

March 2026 Edition 121

'As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.' *Isaiah 66:13*



The Fourth Sunday of Lent, this year on 15th March, is traditionally Mothering Sunday. Countless mothers will be receiving cards, flowers and chocolates, and perhaps be taken out to lunch and generally have a fuss made of them.

Yet for women unable to have children, for the bereaved mother, or child whose mother has died, for the child victims of violence and neglect, for those whose mother/child relationship has irretrievably broken down, Mothering Sunday will surely be extremely difficult to cope with.

So perhaps it is good that one image of Mothering Sunday is wonderfully comforting – that of Mother Church, where we ourselves are brothers and sisters in the same family of God, regardless of our parental status or lack of it. If we focus on the image of Mother Church, we can be reminded that motherhood is about nurture and caring and enabling us to flourish in body, mind and spirit.

Above all, it is about creation - and creation is the concern of all of us; its impact isn't restricted to those who have given birth. Creation is at the very heart of God – our loving parent. I use the term “parent” advisedly. Of course we are all used to thinking of God as Father, and quite rightly because he is. But there are nevertheless wonderful references to God's motherly qualities throughout the Bible, and if we pass these by, we miss so much of the true nature of God, whose children we are.

Consider Genesis 3:21 “And the Lord made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.” Is the image of God sewing garments together to clothe Adam and Eve more suggestive of a mother's activity than a father's?

How about Isaiah 42 verse 14? God speaks:

“For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
Now I will cry out like a woman in labour,
I will gasp and pant.”

God crying out like a woman in labour, gasping and panting is not an image we are familiar, or indeed particularly comfortable, with.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful texts is from Hosea 11. Again, it is God who speaks:

“When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
It was I who taught Ephraim to walk.
I took them up in my arms:
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.”

Wonderfully maternal, don't you think? And if you read it again, substituting 'Israel' or 'Ephraim' for "You", you will hear God speaking to you with great tenderness.

Perhaps you find it hard to equate such feminine language with your concept of God. But we may ask ourselves why God is so concerned to show us this sensitive side to his nature? Perhaps it is all part of the whole image of God as creator. Certainly, Creator God is a concept we are all comfortable with. It takes our imaginations, for creation is a dynamic concept. And we are all called to be part of that. Whether we are biologically involved in procreation or not is really immaterial. For God calls us to co-operate with him in his creative work. God didn't create once and for all. God continues creating all the time, and we are part of that.

Of course, creation takes us back to the very beginning, when God created the universe. But the universe is still being created. New stars are being born all the time. Thoughts of creation also take us back to our own beginnings. As God says in the first chapter of Jeremiah.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born, I consecrated you.”

It’s awe-inspiring, how it was at our beginning. Perhaps even more awe-inspiring is the fact that “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.” The God who brought us to life at our conception, in the beginning, IS NOW. That same loving relationship with God exists NOW. AND EVER SHALL BE. He will never stop wanting us to reach the fullness of the person he has created us to be.

And so even as fully grown human beings, the creator God never ceases yearning to re-create within us. We become the place where his transforming love is constantly at work, seeking to bring order out of our chaos, peace out of our anxiety, healing and wholeness to our brokenness, a sense of direction out of our confusion.

As we ponder on Mothering Sunday what we need to grow and flourish, we give thanks to God for our Mother Church.

Just as human mothering feeds us – so here at St Mary’s we are fed by word and sacrament.

Just as human mothering washes us – so here our sins are forgiven and we are made clean and whole again.

Just as human mothering deals with all the messes we make – so here God takes our failings, forgives and redeems us.

Just as human mothering comforts us when we are hurt – so here we find ourselves held in God’s healing love.

Just as human mothering encourages us to play and have fun – so here God calls us to know the joy of life in all its fullness.

As we give thanks on Mothering Sunday for our mothers who gave us life, so too we thank God for his loving care as we grow to maturity in love.

Maggie Marsh

March Services and Events

Sunday 1	08.00	Holy Communion (BCP)
	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
Monday 2	19.30	<i>Knit & Natter</i> in the Leverton Room
	19.45	<i>Making Sense of Lent</i> in the Cuddington Hall
Wednesday 4	09.30	<i>Knit & Natter</i> in the Leverton Room
Saturday 7	09.00	Men's Breakfast at Horton Golf Park
Sunday 8	08.00	Holy Communion (BCP)
	09.30	Sung Communion
Monday 9	19.45	<i>Making Sense of Lent</i> in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 15	09.30	Mothering Sunday Parade Service
	10.30	Homemade Sunday in the Cuddington Hall
Monday 16	19.45	<i>Making Sense of Lent</i> in the Cuddington Hall
Wednesday 18	20.00	PCC Meeting in the Cuddington Hall
Thursday 19	14.00	Afternoon Club Garden Centre Visit
Saturday 21	10.00	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
	19.00	Quiz Night in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 22	09.30	Sung Communion
Monday 23	19.45	<i>Making Sense of Lent</i> in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 29	09.30	Palm Sunday Sung Communion
	18.00	Stainer's <i>Crucifixion</i> Devotional Service
Monday 30	20.00	Holy Week Communion Service
Tuesday 31	20.00	Holy Week Communion Service
Wednesday 1 Apr	20.00	Holy Week Communion Service
Thursday 2	20.00	Maundy Thursday Communion & Foot Washing
Friday 3	10.00	Good Friday Family Service
	10-12	Children's Craft Workshop
	12-14	<i>Walking in the Footsteps of Christ</i>
	14.00	Liturgy of Good Friday
Saturday 4	09.00	Men's Breakfast at Horton Golf Park
Sunday 5	06.00	Easter Sunrise Communion & Breakfast
	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Easter Sung Communion

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome