



All Saints, Little Casterton



St Peter & St Paul, Great Casterton

# Four Churches



# Together

All Saints, Pickworth



St Peter's Tickencote



**FEBRUARY  
2026**

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Place</b>
1	10.30a.m.	Benefice Holy Communion	Gt Casterton
2	10.00a.m.	Changing Connections Coffee Van Outside Church	Gt Casterton
4	10.00a.m.	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
4	10.30a.m.	Community Coffee	Church Hall
5	9.00a.m.	Parish Breakfast	Garden Centre
5	7.00pm	House Group	Harvard
6	10.00a.m.	Toddler Group	Church Hall
6	2.30p.m.	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
8	10.15a.m.	Café Church	Church Hall
11	10.00a.m.	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
11	10.30a.m.	Community Coffee	Church Hall
13	10.00a.m.	Toddler Group	Church Hall
13	2.30p.m.	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
15	10.30a.m.	Holy Communion	Gt. Casterton
18	10.00a.m.	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
18	10.30a.m.	Community Coffee	Church Hall
20	***Half Term no Toddlers or Warm Spaces***		
21	12.00	Saturday Live. Tim Knight & Friends	Gt. Casterton
22	10.30a.m.	Morning Praise	Gt. Casterton
23	2.00p.m.	Book Club	Mary Sproson's
24	7.30p.m.	Parish (Parson's) Pints	The Crown
25	10.00a.m.	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
25	10.30a.m.	Community Coffee	Church Hall
26	7.00p.m.	House Group	Harvard
27	10.00a.m.	Toddler Group	Church Hall
27	2.30p.m.	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
1 <sup>st</sup> March	10.30a.m.	Holy Communion	Gt. Casterton

## FOUR CHURCHES NEWS FEBRUARY 2026

Hi Everyone

Well, the time has come at last to present my final article for our Newsletter after eight years of being Priest in Charge in this Benefice. What a roller coaster ride it has been and thank you all for being on the train with Helen and me on the journey. Through the lows of Covid to the highs of the last year with multiple weddings, baptisms and of course our latest confirmations. Several highs come immediately to mind, all of which have been team efforts. Our many "drive in" services across the Benefice during the heights of covid. Our green heating systems at Great Casterton which keep us warm Sunday to Sunday and our warm spaces for teenagers on Friday afternoons.

Sadly, I must now stand back from ministry for a period of six months. It's not a retirement, more of a sabbatical and as I look into the future I am reminded of the catch phrase of Terminator Arnold Swartznegger "I'll be back". Well hopefully, providing good health and the bishop's permission being positive. But that's ahead and in God's hands.

Some of you may be worried and concerned for what the future brings for your church. I am not worried for you at all because we have great people who remain to carry forward the good work until the next appointment. We have great PCCs in all our parishes who are already ahead of the planning for services, parish profiles and all the other admin associated with a vacancy. Please support them in their work.

And although I am leaving you for a time remember the Lord is still here, he will not desert you so go forward in trust and in confidence. As an ex-churchwarden, many decades ago now, I can confirm that a vacancy can on many occasions bring fresh blood forward into a leadership role. Could that be you I wonder? We are all called with different gifts so keep listening because God works in mysterious ways sometimes using other people to bring his challenges forward. So, keeping talking to each other and keep affirming one another.

Finally, Helen and I will remain in Greetham, only ten minutes up the A1. We have no intention of leaving Rutland and you will undoubtedly bump into us from time to time. That's for sure.

There is one other certainty in church life that I am sure about. When things go wrong after February as they will from time to time. I can rest easy in the fact that I will get the blame. Don did that, it was his idea, that's the way Don always did it.

Fear not, I didn't get everything right and those errors of yesteryear will eventually resurface in the months ahead. So for all problem issues which arise real or imaginary It was me, I did them just get on with it. It's better to have tried and lost than to never have tried at all.

God bless and thanks for everything.

Revd. Don

**The Choir of All Saints Church Stamford  
will sing a full choral Evensong  
in Great Casterton Church  
on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 17.30**

**MARJORIE NEEDHAM**

**It is with great sadness that we share the news that  
Marjorie Needham died this weekend, 17/18 January, at  
Guthrie House nursing home in Edinburgh. David and  
other members of her family were with her and her  
death was very peaceful.**



"Is this a sermon about eternity  
or a demonstration of it?"

