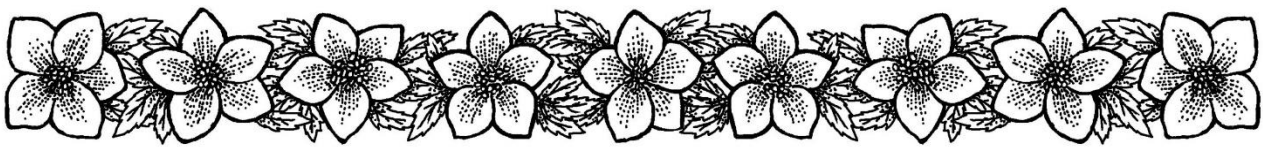


THE LORD bless you
and KEEP you; THE
LORD make His face
shine upoN you,
And be GRACIoUS To
you; THE LORD lift
up His CoUNTENANCE
upoN you, AND GIVE
you PEACE.

St Mark's Parish Magazine
March 2023



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Donations to cover the cost of this publication are welcome

In this month's issue

Letter from the Vicar	Page 2
You are special!	Page 3
Aiming for Net Zero Carbon by 2030	Page 4
News from the Church of England	Page 5
Bishop's Lent Call:	Page 7
Taking the risk	Page 8
Mothering Sunday	Page 9
The day is done	Page 10
Warm Hub	Page 11
Calendars	Page 12
Donating to support the work of St Marks	Page 14
Part 2: The PSRB	Page 15
Warm	Page 17
Book Review	Page 18
Reader Recipes	Page 19
Puzzles	Page 20



Your Views & Contributions

Next issue will be available from
2 April 2023

All contributions to the editor by
Friday 17 March 2023

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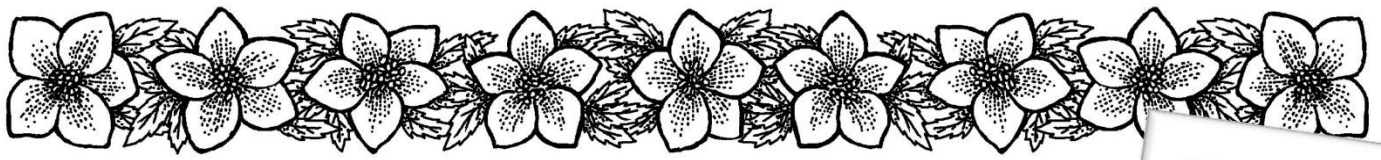
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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

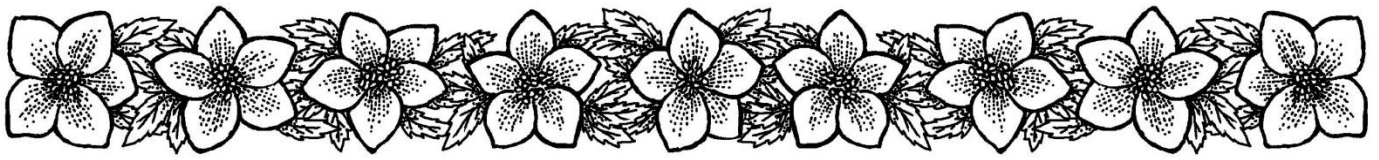
As we enter the month of March we are very much in the season of Lent. Lent is summed up beautifully by the phrase – used so often when people are experiencing difficulties – “Don’t worry, there’s light at the end of the tunnel.” The “darkness” of the tunnel tends to convey a seemingly hopeless situation. Yet, even in the darkness, we may encourage ourselves with the knowledge that difficulties will eventually end, and we will step into the light.

For the followers of Jesus, the shocking events of their leader’s crucifixion and burial would have plunged them into a dark tunnel, from which there would have seemed no hope of a positive end. It would at first have seemed that their Lord and Saviour, their light who had freed them from the powers of darkness, was dead and defeated, and that the evil deeds of the people had triumphed. Perhaps now that Jesus was no longer alive, they believed that they would find themselves gripped and imprisoned in the darkest of tunnels forever. However, of course there was something much deeper happening here. Just as popular books and films such as Harry Potter or Narnia have forces of goodness and light triumphing in battle over the forces of evil and darkness, Lent is a dark tunnel through which we also journey with Jesus to the cruel and violent suffering of the cross, via betrayal and rejection.

As we journey through Lent, we will once again come face to face with ourselves and our own battle with the darkness. We can encourage ourselves with the knowledge that Jesus is the true light that darkness cannot overcome. The true light that gives light to everyone. Today as we journey through the dark tunnel of Lent with our own worries – and the world’s concerns – to the cross with Jesus, we can be aware and assured of a momentous light awaiting us at the end of the tunnel. The long tyranny of darkness is over; Jesus the light of the world has triumphed.

So whatever dark tunnels you may be in this Lent, whenever the light of God’s presence seems to grow dim, may you take hold of the promise Jesus made to all those who trust in him; “Remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” May his light be a lamp to your feet and a light on your path to direct your steps into the light of Easter.

Every blessing



You Are Special!

Have you ever wondered how unique and special you are? No one of us is the same as anyone else. Even if we might surprisingly be look-a-likes, we are different from one another as we necessarily have had a different background and our thoughts and decisions would of course have taken different courses during our separate lives. How wonderful is that? We each have to make what we can of our lives with whatever gifts we are given and each and every day provides us with a new start, good or bad. Because of their circumstances some have so much more help than others in then putting their best foot forward.

