

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

15 February 2026

Sunday next before 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



Jonathan Boast ~ looking forward to becoming
the stipendiary curate for the benefice

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Sunday next before Lent

Exodus 24.12-end Psalm 2 or 99 2 Peter 1.16-end Matthew 17.1-9

Ash Wednesday

*Joel 2.1-2,12-17 or Isaiah 58.1-12 Psalm 51.1-18
2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10 Matthew 6.1-6,16-21 or John 8.1-11*

This is now a momentous time, after the little 'green' break following Epiphany. It has become traditional to commemorate the Transfiguration on this Sunday just before the beginning of Lent. The Transfiguration is a unique and striking event in its own right, while also pointing forwards to arguably the greatest event of all time. The readings show the linking-up of ancient past and beyond-time future, under the all-encompassing oversight of God, and demonstrating the full nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some illumination is given us by scholars and researchers who identify textual matters. The Old Testament reading from Exodus is an interwoven account from two original sources, giving occasional repetition and inconsistency. But the main point of the passage, with the earlier part of the chapter, is the ratifying of God's Covenant with his people. Moses goes up the mountain, where God is in the cloud, and receives the tablets with commandments inscribed, which will become the Jewish Law for all time, the accompanying agreement to the Covenant. But the Covenant had already been sealed in blood, as Moses had offered sacrifices beforehand.

In the Gospel account, Jesus has similarly ascended a mountain (a smaller one) where God is in the cloud, and Jesus is temporarily 'transfigured', becoming dazzlingly bright. Whereas for Moses the glory of the Lord showed like fire at the mountain-top, (as in a volcanic eruption), the Gospel shows the glory of the Lord in and enveloping Jesus himself. The voice comes from the cloud for Moses and for Jesus. For Jesus it also comes at his baptism, and at a later time in St. John's Gospel.

It seems that Joshua witnessed at least some of Moses' encounter, just as Peter, James and John were privileged on Mount Tabor. Witnesses have their own importance, to make things known, and eye-witnesses carry credence. So the Epistle gives apparent eye-witness testimony to the Transfiguration, which is almost certainly the reason for its presence in the New Testament. Were it not for scholars and historians, we might think this is genuinely Peter's written account. However, this epistle is 2nd Century at earliest, written long after Peter's death, but following a custom of those times in attributing authorship to a

known famous person, for credibility. The purpose of this epistle is to counter and condemn false teaching and loss of belief, especially loss of belief in the Second Coming of Christ in glory.

On the mountain, three gospel accounts tell us that Jesus, in his glory, conversed with Moses and Elijah (Law and prophet). This looks forward, with endorsement, to the great task not yet undertaken, the ordeal in Jerusalem, with the sacrificial shedding of the Saviour's blood.

Jesus' early time of understanding his destiny was in the 40 days in the wilderness. Moses was '40 days and nights' on the mountain. 'Forty' was an approximate number, not precise, rather like the modern occasional use of 'umpteen'. But the Church keeps a numbered 40 days of Lent, in acknowledgement of that tremendous achievement in Jerusalem, that we commemorate as the high point of the liturgical year, and of our Christian life. Ash Wednesday is the imposing gateway to the weeks of Lent. Traditionally there is preparation, not only in consuming or putting aside 'richer' foods and pleasures, but also in being 'shriven', that is, making one's confession, to receive absolution and become 'in a state of grace'.

So on Ash Wednesday we gather in worship, to show our corporate contrition for failures to live up to the standards of our faith, or, to express it differently, to repent of wandering away from God's love. We want to keep our side of the Covenant, as it were, so dearly and precious established for us. Every year may see an effort to make a deeper commitment; after many years this may become less energised and less effective, unless some new shaft of realisation can reach us. On Ash Wednesday we are marked with a cross, as at our baptism, but this cross, though also of belonging, is a reminder of mortality. (The ash used is typically obtained from old palm crosses, signs of Jesus' victory).

