



THE HERALD

The monthly newsletter from the churches of
St Nicholas Stevenage + St Mary's Graveley



www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

www.saintmarysgraveley.org.uk

Dear friends,

February 2023

At its best, the month of February is laced with messages of love and affection with Valentine's Day being the epitome of it. It is rare to walk past a shop window, supermarket or to watch television and not see an advertisement depicting diverse ways of showing your affection for someone. Although we do not need Valentine's Day to show how we feel about the people we love and are in love with, it may at least, bring to the fore the meaning of love. For those of us in Christ, our focus is the love of God which we cannot be separated from.

In the beautiful passage of 1 Corinthians 13, Apostle Paul describes the indispensable nature of true love which is always a stark reminder of the love God has for us. In the 6th verse, we are reminded that love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth which can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. Because we are deeply loved by God, he gave us his only begotten Son to die for us so we can rejoice in the truth. Lent begins on the 22nd of February and as we prepare for this period of self-reflection, spiritual growth and discipline, let us be reminded of the ultimate sacrifice of God's love for us through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Forgiven" - written by Dr Tim Chester, is our chosen book for meditation throughout Lent. In these resurrection meditations which go from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, Tim Chester reassures our fearful hearts by pointing us to the Lord Jesus and his finished work. Guiding us

through the later chapters of Hebrews, these devotions remind us that, when everything around us is turning and churning, we can rest secure in Jesus and his forgiveness, the only anchor for our weary souls. This is the sacrificial act of love which is only found in Christ. Please be encouraged to get a copy of this book which you can read and meditate upon either on your own, with your family or home group.

Do continue in prayer for the appointment of our new rector. The advertisement has been published and the closing date is February 28th. Shortlisting will take place on the 8th of March with interviews scheduled for the 20th of March. Continue to pray for the interview panel consisting of Bishop Alan, Archdeacon Janet, the Rural Dean Andy Thomas and the four parish representatives.

Let us continue in fellowship together in love and bear each other up in prayer remembering that love never fails.

**Eunice Sirkett, Church Warden,
St Mary's Graveley**

EVENTS THIS FEBRUARY

HOSPITALITY MONTH - until **Wednesday 22nd February (Ash Wednesday)** - could you invite someone from the church family to your home to share a meal, or for coffee and cake, or whatever you like, to build friendships and fellowship?

'SHOP AND SHARE' - We all know that at this present time it can be quite difficult managing the finances, so at St Nicholas we will be running a 'shop and share'. We will have a couple of bags/boxes of different items in the creche area. Please bring in a food or household item to share if you can. If you're not able to bring anything but need a few things for your family or for someone you know, please take what you need and bring something to share when you can. This is a lovely way to support and bless each other. Sue Bailey is managing this initiative and will be happy to help with any questions.

MEN'S BREAKFAST – Saturday 11th February at 8.30am at The Standing Order.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE at St Nicholas – **Wednesday 22nd February at 7.30pm**: Imposition of Ashes led by Revd Ray Porter.

LENT STUDY BOOKS – copies of "Forgiven" by Tim Chester are now available in church at St Nicholas for £1 per copy – for home groups (or individuals) to study during Lent. Also available are come copies of "Right with God" by Michael Reeves.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH WALKING GROUP – The next walk is on **Friday 24th February** and is approx 5-mile circular walk from the Cricketers Pub in Weston at 10am. Suitable walking boots/shoes and clothing advisable as likely to be wet and muddy. Please let Karen Cattell know if you are coming and if you want to stay for lunch. Karen would like to apologise to all who were booked on the last walk on 26th January for the short notice cancellation on the day. This was due to a severe leak from their upstairs WC which was flooding downstairs.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! for the **Easter Saturday Family Fun Day** on **8th April from 1-4pm** at St Nicholas Church. Could you help with cake-baking or setting up beforehand, the Easter egg hunt, teddy bear zip wire, Easter bonnet competition, running the kitchen for an hour or two for tea and cakes in the Parish Room? Christine Chambers will also be running a flower group stall. If you can help for an hour or so, please speak to Mike or Karen.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

St Nicholas Annual Parochial Church Meeting – Sunday 14th May at 11am after the morning service - Anyone who is on the Church Electoral Roll may vote at the meeting, but even if you are not on the electoral roll you are warmly encouraged to stay and listen.

Mothering Sunday (19th March) – Philip Walker will be preaching.

Palm Sunday (2nd April) – Jon Woodrow will be preaching.

Nightly evening prayer services - Sun 2nd – Wed 5th April – 7 – 7.30pm – at St Nicholas Church - following the Lectionary readings.

Maundy Thursday: meal at 6pm, followed by a service at 7.30pm, at St Nicholas Church. Revd Andy Thomas will be taking the service.

Good Friday – Meditations at St Mary's at 3pm – Graham Squires will be preaching.

