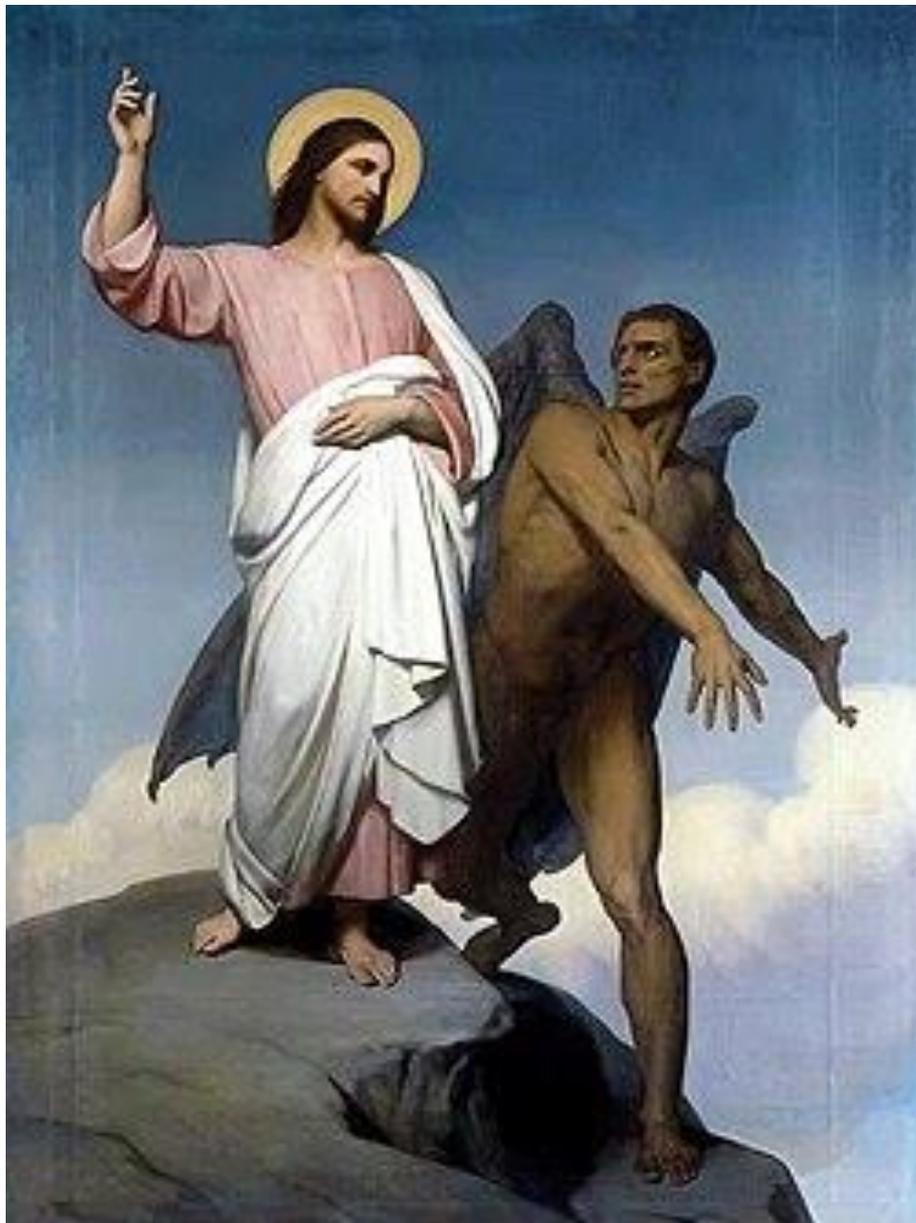


ST PAUL'S NEWS

March 2026



ONE POUND

SERVICES

Sunday 1st March

Second Sunday in Lent

- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Tim Harrold
Link: Rosemary Romano
- 6.30 pm Compline
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 2nd March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 3rd March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 5th March

- 11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 8th March

Third Sunday in Lent

- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Daphne Pilcher
Link: Viv Littlechild
- 6.30 pm Choral Evensong (BCP)
Minister: The Vicar

Monday 9th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 11th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 12th March

- 11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 15th March

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Mothering Sunday

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Joint Parade Service
Minister: The Vicar
Led by the Guide Groups
- 6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 16th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 18th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 19th March

- 11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 22nd March

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Passiontide begins

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Matins
Minister & Preacher: Tim Harrold
- 10.00 am Family Service with Holy Communion
at the Church Centre + Zoom
President: The Vicar
Link: Chris Bassett
- 4.00 pm Taize Service at the Church Centre
Minister: Tim Harrold
- 6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 23rd March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 25th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 26th March

- 11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 29th March

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Palm Sunday

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Wendy Anderson
Link: Rosemary Romano
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 30th March

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

- 8.00 pm Stations of the Cross
Minister: The Vicar

Tuesday 31st March

- 8.00 pm Compline
Minister & Preacher: Daphne Pilcher

Wednesday 1st April

- 9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar
- 8.00 pm Compline
Minister & Preacher: Tim Harrold

Thursday 2nd April Maundy Thursday

- 11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar
- 8.00 pm Eucharist with washing of feet and stripping of altars followed by Vigil
President & Preacher: The Vicar
Minster: Tim Harrold

Friday 3rd April Good Friday

- 9.45 am Procession of Witness in the Village
- 12 Noon Three Hour Devotion with final Liturgical Hour
Ministers: The Vicar, Daphne Pilcher, Tim Harrold

DIARY

Tuesday 3rd March

- 2.00 pm Lent Group in the Church Centre

Thursday 5th March

- 6.00 pm Church Youth Council in the Lodge
- 7.30 pm Living Hope group at 53 Southwood Road

Tuesday 10th March

- 2.00 pm Lent Group in the Church Centre
- 7.30 pm Worship Committee in the Lodge

Wednesday 11th March

- 3.00 pm Communion to Chamberlain Court
– May Graves

Thursday 12th March

- 7.30 pm Living Hope group at 53 Southwood Road

Tuesday 17th March

- 2.00 pm Lent Group in the Church Centre

Thursday 19th March

- 11.00 am Communion to Mt Ephraim House
May Graves
- 7.30 pm Living Hope group at 53 Southwood Road

Tuesday 17th March

- 2.00 pm Lent Group in the Church Centre

Thursday 26th March

- 7.30 pm Living Hope group at 53 Southwood Road

Wednesdays throughout the month

- 9.00 – 11.00 am Playtime at St Paul's at the Church Centre

Thursdays throughout the month
12 for 12.30 pm Rusthall Lunch Club
at the Church Centre



Fridays throughout the month
12.30 – 2.00 pm Community Larder
at the Church Centre

Saturdays & Sundays throughout the month
10 am – 4 pm Choristers Café in the Lodge

From the Registers



Baptism - we welcome as newly baptised members of the Church

Darla Harrison

Magazine Deadlines

Please submit articles for the 2026 magazines in accordance with the following deadlines.

