St. Michael & All Angels
CHURCH IN THE PARK | LIVING, LOVING, SERVING

# outLook

The magazine for the people of Hughenden Parish | **FEBRUARY 2024** | FREE

## Bethlehem's Dawn to Candlemas' Glow

*illuminating the path to Lenten reflection*

**ALSO INSIDE:** *Against Breast Cancer* | The Maharajah's Well | **Nature Quest**

# Welcome to **Your Church**

**This magazine serves the parish in which our beautiful church of St Michael & All Angels is situated. Outlook aims to give you a flavour of what it is to live in Hughenden and to worship here.**

There has been a place of worship and prayer on this site since the 12th century and today the church is open for anyone wishing to wander around or sit a while in its peace. We are an open, welcoming and inclusive church where there are many opportunities for fellowship, social activities and of course the possibility for spiritual growth.

Outlook is published monthly. Articles or comments can be submitted to mag@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk. The deadline is the 15th of the month. If you would like the magazine delivered then please contact Andrew Cole - 01494 305020.

We hope you find something here to interest, inform or enlighten you. We wish you well and would love to have the chance to get to know you.

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**Editors** *Sylvia Clark, Christopher and Jane Tyrer, Susan Brice*

**Design** *Ben Brice*

**Printing** *Andrew Cole, Brian Clark, Roger Grant*

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***Grant us Lord, faith to believe and strength to do thy will***

www.hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

# Dear Readers

**At the time of writing, and possibly as you read this, we will still be in the season of Epiphany. This season lasts until Candlemas (2nd February) which is the celebration of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Both events reflect traditional Jewish events after a birth.**

Our front cover is a photograph taken by Alan Jaycock (thankyou, Alan) and, if it is familiar to you, it should be; though you will be used to seeing it in its gilded glory. The photograph is a black and white version of the wall painting on the south wall of the Choir and shows the visit of the Magi. This is celebrated as Epiphany and coincides with the time we traditionally take down our Christmas decorations in our homes.

Epiphany traditions apparently (thankyou, Wikipedia) include 'chalking the door' with the initials of the Three Magi (C+M+B), often enclosed by the year (e.g. 20 C+M+B 24) to bless and protect the house during the year.

Our contributors this month have reflected on and given us a method of praying for the Middle East; asked us to give praise for the birds we see and hear; provided an 'uplifting' way of 'supporting' research into breast cancer; given us ideas for delighting our taste buds and reading habits; informed us about monuments in our church, directed us to a local monument and bidden us to contemplate the meaning of Ash Wednesday.

As this is written, it is a beautiful sunny, if chilly, day, but snow is forecast for much of the country. Whether it reaches our parish or not, we hope you have something informative, uplifting or amusing to read this month, curled up by your fireside, warmed by an appropriate beverage.

**Jane and Christopher Tyrer**
**Editors**

# from the Vicarage

**Keith Johnson**

Vicar

*St Michael & All Angels, Hughenden*

**Did you know that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day both fall on the same day this year?**

We naturally associate Valentine's Day with love, although its origins are uncertain and come from multiple sources.

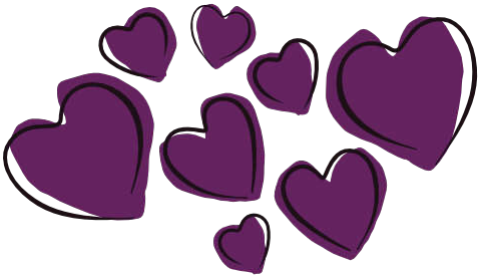
One possible origin was the pagan festival of Lupercalia which celebrated fertility, until Pope Gelasius put an end to it in the late fifth Century. Soon afterwards, the Catholic Church declared that the Christian martyr Saint Valentine would be remembered on 14th February each year.

The poet Geoffrey Chaucer was amongst the first to link Valentine's Day to romance in his poem "The Parlement of Foules." Centuries later, others followed suit, the most famous of which was Shakespeare, in Act 4, Scene 5 of Hamlet, in which he wrote:

> *"To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day, All in the morning betimes, And I a maid at your window, To be your Valentine."*

I wonder, how will you be marking 14th February this year? If you have a partner, perhaps you will be arranging a romantic candlelit meal for two, or takeaway pizza in front of Netflix?

Whilst some will be enjoying an evening in, we will be marking the first day of Lent at St Michael & All Angels Church, with our Ash Wednesday service, which starts at 7.30 pm.



> ***Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.***

Many who attend church regularly have never been to an Ash Wednesday service.

Lent recalls the forty days and forty nights which Jesus spent alone in the wilderness, being tempted by the devil. Christians use Lent – the period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday - as a time for personal reflection.

In order to start as we mean to go on, during this solemn season, a time of extended personal confession is included within the service liturgy, when all who wish, are invited to come up to the altar rail, to be marked with the sign of the cross in ash, as an outward sign of an inner desire to follow Christ and to walk the path of holiness and self-sacrifice.

Many who have attended a service for the first time have commented how moving they have found the experience - especially the marking of their foreheads with the ash taken from last year's Palm Sunday crosses.

Before individuals are invited to come forward to be marked with a cross, the following words of invitation are said:

*"Dear friends in Christ, I invite you to receive these ashes as a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of Lent. God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth: grant that these ashes may be for us a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality; for it is by your grace alone that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen."*

As we are then marked with the cross, the following words are said over us:

*"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ."*

Confessing our sins and shortcomings has always been a foundational principle of what it means to be a Christian. We are encouraged to keep short accounts of our wrongs, so that they do not become an overwhelming burden to us and in order that we might be unencumbered as we seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

However you decide to spend 14th February this year, I hope that you have a memorable evening.

# EMBRACE the Middle East

**Finding hope through lament On Sunday 14th January, the war in Gaza had been raging for 100 days. It is easy to feel less hopeful and more powerless as time marches on. And so often does our motivation to engage in prayer. We want to but we don't know how to effectively do so anymore. God has given us something for just such a time as this. The prayer of lament. It is there throughout the history of his people, to name just a few: Jeremiah, Job, David (two thirds of Psalms are said to be laments) and of course Jesus himself. Lament says it is okay to say out loud all is really not okay! If Jesus can cry out honestly to his dad "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? … " then so can we. It affirms the intimate relationship we have, it participates in the pain of those who are struggling, it asks God to hear and act, it allows hope to enter, it moves us to be involved.**

David McColl, Embrace's Programmes and Partnership Manager says this … "Lament is a declaration that things are not as they should be and will not always be this way. To practise lament is to refuse to accept the status quo of injustice, violence and war and instead to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. Through this, the practice of lament resists the numbness that threatens to paralyse us and sustains us in our struggle for justice." On Christmas Day in Bethlehem, in the occupied West Bank, Rev Munther Isaac delivered a sermon which has gone global, even quoted in the South Africa genocide case today, entitled 'Christ in the Rubble: A Liturgy of Lament'. Just a part of it … "In these last two months, the psalms of lament have become a precious companion to us. We cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Gaza? Why do you hide your face from Gaza?" If Jesus were to be born today, he would be born under the rubble. When we glorify pride and richness, Jesus is under the rubble. When we rely on power, might and weapons, Jesus is under the rubble. When we justify, rationalize and theologize the bombing of children, Jesus is under the rubble. This is his manger. And this child is our hope and inspiration. We look and see him in every child killed and pulled from under the rubble. While the world continues to reject the children of Gaza, Jesus says, "Just as you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me." This is our message to the world today. It is a gospel message. It is a true and authentic Christmas message about the God who did not stay silent but said his word, and his word was Jesus. Born among the occupied and marginalized, he is in solidarity with us in our pain and brokenness".