Prince Philip, on the  
subject of long sermons....  
*'The mind cannot absorb  
what the backside cannot  
endure.'*

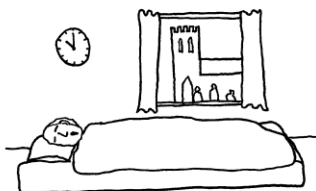
## LENT



LENT IS A TIME FOR QUIET  
REFLECTION AND CONTEMPLATION



IT IS A SEASON OF ABSTINENCE  
AND FASTING



SOME CHRISTIANS GIVE  
SOMETHING UP DURING LENT



OTHERS CHOOSE TO CARRY  
OUT ACTS OF PENANCE

## A SPRINGTIME FOR THE SOUL

February can be a tough month. Christmas is long gone and meanwhile the winter drags on; the weather's miserable and the news relentlessly depressing. There's not much to celebrate it seems.



But there are some signs of things changing. In the woods, a scattering of brilliant yellow aconites hint at the sunshine that is to come and a bank of snowdrops defies the last frosts of the year. Nature is on the move.

And so too is God. As we enter the season of Lent, we tentatively begin our preparations for Easter. Ash Wednesday's ceremonies may seem sober; reflecting on our mortality and need for forgiveness ("remember you are dust and to dust you shall return; turn away from sin") but also pointing us to the One in whom all our hopes are founded ("be faithful to Christ").

Traditionally a season of fasting, perhaps it might be better to think of Lent rather as a time to make space for God. Fast by all means but maybe it's head space we really need, so why not, for example, turn our smart phones off for a few hours so we can think and feel and 'be' ourselves in the presence of God rather than at the beck and call of others?

Perhaps that way we might truly make Lent, what Brother Roger of Taizé called it: "a springtime for the soul" and arrive at Easter with a renewed clarity about God's love and care for us all.  
Have a spacious Lent

The Very Revd Chris Dalliston  
Dean of Peterborough

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Tel: 01733 887000 Email: [communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)  
[www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

*Please support the social team as they endeavour to provide a comprehensive range of social activities for your enjoyment - and to raise money.*

*The provisional 2026 calendar of events follows and your support in coming along is appreciate. Any help offered to organise or run the events will be warmly welcomed.*

### **Provisional Calendar of Social Events for 2026**

**March 7<sup>th</sup>** - Men's Cook Night - £10pp with bar available.

**April 25<sup>h</sup>** - Barn Dance - £15pp with Sausage Supper and bar available.

**Thursday April 2nd** - Passover Supper £10pp

**May 16<sup>th</sup>** - Disco for warm space children - £5 pp - tbc

**June 27<sup>th</sup>** - Family Fun Day - 2.00-5.00pm - details to follow

**September 27<sup>th</sup>** - Harvest Lunch - 12.00-2.30? - £10pp - BYO alcohol

**November 14<sup>th</sup>** - Quingo Quiz - light refreshments - Bar - £10pp

**December 12<sup>th</sup>** - Christmas Draw - coffee morning and prize giving

## THE RESULTS OF HABIT: JOSIAH

**History.** Hezekiah had been a good king, but his son was not. That son Manasseh reigned for 35 years, perhaps longer than any other Judean king. Practices and rituals under him became the norm and were accepted. He was bad, put idols all round what was left of the temple Solomon had built about 400 years before. When he died the officials had a rebellion and the heir only lasted two years as king, before they assassinated him. That left a boy of eight called Josiah to become king of a disorganised state that had forgotten God. The story that followed is repeated almost verbatim in our bibles in Kings and Chronicles, so it might be important. This boy, Josiah, took time to find out what was happening. He was probably at school with a lad called Jeremiah who was a great and wise thinker. We are told that Josiah had a “tender heart”.

**Do good.** When Josiah was sixteen his school must have told him about history and what David had done in setting up the state. So he gave orders to start clearing out the idols, to cut down and smash the Asherah poles not only in Jerusalem but also in the surrounding settlements. In the temple they found and threw out many old things and intricate images. Some of the scrolls looked interesting and they kept them and some of the educated priests started to read them. Josiah was not a bad boy and got rid of many of the bad things, but he was not yet doing many of the good things. One of the first good things he did was to use up some of the tax money to pay craftsmen to repair the temple and clear out some of those back rooms where ornaments and valuable things given in lieu of tax were stored. Lots of good works, and he was still only twenty four years old.