April 2026 by 15th March

May 2026 by 12th April

June 2026 by 17th May

The time between the deadline and magazine issue is to allow for typing, formatting, proofreading, and compiling the magazine. These all take time and have to be fitted around the volunteer editorial team's other commitments. We would therefore be very grateful if you would keep to the deadlines set. Please send items for publication to magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk.

Magazines are posted on the Parish website by the 1st of the month. Photocopies of the magazine can be made available to those who cannot access the magazine online. Please contact Helen Reynolds at the Church Office (TW 521447) to arrange production and collection/delivery.

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From the Vicarage

March 2026

Greetings and a big thank you for your prayerful support and involvement in the life and ministry of the parish. I trust that your journey through Lent so far is contemplatively enriching, and I hope that you will be able to join our Lent groups on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday evenings. We are using the Church of England Lent material entitled: 'Draw Near' – Life-giving habits for Lent. The underlying message of this resource is God's call to us as Christians to 'share' – in worship, in prayer, in communion, in service, the scriptures and the Good News.

Our gospel reading for Ash Wednesday among other things, particularly reminded us of appropriate ways to share in prayer and service, noting that we should 'not be like the hypocrites' (Matt 6:5). We are also reminded in the gospels that God expects us to 'worship in spirit and truth' (John 4:24). Lent gives us the opportunity for introspection so that we can present our 'bodies as a living sacrifice holy acceptable to God' which, according to St Paul is our 'spiritual worship' (Romans 12:1). In the temptation of Jesus, we are told that 'Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted...' (Matthew 4:1). I take encouragement from this verse in the knowledge that the Spirit is with us during our time of testing/temptation. As St Paul noted, 'no testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

My prayer for all of us this Lent is that we may be intensely aware of God's presence with us at all times and be assured of God's ability and willingness to protect us and see us through testing and trying times.

Ronnie



Easter Lilies 2026

If you would like to sponsor one or more Easter Lilies this year, in memory of departed friends or relatives, please look out for the sponsorship forms which will be in the Pew Leaflets in the run up to Easter, or write to or email the Church Office giving details of the name of the person(s) to be remembered and a minimum donation of £6 per lily. Cheques should be made out to "St Paul's Church Rusthall" or the payment can be transferred using BACS to Lloyds Bank 30-98-77, Account 00680470 using the reference 'Lilies'.

The names to be remembered will be placed on the altar during the Easter period.

Jill McAllister, Flower Team

Red Nose Day 2026 – Friday 20th March



Red Nose Day is a fundraising campaign from Comic Relief that takes place every March. Red Nose Day uses comedy to fundraise for important causes, and anyone and everyone can get involved. From hip shakers, cake bakers, and joke makers to Red Nose wearers, t-shirt buyers, and sofa-sitting givers, it's that time of year to come together to support people in the UK and across the world who are facing the toughest times of their lives.

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Registered charity 280276

Proceeds in aid of Hospice in the Weald and St. John's Church

Editorial for March 2026

The Editorial Team has arrived back from a very wet and windy Portugal in time to produce the March magazine! Despite the four named storms that hit Portugal while we were there, we had a lovely time, watched a lot of the winter Olympics and returned to Gatwick to realise that, whatever the weather, Portugal was much warmer than home. The oranges were certainly in evidence on trees that grace both town streets and mountainsides.

March always starts with the celebration of St David, patron saint of Wales. He is the only one of our patron saints to have been born in the UK, a sixth century monk, bishop and archbishop who founded 12 monasteries in Wales and the west country. He was a devout man of simple tastes known as 'David the Water Drinker'. Canonized in 1120, his monastery in Pembrokeshire became a major pilgrimage site. Perhaps this will give Tim Harrold an idea for a future St Paul's pilgrimage once the Martyrs' Way in London is completed this July?

Ninety years ago, on 5th March, the Spitfire made its first test flight. Powered by a Rolls Royce Merlin engine and great attention to detail in its design and engineering, it entered service with the RAF in 1938, strengthening air combat ability and becoming a great favourite of pilots and onlookers during the Battle of Britain.

March has been a historically turbulent month for royalty, and one suspects that this will be the case this year for the Andrew formerly known as Prince. On 18th March 978 King Edward 'the martyr' was murdered at Corfe Castle, possibly at the command of Aelfryth, mother of Ethelred the Unready, who succeeded him. Would her son have been less unready if she had delayed? On 4th March 1681 King Charles II granted a Royal Charter to William Penn, a Quaker born in London, to establish a colony in North America in an area still called Pennsylvania in his memory. However, by July 1776 that colony was to declare its independence from Britain. On 8th March 1702 William III died after falling from his horse. William, Prince of Orange, was the grandson of King Charles I, and initially ruled jointly with his wife Mary, daughter of James II after James was deposed following 'the glorious revolution' of 1688. He ruled alone after Mary's death in 1694 but they had no children, so Mary's younger sister, Anne, became Queen on his death. Anne was married to George, Prince of Denmark, but despite 18 pregnancies a combination of still births and infant deaths meant that all her children predeceased her, so on her death in August 1714 the throne passed to her second cousin, George I.

King George I employed George Frederic Handel in Hanover, before ascending the throne, and Handel composed music for royal events for Queen Anne, and Kings George I and II, later becoming a British Citizen. Handel was tutor to George II's royal princesses but also oversaw music at the Foundling Hospital, donating an organ to its chapel and conducting an annual benefit performance of the Messiah until his death. Over the years this raised a great deal of money to support the foundling children, the charity still exists and is now known as Coram. However, it also ensured that The Messiah became well known and much loved for its wonderful arias and choruses. St Paul's Choir will be performing The Messiah on Saturday 4th April at 6.30 pm at the Church, also trying to raise funds for a good cause. Our organ has been failing at inopportune moments for some time and is now in need of a major refurbishment. The performance of the Messiah will start our efforts to raise the funds for repairs.