# A PRAYER OF **LAMENT**

Embrace have given us a few set prayers such as the Prayer of Lament and updates from their partners in Israel - and Lebanon where war is now likely - on their website embraceme.org/our-prayers/israel-palestine-urgentprayer-for-peace to use and an especially helpful 10 min video clip youtu.be/_FdlZ0XYQVo (can watch just a couple of minutes at a time of words and images set to Barbers Adagio for Strings and Taizé's "O Lord Hear Our Prayer)." It can also be just lighting a candle, reading through a psalm, holding a cross or a rock in our hand, … even while we do the washing up, we can be praying.

**Mission Support Group**

God of justice and compassion,

As the violence rages, we turn to you.
As divisions widen and hatred deepens, we cry out to you.
As families are torn apart, as hostages live in fear,
as civilians are killed and injured, we lift up our souls to you.

How long, O Lord? In this day of trouble, we call upon you:

incline your ear and listen to us.
We plead with you for an end to the violence,
for this war to cease.
Against all the odds, we pray that you would cause
those in leadership in Gaza and Israel to agree
to an immediate ceasefire.

Our hearts break for the civilians of Gaza.
In the midst of fear and destruction,
may they find refuge under the wings of the Most High.
May you open the way for full and immediate
humanitarian access — for food, water and medicine to
reach all in need.
We pray too for the protection of all who
have been taken hostage by Hamas,
and for their safe release.

O Lord, you alone are merciful and gracious, slow to
anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
Do not be far off; come to our aid.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

AGAINST breast cancer

www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk

# Can we give them our supports

*(and yes, the final 's' should be there)*

**Those of you who have read Outlook for a number of years may remember that in the past I've asked for your help to support the work of Against Breast Cancer, a charity started in 1993 thanks to the personal crusade of pathologist Dr Anthony Leatham and his wife Patricia, a breast cancer nurse, to find a future free of breast cancer. They had no ready source of funding, so by a variety of initiatives, including planting a complete allotment's worth of sweet peas and selling bunches from their home, they started their fundraising.**

When Tony, clad in his white lab coat, stood outside Oxford Circus Underground Station rattling a collecting tin, he caught the eye of one amazed passer-by who took the story to Fleet Street – and Against Breast Cancer took off. From raising £15 000 in the first year, the charity has progressed to supporting research teams in Southampton, Oxford, London and Sheffield and today funds research projects to the tune of £4million. These projects are searching for new treatments, tools for earlier diagnosis and ways to reduce the risk of recurrence and secondary spread. The ultimate aim is to discover a vaccine against breast cancer.

One way of raising funds is through the Bin Your Bra scheme. No, it isn't supposed to encourage you to go back to the heady days of Women's Lib and the 1960s! I see it as a great way to raise money for a good cause and also help others. All our unwanted bras – new, old, saggy, baggy – any condition are accepted. New ones get sold on. Others go to recycling partners for textile recovery, giving them a new lease of life rather than going straight into landfill. Successful ventures like this provide employment and an income for people living in the UK. It's only the ones that are truly worn out that end up being dismantled and disposed of properly. One tonne of bras raises £700 for ABC so it's worth doing.

After all that, what am I asking of the ladies of Hughenden? Simply, if you think it's time you got rid of all those saggy, baggy, much-loved-but-past-their-best bras and treated yourself to some new ones, please don't throw them away. We've all got a bra that we no longer wear.

It may be one you bought to go under a special dress which now doesn't fit you; the cheap one bought when you were a bit short of cash; or even one we don't talk about in Outlook! Gentlemen, don't think you're getting out of it totally scot free! It'll soon be Easter – and maybe you could delight (or frankly stagger!) the lady in your life by thoughtfully buying her some lovely new undies instead of (or maybe as well as?) chocolate. Don't forget though, that the lacy, sexy little black number on a poster that has caught your eye may not be what she's looking for to go running in! Do check – I don't want to be held responsible for a procession of bemused wives (or worse still suspicious ones) who have received totally inappropriate and undersized bras even if filled with chocolate eggs!

Whatever we can do by way of recycling old bras will help ABC to raise funds for pioneering breast cancer research. As we don't have an ABC bra bank locally, I'll arrange a collection box, and on the first two Sundays in Lent we can sneak in under the cover of the darker days and bin our embarrassing old bras. Please start putting to one side your over-used, under-worn, wrong sized, wrong-coloured bras that you have lurking in the corners of your undies drawers. Even if you only have one, it's one more towards our collection. It's a win-win situation really – ABC benefit from recycling our old bras, and we get to bin our embarrassing old bras with a clear conscience that they aren't immediately adding to landfill. Watch the notice sheets for reminders of the collection dates.

**Lin Smit**

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# Two Memorials to **Disraeli**

## 1. Disraeli's Royal Plaque

**February is an interesting month: we are past Christmas and New Year and by now we have got used to writing 2024. But as we pass through the shortest month of the year – even in a Leap Year – we miss occasions with which our church is connected and which we may fail to notice.**

Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's favourite Prime Minister, died in April 1881. She was informed by telegraph immediately and was said to be "overwhelmed." She wrote, in her own hand, the announcement that appeared in the Court Circular and visited St Michael & All Angels a few days after the funeral.

British monarchs then – as now – do not usually attend funerals. Recent exceptions were when our late Queen attended Sir Winston Churchill's and Baroness Thatcher's. Queen Victoria wanted to attend Disraeli's but was advised against and attended the church privately a few days later, walking the path the coffin had taken. She brought primroses. The Prince of Wales did attend and the story is well known of his irritation as the train at Marylebone Station was delayed for the then Prime Minister, W E Gladstone, to join it. Disraeli and Gladstone were bitter enemies and Gladstone did not attend. The train, eventually, departed without him.

