



WELLOW & SHERFIELD ENGLISH

Parish Newsletter

February 2026



Letters from our Vicar, Rector and Rural Dean – and from our Curate

The Churches were very well attended over Christmas and I hope people will come to Church on other days in 2026! Many visitors commented on our villages being welcoming. Thank you for being part of the Christmas Celebrations in our communities.

As we move into February, we find ourselves at a turning point in the church calendar, closing the season of Epiphany and looking forward to the journey of Lent. This month often brings a unique mix of themes, from the lingering need for light in the winter darkness to the approaching thoughtfulness and inner reflection of the Lenten season.

The feast day of Candlemas (2nd February, the 40th Day of Christmas) marks the presentation of Jesus at the Temple by Joseph and Mary, based on the account in Luke 2:22–40. Many Christians take their candles to their church, to be blessed and then used for the rest of the year, a reminder that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness, a hope we all need in difficult times, whether facing illness, bereavement, or financial worries. This light is a sign of God's constant presence and hope, even in our darkest moments.

This year, Lent starts quite early (Ash Wednesday, 18th February) so you can prepare for Easter (5th April). As Lent begins, it offers us an annual "second chance", to prepare our hearts and minds for Easter. It is a time focusing on prayer, generosity, and humbler faith. Our shared journey through Lent, perhaps with a specific study course, helps us to arrive at Easter refreshed and energised by the hope of the Resurrection.

Key Dates and Information: Please check *News and Notices* or web pages for details on upcoming services, Lent study groups and community events. This information is vital for staying connected and involved in the life of our church.

Wishing you God's blessings for the month ahead.

Your Rural Dean, James **Revd James Pitkin**
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Pilgrimages

With the beginning of Lent, I also think about Pilgrimage.

Many of us may have watched the poignant film, 'The Way', where a father, coming to terms with the loss and death of his son whilst on the Camino de Santiago, tries to trace his son's steps with hopes of drawing closer to him. The father faces moments of change at each encounter with others, realising the hardship of being on The Way, and yet somehow finding hope within each person's story that he listens to and joins in with. The encounters are transitory and yet meaningful, as we too join in with the stories and are ourselves taken on a pilgrimage. There are moments of quiet loneliness, yet the father discovers grace, acceptance and forgiveness, and comes to understand his son's heart better as a result. In each of our lives, and in each of our ways, we too need to find love, hope and enough grace for each moment, and acceptance of what has been and what lies ahead of us on our own pilgrimages.

Revd Yin-Yin Bull, Assistant Curate

Letters from Churchwardens

What will 2026 bring? Peace on earth if we are lucky! Well, in St Leonard's, we will try to find the positive from the world around us, as we continue to enjoy our services and the social "chit-chat" before and after them, sometimes quite a hullabaloo! We celebrate Candlemas on 1st February with James leading us as we bless the candles used during the year. On Saturday 7th February we hold our first coffee morning of 2026, 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon, so if you fancy an hour or so chatting to all sorts of people ... maybe we should run it like speed dating, a bell rings after three minutes and you move on to the next person? No, maybe not – I would be gutted if I got to the crucial part of a story and couldn't hear the ending, why did Mary's cake have a soggy bottom???

We start Lent on 18th February as we join with other members of the Benefice on Ash Wednesday at East Dean for Ashing. Always an interesting communion service – hopefully Gael will be on hand again with tissues when the olive oil and burnt Palm Sunday crosses mixture runs into my eye. It stings! [NB there are two Eucharist and Ashing services in the Benefice, at Lockerley (9.00 a.m.) and East Dean (7.00 p.m.) PN, Compiler.]

Our main event this year will be for Romsey Festival, as we hold our "One Hundred Years of One Hundred Acre Wood" event on Saturday 4th July (10.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.), celebrating 100 years since the publication of A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* with knitted and craft displays and perhaps even a game of Poohsticks. It is a free event and we will be offering refreshments throughout the day. Please put it in your diary to be wowed by the talent of the Sherfield English community with a little help from friends further afield too.

Julia Noble, St Leonard's Churchwarden

I tend to think of February as one of the dreariest months of the year, only slightly lightened for me by having my birthday in the middle of the month, and of course by the snowdrops that are even now flowering in the churchyard.

This year Lent starts in February with Ash Wednesday on the 18th. As a Benefice we organise soup lunches on Saturdays during Lent, as a way to raise funds for UNICEF, which does so much good worldwide. St Margaret's is the first contribution to the programme, on 21st February at noon.

