



Newsletter

Sunday 8th February

The Second Sunday Before
Lent

*A very warm welcome to
worship in the benefice today*



growing inclusive, intergenerational churches that inspire faith, hope and love

Today's services

Sunday 8th February

8.00am Said Communion, St Mary's

9.30am Sung Eucharist, St Mary's

9.30am Parish Communion, Walford

Music for today's services

9.30am Sung Eucharist, St Mary's

Setting: *A People's Mass* - Greening

Introit: 532 All creatures of our God and King

Gradual: 236 Breathe on me, Breath of God

Offertory: 741 O Christ the same

Communion: *The heavens are telling* - Haydn

Post Communion: 710 Light's abode

9.30 Parish Communion, Walford

37 Angel voices, ever singing

84 Breathe on me, Breath of God

399 Like a candle flame

716 We have a gospel to proclaim

Prayer & readings for today

Collect – Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading *Reader: A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans*

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

[Romans 8: 18-25]

Reader: This is the word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Jesus said: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

[Matthew 6:25-34]

For our prayers

Those being baptised: Henry, whose baptism is today

Those who are ill: Terry Harding, Rosie Taylor, Rene Keogh, Helen Wynn, Sylvia Rogers, and all who are living with long term illnesses or health problems.

Those who mourn, and those who have died, Doreen Hibbert, Raymond Morris, Mary Francis, and Sylvia Greer.

Letter from the Bishop's Chaplain

Spring does not arrive cleanly or all at once. It comes slowly and unevenly. The sounds of returning birds herald warmer weather, green shoots appear before the cold has fully released its hold. Even as the days lengthen, winter often still lingers. Spring understands something that faith has always known: that renewal is rarely quick, and almost never comfortable. The Biblical story never pretends that light appears without darkness first. As we read the Christmas story in the depths of the British winter, Luke is careful not to place God's arrival in ideal conditions, but in a world shaped by political pressure, anxiety, grief, and ordinary hardship. God's work of revealing himself does not begin with triumph or glory, but with quiet presence in tumultuous circumstances. Many of us recognise that pattern in our own lives. But Luke offers a different picture. Light appears while things are imperfect and unfinished, and bringing all that mess into the light is what makes it easier to bear. Spring often teaches the same lesson. It does not begin when the ground is warm, but when it is just beginning to thaw. The first signs of life are fragile. We might spot a single bud on a bare branch or daffodils appearing in Morrisons. These are not signs that winter is finished, but reminders that its days are numbered. Spring has broken into the harshness of winter despite the most unfavourable conditions. As spring reaches its fullness, it reminds us that light works patiently. Each day grows brighter and longer almost without us noticing. Faith, too, is about learning to trust the small signs of presence along the way. And like the signs of spring in the dark of winter, God is here in the world and breaking into even the bleakest of circumstances. This hope is not sentimental optimism, but learning to recognise the presence of God with us, and gently making space again for him to meet us.

The Reverend Jane Plackett-Ferguson.

News from the Ross Parishes

Grave stones safety check Before handing over maintenance of St Mary's churchyard, we need to carry out a check. If you can help on 2.00pm-4.00pm Saturday 14th Feb or 10.30am-12.30pm Saturday 28th Feb, have a word with Bryan or Mark. They can tell you what to do.

Paddle and praise For preschool children: 9.30am-11.30am Friday 13th Feb. For 4 to 11-year-olds: 5.00 pm Friday 13th Feb, after school. Contact Wendy, wendy@rossparishes.uk.

Coffee, cake and friendly chatter at Castlebrook, Coughton, 10.30am-12 noon Tuesday 10th February. All welcome, just let Gay Chinn know if you are coming: 07771 614188 or gay@cobrey.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you!

Heart month Through its association with St Valentine, perhaps, February has been designated as Heart month. Most people will be aware of someone suffering from one or other form of heart disease, but perhaps few know that one in every 100 babies are born with some form of congenital heart defect (CHD). So the week 7th-14th February is marked as CHD awareness week. Please remember in your prayers all who suffer from heart disease.

Lent 2026 Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 18th February. That week the 10.00am Thursday Communion will be moved to Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday, there will be Eucharists for the benefice in St Mary's at 10.00 am and 7.00 pm, with Imposition of Ashes for those who wish.

Lent Course *Entering into prayer*, the benefice Lent course this year, will explore prayer in its many different forms. The meetings, led by David Thomas and others, take place in St Mary's Hall on Sunday afternoons: 22nd February, 1st March, 8th March, 15th March, 22nd March, 29th March. Tea and coffee are available from 2.30 pm and the sessions last from 3.00pm to 4.30pm. Everyone is welcome to all the sessions or all the sessions you can manage.

Lent Challenge This Lent everyone is invited to use their God-given talents to increase our Ministry and Mission and to raise much-needed funds for the church. Take a leaflet today, think and pray about it, and then tell us how you plan to meet this challenge. More information from rachel@rossparishes.uk

Doreen Hibbert The funeral of Doreen, a faithful member of St Mary's, will be held in church at 2.00pm on Thursday 19th February. More details from Colin.

St David's Day at Walford Church On Sunday 1st March all are invited to keep St David's Day at the Festal Eucharist in Walford Church at 9.30am. There will be a Welsh preacher (speaking in English) and organist, harp music, Welsh readings and prayers, Welsh refreshments, and good hymns for English people too! Walford was once an important crossing point from the Principality, hence its name Wealhford, 'the crossing place of the strangers'. A reprieve in Lent!

Summer Garden Fete Save the date! 6th June. St Michael's Walford are holding a Summer Garden Fete at The Homme, Hom Green. Come along for a fun-packed day with stalls, activities, food, drink and more. Please put it in your diaries now! More details will follow.

Dogs in church Well-behaved dogs and humans are very welcome in St Mary's. But could all owners please keep their dogs on leads. Thank you.

Compline Services If evenings are very cold, Monday and Wednesday Compline services at St Mary's may be cancelled on the day. Please check the website for the latest news.

St Mary's Youth Choir and Club Can you give an hour from 3.30pm on Wednesdays to help with "Connect", St Mary's new Choir Club? Emily Goy would welcome assistants to supervise the young people. If you can give help just a few times a year, contact Mark Sanderson.

Watch this space! The format of the newsletter is being updated in the coming weeks.

This week in the Ross Parishes

Every day	9.00am Morning Prayer by Zoom, rossparishes.uk/morning-prayer
Mon 9th Feb	10.00am Tots in Tune, St Mary's Hall 9.00pm Compline
Tue 10th Feb	9.00am Community Larder and Tea & Toast, St Mary's Hall
Wed 11th Feb	8.45am Toast and Toddle, St Mary's 3.30pm "Connect" Youth Choir club (others welcome) and rehearsal 9.00pm Compline
Thu 12th Feb	10.00am Said Communion, St Mary's
Fri 13th Feb	3.00pm Funeral for Raymond Morris, St Mary's 3.00pm Paddle and Praise, Walford, contact wendy@rossparishes.uk 6.00pm Dice and Decks, St Mary's Hall 7.15pm Adult choir rehearsal, St Mary's

Further ahead

Wed 18th Feb	9.30am Toast & Toddle later start time and in St Mary's Hall 10.00am Ash Wednesday said Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes (moved from Thursday) 7.00pm Ash Wednesday sung Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes
Thu 19th Feb	2.00pm Funeral for Doreen Hibbert, St Mary's
Sun 22nd Feb	3.00pm Lent Course first session, "The many different kinds of prayer"

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