In Hughenden Manor, there is an exhibition, including films, about the funeral and about subsequent ceremonies, promoted after Disraeli's death by the Primrose League*, when senior politicians and local public figures came to the grave area outside the now sealed vault and laid wreaths of flowers, some quite substantial, in the enclosed garden.

In the Choir was erected the famous memorial from Queen Victoria to her friend. It is dated the 27th February 1882 and is, of course, unique: no other similar memorial exists from a sovereign to a prime minister or indeed to any other commoner. It was placed there at her Command, adjacent to Disraeli's Garter Stall flag and shield, which she sent to Hughenden. A brass plaque adorns the pew seat in the choir stalls where Disraeli used to sit. He had been the Lay Rector of St Michael & All Angels and had contributed £250 to the cost of the restoration and re-ordering of St Michael & All Angels, under the Blagden and Seawright initiatives.

Another anniversary (this time it is next month) connecting Queen Victoria to

Disraeli also caused her annoyance. In March 1882, one Roderick Maclean fired two shots at Queen Victoria as she rode in a carriage between Windsor Station and the Castle. The assailant was tackled to the ground by two Eton students, one of them the son of the then tenant at Hughenden, Sir Samuel Wilson. (A distant relation of a member of our congregation)

It was unfortunate that the trial of Maclean took place on the 2nd April, the first anniversary of Disraeli's death. That anniversary and that of Prince Albert's death, were not good days to try and do business with the Queen. Worse, it was Gladstone who had to inform her that the accused had been found "not Guilty, by reason of insanity." She was incandescent with rage, which was not assuaged by the sentence of incarceration for life in Broadmoor, until he died in June 1921. Nor was she much mollified by a change in the law, upon which she insisted: under the Trial of Lunatics Act 1883, juries could no longer bring in that verdict but, instead, one of "Guilty, but Insane." This unsatisfactory state of affairs remained until the Criminal Procedure [Insanity] Act of 1964 which restored the position. This Act was an early example of the reforming zeal of the (then) new Labour Government under Harold Wilson and his Lord Chancellor, Gerald Gardiner.

Visitors and parishioners will be aware of the window, commemorating the attempt on the life of Queen Victoria, outside the Vestry. It was erected by Sir Samuel Wilson. There are a number of windows, including those over the High Altar, which commemorate the life of Benjamin Disraeli, donated by his friends and by Oxford undergraduates. (See below)

**The Primrose League** (named for his favourite flower) was founded after Disraeli's death by a group of Conservative politicians including Lord Randolph Churchill. It gained enormous popularity in the years following his death, and arguably its thinking influenced the Conservative party until the 1970s.

## 2. The East Window: Christ in Majesty

**The window is, of course, impossible to miss. Every time a celebrant, worshipper or visitor looks eastwards in church, there is Christ, seated in glory, surrounded by "angels, archangels, prophets and saints", as the Church Guide informs. But how well known is the provenance?**

It is not easy to read the writing under the bottom of the artwork, created by Clayton and Bell. It reads "In affectionate memory of the Rt Hon B D Beaconsfield KG this window was erected by his devoted friends Lord Rowton, Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild and Sir Philip Rose 1881". Who were these people?

Lord Rowton is better remembered as Montague Corry, who was both a friend, confidant and the literary executor to Disraeli who, in his turn, had been his father Isaac's heir and sole executor.

History relates that the young Montague Corry met Disraeli at a house party where both were guests. The ladies present persuaded Corry to sing a comic song and dance to relieve their boredom. Disraeli overheard and came to observe. As a result, within the ensuing year, Disraeli had appointed Corry as his private secretary, which position he held until Disraeli's death. So influential was he that it was suggested that he was the 'de facto' prime minister during one of the premierships.

When the Suez Canal was purchased in 1875, it was Corry who is said to have arranged the purchase. Disraeli had to arrange a loan as Parliament was not sitting and that loan had to be authorised by Cabinet. The backstory is not without interest and, by today's standards, verging on the farcical.

The Suez Canal had been opened in 1869. Four fifths of the traffic using it was British, but the beneficial interest lay with the French, who owned the largest stake. The Khedive of Egypt owned a sizeable share of the ordinary shares, while 56% of the rest were French owned, along with the Founders' shares. The Khedive was profligate, only out done by that of his boss, the Sultan.

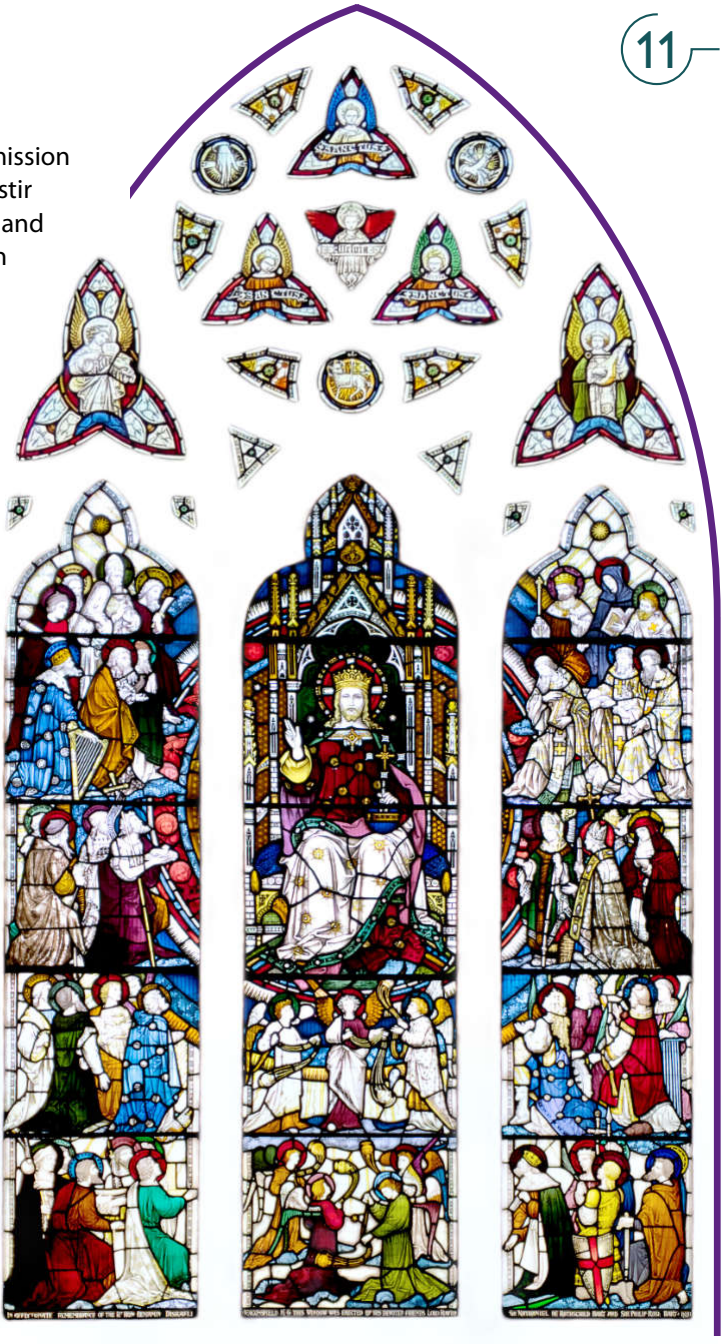
When the Sultan went bankrupt, the finances of the Khedive were soon to follow. He wanted to sell his shares and began to negotiate in secret with the Franch Government. The asking price was between £3 and £4 million. After much complicated manoeuvring, involving the failure of the French Government to support private enterprise, trying to raise the money, the sale was agreed swiftly and secretively at £4 million with the British.

