

PARISH CHURCH NEWS

**Ss. Peter & Paul, Clare
with St. Mary the Virgin, Poslingford**

The Rev'd Mark Woodrow

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“Christ is risen – He is risen indeed. Alleluia!”

Rector's Ramblings – April 2026 (A Journey Back and the Path Ahead)

One of the great joys of being your priest is the opportunity for occasional reflection, often sparked by the simplest of things. I've just returned from a short break to Newquay in Cornwall, somewhere I hadn't been since I went there with my grandparents when I was ten or eleven!

The last time I stood on the cliffs overlooking Fistral Beach was nearly forty-three years ago, and yet as I walked the familiar coastal paths, I was struck by the dance between change and constancy—a theme that feels particularly poignant as we enter April and prepare for the glory of Easter.

Newquay has certainly moved on since the early nineteen eighties. The skyline is now punctuated by modern architecture and sleek glass balconies designed to catch every drop of Atlantic light. Where I remembered modest, lace-curtained guesthouses, there are now stylish hotels and vibrant street art. Perhaps it is simply because I am an adult now, looking beyond the immediate allure of sandcastles and mint-choc-chip ice cream, but the town feels renewed; it brims with a creative, entrepreneurial spirit that I didn't see as a child.



It is easy to feel a slightly adrift when the landmarks of our memory are replaced by the "new and improved." Yet, as I stood by Huer's Hut - that iconic, white-washed lookout that has watched over the bay since the 14th century - I realised that the essence of the place remains untouched.

The Atlantic still thunders against the rocks with the same timeless rhythm. The sharp tang of the salt air, the haunting cry of the gulls, and the stubborn grit of the sand underfoot are exactly as they were four decades ago. Even in a world that moves at a frantic pace, there are "permanent things" that the passage of time simply cannot erode.

This experience remains with me as I prepare to begin to lead our Benefices annual journey through Holy Week. Our lives change - often faster than we would like. We grow older, our families evolve, and many of the people we shared our first holidays with have now died. At times, the world can feel unrecognisable compared to the one we knew as children. We face new challenges and modern anxieties that my grandparents could never have imagined.

But the "shoreline" of our faith remains steadfast. On Easter Sunday (5th April), we celebrate the ultimate "permanent thing": the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Just as the tide inevitably returns to the Cornish coast, the promise of new life and hope returns to us every spring.

Easter tells us that while change is inevitable, and, as we know through the lens of Good Friday, sometimes deeply painful, it never has the final word. The light of the risen Christ is the same light that shone on that first, world-changing morning, and it is the same light that guides us today in 2026.

Whether you are currently navigating a season of great change or seeking comfort in the familiar, remember that the heart of our faith is a story of renewal. I look forward to seeing many of you at our services as we celebrate this "Greater Love" together.

May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you and your families this April.

Mark

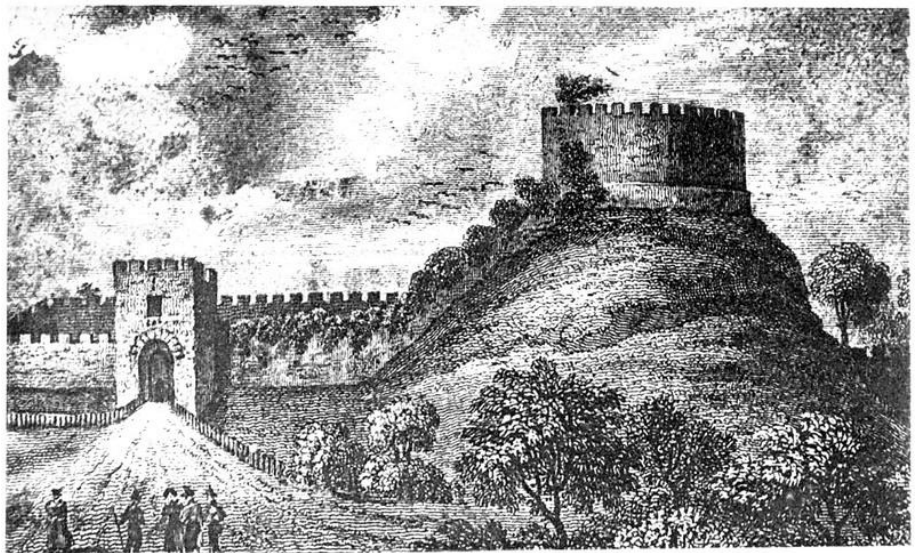
The Rev'd Mark Woodrow
(Rector)

Easter in Mediaeval Clare

By Julia Burge

Easter has been an important Christian festival in England for more than thirteen hundred years. Mediaeval Clare would have enjoyed dramatic re-enactments of the Easter story at both Church and Priory, as well as an extended period of feasting and celebrations.