The organ is vital to the St Paul's worship style. It not only accompanies the congregational hymns and psalms but also the choir anthems and, as a solo instrument, provides an introduction and end to the services. It is surely one of the most difficult instruments to play, using hands and feet on multiple keyboards, sometimes to play more than one tune at a time! It has many different styles, making it a wonderfully versatile instrument – an orchestra all on its own. St Paul's also has a reputation for nurturing young organists, these include Miles Peacock who is now organ scholar at Emmanuel College, Cambridge; Daniel Toombs who is organ scholar at St Salvator's College at St Andrew's University and Alex Robson who has been Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel, Windsor, Herbert Howells Organ Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, was awarded the Organ Fellowship at Sinfonia Smith Square and is currently Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral. We hope you will get behind this endeavour and bring all your friends and relatives too.

The picture on the cover is The temptation of Christ, by prolific Dutch-French portrait painter, Ary Scheffer, in 1854. Please could you ensure that your articles for the April edition of St Paul's News reach us by 15th March as Jury Service (Deborah) and foreign travel (Sue) will be stretching the magazine team. Many thanks.

Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare

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Churchwardens' Notes



Well, Spring is nearly here and despite the dreadful weather it is good to see Daffodils and snowdrops blooming in the churchyard. Another thing about spring is that the clocks go forward at the end of the month and we have lighter evenings.

We are sure that you will have noticed that we have had all of our lights changed to LED, the electrician has assured us that we could save at least £500 a year, which is good for our finances.

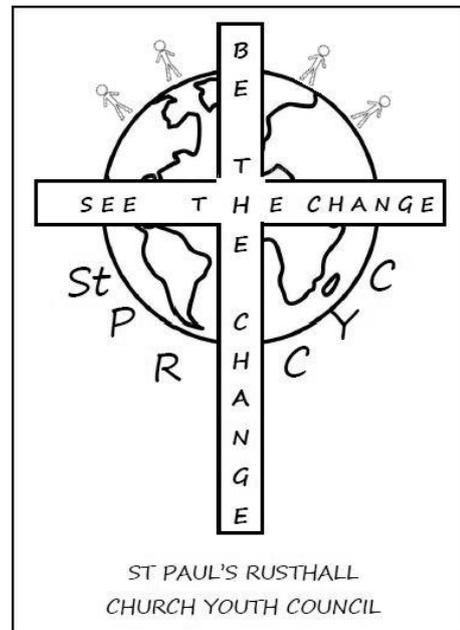
Some of you will be aware that our organ is in need of some loving tender care. To have all the work done that has been recommended, it could cost us £250,000. We therefore need to do significant fundraising. If any of you have any suggestions as to how we can raise funds please let us know.

The choir will be performing The Messiah on Easter Saturday and any money from that will go toward the organ fund. There will be further activities throughout the year to help with fundraising.

At the end of this month, we hope many of you will join the services taking place during Holy Week (details on the Services page) as we follow Our Lord's journey to the Cross.

Our APCM is in May, at which we elect out Churchwardens for the following year. As May is stepping down, we do need to find someone to take on the role. If you might be interested, please do talk to us to find out what the role really involves. There's still time to come and work with us to have a taster!

May Graves and Chris Dobson



In our February meeting, we were incredibly lucky to welcome Sandy Elsworth. Sandy has led a fascinating life as a geologist and still spends a great deal of time working in Africa. He is also currently putting up a really interesting exhibition in The Amelia. His talk was entitled, 'The Earth Story, Human Story. Fossils and Skulls - meet your Ancestors!'

Sandy's talk was brilliant! Skulls came out of a suitcase and everyone asked questions and examined them. The hour flew by.





This was the email we received from Sandy after our meeting:

I had such fun on Thursday evening. They are a great group of intelligent and lively individuals...and I hope I can return at some stage.....to talk about water!

We are already looking forward to welcoming Sandy back to CYC.

We are responsible for The Choristers Cafe the weekend of 7th/8th March. Do come and visit us!

The Youth Council is busy, fun and flourishing. New members are always very welcome. We are also looking for enthusiastic and committed helpers. Please contact Angela (07779098026) or Jean (stpauls.cyc@gmail.com)

Future meetings:

Thursday. 5th March. 'BEETLE DRIVE' with Rusthall Bonfire

OUR APRIL MEETING WILL BE A TREAT!
DATE AND VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED.

Thursday 7th May - talk by Anne Krisman Goldstein. The story of The Beacon

Thursday 4th June Inspirational Talk 'Nothing is impossible!

Saturday 6th June. We are helping at the Commons Fun Day

6 to 7.30 pm in The Lodge. All children of secondary school age welcome.

Please don't feel shy - we are very welcoming and love meeting new friends.

Mind how you go

The almost incessant rain and the occasional freeze have played havoc with our road services, not least the resurgence of the dreaded pothole. It affects all motorists, particularly, so it would seem, anyone driving to and from Crowborough from Tunbridge Wells on the A26.

A letter to the Times had me chuckling, as being able to see the funny side is perhaps an antidote to our frustrations. It reads as follows: -

"In Devon we have our fair share of potholes. Rumour has it that this is helping the local constabulary tackle drink driving. If any vehicle is seen driving in a straight line, the drivers are automatically breathalysed."

Tim Cripps

A Musical Note



On Saturday, 17th January, six of our amazing young choir members were examined by the RSCM — three for their Silver Award and three for their Gold Award. These exams are highly intensive, with the Silver exam lasting forty-five minutes and the Gold exam a full hour.

For the exam, candidates must sing a hymn, a psalm, and an unaccompanied plainsong psalm or antiphon, followed by two anthems for Silver and three for Gold. Some of these anthems are written in eight parts, which is quite a challenge when you're singing just one line completely on your own, without the help of other voice parts. Breath control has to be spot on, as there's no chance to take a sneaky breath as you can when singing with the full choir, and counting rests has to be absolutely precise so you can come back in without a conductor or cues from other parts.

Once the singing section is finished, candidates move on to sight-reading, aural tests, and a quick study of an unfamiliar piece of music. This demonstrates their understanding of keys, Italian terms, intervals, and other areas of musical theory. After that comes the section focusing on the role of music within church services. This includes answering questions about services and Bible references, learning prayers by heart and understanding their meaning, and discussing the meaning of psalms. Candidates also have to read from the Bible at sight and place the reading within the church's year. Finally, they talk about their own role within the choir — a slightly more relaxed section, but one where the examiner is looking for an understanding that singing in a church choir is a form of ministry.

As always, our singers were outstanding, achieving excellent marks across all areas of the exam, particularly in the sung sections. Jess, Fergus and Marcy all passed their Silver Awards with lovely comments from the examiner, and Hannah, Eleanor and Stella passed their Gold Awards with flying colours. Look out for them wearing their shiny new medals, the Gold award hangs on a deep cranberry red ribbon and the Silver award on a purple ribbon.