When the Cabinet agreed the loan, it was a signal from Disraeli to Corry that sent the latter to Baron Rothschild to raise the money. The loan was for the full amount, the security "the British Government" and Baron Rothschild handed the money over

within 24 hours. The commission was 2 ½% which caused a stir with both the Bank of England and in the Commons when the matter was debated and confirmed.

Corry remained loyal to Disraeli to the end of the latter's life, declining both an ambassador-ship to Berlin and cabinet posts.

Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, one of Disraeli's executors, is one of whom not a great deal is known. He is believed to have paid off the mortgage on Hughenden Manor after Disraeli's death. He was the first Baron Rothschild and lived between 1840 and 1915. Known affectionately as "Natty", he was also Liberal MP for Aylesbury from 1865. There is an excellent book about him - "The Unexpected Story of Nathaniel Rothschild" - by John Cooper, published in 2015, which sets out his history for the first time. In the book, confirmation is provided of the secret involvement of Sir Nathaniel (as he then was) in the Suez Canal purchase and of the loan.



Sir Nathaniel lived at Tring Park. There he collected an eclectic mix of animals, one of which was the glis glis. These rodents, edible to some, are about the size of a small squirrel and formidable reproducers. Unfortunately, they escaped from Tring Park and, as so many of us know to our cost, trespass into house lofts, eat electricity cables and wooden beams and have to be trapped and "disposed of" by licensed operators.

The last of the named trio is Sir Philip Rose. He was the other executor and was both a lawyer and Disraeli's confidential agent. The autobiographies are full of reminiscences, the authorship of which is ascribed to Sir Philip. It was he who had to raise a loan for Disraeli to purchase Hughenden Manor and, when Mrs Brydges Willyams* came on the scene, skilfully avoided acting as lawyer for both of them. It was Rose, alongside de Rothschild and Rowton, who followed the coffin immediately after nephew Ralph and his son, the 14 year old Charterhouse schoolboy, Coningsby Disraeli, at the funeral of Benjamin. Coningsby was to remain at Hughenden until his death, survived by his wife but not by any children.

Time has put its distance between them and us and we tend to forget and overlook their part in the history of our church. Like so many, perhaps lesser folk, whose prayers and praises have drenched the walls of St Michael & All Angels and who have been forgotten, they are to be hallowed in our midst as we remember with gratitude those who have gone before and whose generosity has enriched our lives.

**Christopher Tyrer**

* *The archive of correspondence between Disraeli and Mrs Willyams is held in the Rothchild collection.*

# *Have you ever visited …*

## The Maharajah's Well?

**We came upon this extraordinary edifice completely by chance years ago. It can be found in Stoke Row, near Henley. The Maharajah in question was the Maharajah of Benares who offered to fund the digging of a well (through 25 feet of clay and over 300 feet of chalk) in a chance conversation with a local Oxfordshire landowner. The work started long after the conversation, but was fixed to start on 10th March 1863, the wedding of the Prince of Wales. On 24th May 1864 it opened on Queen Victoria's birthday. (At this point I might make unfavourable comparison with 21st century infrastructure projects, but I will desist.) The cost of the well, winding mechanism and the superstructure which involves an elegant, gilded elephant was under £400. To put that into context: the small cottage erected at the same time and opposite the well (the Warden's Cottage) cost £74-14s-6d. A trust operated and maintained the well providing free potable water (about 700 gallons a day) to villagers for over 70 years and provided a small income (£1per annum) and the rent-free cottage to the warden to supervise the well.**

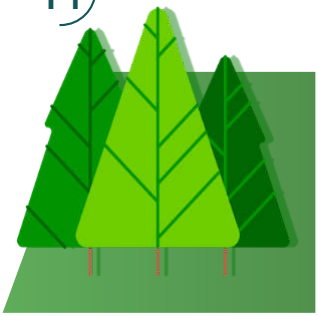
The Maharajah continued to endow the well from time to time, often to mark events involving the British Crown, including funding festivities to mark the Queen's surviving the assassination attempt referred to earlier in the magazine.

Royal links continue: Prince Philip visited the well in 1964, and the late Queen owned an ivory replica.

The hexagonal Warden's Cottage is now Well Cottage and is rented out to provide income to maintain the well. Adjacent to Well Cottage is Ishree Bagh, formerly the Cherry Orchard, which provided an essential source of income to maintain the Well.

There are now information boards, a children's play area (both new since we happened upon the well) and if your visit provokes hunger or a thirst: the Cherry Tree Inn is just a short walk away.

**Jane Tyrer**



# Nature Quest

**On my shelf is a book entitled "Too small to ignore": a book about compassion for children, who too often are not considered in a world ruled by adults. That's not quite my theme here, but it set me thinking of much smaller creatures. If you sit on an ants' nest, the ants won't ignore you, and you won't ignore the ants for very long!**

Isaiah 40 verse 21 "Have you not heard how the world began? It was made by the one who sits on His throne above the earth and beyond the sky; the people below look as tiny as ants." In Isaiah's time ants were the smallest creatures familiar to everyone. And the verse refers to the miniscule status of humans compared with the greatness of God.

Of course, there were plenty of smaller bugs just about visible to the people of those days and countless billions too small to see, and probably never imagined. Even the ones just about visible, were probably not named: they were not thought sufficiently significant or important. The bible gives much more mention to fierce wild beasts and galloping horses, flocks and herds, majestic eagles, etc. Even today we are more impressed with a proud stag than a mere muntjac, and a red kite than a sparrow, the big or beautiful than the dull or feeble or small.

