

St Mary's Newsletter

15th January 2026



The Vicar Writes...

What weather we've been having! As I write this on Thursday it is pouring with rain, has been since breakfast and will be till supper (or tea, or dinner depending on what you have). Yesterday there was so much ice my car took 10 minutes to defrost but then we had glorious sunshine and last week it was snow. It means I need to check the forecast and allow extra time, to make sure I have the right coat, shoes, and other bits and bobs to go outside. It's changeable and I am wrongfooted quite often.

Our readings from Exodus are helping us to explore what it's like when church life feels a bit like the recent weather – lots of change, the feeling that we need to adapt and sometimes feel wrongfooted. Our faith matters, and so church life matters, and when there is change to something which matters it feels tricky. I hope that for the most part we are feeling hopeful and even excited about what the future holds, but even when that is the case we can still be wrongfooted and feel a bit out of control or worried. And perhaps some of the changes affect how we encounter God.

In our reading we think about the crossing of the Red Sea – they all went together with some testing the way, some helping or being helped and some bringing up the rear and ensuring nothing and nobody was left behind.

I would love to hear from you – the good and the challenging so that as things change we can be sure that our whole community journeys just like that.

Sunday Services

Sunday 18th January – week of prayer for Christian unity – 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

8.30 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 Morning Worship with All Stars
no 4pm service this month

Sunday 25th January

10.30 Parish Communion with All Stars – ****GUEST PREACHER****

Prayer for our church community

This is a prayer that I pray every day, please do use it when you pray for our church. I encourage you also to pray for specific things that you feel we need.

God of Mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give,
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
Joy to our worship
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Discipleship

Douai Abbey run **day retreats** and have just released their Spring programme which is attached to the email. If the idea of a quiet day or retreat appeals but you don't like any of their days, then check out the Diocese page or speak to Gail or Brian for help to find something more your style. Taking time out of daily life with God every so often helps us to keep going.

Lent is coming – if you are not already in a homegroup then why not sign up for the 6-week **Lent course** where we will be looking at Baptism using various Bible verses and conversation. Speak to Gail for details.

Confirmation – confirmation is a step of faith following baptism. It's usually for older teens and adults of all ages and is a way of publicly declaring our faith. If this sounds interesting, then speak to Gail – there is a service on 26th April, and she'll be running preparation sessions for those interested.

Local Community

The Charlie Waller Trust, a local mental health charity, are holding a comedy night at the Corn Exchange – why not go along to support them and have a great night out.

<https://cornexchangenew.com/events/laugh-out-loud-for-mental-health>

Family News and Events

Soup Sundays

Are back for 2026. Sign up at the back of church and please include your telephone number. It's been great getting to know people and having more time to chat so please do come and share a bowl of soup with us at the Vicarage.



Spring Clean – Saturday 7th at 10am till 12 noon and Sunday 8th after church.

It's been a while so there's plenty of work for everyone – bring your Marigolds, feather dusters, mops and hoovers and let's get the church sparkling again. Sign up at the back of church so we can work out what jobs we can get done.

Take part on Sundays – could you take a turn reading the Bible reading, or maybe lead prayers. Could you help with All Stars or help welcome everyone into church with a smile? Speak to Gail. Now that we have more people coming, these parts of loving and serving, of using our gifts and spreading the load are more important than ever. Full training given for all roles and you can have a go before committing.



Administrative Help – could you help out with some of the church admin? In particular we need someone to look after bookings for our church hall. This is done through our website and full training will be given. You do not need open up or lock up, only to take bookings and help us get paid.

Sorellas

Is a group who meet a few times a year for fun and fellowship. The first meeting for 2026 is on 9th February at 7pm, see Lis for more information.

Reading

Exodus 14

14 Then the Lord said to Moses: **2** ‘Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall camp opposite it, by the sea. **3** Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, ‘They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them.’ **4** I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so.’

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed towards the people, and they said, ‘What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?’ **6** So he had his chariot made ready, and took his army with him; **7** he took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. **8** The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out boldly. **9** The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots, his chariot drivers and his army; they overtook them camped by the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. **11** They said to Moses, ‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, “Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians”? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.’ **13** But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. **14** The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.’

15 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. **16** But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. **17** Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. **18** And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.’

19 The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. **20** It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵ He clogged^[a] their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

²⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.