The readings on Ash Wednesday stress personal responsibility, because of the overwhelming importance of the matter in hand, individual relationship with God. The passage from (3rd) Isaiah urges the right approach to fasting, the continued awareness of other people's needs, rather than one's own dutifulness. We are answerable in the end, 'when the Lord comes', for what we have or have not done for others, and need to accept, not excuse, our imperfect selves. Humility, with a plea for mercy, is needed especially at this time, in our private devotions and not for public display.

In the alternative Gospel passage, of the woman taken in adultery, (which does not fit consecutively in the narrative and may not belong in that gospel at all), the overt reason for the incident is the testing of Jesus in his adherence to the Law. Very clearly to be seen, with present-day eyes, the woman is treated as worthless and disposable (except by Jesus). Her 'partner' has vanished, unaccused. With recent scandal-reporting, it is apparent that such attitudes still

persist, particularly among men of wealth and status. This Gospel account will be touching many people.

‘Ash Wednesday’ is the title of a long poem by T. S. Eliot. It is in sections; it is deep and difficult, also holding vulnerability and sadness. It describes, for an older, tired person, the awareness that a whole-hearted resolve in a fresh Ash Wednesday dedication will fade, that a once strong hope and energy is no longer felt. The writer tries to make the best of seeing that a new enlightenment is probably not for him.

‘..... For those who walk in darkness
Both in the daytime and in the nighttime,
The right time and the right place are not here,
No place of grace for those who avoid the face
No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise
and deny the voice....’

Yet he wistfully hopes for mercy and for the prayers of a nun (the veiled sister). And interspersed is that cry of the Lord given in Micah 6.3:

‘O my people, what have I done unto thee’.

Another famous poet reflecting on an overwhelming weariness of life was Thomas Hardy. In ‘The Darkling Thrush’, written at the century’s end, there is a poignant contrast between human limited preoccupation and something quite beyond, ever-present and true. The latter verses:

‘..... And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-throated evensong
Of joy illimited,
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled
through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.’

However you approach this Ash Wednesday, with prescribed interior soul-searching, keep an eye and ear open to note what may be sent to you for reassurance and strength. These things are signs of your Creator’s love for you, to bring you nearer to his Kingdom.

Marianne Atkinson

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 15 FEBRUARY

SUNDAY 15 February Sunday next before Lent

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

Monday 16 February

Tuesday 17 February Janani Luwum, archbishop, martyr, 1977

6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Wednesday 18 February Ash Wednesday Lent begins

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
7.00pm	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes (CW)	Fornham St Martin

Thursday 19 February

9.30am	Eucharist (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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Friday 20 February

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

Saturday 21 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

Jonathan Boast

Andy Miller writes: We are very pleased that we will welcome Jonathan Boast as a full-time stipendiary curate in the Team. Jonathan will be ordained this Summer at the Cathedral and we look forward to him joining us.

A message from Jonathan

I was born and grew up in rural Suffolk; Long Melford, Kersey and Lavenham. My former career allowed me to live, learn, work and worship across Europe and the US. Alongside my professional practice as a multidisciplinary artist I worked extensively in education; all ages, all settings, mainstream and specialised.



My work has always been thoughtful, pastoral, collaborative, eclectic and inclusive and wholly formative in my calling to ministry.

I am greatly looking forward to becoming your Curate, meeting you all and serving Him in every parish of the Lark Valley and North Bury benefice, with humility and love, and I would like to thank you for this opportunity.