In recent centuries microscopes have been developed, and we are all familiar with bacteria such as salmonella, E. coli, cyanobacteria, and streptococcus, at least to have heard their names and perhaps experienced their ill-effects, even if we'd be unsure what to look for down the

microscope! And looking even further with electron microscopes there are tiny viruses, even if we're hard pressed to name more than Covid19's SARS-CoV-2 and some of its variants.

A 2005 paper by Dykhuizen states "I estimate there are a million species of bacteria in 30 grams of rich forest topsoil and propose that there will be at least a billion species worldwide." Bacteria are everywhere. Even in the most inhospitable environments, some little bacteria will evolve to overcome the conditions which are deadly to most others. Our own bodies are quite hospitable and contain vast arrays of bacteria, some beneficial, most fairly harmless, and a few quite dangerous with which our bodies are fighting a perpetual battle, (generally successfully). The microbiome in our gut assists the effective digestion of our food and its absorption into our bodies. Without it we would not survive. When it is out of balance, our health is out of balance. You have more bacteria than human cells in your body!

We try to clean our teeth regularly and maybe even use a mouthwash. When kissing we hope the other person's mouth is fairly hygienic, but recent research shows that our oral microbiome survives all our cleaning efforts and about 700 types of bacteria can always be found there! Yuk!

Not as small as bacteria, but more lively, are red spider mites. They sometimes infest my greenhouse plants. I don't know where they come from, nor why they eventually die, but in the meantime, they severely damage the plants. The other red one that I'd like more of, is the ladybird. Supposedly they deal with the pesky aphids which also appear from nowhere, but it is said the ladybirds farm the aphids, milking them rather than eating them.

All these creatures are 'too small to ignore'. Our health and well-being depend upon some of them, and the health of our gardens and food supplies also. A crucial part of Creation, unknown in ancient times, but revealed in our modern Nature Quest. Thank God for both.

**Mike Hill**
**nature@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk**

# and on the subject of birds ...

**You can find traces of old saints in most corners of the British Isles, but Seiriol is one of the only two saints connected to Anglesey, and certainly the ONLY saint connected to Puffin Island. His feast day is 1st February.**

It was back in the 6th century that this gentle abbot first settled in Penmon and built a little church. His ruined beehive cell still survives there today, as does the well from which he drew water, both for his own use, and also for baptising local people.

Like many other Celtic saints, Seiriol would have travelled by sea. So he felt comfortable near the coast on Anglesey, on low-lying land. Although he lived as a simple hermit, Seiriol soon attracted followers, and eventually he decided to establish a small monastery. He chose to build it on nearby Ynys Seiriol, now called Puffin Island.

That little monastery on Puffin Island saw some scary action in 632, when Edwin of Northumbria was chasing the Welsh king, Cadwallon, and ended up besieging him on the island. Cadwallon was finally conquered, and history moved on, but the monastic ruins of Seiriol's little monastery are still there today.

Seiriol seems to have been a purely local saint who never attracted a very great number of followers. The only known dedications to him are at Penmon and Puffin Island. But Seiriol's life and work are still a testimony today. He is a gentle and encouraging reminder of what an impact even a simple local Christian can achieve, by simply being faithful to Jesus Christ in the place where he is.

**From the Parish Pump**

# War in Ukraine

*- two years on*

**Although Russian troops were massing near the borders of Ukraine in February 2022, we naively believed their denial that an attack was imminent.**

Since then, an all-out war has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, and hundreds of thousands of military casualties. A quarter of the Ukrainian population has been displaced. Eight million are now refugees, spread across Europe.

Few of us realised that a war between the two countries really started in 2014, when pro-Russian regions of Ukraine rebelled and Crimea was annexed.

Hostilities between the two countries had begun even earlier. Ukraine had joined the Soviet Union in 1922 and ten years later lost more than a million of its population in the 'Holodomor' famine, now widely regarded as genocide inflicted by Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader.

Relationships between the two countries have always been turbulent, and Russia's possessive attitude towards its neighbour is deeply resented.

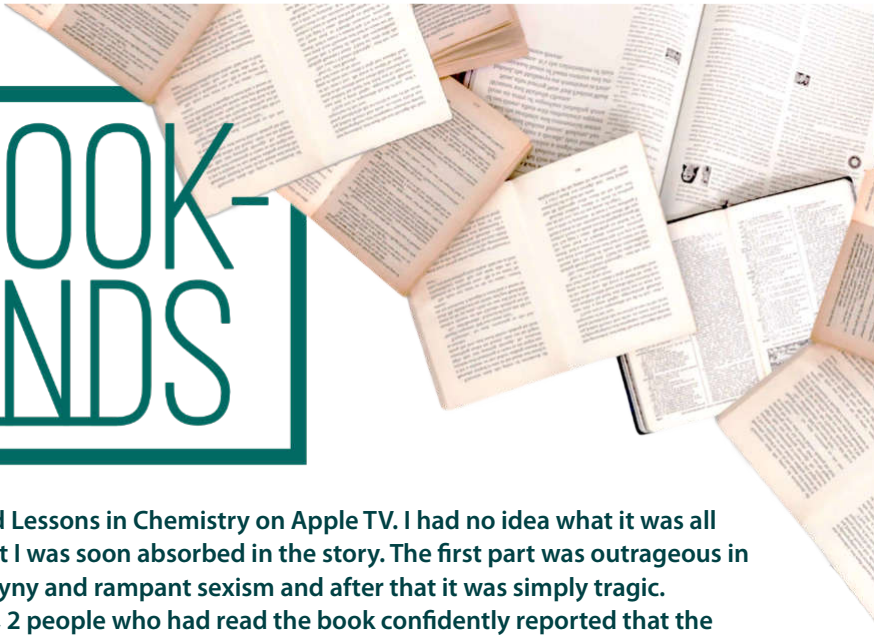
Ukrainian refugees in the UK are mainly women and children, for their men are needed for war service. So, they have organised themselves into self-help groups, painstakingly learning to read and write in English, as well as working full or part-time and keeping up their morale by organising groups for young and old. Choirs have sprung up, often assisted by British musicians. One member wrote movingly of how singing helped her cope with the mental trauma of her homeland fighting for survival.

Ukrainians are unceasingly grateful for our hospitality, but they fear our compassion may wear thin, as our attention has been diverted by news of the barbarity between Israelis and Palestinians. That conflict also has a long history of smouldering hatred on both sides. Wars rarely solve disputes. When wearied people recognise their futility, settlements may be negotiated. Forgiveness takes longer.