Huge thanks must go to Anthony Hughes, who very kindly offered to accompany all our candidates. This was a lot of music to play and meant giving up almost his entire Saturday. Having Anthony with them during the exams made a huge difference — he helps everyone feel so relaxed and at ease, and we are incredibly grateful to him.

The choir has now begun rehearsals for our performance of Handel's *Messiah* on 4th April at 6.30pm. We are so excited to sing this incredible work, and it's been great fun adding a little more at each rehearsal. The concert will be in the traditional three sections, with two short intervals. Refreshments will be available before the concert and during each interval.

Tickets can be booked in advance by contacting the Parish Office or via Eventbrite. Tickets are £10, with free entry for under-16s. We'd love you to bring along lots of friends and family for what promises to be one of our most exciting concerts yet. It is also the first event to raise money towards the much needed refurbishment of the Organ. Members of the choir will be singing the solo sections, Alasdair will be playing the organ, and some movements will feature string accompaniment performed by members of the choir.

I really hope you can all be there to support us.

Fiona Johnson



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Magazine Easy Payment Methods

Income from magazine sales is important to us at St Paul's. If everyone paid the £1 cover charge we would raise over £900 a year, which would not only cover the cost of producing the magazine but also contribute to other costs such as leasing the photocopier.

If you often find yourself fumbling for the right change, perhaps you might like to pay in advance for a year's "subscription", 10 issues for the sum of £10, (you might even feel tempted to be more generous!) Please make cheques payable to St Paul's Church, Rusthall and send them to the Parish Office.

Alternatively you can use the card payment machines – just choose the £1 donation option.

Your contributions are much appreciated.

Open our hearts to God in Lent

Having been laid low for a month with a bacterial chest infection, I had to seek medical help to get rid of a really nasty infection. Mind you, I cannot claim exclusivity in being laid low as I know many will at some point or another not been at their best at the beginning of the year. I said to the Doctor 'how did I get this?' and she gave a one word reply 'breathing' to which I replied 'well, I suppose it is better than the alternative'. This in turn set off a major coughing fit but every cloud has a silver lining as the doctor marked my prescription for antibiotics as URGENT. Sickness, like Lent, is a season of holy interruption – a time when God unsettles our routines and invites us to walk in deeper trust. In the Old Testament reading, we meet Abram, a man called to leave the familiar for the unknown. At 75 years old, Abram hears God's voice urging him to leave Haran, to set out stage by stage toward a promise he cannot yet see. There is no map, no timetable, no clear picture of the destination – only the assurance that God will guide him. Abram's obedience reminds us that God's calls are not bound by age, status, or convenience. Whether young or old, rooted in one place or constantly on the move, we are pilgrims in the hands of a faithful God.

For each of us, life itself is a journey. Sometimes we travel physically from place to place, other times we move through seasons of change – health and sickness, joy and grief, connection and loss. In my seventy-eighth year I can gladly testify that on this path, relationships are made and cherished, while others, equally important, may fade into memory.

All these moments – the bright and the dark threads – are woven by God into the tapestry of our lives. Even the broken strands and loose ends contribute to the beauty of the whole, revealing a story of grace at work.

Lent invites us to see our lives in light of God's greater story. It is a season that recalls another journey – the Exodus. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt through the Red Sea, toward a land flowing with milk and honey. That journey was not quick or straightforward. It lasted 40 years, full of twists, trials, and moments of doubt and disobedience. Yet God's presence never left them. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night bore witness to God's faithfulness. Likewise, in our own wilderness experiences, God is not absent.

The season of Lent urges us to remember that our story is also one of liberation – from slavery to freedom, from death to life.

The Gospel reading brings us to yet another kind of journey – not across deserts, but from darkness into light. Nicodemus, a respected teacher in Israel,

comes to Jesus under the cover of night. We can imagine his curiosity, perhaps even his anxiety. What will he find?

What will he hear? Jesus meets him where he is, acknowledging his knowledge and sincerity, but offering something more: 'You must be born again' or, as it can also be translated, 'born from above'.

Nicodemus misunderstands, thinking of physical birth, but Jesus is speaking of spiritual rebirth – something only God can accomplish. The Spirit moves like the wind, invisible yet powerful, bringing new life where there was none. Lent reminds us that following Christ is not simply about learning rules or adding religious habits. It is about allowing the Spirit to transform us from within, to breathe new life into the places we have closed off or left unattended.

Jesus then turns Nicodemus' attention to a strange image from Israel's history: Moses lifting the bronze serpent in the wilderness so that those who looked upon it might be healed. In the same way, Jesus says, the Son of Man must be lifted up – so that everyone who looks to him in faith may have eternal life. Here we reach the heart of the Gospel: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.' This is the language not of condemnation, but of salvation. God's love is not selective or small – it is for the world, for all who will look to Christ in faith.

In Lent, we lift our eyes to the Cross. We see there not only the cost of sin but the depth of love. We recognise that our healing, our salvation, and our new life are gifts, not achievements. We cannot earn them, but we can receive them – gratefully, humbly, and joyfully.

This season is not intended to be a grim march toward deprivation. Instead, it is a journey of honest self-examination and hopeful expectation. It calls us to set aside distractions and lesser loves so that we can make room for the One who is life itself. Like Abram, we are invited to trust the God who calls us forward. Like Moses, we are to walk through our wilderness in hope. Like Nicodemus, we are urged to step from the shadows into the light, to let curiosity become faith, and faith become transformation.

Lent will always lead us to the same place: the Cross. But beyond the Cross lies the empty tomb, the promise of resurrection. The season teaches us to live as children of God – turning from darkness to light, from fear to trust, from self-reliance to Spirit-dependence. This is not only a seasonal practice but a lifelong posture.

So let us journey together. Let us open our hearts to God's unsettling yet life-giving call.

Let us lift our eyes to Christ, the Saviour of the world, and receive again the gift of grace. And let us walk, step by step, into the light of the One who makes all things new. I hope that during Lent we will get to sing that great hymn, one of my favourites 'Guide me O thou great Redeemer' to help us through.

Recommended Readings:-

Genesis 12: 1-4a,

John 3. 1-17.

Tim Cripps

Home Life in the New Testament

Part 2

The houses built by the Greeks and Romans were rather different from the houses of most of Palestine. They tended to have a rectangular arrangement of streets, each block containing four houses. They would have streets lined with shops, baths and even perhaps a theatre. There was of course no wallpaper, but it was the general fashion to paint the walls of the houses with pictures, and this was also done in the small houses where the subjects - following excavations - seem to have occasionally been somewhat vulgar. Sometimes a sort of tapestry was hung on the walls.