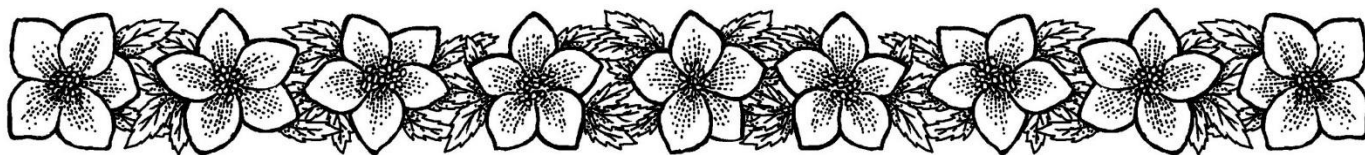
How difficult it would be if instead we all looked and behaved in the same way. I have had the joy to meet my 2 great grandchildren so soon after they were born and each from day one is making a new life unique to each one of them, whatever their loving parents think and hope for them. Of course it can be a delight for parents if certain traits appear in the next generation and if our off-springs are making a better go at it than we ourselves.

But it isn't only humans who are each unique. Penguins can return to their families amongst thousands of others, spotting their loved ones with no trouble at all. Years ago I was taken round a pig farm of about 900 pigs thinking they were all the same but they were all different.

As Christians we believe God created us all and how wonderful it is that he provided such diversity in the process. He has also given us the opportunity to make our own way in life, taking good or bad decisions at each stage of our journey. He knows each of us by name and we believe he is so kind as to forgive us when we take a wrong turning.

David Attenborough did so much to make us aware of the wonders and diversities of our world but he was worried that if there is a God, he had created a world in which tragedies still had to happen when one animal has to kill another one, in order to survive themselves. Others worry that God created a world in which tragedies happen so often because of the freedom provided for humans and the world around us. But if God were to stop any tragedies happening freedom would thereby be impossible. I see this as a problem that has no happy solution, but it still leaves me believing in my creator as a kind and loving God who can be next to us in our really troubled times.

Ian Archer



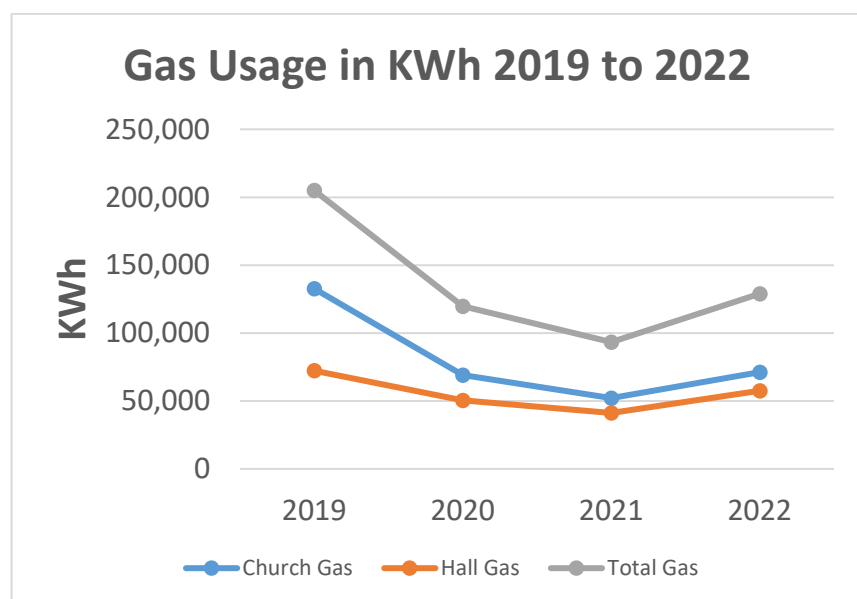
Aiming for Net Zero Carbon by 2030

In February 2020, General Synod voted to set a target for the whole Church of England of achieving 'net-zero' carbon by 2030. St Mark's is committed to working towards this target and the sustainability committee is looking at all aspects of our carbon footprint to see where we can make changes.

The most significant change we can make is in reducing our energy usage and we have made good progress in 2022 with a number of initiatives including:

- Installing 70 solar panels in February 2022 together with three batteries to reduce electricity drawn from the grid
- Converting more lighting to LED where possible in both the hall and church
- Green Sundays – holding all services in the hall on the first Sunday of the month from November to March as the hall heating uses less gas
- Installing thermostats that can be operated remotely so that heating can be monitored more closely and turned on only when needed
- Reducing the thermostat temperatures in the hall to suit the level of activity
- Using the hall rather than the church whenever possible
- Grouping church events together on the same day to share heating costs

These graphs demonstrate how much we have achieved in the last few years through a change in mindset and a conscious effort to get to Net Zero by 2030 – although we still have a long way to go!