**From the Parish Pump**

**The Ukraine to Chilterns charity continues to support the many Ukrainian refugees who have found homes in our villages. www.ukraine2chilterns.com**

# BOOK-ENDS



## Lessons in Chemistry - Bonnie Garmus

**I watched Lessons in Chemistry on Apple TV. I had no idea what it was all about but I was soon absorbed in the story. The first part was outrageous in its misogyny and rampant sexism and after that it was simply tragic. However, 2 people who had read the book confidently reported that the story was extremely funny; laugh out loud funny. Indeed, many of the short reviews in the blurb on the book agreed. I could only conclude that the book was very different from the television adaptation. Obviously, I had to read it.**

We are in 1950s America and Elizabeth Zott is trying and failing to undertake scientific research and earn a living. Everything is against her, simply because of her sex. She is on a lesser pay scale, she is patronized, not eligible for promotion and sexually harassed. Having just watched series 2 of The Gilded Age it reminded me of the episode about the building of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. Without it being publicly known, Mrs. Roebling was responsible for the engineering of the bridge and not her husband and yet she was never allowed to be acknowledged. It was decided that people would not trust the safety of the bridge if they knew it was designed and engineered by a woman. Move forward 70 years and it really didn't feel that much had changed at all.

Elizabeth, against all the odds, finds her soul mate, Calvin Evans. He is a famous scientist whose research is fully funded. He is feted and celebrated and he falls in love with Elizabeth. The witness to this happening is 'Six-thirty,' a dog who has turned up on their doorstep (at 6.30!) and chooses to stay. All three characters have difficult and complicated back stories which are revealed as the narrative moves forward.

In the book, the dog takes a larger part than in the TV version as he shares his fears and feelings with the reader. Six-thirty was part of the accident that kills Calvin and he will never forgive himself.

I liked the way the author had used the device of allowing the dog to narrate. It is rather beguiling and I am perfectly happy with some magic realism. Having read Elif Shafak's 'The Island of Missing Trees' where one particular tree has a major part in the story telling, to receive the thoughts of a dog does not cause a problem for me.

Elizabeth meanwhile is engulfed in grief and for a time does not realise she is pregnant. Madeline (Mad), her daughter by Calvin, is probably my favourite character in the story. Her super intelligence makes it hard for her to fit in at school and she asks questions that her teacher isn't comfortable with, maybe because she is unable to offer any reasonable answer. Elizabeth also finds she is unable to answer all Mad's questions about her father and there begins a trail of hunting for Calvin's earlier life, led from the front by his daughter.

Feeling that she should put Madeline in a school that might better suit her educational needs, Elizabeth has to find work that pays well. This turns out to be becoming a presenter of a late afternoon cookery show: Supper at Six. Here are the titular 'Lessons in Chemistry.' Cooking is of course science. It is about what scientific process will occur if you heat an ingredient or mix particular substances together, but most cookery shows do not follow this approach, whether we are thinking of programmes in the 1950s or indeed today. Her boss at the studio is at a loss. He hates her refusal to wear tight dresses and frilly aprons and he tells her the audience will switch off when she uses chemical terms and vocabulary. The mainly female audience however love to see Elizabeth wearing trousers and begin to feel empowered by the way she talks to them. She is a huge success. Madeline though is not impressed and points out to her mum that she is a scientist and should be doing research in a lab not presenting a cooking show. The dilemmas with which mothers have constantly struggled: work, home, money, children.

There are several differences between the book and the TV episodes but both are, in my opinion, exceptionally good, being entertaining and interesting. Apple TV apparently does not feel the need to appeal commercially to a large audience as it is not a media company, unlike Disney and Netflix. The result is that it can focus on heavy issues if it so chooses and that's maybe why the 1950s treatment of women is hit on so very hard in the TV episodes by the producer and star Brie Larson. As for the 'laugh out loud funny' question, well, I am confident that I do have a sense of humour(!) but much as I loved the story, that was not my take on it. You will have to read it for yourself and see how it works for you.

The author Bonnie Garmus attempted to get about 100 other books accepted for publication before her success with 'Lessons in Chemistry.' I bet there are agents and publishers bidding for that backlist now!

Happy reading and thank you to those who email or comment to me about Bookends and what you enjoy. Always a joy to hear from fellow readers.

**Susan Brice**

# February Recipe

**The cold weather always makes me think about eating warming casseroles or a curry! The curry here is one our daughter in law made for us recently and is delicious with a real depth of flavour and gentle spice.**

My husband is not keen on aubergines but in this recipe they melt down to make a delicious sauce. We are lucky to have many good Indian restaurants locally and hence curry is a dish that I am never that confident preparing, but this recipe works well and is very easy to prepare. The recipe comes from 'Jamie Olivers 5 ingredients' and really does only take 10 minutes to prepare. To make it more special serve with naan and Indian preserves such as mango or lime chutney.

**Julia Grant**

## Aromatic Lamb Curry

## INGREDIENTS

*400g lamb shoulder, bone out*

*2 large onions*

*2 large aubergines (approx. 800g)*

*200g natural yoghurt*

*2 tbsp Rogan Josh curry paste (or other preference)*

*1 tbsp wine vinegar*

## METHOD

1. *Preheat the oven to 180°C/350F/gas 4. Put a large casserole pan on a high heat. Dice the lamb into 3 cm chunks and place in the pan fat side down.*
2. *Peel the onions, dice the aubergines to the same size as the lamb then stir into pan. Season with salt and pepper and stir in the curry paste and 1 tbsp vinegar, then transfer to the oven for an hour until tender. Stirring halfway, loosen with a dash of water if needed.*
3. *Taste the curry and season accordingly. Ripple through the yoghurt and drizzle over ½ tbsp of extra virgin olive oil for serving with rice.*

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# On why rural church-goers like to freeze in church

The Rectory
St James the Least

*My dear Nephew Darren*

*Winter certainly exposes the difference between those of you who live in cities and us rural folk. While you bask in your centrally heated flat, and complain about the half an inch of slush outside, we country folk wear overcoats in our houses, open all doors and windows to let the heat in and battle through snow drifts, measured in feet, to get the morning paper.*

*Colonel Wainwright has acquired a new toy: a snow blower, of sufficient power that I believe it could clear the Antarctic. He kindly volunteered to clear the paths around the church. Working outwards from the church door, the path to the church soon became snow-free. Unfortunately, he only realised when his job was complete that the blown snow then formed a ten-foot drift under the lych gate.*

*Miss Margison, ever helpful in the worst sense of the word, decided to unfreeze the pipes in the church hall. A blow torch was not the ideal solution, although the resulting burst did make some rather attractive ice sculptures round the kitchen equipment. The village badminton team that uses the hall has now temporarily changed sport to ice hockey.*

*Inevitably, congregations have soared. There is nothing like adversity for making people want to prove they have the moral fibre to overcome it. Much satisfaction seems to be obtained on discovering who has not dared venture out, which is taken as judgement on their strength of character. The Prentices upstaged most people by arriving on a sleigh. Mr Prentice was warmly wrapped in a travelling rug, while his wife pulled it. As they both explained, they couldn't possibly let the pony work in such conditions.*