Up until the first century AD the method of heating the houses was by charcoal brazier, but then a system of central heating by means of hot air or hot water was invented but it was not until the second century that both floors and walls were warmed by means of hot air - generated by a furnace and conveyed by pipes to the different parts of the building.

Whatever may have been the practice for water supply in Palestine generally, for any districts directly administered by the Romans themselves it was usually very efficient. They would look for a good source of water, usually in the shape of springs high up in the mountains, which would be free from contamination. They then built an aqueduct to bring the water down from some kind of reservoir to the area or city they wished to connect it with. The ownership of this water was strictly in the hands of the State. In theory the Emperor was the owner of it and he would delegate its control to the care of an officer of high rank.

It was in effect nationalised and a water-rate was a direct source of revenue to the government. Those who could not afford such a private water supply and to make arrangements to fetch their water from a public fountain. We know that the Jewish official who was in charge of the water to the Temple at the time of Christ was called Nakdimon ben Gurion and it has been suggested that this man may have actually been Nicodemus - a ruler of the Jews who is mentioned in John's Gospel.

The question of bodily cleanliness is something about which there is often misapprehension. It may be true that in the village communities of the New Testament there was a good deal of neglect of personal cleanliness. However, the influence of Greece and Rome was certainly on the side of washing. Apparently there was a Roman bath not far from the Pool of Siloam and the remains of public baths have been found in various parts of Palestine. Anyone who reads Leviticus will see that behind the regulations for ceremonial washing there was also a sense that disease had a real connection with dirt. Probably the Law of Moses was much more aware of this connection than many Christians who lived in the Middle Ages.

As Christianity spread into the various provinces of the Mediterranean many would become very familiar with the idea of the Roman bath. The Romans in early times only had a weekly bath, though they washed their arms and legs daily. The warm bath only came in gradually, and at first it seems that the bathroom was a primitive sort of place next to the kitchen, so that hot water could easily be carried into it. The invention of a centrally heated bathroom, with a supply of hot water appears to have taken place around 70BC. The 'municipal' baths tended to be open from sunrise to sunset.

Sewage disposal by means of drains seems to have been in existence since fairly early times. Roman toilets often had running water. Cesspools were cleared during the night. The sanitation in Palestine depended very much on the locality. Areas where the Romans and Greeks had set up home were better served than the village areas. We know that there was a certain amount of good drainage and sewage disposal in Jerusalem, especially in regard to the Temple area. However, in every town and village there were certain sanitary rules mostly based on the Torah, which were strictly adhered to. Cemeteries, tanneries and any industry which might be detrimental to health had to be outside a town, though only by 50 cubits, about 25 yards. The principle of isolating any contagious disease was strictly observed, as we read in the New Testament of people suffering from leprosy.

Daphne Pilcher

Poems for March

On Mothering Sunday, 15th March, we may find ourselves remembering childhood times, seemingly at random. The following poems show how such thoughts and memories awakened the poetic imagination, capturing something precious. This month also sees World Poetry Day on 21st.

Susan Barber

Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is
singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of
years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in
the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small poised feet of
a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious
mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me
weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home,
with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the
tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to
burst into clamour
With the great black piano
appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my
manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance,
I weep like a child for the past.

D. H. Lawrence



The Lanyard

The other day as I was ricocheting slowly
off the pale blue walls of this room,
bouncing from typewriter to piano,
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,
I found myself in the L section of the dictionary
where my eyes fell upon the word *lanyard*.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist
could send me more suddenly into the past –
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp
by a deep Adirondack lake
leaning how to braid thin plastic strips
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard
or wear one, if that's what you do with them,
but that did not keep me from crossing
strand over strand again and again
until I had made a boxy
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,
and I gave her a lanyard.
She nursed me in many a sick room,
lifted teaspoons of medicine to my lips,
set cold face-cloths on my forehead
and then led me out into the airy light

and taught me to walk and swim,
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.
Here are thousands of meals, she said,
and here is clothing and a good education.
And here is your lanyard, I replied,
which I made with a little help from a counselor.

Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,
strong legs, bones and teeth,
and two clear eyes to read the world, she
whispered,
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.
And here, I wish to say to her now,
is a smaller gift – not the archaic truth

that you can never repay your mother,
but the rueful admission that when she took
the two-tone lanyard from my hands,
I was as sure as a boy could be
that this useless, worthless thing I wove
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.

Billy Collins

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Give swifts a home

High Weald Swifts is a charity working to raise awareness of the incredible Common Swift - one of our most remarkable summer visitors - and to encourage action to boost their numbers locally. Unfortunately, surveys from the Weald reflect a worrying national trend: swift populations in the UK have declined by a staggering 66% between 1995 and 2023. The Common Swift has now joined Sparrows and Starlings on the UK's Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. Swifts are in serious trouble - and they need our help.

Climate change, the decline in insect populations, and the shortage of suitable nesting sites have all contributed to the dramatic fall in swift numbers. But despite their rapid decline, swifts are a species we *can* help. These spectacular birds, synonymous with summer, fill our skies with joy. By offering them just a small corner of our homes to nest in, we can play a vital role in their survival - while inspiring others to get involved and make a difference too.

A life on the wing

These iconic summer visitors make the hazardous 3,500-mile journey from Africa every year, where they reach our shores in early May. Their only objective on arrival is to nest and raise their young before making the long return journey to Africa in early August. It's only when nesting that these incredible birds land; the remaining nine months are spent on the wing eating, sleeping and breeding. Once young swifts leave the nest, they won't touch down again until they're ready to breed - around the age of three.

Housing shortage

Swifts are loyal to their traditional nest sites, typically gaps under tiles, cavities behind soffit boards or brickwork, often with us unaware that they may be there because they're quiet and leave no mess. Modern homes are well insulated, whilst older houses are being renovated, soffits replaced and gaps sealed, leaving these special birds homeless. Being long-lived, swifts may have used the same nest site for many years.



The good news is that swifts will adopt specially designed artificial nest boxes. By installing these boxes and using a simple call system that plays pre-recorded swift calls, we can attract them to new nesting sites and help reverse their decline.

There are plenty of different nest boxes available, to suit all budgets and aspects. Head over to www.highwealdswifts.co.uk to see some of our favourites.

Serve up some insects

Swifts feed exclusively on insects. This is why they migrate during our cold winters, heading south to warmer climes in the Congo area of Africa where insect life is abundant. When they return to the UK in late April/early May, they rely on a steady and plentiful supply of insects to survive and raise their young. A single swift can consume up to 20,000 insects a day! But with insect populations in decline, food is becoming scarcer.