2022 128,885 KWh 23.5 tonnes of carbon
2019 204,962 KWh 37.5 tonnes of carbon
A reduction of 37% and 14 tonnes of carbon

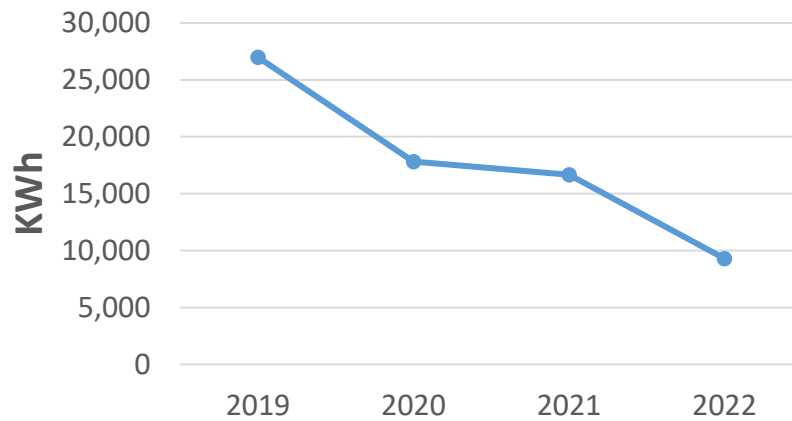
2022

9300 KWh
1.7 tonnes of
carbon

2019

26983 KWh
4.9 tonnes of
carbon

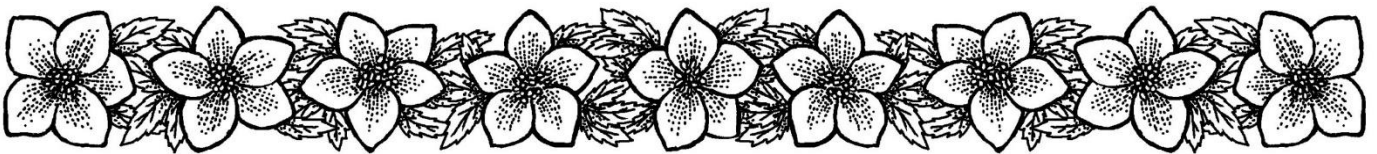
**A reduction of
65% and 3.2
tonnes of
carbon**

**Electricity Drawn from the Grid 2019 to
2022**

Please note that energy use for both 2020 and 2021 was impacted by the pandemic but in 2022 we have had a full year of activities which makes a comparison to 2019 more appropriate.

As treasurer and a member of the sustainability committee I have a keen interest in not just the cost of our energy but also in reducing our carbon footprint. At St Mark's we are open to all suggestions to help us get to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 so please share any thoughts you have.

Mel Crighton

**Garden Tidy Day**

On Saturday 1 April we shall be holding our pre-Easter garden tidy day. Please join us from 10.00am – refreshments provided.

Patricia Bird and Elizabeth Davis

News from the Church of England

Archbishops' Commission on Racial Justice releases Second Biannual Report

23/02/2023

The Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice has released the second of its biannual Racial Justice reports.

Mandated to drive 'significant cultural and structural change on issues of racial justice within the Church of England', the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice ("ACRJ"), headed by The Rt Hon Lord Paul Boateng, is charged with monitoring, holding to account and supporting the implementation of the forty-seven recommendations of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce which were laid out in the Taskforce's comprehensive 2021 report From Lament to Action.

In his foreword letter to the Second Report, Lord Boateng singles out for praise the Church Commissioners for their "ground-breaking work" in the forensic audit undertaken on Queen Anne's Bounty and its links with transatlantic chattel slavery. The Commission welcomes the £100 million of funding to deliver a programme of investment, research and engagement over the next nine years, but caveats that there is much further work to be done as this is "not the end of the story" [*Slavery, p 23*].

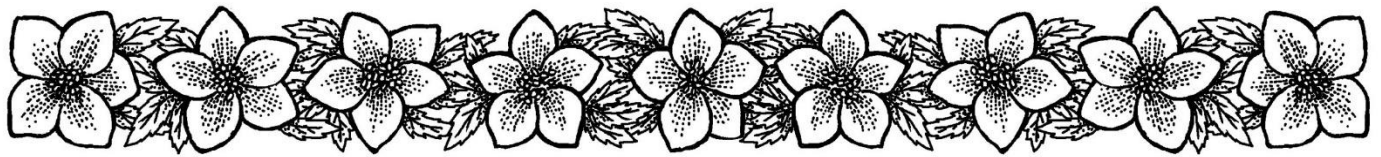
Lord Boateng welcomes the arrival in December 2022 of the Director of the Racial Justice Unit, but expresses continued disappointment at the time it has taken to establish the Unit and comments: "This has inevitably impacted negatively upon our own work and on the progress made across the Church of England in delivering on the recommendations of *From Lament to Action*".

The Second Report draws particular attention to the witness heard from representatives of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Christians about the "indifference, neglect and outright hostility" at the hands of both church and state. General Synod in 2019 urged dioceses to establish a chaplain to the communities. The Commission heard that twelve such chaplains have been appointed and calls for the remaining dioceses to do likewise in ensuring the GRT community receives pastoral, advocacy and educational activities. On the latter, the Church of England's "Leaders like us" programme will have a part to play and the programme will be scrutinized by the Commission over the course of its work [*Process and Engagement, p 11*].

Commenting on the Second Report, the Archbishop of Canterbury said: "I am encouraged that some progress has been made, particularly in the establishment of a fully-functioning Racial Justice Unit, but there is clearly more to be done. I continue to be very grateful to Lord Boateng and the members of the Commission for Racial Justice for the essential and demanding work they are doing and will pray for them."

Adding his thanks for the Second Report, the Archbishop of York said: "I remain saddened that the issue of racial justice has to be one of constant vigilance and questioning. The Commission's work is vital if we are to transform the nature of our ministry and witness."

Full article available on the Church of England website.



Bishop's Lent Call 2023

Each year, the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call raises funds for local community projects in Southwark and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem, as well as calling parishes to a time of prayer and contemplation.