*What I momentarily thought was applause during my sermon was merely people keeping their hands warm and the hymns were drowned out by the stamping of feet. Our organist complained that the cold made his fingers so numb that he couldn't play properly – although I didn't notice that things were much different from normal.*

*No, my dear nephew, a few flakes of wet snow may close your car park for health and safety reasons, but we shall continue to triumph heroically over adversity. We return home after Mattins, knowing we have proved our Christian commitment in being utterly uncomfortable.*

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

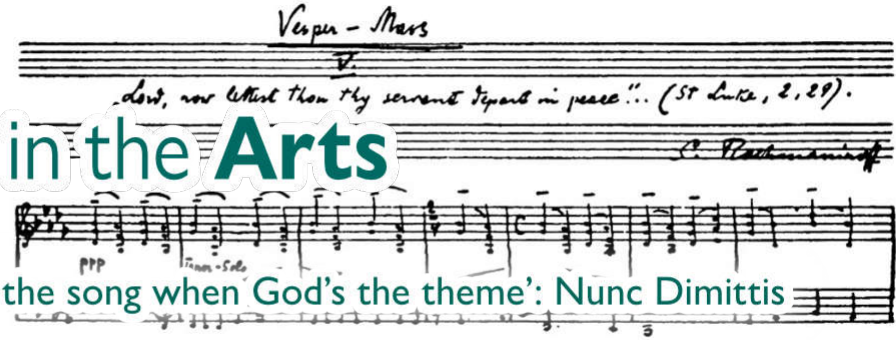
***Taken from Rev Dr Gary Bowness' collection of tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'***

# Floodlighting Dedication

***8th January 2024 in commemoration of John and Shirley Babb. Both greatly missed: Rachel Downs***

If you have special occasions or memories to mark why don't you dedicate the floodlighting. Please send any dedications to Lynn Brooks at office@hughendenparish church.org.uk

# God in the Arts




## 'Glorious the song when God's the theme': Nunc Dimittis

**St Luke tells us in his Gospel that the angels sang praises to God at the birth of Jesus, and he has given us three poems that have become part of Christian song: the Magnificat, the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimittis.**

The first two are full of praise and rejoicing. The last comes as Mary and Joseph fulfil the Law of Moses and bring the child Jesus to Jerusalem. In the temple they meet Simeon and Anna. Simeon represents each of us who can look back over life with gratitude in the face of death as he says, 'Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace.' It is a story that has inspired preachers and artists, and also composers.

In the Christian Church these words of the Nunc Dimittis have become part of worship at the end of each day, not just the end of life. Cathedral and parish church choirs have sung settings of these words in that great tradition of Anglican choral music at Evensong – settings that have captured the sense of quiet resignation, but also conveyed the glory of the light that is Jesus shining for all people. Rachmaninov's setting is part of his Vespers, the night-long vigil sung in the Russian Orthodox Church on the eve of great feasts.

Rachmaninov composed the work (and it comprises 15 pieces) at great speed, but even so, the Vespers are now seen as one of the great masterpieces of religious music.

This was no more so than in his beautiful setting of the 5th canticle, the Nunc Dimittis. Just 36 bars long, it begins with a rocking, undulating figure in the upper voices. A solo tenor enters as the voice of Simeon, and it ends with the basses moving down to a low B flat: 'a sigh of wonder and resignation on the threshold of eternal rest and peace,' one critic has called it.

Rachmaninov later recalled, "After I played the passage at the end of the 5th canticle where the basses slowly descend to that low note, the conductor shook his head, saying, 'Now where on earth will we find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas!' Nevertheless, he did find them." It was one of the composer's favourite pieces, and he asked for it to be sung at his funeral in the hope that it would send his 'ship of death gently towards the unknown region.'"

On 2nd February we shall hear these words as part of the Gospel on the feast of Candlemas. Simeon prays them because his cup is now overflowing. He has looked on the salvation of God. Music allows us to look on that glory and salvation also, and Rachmaninov, in his moving setting, has captured the calm trust of that moment, which shines out like the brightness of the light of Jesus.

**From the Parish Pump**

The church crib with additional offerings from Tiny Tots.

# Tiny Tots @ St Michael's

Tiny Tots resumed after the Christmas break with mums and helpers pleased to catch up with eachother's news and exclaim over the how the little ones had changed in the break.

The second meeting in January was the Tiny Tots service (held monthly) of the New Year with the theme of Epiphany. The craft work involved decorating a star, and the story was of course of the visit of the Magi. The children held (and smelled) gold, frankincense and myrrh and then journeyed round the church to take presents to Jesus in the crib in the North Aisle to musical accompaniment. The usual copious amounts of scones, little and big cakes and fruit were consumed, washed down with tea or coffee from the excellent and super speedy new coffee machine.

**Tiny Tots Team**

**Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's meets every Thursday in term time from 9.30 - 11.30 am in the North Room. Come for chat, play, craft and refreshments. For details contact Helen Peters - helen.peters@peters-research.com**

# Mothers Union

We will start our year with our AGM in February.

The next few months will include a talk from Wheelbase, a local charity that supports sports activities by wheelchair users. All are welcome.

A full programme will be available on the inside church noticeboard.

**Ann Gee**

# The Rotary Club of Princes Risborough

December kept us busy. Our annual Tree of Light dedication, in remembrance of those who have passed away, raised funds for the Rennie Grove and our Club Charities; our Christmas Lunch for over 70 of the Town's elderly, which was held at the Princes Centre, was a great success; we were also able to raise funds during the Town's Christmas Light's switch-on; and we held Christmas Collections during the 2 weekends prior to Christmas Day – as always the generosity of the local population was amazing. In fact with your generosity we raised over £3,750 from street collections alone. We are keen to ensure we donate these funds to good causes.

One of our major projects in the coming year is the "Risborough Rotary Ramble", on the 7th July, which is the first Sunday of the Town's Festival. It will be made up of 3 stages, each of around 7 miles - Wades Park to Longwick, Longwick to Lacey Green and Lacey Green to Wades Park. Participants can choose to complete all 3, 2 or just 1 stage. There is also a shorter route of around 5 miles, again starting/ finishing in Wades Park. Refreshments will be available at the end of each stage. It will be in aid of various Charities (details nearer the time). It's hoped that while the Ramble is in aid of charity it will also be fun.