You can create a haven for swifts, and a wide range of other wildlife, by making your outdoor space more insect friendly. All it takes is a little enthusiasm and a willingness to let part of your garden grow a bit wild. One of the simplest and most effective ways to start is by planting wildflower mixes, which provide vital food sources for pollinators.

Most importantly, avoid using harmful insecticides in your garden. Instead, embrace organic gardening principles like companion planting, which naturally supports a balanced ecosystem. If you have the space, consider going even further by creating a beneficial insect meadow, a sanctuary for pollinators and other creatures.

Remember: **No wildflowers mean no insects means no food for swifts!**

So, let's celebrate swifts and create a home for them to come back to each year.

Cheryl Mason

Trustee of High Weald Swifts

High Weald Swifts - our aims

Provide **advice and support** for people who would like to install swift boxes and bricks.

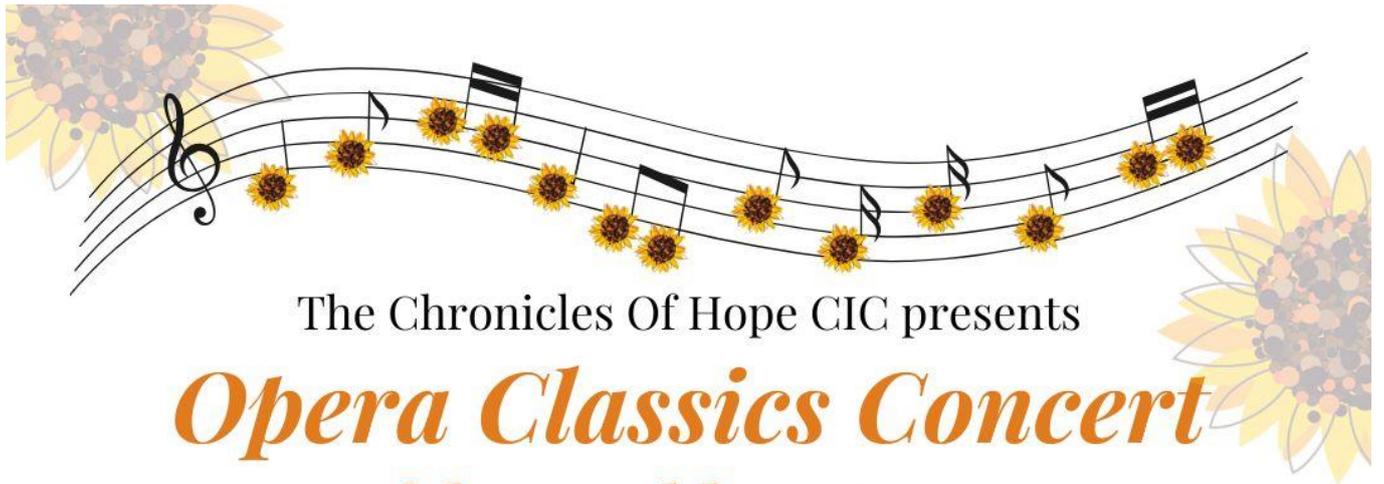
- Carry out **swift surveys** during the main breeding season
- **Hold talks** for local groups and societies
- **Attend local events** to educate and inform
- **Encourage developers** to consider including swift boxes and bricks in their plans

We're also speaking up for swifts when there are opportunities to **influence local planning** decisions, and we're contributing our voice to consultations on Local Plans and on the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent**.

www.highwealdswifts.co.uk



Follow us on Facebook: Search High Weald Swift Conservation
Registered Charity Number: 1204521



The Chronicles Of Hope CIC presents

Opera Classics Concert

with Matchbox Opera

In memory of Dr Mark Pasola

7pm 11th April 2026

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Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1YX**

Guest Tenor:

Richard Rowe

Guest Accompanists:

Jong-Gyung Park

Soloists and Chorus:

Members of Matchbox Opera

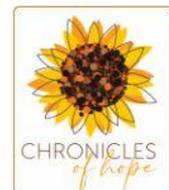
Tickets £20 online, or on the door.

<https://thechroniclesofhope.org/events>

Profits going to The Chronicles Of Hope CIC

Funded by and with thanks to:

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Contact: admin@anniebennett.co.uk with any enquiries.

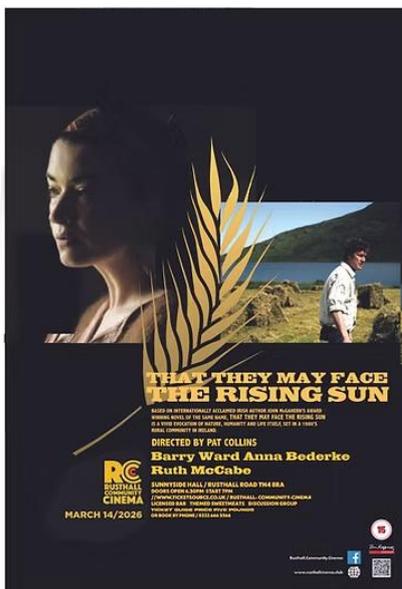


Rusthall Community Cinema



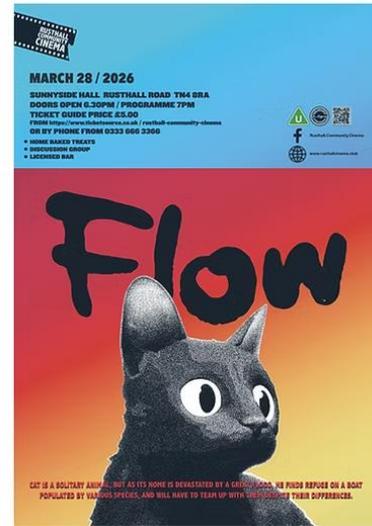
NT Live: The Audience

Doors open: 2pm Sunday 1st March
 Written by: Peter Morgan
 Directed by: Stephen Daldry
 Genre: Recorded Live Theatre
 Runtime: 1hr 30 mins
 Starring: Helen Mirren



That They May Face The Rising Sun (2023) Cert 15

Doors open: 6:30pm Saturday 14th March
 Director: Pat Collins
 Genre: Drama
 Runtime: 1hr 51mins
 Starring: Barry Ward, Anna Bederke, Ruth McCabe



Flow(2024) Cert U

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 28th March
 Director: Gints Zilbalodis
 Genre: Animation/Adventure
 Runtime: 1hr 25 mins
 Starring: Animated animals



Bat out of Hell (The Musical) 2025 Cert 12A

Doors open: 2.00pm Sunday 29th March
 Director: Jay Scheib with Jim Steinman
 Genre: Rock Musical
 Runtime: 2hr 15mins (including interval)
 Starring: Glenn Adamson, Katie Tonkinson, Rob Fowler

Stone Ness Potting Shed News - A Spring message from Scary the Scarecrow

Hallo evrywun.