In 2023, the theme is "mental health and well-being", and we are featuring projects that help with access to medical care both here and in our Link Diocese of Jerusalem. Access to food is a common theme too as worry about being able to feed the family leads to enormous stress, so we feature foodbanks here and nutritional gardens in our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe. Many too need support to deal with the pressures of life and we are asked also to support projects to facilitate well-being by developing strategies to cope with the stress and mental illness caused by our modern world.

You can find more information on this year's projects on the diocesan website (there is a link on our parish website).

As a parish we will be highlighting the Bishop's Lent Call through 3 Lent Lunches and in our Sunday services. There will be opportunities to give to the Lent Call at the Lent lunches and on Sundays, or you can make a donation direct via the website or via St Mark's Parish Office. If you can, please Gift Aid any donation.

The Lent lunches will be on:

Thursday 9th March at 12.45pm (the Iona Service first followed by lunch in Church)

Tuesday 14th March at 12.45pm at Liz Woodhouse's home

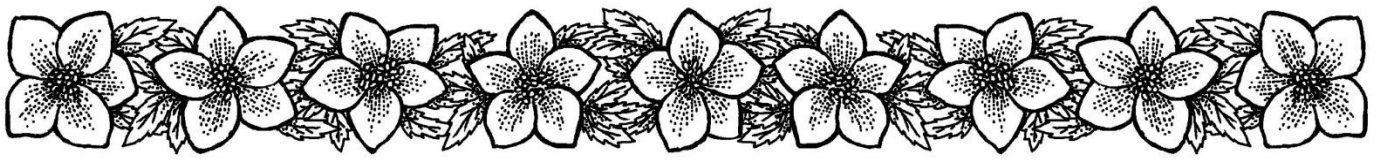
Tuesday 21st March at 12.45pm at Gillian Hull's home.

Please sign up on the lists in the Church or contact the Parish Office – some have limited numbers.

As we spend time in prayer and contemplation this Lent, we hope that you will feel able to generously support the projects we have chosen this year.

VACANCY

Would you be willing to be part of an editorial team that has responsibility for editing the content of this magazine? If so, please speak to Fr Martin or to Helen Starmer, the current editor.



Taking the Risk

Are you one of those prepared to take the risk in any given situation? Are you a gambler or wary of taking risks? When gambling someone wins, hopefully oneself, and someone loses, preferably, the other person. We can rejoice at winning but can be sorry for the loser, so in some ways there is always a disaster.

Sometimes we have to accept the need to take a risk as it is a choice between the "devil and the deep blue sea", or the "better of 2 evils". Let us pray we then take the right course.

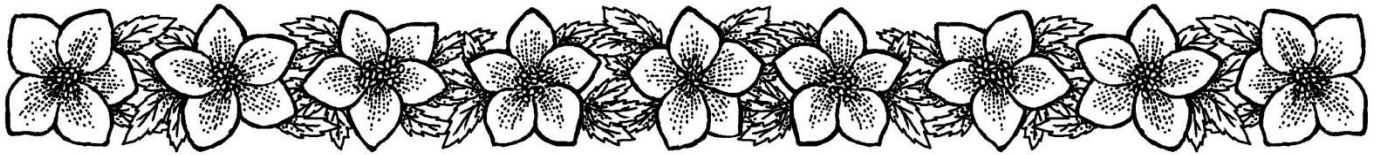
We need those who are prepared to take risks, as we need the entrepreneurs to discover new ways forward for the rest of us. Then so many have risked even their lives by consciously taking risks for the good of themselves and others. I think of women I have met, who in World War II flew Spitfires and Hurricanes without instruments, through cloudy conditions, to get the planes to our Air Bases and of missionaries who have left secure jobs at home to attempt to help those abroad.

But at a more trivial level I can think of the driver of our car jumping the traffic lights to get us away from the ushers at our wedding 62 years ago. He might have been brave to do so but he might have put others at risk at the same time. There are many risks that each of us can take that in fact put others at risk as well as ourselves. Everything we do and say can affect others in a good or bad way, so although taking risks for ourselves and others we need to keep in mind the affect those actions have on each one of us.

Those of us who are ancient, like me, need to avoid risks as much as possible as any accident we might incur may cause trouble to our friends and family, who might then be hoping to help us to recover.

Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John were all four prepared to leave off fishing at the "drop of a hat", the last two leaving their father Zebedee to mend the rest of their nets. So there must be occasions when any of us might be called by God to do something that seems risky, but can only be done at a time and place that He might wish. For such important issues we must go the way we are called, but on more trivial occasions we must consider the risks we are taking carefully and consider what affect our actions might have on others as well as ourselves.

Ian Archer



Mothering Sunday

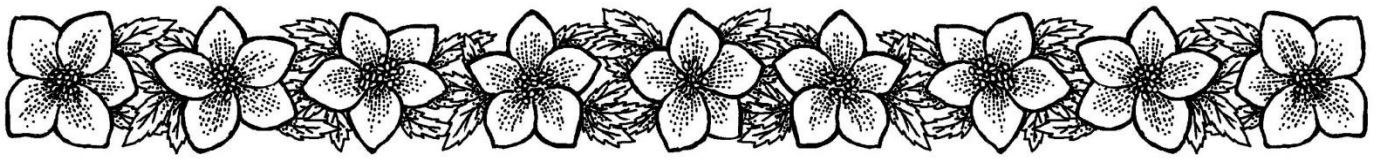
Mothering Sunday is a day of mixed emotions. For many it's a happy, joyous day, but for others it's one of pain and grief. A day to celebrate love, while acknowledging those who cannot have children or have lost them and those who have no relationship with their mother.