**Think good.** It was in these back rooms that they found some old scrolls (books to us) and they started to read them. Dr Whyte says in his commentary that without Josiah’s spring cleaning we may not have heard about the creation, the exodus or even Moses and the ten commandments as these scrolls could have been the only copies of all the first five books of our bibles. Modern scholars teach that the “Book of the Law” that they had found was our book Deuteronomy. The word Deuteronomy means “repetition or copy of the law”. The book summarises the commandments and forecasts disaster on those who ignore it. They had found Moses’s records of the start of their nation and what God had done for them by bringing them out of slavery in Egypt and into the fertile land where they were now. They were so excited that they went and read it all to king Josiah. He seems to have been ignorant of what God had done for them in the past and he made the sign of great drama by “rending his clothes”. (This was probably only his royal robe, so don’t worry). Not content with being sorry, he decides to do something and tells the High Priest and his aides to find a wise woman and pray for him. They go for advice to a wise woman or prophetess. Their prayer is answered when they consult this old lady called Hulda – probably a second cousin to Jeremiah, who had a reputation of being wise and close to God.



when they consult this old lady called Hulda – probably a second cousin to Jeremiah, who had a reputation of being wise and close to God.

**Sorry.** She tells them bluntly that, because the people had turned away from God, all the disasters foretold in the book would happen - but not for some time now that the king was really sorry. King Josiah will have peace if he honours God before the disaster overtakes the nation. “Because you took seriously and responded in humble repentance, tearing your robe in dismay and weeping before me, I am taking you seriously. I’ll take care of you. You won’t be around to see the doom I am going to bring on this place and people.” That was God’s message from Hulda.

**Acts good.** Just being sorry was not good enough. Now Josiah acts. He assembles all the people and reads this “book of the law” in public. They too are excited and take it to heart and commit themselves to obey the rules. These are not just the ten commandments, but also some detailed principles for living. Actions are dramatic. They broke down the shrines and altars which had been built for the “vile and detestable” deities. One was even where they had sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. The quarters for the male prostitutes were knocked down. Was a kiln worse than the pill? Then Josiah immediately celebrates the Passover feast – that was in memory of when those who trusted and obeyed then survived when escaping Egypt. (now our modern Communion). Temple worship is restarted with a feast that Josiah provided. Everything was done properly, as in the rules Moses had recorded in the scrolls. Josiah led a reformation. There are said to be over 100 references to and quotes from Deuteronomy in the New Testament, many by Jesus Himself.

**Lessons.** The country had been politically stable but religiously devoid. Jesus quotes the Old Testament to explain about Himself. He says it is now by faith we are saved, not just by keeping rules. The Epistles are full of references to “the law”. Would we have reacted in the same way when hearing Deuteronomy or even the whole Pentateuch read out? What do we learn from Moses and those other old ones? Do we ever take notice of old ladies’ opinions? Or even from Josiah? Being sorry. Prayer. Making decisions. Taking action. Persisting. The people didn’t. They were back to their rituals within a few years. Leadership is needed. Josiah died in 606 BC and his reforms were ignored. What should have been done to prevent this retrogression away from God? Would a suitable leader have made any difference? Should Josiah have been training leaders? Was Josiah’s reformation based on fears rather than love? Is a Trump-like imposed approach to change destined to be temporary? Nine years later in 597 the Babylonians “resettled” those with potential to Babylon (Daniel was among them). The remnant still had not learned and revolted. So the Babylonians came back in 595 to devastate the temple, Jerusalem and the country. It was a long time before the city was resettled. See Haggai and other minor prophets. .

*Sources: Bible: 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, Josephus, Dr Whyte and of course, Google.*



**BETTY LAMB**  
**Much loved organist in this church**  
**For over 70 years**  
**Presented on her retirement 2025**

Betty Lamb has retired after being organist at Saint Peter and Saint Paul Great Casterton for over 70 years. A commemorative plaque has been attached to the organ to record this long period of devoted service to the church. After the confirmation service Bishop Debbie unveiled the plaque in the presence of the whole congregation and members of Betty's family. Betty is currently in Whitefriars care home and was unfortunately unable to attend however pictures and a video of the event were taken and were shown to her later.

A very fitting recognition of Betty's faithfulness and talent for over seventy years. .

## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*Answer from last month - George Bernard Shaw said, " Youth is wasted on the young".*

This month's quote - Who said this? Better a diamond with a flaw, than a pebble without".

## **FEBRUARY AROUND THE WORLD**

World Cancer Day falls on February 4th, and Valentines Day is celebrated on February 14th.