I thort it woz about time I wrote a nartikel, becos in March the Walled Gardeners will be back here in the week starting 2nd March – sowing, growing, and enjoying tea breaks as though they've never been away.

Jean has asked me to thank the kind people who gave homes to our Christmas Trees. In January we planted 20 young Norway Spruce, filling all the gaps, so now we must set up a new Monday afternoon group to look after these and their older neighbours throughout the year. Get in touch if you have been out of sorts, unable to work, need a little bit of fresh air and nature in your life ... and fancy joining us. You must be able to kneel down to weed and sit down to drink tea and eat a biskit, and we do not do it in horrid weather!

And – as I always say – if anywun out there wants to know more about wot we get up to in and beyond the Walled Garden, do pleze give Jean a ring.

Now, a date fixed in my mind (although not ackchally fixed yet becos I need to check that it duzzn't clash with other important sporting fickschers)

The Walled Cup 2026

to be held at our Open Day in the summer. I can't wait. This will be our 4th Walled Cup and as always, I am to be the goalie. Yes, I know, that makes it very difficult for our speshal needs footballers, but they will do lots of practising in the coming months – and of course Jean will be ref and she seems to make up the rools as she goes along – but it'll be good fun and I hope a hewge crowd of you come to cheer us on.

So wotch this space for diary dates, and remember wot I sed about getting in touch if you or anywun you know might enjoy coming here.

Luv from Scary (and Jean) February 2026

tel. 01892 740305 or 07889 731949 (not after 8pm)
www.thestonenesswalledgarden.org



Two Walled Gardeners, enjoying The World Cup Challenge in 2022



Activity Pages

Twenty questions to test you

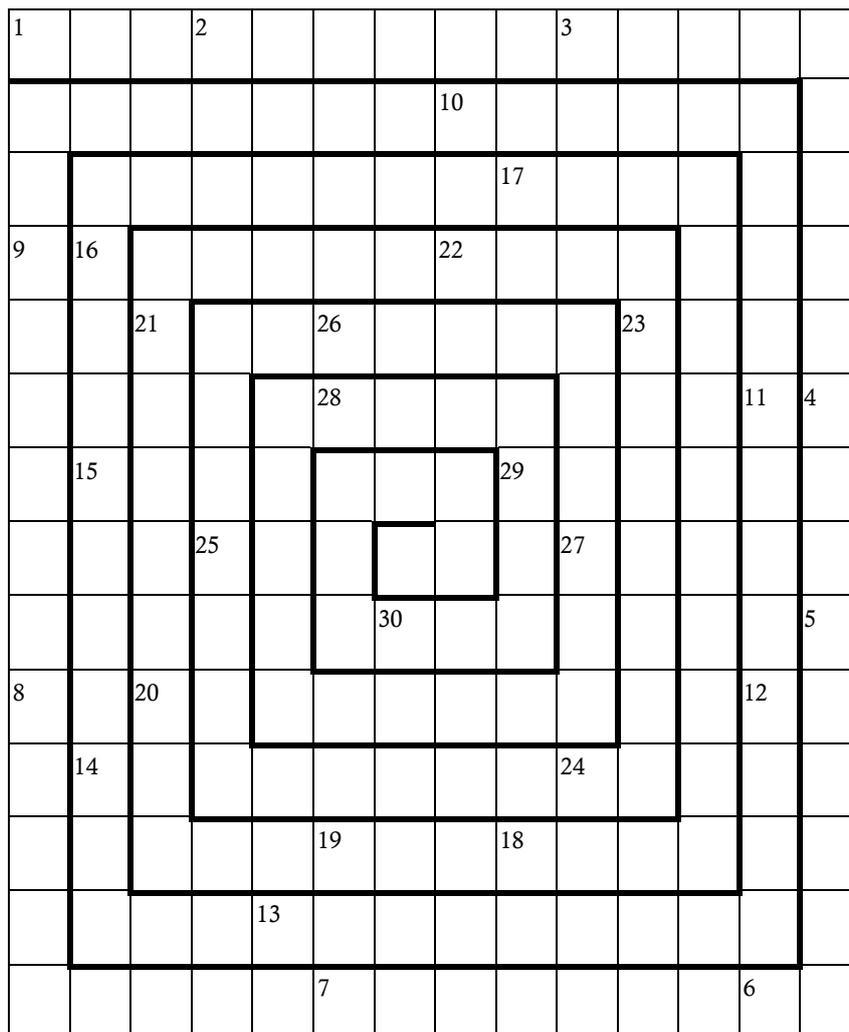
1. Who is the headmaster of Durmstrange in the Harry Potter books
2. In which British city might you find Greyfriars Bobby and Waverley railway station
3. Where in the human body is the scapula
4. How many pounds are there in one stone
5. Who was the father of Odysseus
6. In the standard UK version of the game Monopoly, what colour are Vine Street and Bow Street
7. Which English county is represented by a white cross on a black background
8. Who wrote the book Pride and Prejudice
9. Which British artist is known for his painting of The Fighting Temeraire
10. What is the capital of Venezuela
11. What is the name of Long John Silver's parrot
12. In which European city would you find the statue of the Little Mermaid
13. Victoria, Opal and Jubilee are all varieties of which fruit
14. What type of animal is Shere Khan in the Jungle Book
15. In which country might you find the northern most point of the EU mainland
16. What does an oologist collect (largely illegally)
17. What colour is Mr Bump of the Mr Men (behind his bandages)
18. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, what is the name of Hamlet's mother
19. Which country has the internet domain code.ge
20. Lerwick is the main town of which Scottish island group.

1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							

Answer the questions and then fill in the grid. Then rearrange letters in the 4th vertical column and you will get the name of a King and a Priest who was contemporary with Abraham. All the Biblical references are taken from the Good News version of the Bible.

1. Jabin was king of this place (Joshua 11 v 1)
2. Son of Jephunneh (Deuteronomy 1 v 36)
3. His father was Machir (1 Chronicles 7 v 14)
4. Esau's twin (Genesis 25)
5. Where Nahash was king (2 Samuel 10 v 1)
6. Saul's cousin (1 Samuel 14 v 15)
7. What valley is mentioned (Psalm 60 v 6)
8. From whom are the priests descended (Ezekiel 40 v 46)
9. An official in the province of Ammon (Nehemiah 2 v 10)
10. He had a son Terah (Genesis 11 v 24)
11. Where did Paul leave Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18 v 19)

Try this Crossword with a difference where the last letter of each answer is the first of the next one. All the answers are likes to crafts, games or sport.



