question we find ourselves faced with on the first Sunday of Lent. Indeed, it is the question we are faced with every year on the first Sunday of this season that directly precedes the great feast of Easter.

In a practical sense, the answer to this question is presented to us by the text that we have from St Matthew's Gospel. For as described in this, it is the Holy Spirit that leads Jesus into the wilderness. In this both Mark and Luke agree. And like for them and for Matthew this is immediately after Jesus has been baptised by John the Baptist and declared to be God's beloved Son, with whom God is well pleased.

Here primarily is the source of wonder we may have as to why Jesus entered the wilderness at all. Given that Jesus has just been part of a very clear announcement of his divinity that reveals that he is the one that John the Baptist has been preparing the way for, why does Jesus choose to take an arid detour, rather than immediately begin to reveal that Godliness to the people who have been waiting for him as the one that John has been lauding?

Well, a very good answer comes from the Spirit's part in this journey into the desert. For this reveals that it is God who is responsible for Jesus heading into the harsh wasteland.

Here we surely have the main reason why Jesus did this, and indeed everything that he did during his life and ministry. For this is his obedience and loyalty to God. It was God's desire that Jesus head into the desert, and so Jesus did. And this theme of obedience and loyalty runs right through the entirety of this wilderness time for Jesus.

As it turns out, people who know more about these things than I also make other suggestions when it comes to the hoped for causes and effects of Christ's time in the wilderness. They suggest that the main things offered by Jesus during this time in the desert are a warning and an example to those who would be his followers. And in this, we can certainly see further reasons why Christ may head into the wilderness.

Temptations are very much a part of human life and nature, and as the Old Testament passage for this Sunday suggests, this was so from the very beginning. And Jesus as we know faced such during his time in the desert. For Matthew, these are the most noteworthy things that happened to our Lord during this time.

So as we hear, in the wilds Christ was tempted to look to his needs alone through the call to turn stones into bread. He was tested through being nudged toward leaping off the temple to impress and then drink in the adoration of the crowd below. And he was teased with the chance to rule over others and have them serve him.

So as is revealed, Jesus has experienced those deeply enticing temptations that can, will and maybe have, whispered in all our ears. Things such as greed, selfishness, arrogance and a thirst for power. However, what this wilderness experience does wonderfully mean then, is that once again Jesus stands shoulder to shoulder with everyone in our world. Temptation is yet another thing that Jesus the man has experienced at first hand.

And so here is another answer to the question why Jesus went into the wilderness. He did so to experience more of human life, such that nothing of this is beyond his understanding and indeed, empathy.

But here too is the warning contained in these events. For if even Jesus, God's beloved Son, can face such things in his life, then temptation can indeed be a part of all human existence, challenging anyone and everyone. But thankfully and vitally, Jesus does not just empathise with humanity thanks to the things that his humanity sees him experience, but he offers answers to how to respond to such situations.

Here in the heat of the desert, as Matthew so wonderfully outlines, Christ certainly provides the example suggested by so many. An example that means that we may similarly face and overcome such temptations in our lives. And what so fabulously ties so much of this together, is that the example that Jesus provides within the wilderness that helps we humans cope with the stresses and strains of life, including not least temptations such as those he himself faced, is so very human.

For, as Matthew reveals, to resist those things he is being teased with in the desert, Jesus does not resort to the miraculous. In fact, much of his resistance involves actively refusing to use the power that he has as the Son of God. Indeed, what Jesus reveals in the wilderness is that we do not need miracles to make our way through life resisting temptations.

Rather it is via being true to God and knowing his ways that we mimic Jesus. And as this desert story highlights, this is knowledge found not least in the Bible. For as we hear, it is in the words of Scripture that Jesus finds the responses to each one of the temptations he faces. On each occasion it is words from our Holy Book that Jesus quotes as a rebuttal to what he is being challenged with, and that clearly embolden him to resist and overcome the temptations that he faces.

Crucially in all these cases, we return to that point mentioned earlier. For through being true to Scripture in response to each temptation, Christ is choosing the option that sees him being obedient and loyal to God. It is, as Jesus says, every

word that comes from the mouth of God that feeds him, such that he will not put God to the test.

And most importantly of all, it is God and God alone who is worthy of his, and indeed anyone's, worship and service. God and their call on his life is always what drives Jesus and is the root of all the choices that he makes.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to follow this example and do the same. Everything we do must be led by the desire to be obedient and loyal to God like Jesus, such that we know God's call on our lives and can resist everything that might tempt us away from this and onto another course.

And yes, this is indeed within our grasp. For what is so wonderfully revealed by this wilderness sojourn, is that we do not need all of Scripture and every single aspect of our Christian faith at our fingertips to understand what is required of us as followers of Jesus. Yes, studying the Bible and immersing ourselves in its treasures will build up our faith, and this is something that can and will see all Christians grow in their knowledge of God.