More parochially, the regular weekly Tuesday lunches in the Church Rooms continue, thanks to a wonderful team of volunteers led by Gael and Ann. With transport organised, they are a real service for elderly people living alone, who enjoy the company every bit as much as the food. If you know a neighbour living alone, maybe no longer able to drive, do not hesitate to let them know of these lunches.

Roy Perry, St Margaret's Churchwarden

St Margaret's Services and Events

St Margaret's Services, Readers and Sidespeople for February 2026 and the start of March

February 2026		Reader 1	Reader 2	Sidesperson
Sunday 1st	Holy Communion 9.15 a.m. Messy Church 4.00 p.m.	Ann Jarrett (Sara-Jane Stevens)	Rose Forward	Ann Jarrett
8th	Holy Communion 9.15 a.m.	Mel King	Michael Gibb	Barbara King
15th	Holy Communion 9.15 a.m.	Tim Jobson	Jonathan Cooper	Tim Jobson
22nd	Holy Communion 8.15 a.m. Matins 9.15 a.m.	Paul Newby	Sue Forsey	Paul Newby
1st March	Holy Communion 9.15 a.m. Messy Church 4.00 p.m.	Gael Clemmett (Sara-Jane Stevens)	John Parr	John Parr
8th March	Holy Communion 9.15 a.m.	Lesley Mackay	Ann Jarrett	Ann Jarrett

Ash Wednesday, 18th February: Eucharist and Ashing Services at Lockerley (9.00 a.m.) and East Dean (7.00 p.m.)

Saturday 21st February, 12 noon to 2.00 p.m.: Lent Lunch at St Margaret's Church Rooms (Info from Mel, 01794 519433)

Across our Benefice, the churches raise money for the good works of UNICEF worldwide by hosting soup lunches every Saturday in Lent (from 21st February to 28th March).

Subsequent venues are as follows: 28th February: Karen Walker's Barn – Lodge Farm, The Green, West Tytherley SP5 1LA
7th March: Manor Cottage, Frenchmoor Lane, East Dean SP5 1HA (Nick and Suky Turner) (Parking at The Old Brewers SP5 1HU)

14th March: Coach House, East Tytherley SP5 1LE (Rob Scoones & Joanne Nash)

21st March: Lockerley Water House (Heather Bowyer)

28th March: Lockerley & East Dean Memorial Hall (Volunteer hosts may still be needed – contact James, 01794 340635).

Also on Saturday morning, 21st February, at St. Margaret's, "Training (Initial and Refresher) for All":

10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. Welcomers and Sidespeople; 11.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. Sacristans and Communion Assistants.

Every week in St Margaret's Church Rooms (Transport can be arranged if needed)
Seasonal Lunch, Tuesday from 12 noon Coffee and Chat, Thursday from 10.30 a.m.

St Leonard's Services and Events

1st February – Holy Communion (Candlemas)

8th February – Morning Prayer

15th February – Family Service

22nd February – Morning Prayer

NB 18th February (Ash Wednesday) – Eucharist and Ashing at Lockerley (9.00 a.m.) and East Dean (7.00 p.m.)

1st March – Holy Communion

8th March – Morning Prayer

[Services in St Leonard's are at 11.00 a.m. unless stated otherwise]

Saturdays 7th February and 7th March, 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon, Coffee Mornings in St Leonard's

Lectionary Listings for use in both Churches

Date	Sunday	Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel
1 February	Candlemas (W)	Malachi 3:1-4	Psalm 84	Hebrews 2:14-18	Luke 2:22-40
8 February	2nd Before Lent (G)	Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)	Psalm 112:1-9 (10)	1 Corinthians 2:1-12(13-16)	Matthew 5:13-20 [OR 6:25-end]
15 February	Transfiguration (G)	Exodus 24:12-18	Psalm 2 OR 99	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
22 February	1st of Lent (P)	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11
1 March	2nd of Lent (P)	Genesis 12:1-4a	Psalm 121	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17 [OR Matthew 17:1-9]
8 March	3rd of Lent (P)	Exodus 17:1-7	Psalm 95	Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42

In case of ambiguity, Readers should not hesitate to consult the Celebrant to check which variant is required.

Altar Frontal colours: (W) White/Gold; (G) Green; (P) Purple. At St Margaret's Matins, Second Reading is the Gospel.

St Margaret's Church, East with West Wellow and St Leonard's Church, Sherfield English

<https://tandbchurches.org.uk/news-notice/>

<https://www.sherfieldenglish.org.uk/st-leonards-church>

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