



WELLOW & SHERFIELD ENGLISH

Parish Newsletter

March 2026



Letters from our Vicar, Rector and Rural Dean – and from our Associate Priest

What is Lent? Lent is the six weeks leading up to Easter, together with Advent one of the most important times of year for Christians.

Lent is seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday to its conclusion on Easter Sunday, Lent has been a time for fasting or giving something up. Just as we prepare for personal events such as weddings or birthdays, Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for Jesus' life, death and body resurrection.

What do Christians do during Lent? These days, Christians observe Lent in many ways. Many denominations observe the fast strictly, beginning with the "ashing" on Ash Wednesday and not eating meat, fish, eggs and fats until Easter. Others may give up just one item for Lent, often a 'luxury' such as chocolate, meat or alcohol. Some people give up time-consuming activities (like social media) to focus on their faith. Many study their Bibles and pray more intensively, using the many available books and courses. Sundays during Lent are very important. While Mondays to Saturdays of each of the six weeks are concerned with fasting and abstinence, Sunday is a celebration symbolic of Christ's resurrection. Instead of fasting, Christians hold feasts in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. The fourth and sixth Sundays are particularly important here – the fourth because it's Mothering Sunday (15th March) and the sixth because it's Palm Sunday (29th March). What will you do this Lent?

Key Dates and Information: Please check for details on our upcoming services, Lent study groups, and community events. This information is crucial for staying connected and involved in the life of our church.

Your Rural Dean, James **Revd James Pitkin**
 romseyareadean@gmail.com jamespitkin@priest.com

'Waiting' 'Patience is a virtue', we are taught in our younger years, however it seems a rare gift these days. We expect immediate responses to e-mails, and even quicker replies to a text message. We can order milk and bread for delivery to our homes on a motorcycle in less than an hour (if we live in the right postcode), and on-line deliveries can be made within 24 hours. Everything can happen so fast.

But we humans need a slow pace every now and again, to catch up with ourselves. A gentle walk in the sunshine or a stroll in the rain. During the 40 days of Lent, we are encouraged to make a personal sacrifice to give us a little time with God. We are encouraged to make our confession, to be right with God and then to rest in the Everlasting Arms.

If you haven't spent time waiting with God today, why not do that now? Take a few minutes to stop and consider the coming joy of Easter, and all that Jesus went through on earth for you. Or maybe come to the Lent Course, Thursdays at 7.00 p.m. in Wellow Village Hall. Jesus wants to spend time with you ... He loves you to death!

Revd Sara-Jane Stevens, Associate Priest
 revsj@btinternet.com

Letters from Churchwardens

Spring arrives with the equinox on 20th March. It would be wonderful to have dry weather after the last couple of months. The daffodils and primroses are in bloom, the birds are joyfully proclaiming the new season, and the trees are starting to bud and blossom. This season reminds us of the wonders of God's creation and our gratitude for being part of it.

We are well into the season of Lent, a period of self-denial, reflection and giving. St Margaret's hosted the first of the benefice's Lent lunches, well-supported and raising £250 for UNICEF. Thank you to all who donated, and to our loyal band of volunteers for the delicious soup and cheese. I know I always go on about our volunteers, but without them, church events cannot happen. We are always looking for more volunteers.

As Lent draws to a close, Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, 29th March, with a joint benefice service at 10.30 a.m. in Sherfield English.

Looking forward, our churchyard 'Rewilding' project will continue this year, with (hopefully) young volunteers assisting with its implementation. We are also commencing a fundraising effort for the restoration of our 13th-century wall paintings; approximately £20 000 is required to cover the cost of the work, which is tentatively planned for later this year.

One of our major events this year will be our contribution to the Romsey Festival which takes place during July. This is a benefice-wide project; our contribution will be to mount an exhibition and display of Florence Nightingale's life and her connection to St. Margaret's church. There will be a display of the history of our beautiful church, and to bring this to fruition we require volunteers to offer their suggestions, as well as their support. Please speak to me if you can assist.

Mel King, St Margaret's Churchwarden

Five Sundays in March means a busy time at St Leonard's church, including Mothering Sunday on the 15th. It is our turn to host our group of six churches on Palm Sunday, 29th March, at 10.30 a.m. It will be lovely to welcome our friends from these other churches and catch up on all that has happened, highs and lows, since we last met. I suspect there will be much commiseration as well as merriment that the first of us to receive the Archdeacon's Visitation, when all the documents and church property are checked, will be St Leonard's. I am even attending the webinar in March to learn how it should be done as our last one was in 2019. The very organised chronicler and ex-churchwarden, Terry Drabble, led the preparations and I just turned up on the day to answer questions. This Visitation is not until the autumn, so I am sure we will get on top of it and we can then smugly rest up for another six years! Joy!

We are in Lent for the whole of March but we can still indulge ourselves at our coffee morning on Saturday 7th March, 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. If it is anything like the February gathering it will be heaving with people, a fabulous occasion!

Julia Noble, St Leonard's Churchwarden