The 2026 Winter Olympics will be held in February in Milano/Cortina, Italy.

The Lunar New Year begins on February 17th (Year of the Horse).

And many places hold traditional carnivals such as Rio de Janeiro Carnival, beginning February 13th, Kurentovanje Carnival in Slovenia where people wear sheepskin costumes to scare winter away, and the Narvik Sun Pageant in Norway to welcome back the sun.

## **WORD CHALLENGE**

How many words can you make of 3 letters or more from the letters in ASCERTAINED

## **HAVE YOU EVER VISITED?**

The National Civil War Centre, Newark. Open Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10.00 am till 4.00 pm.

The National Civil War Centre invites you to explore one of the most fascinating times in UK history, sweeping you into a remarkable story of superstitions, serious sibling rivalry and seismic change which has affected the country we live in today. See the realities of 17th century life through the eyes of people who lived it in our stunning galleries and bring the whole family to enjoy a fantastic range of interactives including our much-loved dressing up cupboard!

With a shop, and a cafe on site, this museum offers a lot more than might be expected. On Appletongate in Newark, it is easy to find, but not quite so easy to find parking first. However, it is worth the effort and if you have accessibility concerns, they welcome a phone-call to sort things for you, personally.

Admission, £8.50 pp, £ 7.50 for concessions and free for the Under 25s. The museum holds a range of special events and the what's on section of the website is easy to navigate: a sample of forthcoming talks is given below.

Evening Talk on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February at 7 pm (for LGBGQ History Month)- the life and loves of James 1<sup>st</sup>, an openly gay monarch. Talk entitled Queen James.

Evening Talk on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm - The British Civil Wars and the Wider World.

*Sue Cliffe*

**SATURDAY LUNCHTIME LIVE JANUARY 17TH 2026**  
**THE RUTLAND FOUR**



To introduce the Rutland Four, a group of friends, the majority of whom live in Rutland, Rachel and Ben from TollBar, with Tim (who we've met before) and Greg from Little Casterton.

The theme of colours was an interesting theme with each of the band singing individually for a different colour.

Rachel had her fingernails painted to represent the colours of the rainbow and the performance started with 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' sang by Rachel, following on with Tim singing 'Brown Eyed Girl', Greg singing 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road' and then Ben with 'Yellow'.

An instrumental from the sixties originally by Booker T and the MGs - 'Green Onions' came next followed by a group of blue songs - 'Blue Suede Shoes', 'Blue Eyes', and 'Blue Velvet', which almost completed the rainbow of colours.

Rachel then performed 'Pearl's a Singer', with Tim following with 'Fields of Gold'. 'Nights in White Satin' and 'Red Light' completed the line up to a very eclectic selection of coloured music from the fifties, sixties and seventies. Did you know that there were so many songs with a colour theme?

The band hadn't really prepared an encore, but on the spur of the moment when asked to play and sing again, Greg sang 'Just Seventeen' which of course was not coloured but jokingly announced as being in the key of yellow.

An amazing audience of 30 people enjoyed a well thought-out and beautifully performed Saturday live event.

The total raised is unknown at the moment as several people used the electronic giving system however we are grateful for all the donations for our church funds.

## **CONFIRMATION**



***Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.  
Amen.***

On the 11th of January we welcomed the Bishop of Peterborough, the Rt Reverend Debbie Sellin to Great Casterton where she carried out a confirmation service and celebrated Communion.

..

Five members of our congregation, Mary Sproson, Carol Maynard, Jane Cuppleditch, Julia Fraser and Bill Bowden were confirmed. After the service the Bishop presented each candidate with a commemorative candle.

The church was full of the regular congregation and friends and family of the five candidates. After the service everyone enjoyed light refreshments and the opportunity to talk to the candidates and their families.

### **PRAYER BOARD IN CHURCH**

Did you know that every week the names that have been placed on our prayer board in church are prayed out loud on Wednesday mornings? Please date each prayer that is placed on the board, to help the team keep up with how recently they were placed there.

