



THE HERALD

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



www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

www.stmarysgraveley.org.uk

Dear friends,

February 2024

Two thousand years ago, a devout man in the Jerusalem Temple saw a baby and sang out:

“Now, according to your word, Sovereign Lord, permit your servant to depart in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: a light, for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

The man was Simeon and the baby he had seen was Jesus Christ. Simeon knew that the baby he had seen was not like all the others being presented in the Temple that day by joyful parents, but instead was nothing less than the saviour of God's people.

Simeon's prophetic word was of such richness that the church took it as the canticle (song) to follow the New Testament reading daily at compline (night prayer).

We also particularly remember both Simeon and Anna and their heralding of the 'consolation of Israel' each year at Candlemas (2 Feb). May we all this Candlemas, with Simeon, be ready (whenever our time comes) to 'depart in peace', knowing our salvation.

Revd Edward Keene

Rector, Stevenage (St Nicholas)
and Graveley with Chesfield (St Mary)

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Unless otherwise stated, both churches have services of Holy Communion (HC) on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and Services of the Word (MW) on 1st and 3rd Sundays. 5th Sundays are joint Services of the Word at St Nicholas - starting at 10:30am.



4 th February	Romans 3: 21-31	(MW)
11 th February	Romans 4	(HC)
18 th February	Romans 5	(MW)
25 th February	Romans 6: 1-14	(HC)

MIDWEEK ACTIVITIES



There are benefice **home groups** currently meeting on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings and Monday afternoons. Please ask Edward if you wish to join one.

Every Wednesday at 7pm, there will be an **act of prayer** at St Nicholas Church – either a benefice prayer meeting, or a service of evening prayer – check the church calendar for details:

[Calendar – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](http://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk).

Every other Wednesday, on the same week as home groups, there will be an 8am **morning prayer** meeting on Zoom. Ask Edward for details.

*St Nicholas will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12pm & 2.30-4.30pm.*

Flower arranging - please see Chris Chambers for more details – full training given. Occasional Thursdays 10am-12pm, & 6.30pm-9pm at St Nicholas. More info and meeting dates are on the notice board in the parish room.

OTHER EVENTS COMING UP

Baptism Enquiry session – Saturday 3 February at 11am – please speak to Edward if you're interested in having your child baptised and would like to come along to find out more.

Women's Faith and Fellowship Breakfast – Saturday 10 February in the Parish Room at St Nicholas. Continental breakfast and speaker.

New housing development workshop – Saturday 10 February in Graveley Village Hall. St Albans diocese is running a workshop to help parishes think about their missional response to new housing developments. All are welcome. Please just sign up via the diocesan website.

St Nicholas Walking Group – The next walk is on Friday 23 February starting at 10 am from The Crown at Aston. Approx 5-mile walk. Please let Karen Cattell know if you are walking and wish to stop afterwards for lunch.



Since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting. I invite you therefore to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

Ash Wednesday service – 14 Feb 7pm at St Nicholas, with Bible reading in Matthew 6:16-17.

Lent daily devotional – readings in Lamentations; *Finding Mercy on the Way of Sorrow*, by Robin Ham. Copies will be available from church from Sunday 4 Feb onwards. Some home groups will use this as study material.

Lent course in Revelation – Jacky Swanson and Tina Hassan will lead this 6-session course. Please sign up using the sheet at the back of church or by contacting Jacky, Tina, Alison or Edward and let us know your preference for Tuesday evening (7:30pm) or Thursday afternoon (2:30pm).

Bridge Builders Easter Journey – 11-15 March at St Nicholas. If you would like to take part this year, whether acting as a character in the Easter story or helping to host the schools, please contact John Forster, who is coordinating.

Church Weekend Away 22-24 March – There are still tickets available. Please email Edward to book.

Transport to the venue (in Suffolk) will be available for some – we can arrange lift-sharing and have use of a minibus from Oak Church.

The weekend will be fully catered. Accommodation is in comfortable rooms for individuals, couples, and families, but NB rooms are not en-suite.

The guest speaker is Rev Dr Lee Gatiss, Director of Church Society and a prolific author. He will be speaking on the topic of the Cross – a very apt theme for Palm Sunday weekend, a week before Easter.



We have external leads joining us to assist children's work (Stephen and Anna Lovelock) and music (Yosi Hart).

Joint benefice service Palm Sunday 24 March – as many of us will be away at Sizewell Hall on Palm Sunday, there will just be a single service in the benefice that day, to be held at 10:30am at St Mary's Graveley. The Revd Ray Porter will kindly take the service.

Christian Institute Regional Presentation – Thursday 25 April at St Nicholas. An evening bringing us up to date on key public issues for our awareness and prayer. More details to follow.

KEY CONTACTS

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