In the dying moments of his life, Jesus honoured Mary his mother by showing her love and care. He entrusted His mother to John's protection: "*When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*" (John 19.26,27). While affirming the importance of mothers, Jesus reminds us that the love we show on Mothering Sunday is just a token of our continuous appreciation of them.

Jesus also creates a new way of being family, marking the beginnings of the church. In the past, people would go back to their '*mother*' church on this Sunday, to acknowledge its importance in their lives. Jesus invites us into this new family of love and mutual belonging, where we can find a place, irrespective of our own family circumstances.

Church is not always an easy place to be, because we are shaped by our own experience of mothering. We may find it hard to give or receive love without ourselves getting in the way. However, God's help is available to change things, "*because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*" (Romans 5.5)

The mother of three difficult youngsters was asked whether she'd have children if she had it to do over again. "Yes," she replied. "*But not the same ones.*"



The Day is Done:

The day is done and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night
As a feather is wafted downwards
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist.

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters
Not from the bards sublime
Whose heavy footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

For like the strands of martial music
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour;
And tonight I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet
Whose song gushed from his heart
As showers from the clouds of summer

Who through long days of labour
And nights devoid of ease
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have the power to quiet
The restless pulse of care
And come like the benediction
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have the power to quiet
The restless pulse of care
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice
And let the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of the voice.

And the night shall be filled with music
And the cares that infect the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs
And as silently steal away.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



St Mark's Church Centre, Alma Road, RH2 0DA

Fridays 10.00am – 12.00pm

(except 30 December) until the end of March 2023

Tea and
Coffee and a
warm space
to meet
others

**All are
welcome**



CALENDAR FOR MARCH 2023

Wednesday 1st March	St David – Patron of Wales 3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 2 nd March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 3 rd March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 5th March	2nd Sunday of Lent (<i>Green Sunday</i>) 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online 4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall
Wednesday 8 th March	3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 9 th March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 10 th March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 12th March	3rd Sunday of Lent 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church
Wednesday 15 th March	3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 16 th March	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 17th March	St Patrick – Patron of Ireland 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 18 th March	8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall
Sunday 19th March	4th Sunday of Lent (<i>Mothering Sunday</i>) 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online 4.00pm Messy Church
Wednesday 22 nd March	3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 23 rd March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 24 th March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 25th March	The Annunciation
Sunday 26th March	5th Sunday of Lent 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church 6.00pm Taizé Prayer
Wednesday 29 th March	3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 30 th March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 31 st March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall

CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2023

Sunday 2nd April

Palm Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall

Monday 3rd April

8.00pm Stations of the Cross and Compline

Tuesday 4th April

8.00pm Stations of the Cross and Compline

Wednesday 5th April

8.00pm Stations of the Cross and Compline

Thursday 6th April

Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Sung Eucharist and Watch (until 10.30pm)
in Church and Online

Friday 7th April

Good Friday

10.00am Messy Church
1.30pm Liturgy for Good Friday – in Church and online

Saturday 8th April

Holy Saturday

8.00pm Easter Vigil and First Communion of Easter

Sunday 9th April

Easter Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online

Thursday 13th April

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Saturday 15th April

8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall

Sunday 16th April

2nd Sunday of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online

Wednesday 19th April

3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 20th April

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Sunday 23rd April

St Mark the Evangelist – Patronal Festival

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
with Junior Church
6.00pm Taizé Prayer

Wednesday 26th April

3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 27th April

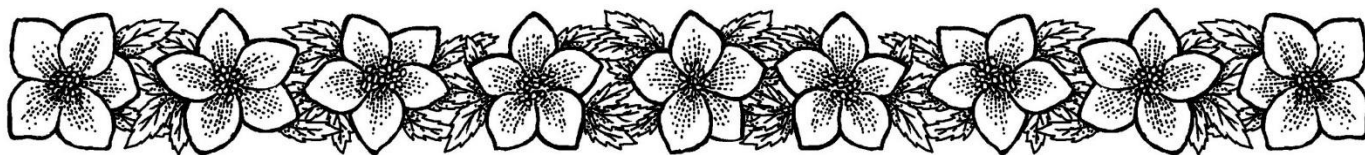
12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Sunday 30th April

4th Sunday of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
with Junior Church

Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.



Donating to support the work of St Marks

Regular Giving



PARISHGIVINGSCHEME

Regular donations are so important to our church to enable us to carry out our ministry and to run and maintain our buildings in the knowledge that the funds will be available when required. To make regular giving easier we have joined the Parish Giving Scheme (or PGS for short) which is a national scheme supported by the Diocese.

The PGS is a Direct Debit service, which enables you to give on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. We receive 100% of your donation and Gift Aid is automatically claimed for us, which means reduced administration and less work for our Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary (though you do not have to be eligible for Gift Aid yourself to join the scheme)

If you would like to know more you can watch [this video](#) to see how PGS works.

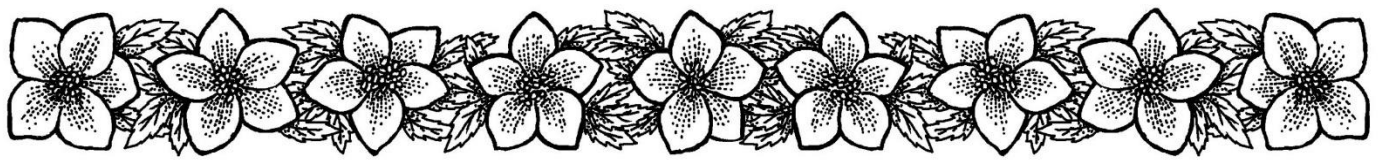
If you already donate regularly by standing order we are hoping that you will make the switch and if you are new to regular giving we encourage you to donate via PGS.