Best wishes and God Bless,
Jonathan

SINGING FOR FUN WITH AFTERNOON TEA



ALL SAINTS CHURCH,
PARK ROAD, IP33 3QW

SATURDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

STARTS AT 2:30PM

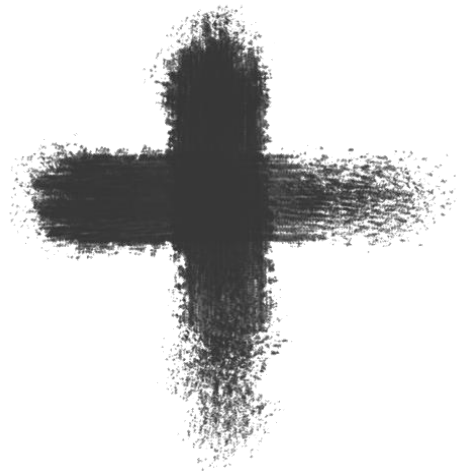
ENTRANCE £5



COME AND SING ROMANTIC SONGS ON
VALENTINE'S DAY,
OR JUST ENJOY THE MUSIC AND AFTERNOON TEA
IN GOOD COMPANY

www.northburychurches.org.uk

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches



Ash

Wednesday

18 February 2026

HOLY EUCHARIST

with

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

St John the Evangelist 9.30am

Fornham St Martin 7.00pm

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

St John's Church
Bury St Edmunds



Stations of the Cross

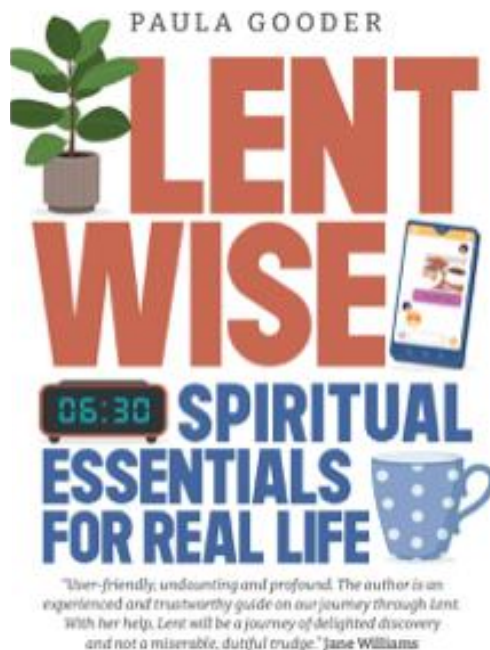
Reflections following
the narrative
of Christ's passion
using the pictures
created by Iain McKillop



Walsingham Abbey 2026



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**

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.

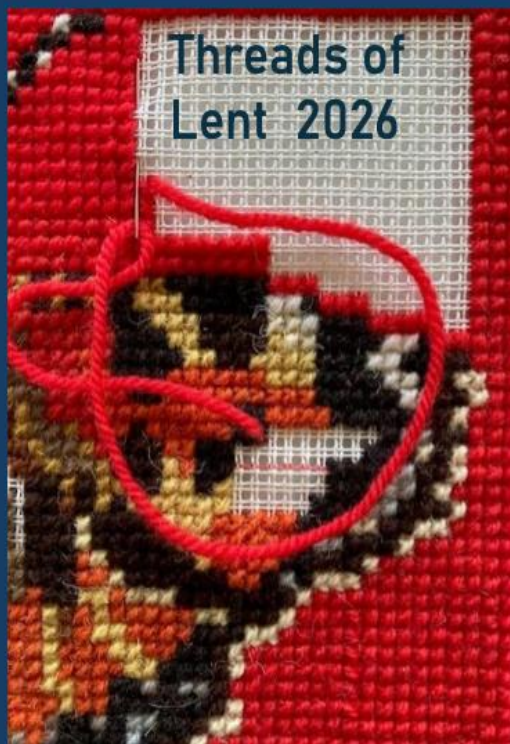
The preparation for this day is extensive. The writing country and theme are chosen years in advance, and the service then travels to the international committee in New York for translation and dissemination to national committees in over 120 participating countries. From there it is adapted and shared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



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

Contacts

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Revd Ali Miller 01284 728714

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Team Office 01284 700400

NBTLVB@outlook.com

*We also have assistance 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.
