

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 15TH MARCH

MOTHERING SUNDAY

STADHAMPTON - 9:30AM MOTHERING SUNDAY HC

WARBOROUGH – 11:00AM MOTHERING SUNDAY FAMILY
EUCCHARIST

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH

5TH OF LENT

WARBOROUGH – 8:00AM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

STADHAMPTON - 4:30PM CLUSTER EVENSONG

SUNDAY 29TH MARCH

MOTHERING SUNDAY

STADHAMPTON - 9:30AM PALM SUNDAY HC

WARBOROUGH – 11:00AM PALM SUNDAY FAMILY
EUCCHARIST

MONDAY 30TH MARCH

WARBOROUGH – 7:00PM COMPLINE

TUESDAY 31ST MARCH

STADHAMPTON – 7:00PM COMPLINE

WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL

WARBOROUGH – 7:00PM COMPLINE

STADHAMPTON – 7:00PM COMPLINE

WARBOROUGH NEWS:

We are delighted to welcome you here, on Mothering Sunday.

Please join us after this service for refreshments in St Laurence Hall.

We enjoyed having the pupils and staff of St Laurence School here yesterday for their School-in-Church Celebration.

This week we pray for those who live in Gravel Lane, Green Lane and Six Acres, together with the pupils and staff of St Laurence Church of England Primary School.



*Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton,
Warborough and Shillingford*

PEWS NEWS

St Laurence Church, Warborough

SUNDAY 15TH MARCH

4TH OF LENT, MOTHERING SUNDAY

THE COLLECTS

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living

that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Exodus 2.1–10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ²The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. ³When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. ⁷Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' ⁸Pharaoh's daughter said to

her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

Colossians 3.12–17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

John 19.25–27

And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life: help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

Let us pray to God, who loves us as a parent loves their children, and who gathers us all into one family of faith.

We give thanks today for mothers and for all who nurture and care for others. For those who have given us life, love, guidance and encouragement. For those who have comforted us, taught us, and helped us grow. May we honour them with gratitude and love.

We pray for families everywhere. For relationships that are strong and joyful, and for those that are strained or fragile. Bring patience where there is frustration, healing where there is hurt, and reconciliation where there is distance.

We remember before you those for whom this day is difficult: those who long to be parents, those who grieve for mothers or children no longer with them, and those whose family relationships are complicated or painful. Surround them with your compassion and peace.

We give thanks for our church community, for the fellowship we share and the care we offer one another. Help us to nurture one another in faith, to welcome those who seek belonging, and to be a place of kindness, encouragement and hope.

We pray for the wider world. For those suffering through conflict, poverty or injustice. Guide leaders in the ways of wisdom and peace, and help us all to play our part in building communities of compassion and understanding.

We remember those who are sick, lonely, or in need of comfort. May they know the strength of your presence and the support of those who care for them.

Loving God, as a mother comforts her children, so you care for each one of us. Receive these prayers we offer today and hold us together in your love.

Amen

Views from the Pews: Jen's Lens

I have always found Mothering Sunday to be such a lovely celebration. Not just because I might receive some flowers (and perhaps breakfast in bed), but because it tends to be such a happy, gentle sort of day. Whether you think of it primarily as a day for mothers, remember its older tradition of returning to the "Mother Church", or simply treat it as a moment to honour those who love and care for us – and whom we love and care for in return – it carries with it a warmth that envelops like a comfort blanket. That is, of course, once I have remembered and managed to source a gift for my own mother and can relax!

Like other high days and holidays, it's a chance to reconnect. Families have varying dynamics and, other than sending my brother pictures of rainy England while he sends ones of Caribbean sunsets, my role seems to include reminding him to send mum something in time. Not that he wouldn't have called from the other side of the world, but he might not have marked the day without a gentle nudge. That message often sparks a longer conversation, and we chat for a while before drifting back into our comfort zone of sharing photos rather than words. In church life too, there are often a few more faces at the Mothering Sunday service, and it's always a lovely opportunity to catch up as we pause our busy lives for a moment.

Community has always been a huge part of my experience of church. Rev'd Mel used to describe it as "faith through fellowship", and that phrase has always stayed with me. Faith isn't something we practise entirely alone; for me it extends beyond the end of the service into the conversations, the laughter, the cake, and the ever-essential cup of tea.

Mothering Sunday brings this spirit out particularly clearly. Even if the day itself carries difficult memories or complicated feelings, church can be a place of welcome, comfort and kindness. Perhaps because my family was always hundreds of miles away, I've had a tendency to find new families wherever I am. At boarding school and on postings around the world I quickly gathered a family of friends whom I still cherish to this day, and I'm beginning to feel just as strongly about my church family here.

The other day I was listening to the podcast *The Rest is Politics*, where, while discussing recent global events, Rory Stewart made an offhand remark about how "we are not Hobbits requiring the men of Gondor to come to our aid". I understood his point, but it did make me smile, because in my understanding of Tolkien the Hobbits were never weak or helpless at all.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Hobbits are often dismissed as small, ordinary creatures, content with their gardens, their many meals and the comforts of the Shire. They are not kings or warriors. But Tolkien quietly shows us that their strength lies somewhere else entirely. It lies in loyalty, friendship, courage, hospitality and a deep love for home and community.

Those qualities may not look dramatic, but they are precisely the things that hold the world together. The Hobbits succeed not because they are powerful, but because they remain kind, steadfast and devoted to one another even when the world around them grows dark.

Perhaps those same qualities are the ones that sustain our own families and communities too. The small, everyday acts of care. The phone calls, the encouragement, the willingness to show up for one another. The things that might seem ordinary, but which quietly build the relationships that support us all.

So on Mothering Sunday, perhaps we might embrace a little of our inner Hobbit. To value the small things that hold families and communities together. To look after one another, and to honour the places and people who make us feel at home. Perhaps, at the moment, the world needs a few fewer "men of Gondor" and a bit more good company, hot cups of tea and, perhaps, second breakfast.

I wish you all a wonderful week ahead!

Jen