1. An equestrian sport
2. Japanese paper folding
3. Activity which may take place indoors on a rink or, if really cold, a lake
4. Teams from Europe and America compete for the Ryder Cup in this sport
5. A family friendly event which offer a variety of rides and attractions
6. Played in England since Tudor Times it was referenced in 1744 as Base Ball
7. An individual winter sport
8. A recreational sport in which pilots fly unpowered aircraft
9. Scottish country dance
10. This activity needs a special flat piece of hard material with wheels attached
11. Dance venue
12. A competitive sport where people have to find their way across rough country with the aid of a map and compass
13. A knitting stitch
14. A game which originated at a well known English independent school
15. A group of physical, mental and spiritual practices
16. Group of sporting events that include running, jumping and throwing
17. A board game liked by children
18. To move in water
19. Traditional English folk dance
20. Walking on upright poles – with support for the feet – enabling the user to walk at a distance above the ground
21. Game played with cues on a billiard table
22. Competition race with members of a team taking turns to complete sections of the race
23. Sport which can involve competitive sailing
24. This sport includes physical exercises requiring balance, strength, flexibility and agility
25. This sport sounds like a drink
26. Danced by sailors
27. A lively Scottish dance for an octet
28. Another name for Bingo
29. Church musical instrument
30. Another name for skittles

ANSWERS

Twenty questions to test you

1. Igor Karkaroff 2. Edinburgh 3. Shoulder blade 4. 14 5. Laertes 6. Orange 7. Cornwall
8. Jane Austen 9. JMW Turner 10. Caracas 11. Captain Flint 12. Copenhagen 13. Plum
14. Tiger 15. Finland 16. Eggs 17. Blue 18. Gertrude 19. Georgia 20. Shetland

Questions in the Grid

1. Hazor 2. Caleb 3. Gilead 4. Jacob 5. Ammon 6. Abner 7. Sukkoth 8. Zadok 9. Tobiah
10. Nahor 11. Ephesus

In the fourth vertical column a king and priest who was contemporary with Abraham was Melchizedek

Crossword with a difference

1. Polo 2. Origami 3. Iceskating 4. Golf 5. Funfair 6. Rounders 7. Skijumping 8. Gliding
9. GayGordons 10. Skateboard 11. Disco 12. Orienteering 13. Garter 14. Rugby 15. Yoga
16. Athletics 17. SnakesandLadders 18. Swim 19. Morris 20. Stilts 21. Snooker 22. Relay
23. Yachting 24. Gymnastics 25. Squash 26. Hornpipe 27. Eightsomereel 28. Lotto 29. Organ
30. Ninepins

Colours Cross-jig

Moving from left to right the vertical columns read:

Cerise Maroon Violet Orange Coffee Indigo Cherry Yellow Purple Golden

Daphne Pilcher



Empathy Action present **Broke** - a collection of 9 dramas designed to create empathy with those suffering poverty and to inspire action to help them. The Events are free to attend but you need to book a place via the Empathy Action website

www.empathyaction.org.uk

You are also encouraged to bring a donation for the local foodbank.

To be held at The Gatehouse, 1 Market Square, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2SW

Thursday 26th March 7.30-9.30 pm

Friday 27th March 10.00 am – 12.00 pm and 7.30 – 9.30 pm

Saturday 28th March 10.30 am – 12.30 pm, 2.00 – 4.00 pm and 7.30-9.30 pm

Sunday 29th March 2.00 – 4.00 pm and 6.30-8.30 pm

General Information

Vicar Rev. Ronnie Williams, The Vicarage, Bretland Road, Rusthall	521357
Associate Priest Rev. Nicholas Burton (c/o Parish Office)	521447
Reader Daphne Pilcher	521691
Licensed Lay Minister Tim Harrold	07413805814
Churchwardens May Graves Chris Dobson	gravesmay7@gmail.com 539539
Deputy Churchwarden Graeme Anderson	532922
Parochial Church Council Secretary Mione Palmer	667951
Youth Council Angela Culley	07779 098026
Treasury and Planned Giving PCC Finance subcommittee c/o the Parish Office	521447
Safeguarding Officers Daphne Pilcher	521691
DBS Officer Clive Brown c/o the Parish Office	521447
Bible Reading Fellowship Secretary Vivienne Sharp	543263
Choir Leader Fiona Johnson	07540 273303
Magazine Editors Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare c/o the Parish Office email – magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk	
Flower Team Jill McAllister	532817
Parish Hall Bookings Churchyards Enquiries to Parish Office	521447
Rusthall St Paul's Primary School Executive Headteacher – Mrs Liz Mitchell Head of School – Mrs Lyndsay Smurthwaite	520582 520582

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

All worshippers who are baptised members of the Church of England, and aged over 16, should have their names entered on the Electoral Roll. This entitles them to attend and vote at the Annual Parochial Meeting. Forms for enrolment will be found in the Parish Church or the Parish Office and should be sent to the Vicar.

Organisations

Julian Group Pat Stevens	529187
Group Scout Leader Gavin Cons Email – rusthallscoutgroup@gmail.com	
Scout Membership Secretary Juliet Waller Email – rusthallscoutgroupwaitinglist@yahoo.co.uk	
Squirrels: rusthallsquirrels@gmail.com Beavers: beaversrusthall@gmail.com Cubs: rusthallcubs@hotmail.co.uk Scouts: rusthallscouts@gmail.com	
Ranger Guides Gemma Bradley	07377 061398
Guides Gemma Bradley	07377 061398
Brownie Guides Karen Miller (Thurs) rusthallbrownies@btinternet.com Tina Francis (Mon)	545877
Rainbows Mary Saunders Email – saundii@aol.com	319872
Playtime at St Paul's Liz Mankelow	07840 837968
Rusthall Lunch Club Helen Foster Richard Brook	01892 535159 01892 862677
Rusthall Community Larder Bjorn Simpole	07900 906294
Rusthall Community & Youth Project Barry Edwards	680296
Rusthall Village Association Alex Britcher	07967 011467
Rusthall Parish Council Council Clerk: Alison Stevens	520161
Rusthall Bonfire and Fete Committee Annie Softley	548366
Friends of TW and Rusthall Common Roger Barton rogerbarton@gmail.com	524795



The Parish Office

Parish Administrator - **Mrs Helen Reynolds**

St Paul's Parish Office, Church Centre, Rusthall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8RE

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The Office is open on weekday mornings (except Tuesdays) between 10 am and 1 pm.