Thank you

### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

<b>Priest in Charge</b>	Rev Don McGarrigle	01572 812804
<b>Great Casterton Hall Bookings</b>	Steve Cunningham	07810 404748
<b>Benefice Safeguarding Officer</b>	Carol Maynard	01780 755687.
<b>Newsletter Distribution</b>	Mary Sproson	01780 762933
<b>Churchwardens:</b>		
Great Casterton	Geoffrey Archer	07803 423010
	Peter Bryan	07507 299436
Little Casterton	Tony Dolby	01780 766897
Pickworth	Charles Gilman	01780 411017
	Goldie Bardwell	01780 410272

### **FOR HIRE**

Great Casterton Church Hall is available for hire for children's parties and/or other events. For more details contact Steve Cunningham

Email: [stephenmichaelcunningham@gmail.com](mailto:stephenmichaelcunningham@gmail.com)

Phone: 07810 404748

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### **Church Projects**

Moving on from our heating project we are now fund-raising to renew the kitchen in the Church Hall, which is in dire need of being updated to meet current standards. You can help by coming along to and supporting our social events, where all monies raised will go towards church projects, or you can make a one off or regular donation by using our QR code. We are very grateful for any support you can give us.



## **Snug as a bug in a .....pile of logs.**

Wildlife appreciate shelter in winter and a pile of logs, stones, sticks and earth can be a desirable residence. If you are able to dig down into a damp or boggy area in your garden and create a hibernaculum you may be able to attract amphibians and reptiles. As well as our common frog you could play host to the common toad, the smooth newt, the palmate newt and even, if you are very lucky, the great crested newt. Did you know that newts used to be called ewts? But over time, people started saying a newt rather than “an ewt”. That shift went the other way with adders, though - before 1500 we talked about “a nadder”

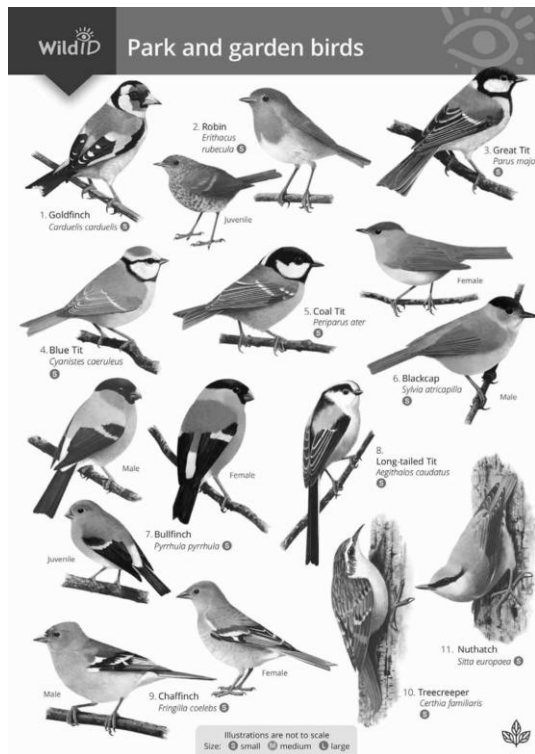
Insects will love your logs and sticks, too, and we know how important insects are to our gardens. From solitary bees to partying woodlice, centipedes to perhaps even stag beetles (if you are in the South of the UK), you'll soon be brimming with happy wildlife. A diverse garden is a resilient one so get piling up those logs.

## **Rutland Water**

2026 is a big year for Rutland Water and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. It is 70 years of nature recovery across Leicestershire and Rutland, 50 years since the reservoir was completed and Rutland Water Nature Reserve was established. It is 30 years of Osprey reintroduction to Rutland. And 10 years since the start of the Anglian Water Parks, Park Lovers Volunteers group, which I joined not too long after it began. We carry out a wide range of conservation tasks around the reservoir.

This milestone of multiple anniversaries provides a moment to reflect upon the conservation progress made so far, but also the work still to be done, to ensure the wildlife of the two counties and around the reservoir flourishes and remains. Special anniversary events will be taking place throughout 2026.

***Peter Bryan***



The dawn chorus is starting to amplify, with a rich orchestra of robins, various tits, sparrows, crows and other corvids, dunnocks and more. You're likely to spot plenty of woodpigeons and collared doves perched in trees and greedily pecking away at bird tables. Look out for blackbirds, and all the birds named above, flitting about around hedgerows, in trees and in gardens.

Mistle and song thrushes may also start warming up their vocal chords in February. These beautiful birds have a dramatic, high pitched and flute-like song, with the song thrush often opting to repeat phrases several times. Look out for them higher up in trees and hedgerows.





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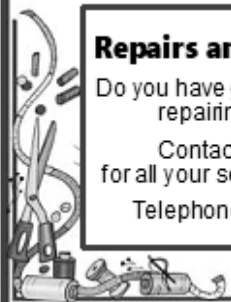
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