Please use the following link to join:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/reigate-st-mark-reigate/>

If you would prefer to join by telephone or post then please contact Mel Crighton for details.

Thank you.



Part 2: The PSRB

(Note from Sub Editor to Editor: I am passing this story for publication not for the interest in the particular circumstances but because it instances management problems which will arise not only in Departments of State but any of our larger company concerns. It should be informative for the young and a reminiscence for the retired and more mature.)

Editor's Note 2: The story is now concerned with recruitment to the top posts in the Civil Service, briefly a three day process of intelligence and other tests plus discussions between candidates and interviews with assessors. The third day is assessing the results and formulating reports. There were two or three assessors: a senior or retired top civil servant, an "observer" or middle career, promising, assessor and sometimes a psychologist. The system managed recruitment principally to the Admin grade and HMITs but also to levels of top policing and other discrete areas.

(Editor's Note 3: The reader should be aware that these stories cover only life at work and not Fred's private family life. No tax problems or implications are considered)

.....
So Fred went in search of Percy to be briefed on his duties as the first Inspector attached to the Public Services Recruitment Board (PSRB). His friend Bob, in Room 101 told him the way, but said Percy did not wish to see him till 2 o'clock. Meanwhile in between assignments Bob told him many of the ropes of Head Office, and the many functions of Room 101.

A small group from 101 went across the way to the Indian High Commission canteen and over lunch made sure Fred was in trepidation of a further meeting with Percy. They agreed that many promising careers stopped in Percy's room. Fred was glad to get away from them and knock on that door precisely at 2.00pm.

Percy was brief. "Your job will be to see that the Revenue Competition is working properly with no bias against it and if there is, to put it right and make sure we get some decent recruits. I shall be supplying as many of the chairmen as possible and you will run the seats of Observer using promising young DIs (District Inspectors) listed. But you will do as many of the Boards as possible yourself to save the time of our young DIs. Over there they will use Christian names and be congenial and chummy, but remember, they can slide the knife in under your ribs without you hardly noticing. Make an early appointment to see the Director and make sure you get the job." "What if they don't take me?" said Fred. "Make sure they do!" Then with emphasis: "Don't forget your pay cheque will still come from here!"

Fred borrowed a phone and arranged to see Mr Finlay, the Director PSRB, the next day. Then he phoned his old boss and told him he had been shifted. His boss clearly had not

been told but warned that Fred should ensure to make the hand over personally once someone was appointed. "Till then, carry on." Fred thought: "They used to say 'no man can serve two masters!' "

The "Chat" with Mr Finlay began quite slowly. Finlay was not enchanted to hear Fred had been recruited via Method 1, by exam, rather than the present Method 2 by extended interview. Fred would simply act as a resident Principle taking interviews and Boards. That was different from Percy's briefing. But when the subject of Fulton came up Fred made sure Finlay understood that he was expected to see that there were no "physical or psychological barriers in the way of recruitment of HMITs." Curiously, Finlay then thawed and took Fred through the principles and routine of his future job with great clarity. Towards the end Finlay gave this advice: "Beware of the young psychologists here. Often they are still trying to understand themselves!" "We must work together," were his parting words.

Back in this old office life seemed very artificial. His successor would be there within a fortnight so he embarked on a frenetic period of tidying up, settling what cases he could. He felt somehow that he was letting his colleagues there down. But finally the hand over was effected.

Arriving at PSRB he found he was already assigned to a board and was glad he had done the background reading at home. His first chairman was with Sir Andrew Wise , a retired ambassador of long PSRB experience. In between interviews he went to see a Mr McIlwin who had run the Revenue Competition for many years and also managed the police one for Chief Constables. Fred got on well with McIlwin but there was tension when Fred embarked on a long list of questions which implied things could not be going well. McIlwin did not like the word "Fulton". Fred ploughed on and eventually McIlwin suggested it might be better if Fred ran the competition himself and surprisingly, later Finlay agreed. Fred wondered if passing the buck to him absolved them from "no physical or psychological etc....." But at least he now had the reigns in hand, if not the horses.

Of course life is never straightforward. He found he had other responsibilities within CSSB which were expected to take precedence and often they arose only at the last minute. One example was when he was called to take part in a training exercise for new assessors. It was a Group Discussion with several Principles acting as pretend candidates. They set off the discussion at a great pace leaving Fred behind and in listening mode but soon he grasped his chance and took the group over the past discussion pointing out the irrationalities and ending with his own solution. The trainee assessors loved this and voted him top candidate, but not so the Principles.

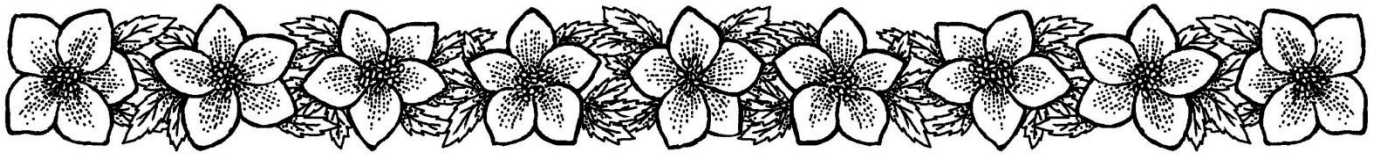
He got used to the frequent Boards and or comfortable making judgements of candidates remembering how green he had been at the same stage and looking for signs of growing maturity. He learned much from experienced chairmen and lost his awe of their high offices they often occupied. The Final Selection Board seemed to like his written reports and he got on well with Director Finlay.