But once again it is those things that Jesus called the greatest of all the commandments that are at the centre of the example given to us on the first Sunday of Lent. Things that are loving the Lord our God with every part of our being and loving our neighbours as ourselves.

For it is these that Christ used as his motivation to resist temptation as we hear today. Things that we cannot take for granted, but that we already know must shape and mould our lives and that are therefore already our aims as we look to be good followers of Jesus.

In simple terms what we learn once again, this time as Lent begins, is that if get the foundations of the faith right, then Jesus will truly have guided us away from temptation and towards God.

So, the Sundays of Lent start once again with Jesus in the wilderness. And why does he do this, and why do we hear of this? Not to simply get to the other side of this time for him, and this season for us. Rather it is for the rich wonders that this wilderness journey offers to all those who are followers of Jesus.

Rich wonders from Jesus, who we see embraces all parts of what it means to be a human being, and who shows humanity how we can resist the temptations that life will inevitably throw up. Resistance through looking to the words of Scripture as he did in the desert, such that we too are obedient and loyal to God.

Obedient and loyal to the call to love God with our whole being, and to love and care for others around us in all that we do.

*Andy Miller*

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# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

## SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 22 FEBRUARY

### SUNDAY 22 February 1st Sunday of Lent

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

### Monday 23 February Polycarp, bishop, martyr, c155

#### Tuesday 24 February

6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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#### Wednesday 25 February Ember Day

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

#### Thursday 26 February

9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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### Friday 27 February George Herbert, priest, poet, 1633 Ember Day

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

#### Saturday 28 February Ember Day

10-11.30am	LVNB Lent Course: Lentwise	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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### SUNDAY 1 March 2nd Sunday of Lent

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
3.00pm	Wonder Club	Lackford

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# PRAYER (I)

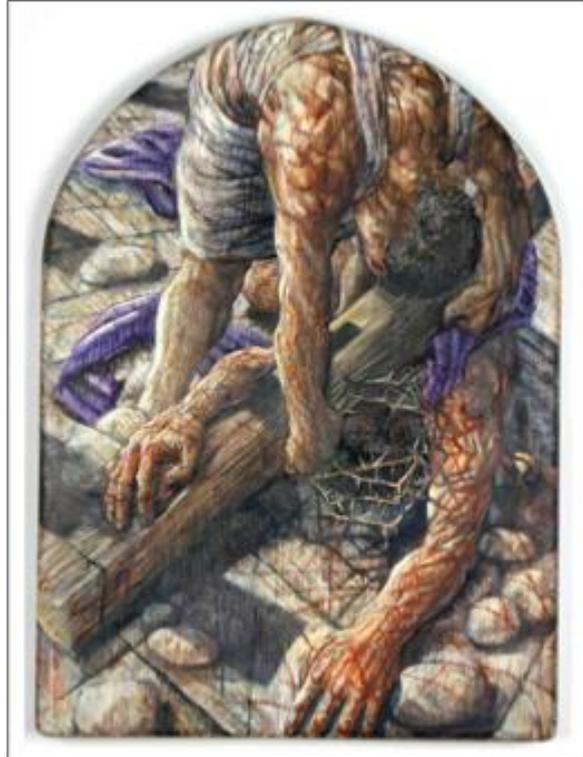
*George Herbert*

Prayer the Church's banquet, angels' age,  
    God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
    The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet, sounding heav'n and earth;  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
    Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
    The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
    Exalted Manna, gladness of the best,  
    Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
    Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
    The land of spices; something understood.

George Herbert, priest and poet, died on 27 February (in 1633), which day is now kept as his festival in the Common Worship calendar.