Over the past few years we have managed to raise anually an average of over £33,000. All of this we have donated primarily to local charities and organisations. To raise such amounts requires considerable effort by our members but luckily we have welcomed a number of new ones over the past few months. Despite our fund raising efforts, the core Club activities are socially based, with our regular evening meetings at the Whiteleaf Golf Club to which we would be delighted to welcome more members: we're looking for men and women to help us make a difference. As ever, we remain a fun, friendly Club. If you would like to be part of it and help us contribute locally and internationally, visit our website and consider coming to one of our meetings to see if it might interest you. Also, if you know of causes that would benefit from our support, or you would like to donate to our Charity Account, please use the contact details below.

**You can contact us at: rcpr.org.uk or call the Club President, Graeme Card on 07827 298411 or email: gpcard@gmail.com**

# What's On at St Michael & All Angels

## February

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2.00 pm | Mothers' Union AGM: Church House |
| 7 | 1.00 pm | Knit and Natter: Church House |
| 14 | 7.00 pm | **Ash Wednesday** Holy Communion: Church |
| 22 | 10.00 am | Marriage Preparation Morning: Church House |
| 27 | 10.00 am | Mothers' Union Coffee Morning: Church House |

## March

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 8.30 am | Men's Breakfast: Church House |
| 6 | 1.00 pm | Knit and Natter: Church House |
| 28 | 7.00 pm | **Maundy Thursday** Holy Communion: Church |
| 29 | 9.00 am | **Good Friday** Morning Prayer: Church |
| | 11.00 am | All Age Service: Church |
| | 2.00 pm | An Hour at the Cross: Church |
| 30 | 7.00 pm | **Easter Eve** Easter Vigil: Church |

## 1st & 3rd Sundays

9.00 am **Choral Communion**
11.00 am **Service of the Word**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

## 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays

9.00 am **Matins (Sung)**
11.00 am **Family Communion**
6.00 pm **Evensong (Sung)**

## Tuesdays

11.00 am **Holy Communion (Said)**

*One morning service is usually live-streamed on Sunday. Find it on our website, or on the church YouTube channel: youtube.com/hughendenchurch*

## Regular Groups

### Hughenden Community Singers

Mondays from 7.30 to 9.30 pm. No need to be able to read music or to have sung before, and no auditions. Under-18s welcome with parents. Contact Liz on 07768 790029 or evmoseley@btinternet.com

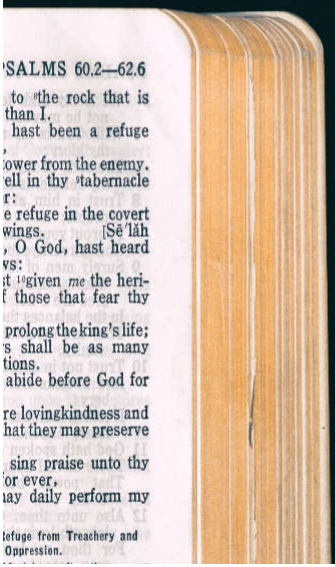
### Friendship Morning

This is a get together in Church House on the third Thursday each month at 10.30 am. Primarily for those who are bereaved, who live on their own or who are lonely. The emphasis is on companionship and the atmosphere is light and cheerful. Contact Penny Austin on **01494 529596.**

### Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's

Tiny Tots @ St. Michael's meets every Thursday in term time from 9.30 - 11.30 am in the North Room. Come for chat, play, craft and refreshments. Included, every second Thursday of the month, will be the Tiny Tots service, a time of fun worship in church. For details contact Helen Peters - **helen.peters@peters-research.com**

# February Lectionary




**4th : Candlemas**
Malachi 3: 1-5
Hebrews 2: 14-18
Luke 2: 22-40
*Evensong:* Psalm 132
Haggai 2: 1-9
John 2: 18-22

**11th: Sunday next before Lent**
2 Kings 2: 1-12
2 Corinthians 4: 3-6
Mark 9: 2-9
Psalm at 9.00 am: 50: 1-6
*Evensong:* Psalm 2
1 Kings 19: 1-16
2 Peter 1: 16-end

**14th: Ash Wednesday**
Isaiah 58: 1-12
2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10
John 8: 1-11

**18th: First Sunday of Lent**
Genesis 9: 8-17
1 Peter 3: 18-end
Mark 1: 9-15
*Evensong:* Psalm 119: 17-32
Genesis 2: 15-17 & 3: 1-7
Romans 5: 12-19

**25th: Second Sunday of Lent**
Genesis 17: 1-7 & 15-16
Romans 4: 13-end
Mark 8: 31-38
Psalm at 9.00 am: 22: 23-end
*Evensong:* Psalm 135
Genesis 12: 1-9
Hebrews 11: 1-3 & 8-16

## From the Parish Registers

**Holy Matrimony**

Monday 20th November: Christopher Edward Trew Colman to Rebecca Victoria Aileen Carter

**The Departed**

Alan Sidney Hawes, aged 91
Doreen Portlock, aged 90
Irene Marsh, aged 90
Joan Steel, aged 90

# Who's Who at St-Michael & All Angels

## Keith Johnson
Vicar

Home: 01494 257569
Mobile: 07772 642393

keiththevicar@gmail.com

Day off: Friday

## Helen Peters
Associate Minister

Home: 01494 716772
Mobile: 07792 118357

helen.peters@peters-research.com

Day off: Monday

## Parish Office
Administrator: **Lynn Brooks**

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

07928 536543
office@hughendenparishchurch.org.uk

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Licensed Lay Minister | David Tester | 563354 | Church Flowers | Sylvia Clark | 562801 |
| Churchwardens | Julia Grant | 565746 | Captain of Bellringers | Verity Nicholls | 07952 850760 |
| | Frank Hawkins | 565050 | Safeguarding Officer | Roger Grant | 07909 960938 |
| Parish Clark & Verger | Arthur Johnson | 521471 | Crèche Rota | Agnes Dodwell | 07958 568538 |
| Church Notices & Website | Ben Brice | 445899 | Social & Outreach | Antony Rippon | 07747 643270 |
| PCC Secretary | Susan Brice | 445899 | Mothers' Union Parish Link | Louise Stallwood | 712705 |
| PCC Treasurer | Brian Morley | 528633 | Hughenden Village Hall | – | 07815 163269 |
| Organist & Choirmaster | Neil Brice | 445899 | Naphill Village Hall | Norma Clarke | 563116 |
| Servers | Andrew Cole | 305020 | Friendship Morning | Penny Austin | 529596 |

*All numbers are High Wycombe area code (01494) unless otherwise stated.*

# OUR VISION IS

## *to know God's love, and to share that love with everyone.*

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3:16-19

**Our aim is that all may know Jesus Christ, become his lifelong followers, and grow into mature members of the Church.**

*You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14-16

**Our Church family will actively contribute to the life of our local community. Our Church activities & facilities will be accessible and we will welcome all with warm and generous hospitality.**