Then disaster struck. Applications were first dealt with in another office some way away and separate from PSRB. The numbers of candidates applying for the Revenue was high

but not getting through to PSRB, whereas the Admin grade was well served. Fred recalled Percy's "advice" that any blips in the Revenue competition should be sat on. This problem was outside his sphere but Percy was unlikely to accept that as an excuse. What should he do?

The answer was first find out the facts, so he arranged to visit the other office. He would start an inspection at the bottom and see where it led.

Harry Ingram



Warm

Are you warm enough in this cold winter? I suppose most of us are warm in bed but are chilly when we have to get up. I find my fingers can sometimes be so cold they go numb and I then I find it difficult doing up my buttons. Perhaps I should just have zips, but they can jam. Exercise can help but that is not so popular when it's cold outside. How nice it will be when our weather gets warmer.

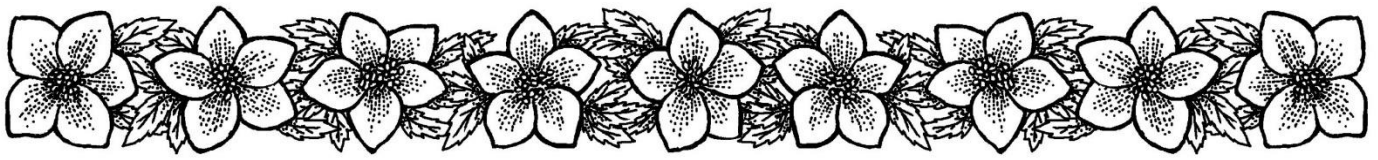
But apart from needing to keep our bodies warm, how warm are we to other people. Do they feel spiritually warmed by meeting and talking with us? "Think positive!" my son Andrew used to say in our home when he was young on occasions when we were not all at peace. There are so many things we meet in everyday life that can depress us, but it is far better if we can think positively.

We try to get alongside others but we can't always know their underlying worries and distress. I think of those shipwrecked and floundering in the deep. How good it would be if they could remain buoyant through their disaster and so ultimately survive. May we remain buoyant through our disasters and wherever possible help in saving the lives of those we meet and love.

I was recently taken into the wonderful church of St Stephen, Walbrook in the City of London, where so long ago the Reverend Chad Varah started the Samaritans. Although he wanted to dissuade those who might have been led to commit suicide, it was his helpers who did so well getting alongside them with cups of tea while they waited to see The Reverend Chad Varah himself. The helpers were so understanding that those in distress often were buoyed up by the cheery friendship they had received and needed no longer to go to the front of the queue.

How many people who had ceased to feel buoyant, have been helped by Jesus both during his life time and for all the years since then and may we be able to remain buoyant and help others to be so too.

Ian Archer



Book Review

This month we review: The Comfort Book



I have enjoyed many books by Matt Haig and so I picked this one up expecting good things. It is not however, the same style or format as his other books either fiction or non-fiction.

This book is a collection of musings, quotes, even playlists which all aim to bring comfort.

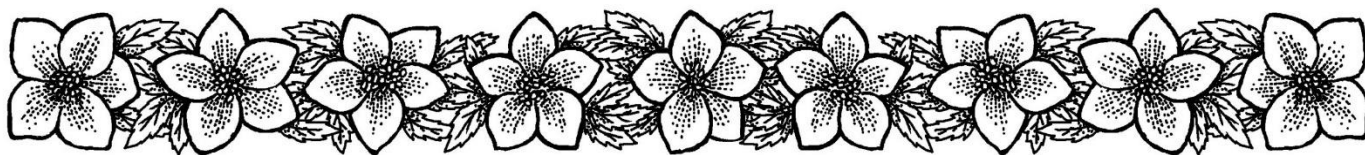
The author has previously suffered heavily with depression and this book has been written with his experience in mind.

I didn't find this book had much flow to it and I struggled to find the links between the various chapters/ sections which are very short. However, I did find what the book promises 'comfort'. The themes explored in this book to invite you to take time to think about yourself and your own thought patterns and consider that perhaps there are reasons to be comforted and to feel a little bit brighter. It is an antidote to social media and the constant misery found in the news.

For anyone who may be struggling with their mental health it may offer some relief. It is a Sunday Times best seller and the Independent describes it as 'Full of eloquent, cogent and positive reminders of the beauty of life.'

I would suggest this is a good book to leave in the loo, easy to dip in and out of when you have five minutes. It doesn't require a large investment of time or energy and may just give you a little lift when you didn't realise you needed it.

Have you recently read a good book? Tell us about it. Email magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk with your book review.