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

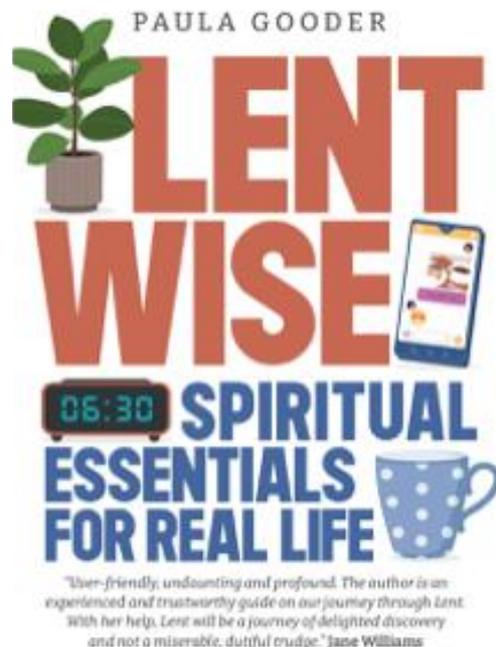
St John's Church  
Bury St Edmunds



# Stations of the Cross

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

# 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.**

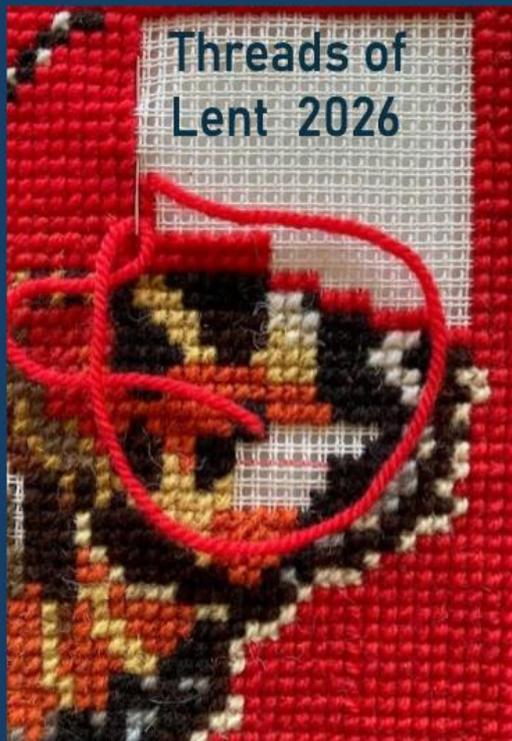
**The session titles are Compass, Nourishment, Light, Shelter, Water. Each week the journey is aided by passages from John's Gospel.**

**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)**



## 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)

## Knitting and Nattering at St George's



The group is gathering together another set of blankets to send to the charity Hamlin Fistula UK (which is dedicated to the treatment and prevention of childbirth injuries in Ethiopia) later this month, for despatch to Africa. *Photo: Valerie Wilde*

# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches Praying Together ~ March 2026

## *For the wider community & church*

- 1 S For all in keeping a good and holy Lent
- 2 M Beetons Lodge residential home
- 3 T The Presbyterian Church; Lancaster Avenue Gospel Hall
- 4 W St Olave's Road shops and residential area
- 5 T The Beacon Church (Pentecostal)
- 6 F Bridge Community Church
- 7 S All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
  
- 8 S *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at All Saints', Bury
- 9 M All Saints', Bury church hall
- 10 T Julie Hooton, our Benefice Administrator
- 11 W All Saints' church monthly coffee morning
- 12 T The Priors Estate
- 13 F The Priors Estate Residents' Action Group
- 14 S Kings Road & Queens Road housing areas
  
- 15 S Out Risbygate housing and business areas
- 16 M St Peter's House residential home
- 17 T Jankyn's Place sheltered housing
- 18 W St Andrew's, Timworth
- 19 T *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at Timworth
- 20 F All who live in Timworth
- 21 S St George's, Bury St Edmunds
  
- 22 S *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at St George's
- 23 M The Anselm Community Centre
- 24 T The Mildenhall Road Estate
- 25 W The Mildenhall Road Estate Residents' Association
- 26 T Chestnut Court sheltered housing
- 27 F Northumberland Avenue Methodist Church
- 28 S Kingdom Hall (Jehovah's Witnesses)
  
- 29 S West Road area
- 30 M Westley Road area
- 31 T Winthrop Road area

# Coffee Morning

Donations to



Tuesday 3rd March

10:00 - 11:15 am

All Saints Church

Coffee or tea, cake and chat

All Welcome



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

# **WEST STOW CHURCH**

**MARCH 4TH**

**CHAT, COFFEE, TEA,  
BISCUITS**

**9.30 – 11.30**

**Donations in aid of**

**RESTORE**

**(Formerly Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre)**

**this month**

# WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

WOMEN LED + GLOBAL + ECUMENICAL

# “I will give you rest”

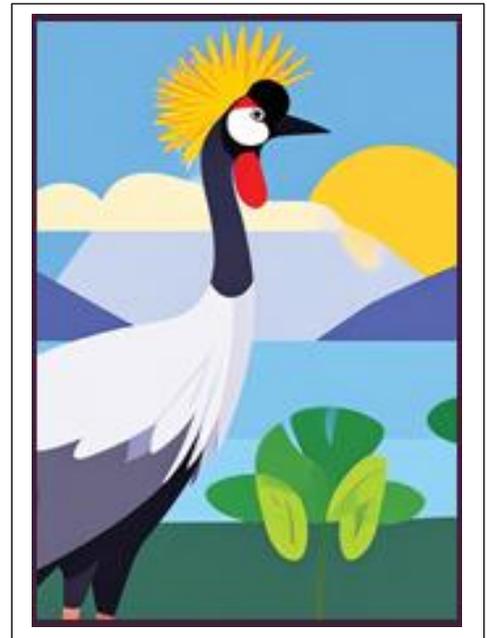
## 2026 NIGERIA

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 22<sup>nd</sup> March at 3pm

Followed by refreshments

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# Contacts

Revd Dr Andy Miller .... 01284 728714     [teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com](mailto:teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com)  
Revd Ali Miller ..... 01284 728714     [teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com](mailto:teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com)  
Team Office ..... 01284 700400     [NBTLVB@outlook.com](mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com)

*We also have assistance 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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