

“The Newsletter”

For MARTLESHAM & BRIGHTWELL

Sunday 15 February 2026



St John's church, Brightwell is a lovely church. Although it is – by any objective measure – a tiny building, it lends itself to smaller services and times of reflection. The fortnightly evensong is a joy to come to. A space to meet with God in words that others have used for hundreds of years. I particularly love singing the Song of Simeon or Nunc Dimittis asking God to let his servant depart in peace. For someone who often has hectic Sundays, this is my space to rest in God.

What I don't especially love is standing at the end of the farm drive operating the gate. The family who lives there have generously given us a field on which to park, but due to recent events have restricted the gate code. So, someone has to stand there and let people in and out. Currently it has been quite cold and wet when I have stood there. This Sunday as I stood there, I was pondering psalm 84:10 A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked. I have to admit that my thoughts were against this – surely a good life in the warm would be better than being a gatekeeper in the cold and rain.

But it did lead me to ponder about worry. Sunday morning, I spoke about how Jesus calls us to draw our eyes away from the worry to see the provision that God has for us (do find the talk online if you missed it). Entering into worship is a great way to put our lives into perspective and see that God does indeed care for us. Leaving the gate to enter into God's house and spend time worshipping him was a great tonic.

So if you are struggling with worry, do reach out and I, or any of the ministry team, would be happy to chat and pray with you. And if you need something to look at as you work your way through a tough week, why not consider Psalm 27 which speaks of how God will protect and comfort us in times of struggle. Well worth a read, whether or not you are in need.

Toby

One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.
Psalm 27:4

Sunday 15 February

10:00am – Morning Worship – St Michael's

11:00am – Holy Communion – St Mary's

Monday 16 February

8:30 - Morning Prayer - St Mary's

Wednesday 18 February (Ash Wednesday)

10:00am Holy Communion – St Michael's

Sunday 22 February

10:00am – Holy Communion – St Michael's

3:00pm – Evensong – St John's

Monday 23 February

8:30 - Morning Prayer - St Mary's

Wednesday 25 February

10:00am Holy Communion – St Michael's

Sunday 1 March

9:30am - Breakfast Church - St Michael's

11:00am – Holy Communion – St Mary's

Monday 2 March

8:30 - Morning Prayer - St Mary's

Sunday 8 March

10:00am – Holy Communion – St Michael's

3:00pm – Evensong – St John's

Monday 9 March

8:30 - Morning Prayer - St Mary's

Wednesday 11 March

10:00am Holy Communion – St Michael's

We were sad to hear that Liz Welham died peacefully at home with her family at the end of January. Liz was a pastoral elder for many years, visiting people and taking home communion. She led Friends on Friday with John and Ruth, and her devotion to that group kept going throughout her illness. In the past she had been involved in children's work, leading a group of older primary school children on Sunday mornings, and much more besides. She will be missed by friends and family alike.

There will be a Thanksgiving service for Liz at St Michael's on **Tuesday 31st March at 2pm**, followed by refreshments, and all are very welcome to attend. Please come dressed however you feel comfortable.

If you have any memories of Liz, I would be very grateful to hear them, so I can collect them together for the family.

Christine

Reflecting with God this Sunday 15th February at 7pm on Zoom

Would you like an opportunity to gather together with God for some quiet time and reflection? Reflecting with God meets this Sunday evening at 7pm on Zoom, and everyone is welcome to join. We don't have a set format but a typical meeting starts with an introduction then a short time of silence to bring ourselves consciously into God's presence. The materials for reflection are then introduced and we spend a longer time in quiet to reflect on these individually. After this we start the meeting again and there is an opportunity to share anything we'd like of what we've heard God saying to us, then we close with prayer.

For more details and the Zoom link please contact Toby
toby@martleshamcofe.org.uk.

Carolyn Smith

There will be no after-service Zoom coffee chat this Sunday (15th February) due to family commitments. We apologise but normal service will resume the following week. For more details and to get the Zoom link please email info@martleshamcofe.org.uk. Looking forward to seeing you next week!

Carolyn Smith

Lent Lunch

- Food, fellowship and support for the persecuted church

Each Tuesday lunchtime during lent you are invited to join us at St Michael's for homemade soup and bread, a chance to chat to friends and a short talk. The meal is free but this year we are asking for donations towards Open Doors who support the persecuted church. Find out more about the work they do at <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

Lunches start on **Tuesday February 24th at 12.30pm**.

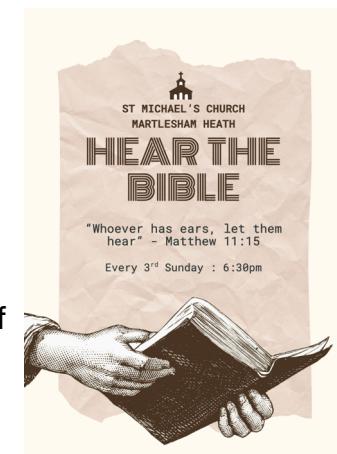
Toby

Hear The Bible

I've heard it said before that if you want to hear God speak, read your Bible. If you want to hear God speak audibly, read your Bible out loud.

Over the year we are going to be reading out loud most of the New Testament. We start this Sunday at St Michaels with the Gospel of St Mark. It's often considered the 'fast paced' Gospel, most likely written for the Romans as they liked the excitement of a quick moving story. You are all invited to come and join in, starting at 6.30pm, you can come and read a chapter if you wish, or you can follow it along, or you can just sit and listen.

Rob



Refreshments for Crocus Visitors

During February we are hoping to provide refreshments on Saturdays for the many visitors who come to St. Mary's to admire the crocuses and snowdrops in the churchyard. We intend to provide teas, coffees and biscuits between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon.

If we get enough volunteers, we may extend the time to 2.00 pm. If you have an hour or two to spare on a Saturday, please talk to **Roger or Pam** who will be happy to add you to the Rota. The refreshments will be set up first thing. All you will need to do is pour the teas or coffees and chat to the visitors.

Roger

(Crocus photo from last year - Ed.)



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<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068833925952>

<https://www.youtube.com/@martleshambenefice>

Liz Whelam contributed this poem last year. We can enjoy it once again as we remember her life and her many contributions to church activites over the years, including Friends On Friday

ODE TO FRIENDS ON FRIDAY

We look forward to Friends on Friday,

Gives us a chance to exchange news.

How is your friend feeling who wasn't here last week?

Coffee or tea from the Runway, yum yum

Biscuits! The more the merrier – sometimes cake

Let's sing 'Happy Birthday!'

John likes to play table tennis,

Debbie likes doing a jigsaw puzzle

David likes to play pool.

Readers? Lots of Friends are avid readers and like to swap books

Have time to listen to each other's problems

Riots sometimes break out over Scrabble!

What do you do if you've nothing but vowels!

Just in time a speaker arrives for Thought for the Day –

Ruth won't enjoy this – she doesn't like poetry.

Perhaps the sun will come out just as we leave.

Sometimes very clever people play chess.

I still don't understand 'Rummikub' but Peter does.

Make a small donation – it keeps the church warm.

Music? We don't have any; perhaps we should?

It stops us being lonely – thank you for Friends on Friday!

God's in his Heaven – all's right with the world.

Love God, and treat others as you would wish to be treated.

'My soul he doth restore again' – wonderful words from Psalm 23.

If you forgive others, God in heaven will forgive you.

Jesus is the same – yesterday, today and forever.

'Friends on Friday' meets every Friday morning, 10:00 - 12:00 at St Michael's. The Runway is open for refreshments. All are welcome.