Easter Saturday Family Fun Day – 1 - 4pm. Easter egg hunt, teddy bear zip wire from bell tower, Easter bonnet competition, Flower Group stalls, tea and cakes in the Parish Room.

Easter Sunday Family Communion – Revd Ray Porter will be taking the service.

PATTERN OF SUNDAY WORSHIP: Unless otherwise stated, both churches will have services of Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, and Services of the Word on 1st and 3rd Sundays. 5th Sundays will be joint Services of the Word - starting at 10:30am, with the venue moving between the 2 churches.



Every Wednesday, there will be an Act of Prayer at St Nicholas Church – either a Benefice Prayer Meeting at 7.30pm, or a service of Evening Prayer at 7pm – check the church calendar for details: [Calendar – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](https://saintnicholaschurch.org.uk).

Every other Wednesday, on the same week as Home Groups, there will be an Early Morning Prayer meeting on Zoom.

*St Nicholas will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon*



5th Feb Luke 3: 23-38 12th Feb Luke 4: 1-13
19th Feb Luke 4: 14-30 26th Feb Luke 4: 31-44

Preachers for February:

5th Feb: Philip Walker (MW)

12th Feb: Revd David Miller (HC)

19th Feb: Stephen Lovelock (MW)

26th Feb: Revd Ray Porter (HC)

KEY CONTACT DETAILS

St Nicholas Church, Rectory Lane, Stevenage, SG1 4DA

St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Graveley, SG4 7LY

CHURCH WARDENS:

St Nicks Mike Wilton – 07946 140909

St Nicks Karen Walker – 07427 576870

churchwardens@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

St Mary's Eunice Sirkett – 07709 248625

Enquiries for weddings, funerals and baptisms –

07733 995779 or admin@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A free interactive church based event for children in year 6

Week One: Monday 6th March - Friday 10th March 2023

- All Saints, The Oval, Stevenage
- St Martin's, Knebworth

Week Two: Monday 13th March - Friday 17th March 2023

- St Andrew and St George, Stevenage

Week Three: Monday 20th March - Friday 24th March 2023

- St Hugh and St John, Chells
- Longmeadow Evangelical Church, Oaks Cross

Please sign up to be a part of this amazing project, helping children to learn and understand the importance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To sign up as a volunteer please contact one of the church co-ordinators or contact the Bridge Builder's office on 01438 314314.

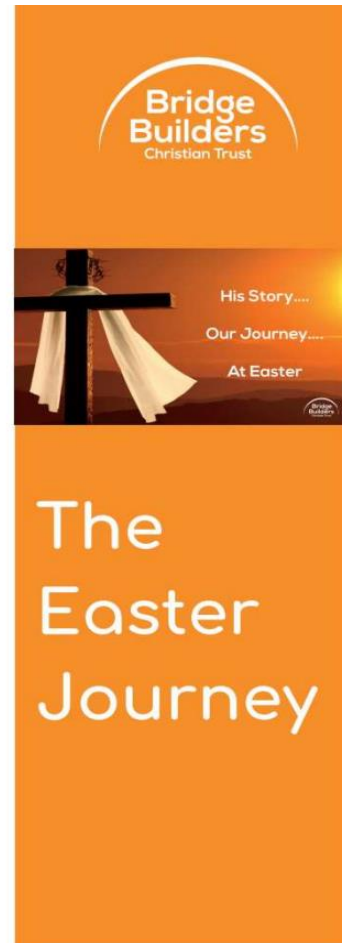
All Saints
Helen Gale
07790 381740
hcg88@outlook.com

St. Hugh & St. John
Sunil Jayewardene
07514 417046
sunil_jayewardene@yahoo.co.uk

St. Martin's
Penny Paton
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St Andrew & St George
Karen Mitchell
07596 374372
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Longmeadow Evangelical Church
Russell Knell
07711664673
russknell@gmail.com



Many Thanks



Generous Support

Allchurches Trust, Broadwater Fair Trading, Bunyan Baptist Church, Churches Together In Stevenage, Hertfordshire County Council, Holy Trinity, Great Ashby Community Church, Longmeadow Evangelical Church, North Hertfordshire Methodist Circuit, Ravenstone PCC, St. Andrews Church Hertford, St. Hugh & St. John, St Martin's Knebworth, St. Mary's Graveley, St. Mary's Shephall, St. Nicholas, St. Peter's, Sirius Digital Solutions, Stevenage Borough Council, United Reformed Church, Trinity Church Knebworth, and individual donors.

Prayer: the most important form of support is to pray

- For doors to open in schools
 - to reach more children through assemblies, lessons and journeys
- For hearts to be opened
 - as both children and teachers hear about Jesus

Partnership funding: to continue the work of Bridge Builders

£20 a month: essential storage for costumes, props and craft materials

£10 a month: sponsors a class to attend Christmas or Easter Journey

£5 a month: an assembly for use in schools across Stevenage

Regular giving enables Bridge Builders to plan ahead

Gift-aid increases the amount given by 20%