Reader recipes

Herby Spring Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients:-

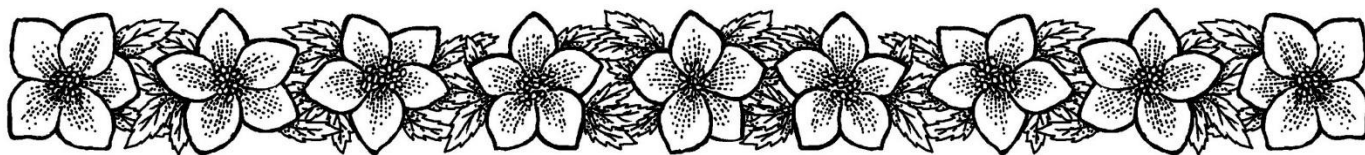
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for brushing over the pastry
- bunch spring onions, sliced into 3cm pieces
- 250g frozen spinach
- 6 ready-cooked chicken thighs (or see tip, below)
- 350ml hot chicken stock
- ½ tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 200g frozen peas
- 200ml half-fat crème fraîche
- ½ small bunch tarragon, leaves finely chopped
- small bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 270g pack filo pastry



Method:-

1. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large, shallow casserole dish on a medium heat. Add the spring onions and fry for 3 mins, then stir through the frozen spinach and cook for 2 mins or until it's starting to wilt. Remove the skin from the chicken and discard. Shred the chicken off the bone and into the pan, and discard the bones. Stir through the stock and mustard. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 5-10 mins.
2. Stir in the peas, crème fraîche and herbs, then remove from the heat. Scrunch the filo pastry sheets over the mixture, brush with a little oil and bake for 15-20 mins or until golden brown.

Recipe taken from Good Food online. If you have a recipe you'd like to share email us at magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.



Prayer

God stir the soil,
Run the ploughshare deep,

Cut the furrows round and round,
Overturn the hard, dry ground,

Spare no strength nor toil,
Even though I weep.

In the loose, fresh mangled earth
Sow new seed.

Free of withered vine and weed
Bring fair flowers to birth.

Anonymous

Puzzles

March Sudoku Puzzle

2		3	6		8			
	4			2		8		3
8		1		4		6		
	6	5			7		4	9
3								1
7	9		1			3	5	
		8		5		1		6
5		9		1			3	
			4		9	5		2

February Solution

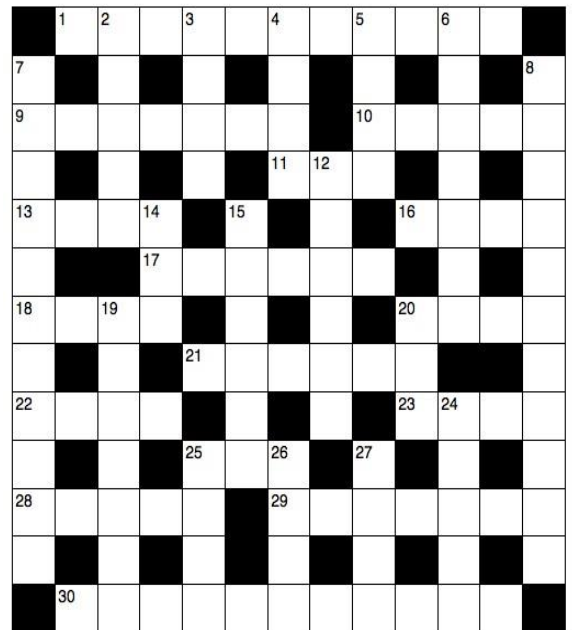
1	9	7	2	6	4	5	3	8
4	2	6	5	3	8	1	7	9
8	3	5	1	7	9	4	6	2
5	7	1	3	9	2	8	4	6
3	4	9	8	5	6	2	1	7
2	6	8	4	1	7	3	9	5
9	5	4	6	8	3	7	2	1
7	8	3	9	2	1	6	5	4
6	1	2	7	4	5	9	8	3

March Crossword

Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 1 These letters come between Romans and Galatians (11)
- 9 'You will not — me to the grave' (Psalm 16:10) (7)
- 10 King of Moab to whom the Israelites were subject for 18 years (Judges 3:14) (5)
- 11 Town possessing mineral spring (3)
- 13 Mede (anag.) (4)
- 16 High-fidelity (abbrev.) (4)
- 17 He succeeded his father Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kings 14:31) (6)
- 18 A son of Simeon (Genesis 46:10) (4)
- 20 Controversial religious book of the 1970s, The — of God Incarnate (4)
- 21 'He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you — — and hear' (Acts 2:33) (3,3)
- 22 'You — me together in my mother's womb' (Psalm 139:13) (4)
- 23 Edit (anag.) (4)
- 25 'Who has believed our message and to whom has the — of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1) (3)
- 28 Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:23) (5)
- 29 'When Mordecai learned of — that had been — , he tore his clothes' (Esther 4:1) (3,4)
- 30 Sympathetic (Proverbs 11:16) (4-7)



Down

- 2 'That was why his parents said, "He is — —; ask him"' (John 9:23) (2,3)
- 3 Integrated Services Digital Network (1,1,1,1) 4
- 4 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his — of thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7) (4)
- 5 Concept (John 8:14) (4)
- 6 'Do we, then, — the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law' (Romans 3:31) (7)
- 7 Industrious (2 Timothy 2:6) (11)
- 8 'I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be — in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you (Ephesians 1:18) (11)
- 12 'Out of the same mouth come — and cursing' (James 3:10) (6)
- 14 This was how many of the Jewish leaders described Jesus (John 10:20) (3)
- 15 Vitality (Job 20:11) (6)
- 19 He urged David to kill Saul at Hakilah (1 Samuel 26:8) (7)
- 20 'So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul — with the church and taught great numbers of people' (Acts 11:26) (3)
- 24 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord — — ' (Deuteronomy 6:4) (2,3)
- 25 Parched (Matthew 12:43) (4)
- 26 'In the image of God he created him; — and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27) (4)
- 27 Disparagement (Psalm 15:3) (4)

February answers

ACROSS:

8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi. 13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account. 24, RAC. 25, Sovereign Lord.

DOWN:

1, Oceans. 2, Hophni. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar. 6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe. 16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21, Recede. 23, Cure.

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