Easter follows Lent, a 40-day period of religious observance and abstinence. On Maundy Thursday, the monks at Clare Priory, along with those at religious houses around the country, would have washed the feet of the poor. The Norman household at Clare Castle would have joined in Lenten abstinence and a Good Friday fast, before feasting in style from Easter Sunday.



Feasting was serious business for the wealthy in the Middle Ages, with meals of swan, bittern, egret and heron, as well as a variety of game. Elizabeth de Burgh, chatelaine of the castle for many years in the 1300s, was one of England's richest people and niece of King Edward II: her uncle spent Easter 1318 at Clare and joined the household in prayer, fasting and subsequent feasting in royal style.

For the working people of Clare, abstinence from meat during Lent would have been no hardship, as it was largely unaffordable. They were more likely to have missed eggs and dairy,

which were also off the menu during Lent, though even these would have been unaffordable luxuries for some.

Elizabeth was a generous supporter of Clare's poor, particularly in her later years, and her practice of feeding the local paupers on Maundy Thursday would have been very welcome. This Easter ritual continues today, with the King distributing Maundy money to pensioners to commemorate Jesus' washing of the Apostles' feet.

In 877, Alfred the Great's administration had decreed that workers be freed from labour for a whole week at Easter, the longest holiday of the year. This was whittled away until, by the mid-1800s, Good Friday was one of just two national days off (the other being Christmas Day). In medieval times, however, English labourers would have enjoyed archery, handball and dancing among other sports, on Easter Monday and into the following week. Indeed Cambridge was a hotspot for communal skipping, though history doesn't record whether Clare folk embraced it with the same enthusiasm.

The closest many children come to an Easter sport today is an Easter egg hunt. England's earliest recorded Easter eggs date back to 1290, when Edward I (grandfather of Elizabeth de Burgh) purchased 450 eggs. They were decorated with gold leaf and gifted to members of the royal household. Easter egg hunts didn't become fashionable until the 1800s, when they were introduced to the UK by the Hanoverians, who also favoured Easter cards and gifts featuring bunnies, chicks and other whimsical symbols of new life.

Other Easter rituals that we enjoy today may be traced back hundreds of years. The earliest mention of a hot cross bun is in 1733. Baked on Good Friday, they were thought to have magical properties. In 1841, writer William Hone noted that "in the houses of some ignorant people...there hangs from the ceiling a hard biscuit-like cake of open cross-work, baked on a Good Friday, to remain there till displaced on the next Good Friday by one of similar make". Fortunately, the cakes we'll enjoy at the Easter coffee morning on 4th April will be a lot more digestible!



Please note that our annual meeting will be held on **Sunday, 26th April** after the morning service.



World Day of Prayer

From Jayne Drinkwater

Thank you to everyone who supported the World Day of Prayer service – all 29 of you, including 3 men. You represented at least 5 different churches and 4 different denominations, so it was a truly ecumenical event. The women of Nigeria will have appreciated your prayers and understanding.



EASTER

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

Most glorious Lord of Life! that on this day,
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;
And, having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captive thence captive, us to win;
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom Thou diddest dye,
Being with Thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live for ever in felicity!

And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same againe;
And for Thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne!
So let us love, deare Love, lyke as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

COFFEE CONCERTS

ST PETER & ST PAUL, CLARE

Coffee is served from 11.00; concerts start at 11.30 and run for approximately 45 minutes



Saturday, **18 April**: talented teenage musician **JAMES BARKER** plays popular music on piano and organ



Saturday, **16 May**: London-based flautist **ANDREW MORRIS** – a varied programme of music for flute and piano



Saturday, **20 June**: local organist **CHRISTOPHER MOORE** presents a programme of music for organ



Saturday, **18 July**: the **ASADI PIANO QUINTET** presents the magnificent Quintet for piano and strings in A major by Dvořák



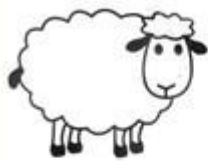
Saturday, **15 August**: professional pianist **JILL CROSSLAND** gives a concert of fine music for piano



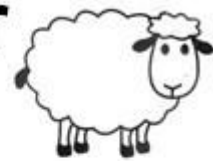
Saturday, **19 September**: music for clarinet and piano played by husband and wife team, **KOREN WILMER** and **ANDREW PARNELL** from Ely

Admission is free, with a retiring collection. After expenses, remaining funds will support the work and fabric of St Peter and Paul Church, Clare.

Some upcoming events across the Benefice



Children's Easter Celebration



Wednesday 8th April 10am-12 noon
All Saints Church, Hundon

Fun activities, crafts, story time, singing,
treasure hunt & refreshments !

No charge

For pre-school &
primary

Please come
with an adult



Saturday 11th April 2026 from 2pm until 3.30pm

All are welcome to come along to **St Mary the Virgin Church in Poslingford** for some exciting games of bingo, together with some bangers to eat.

Bangers will be £1 (to offset costs) - You are encouraged to bring a tin/jar/packet for the Community Pantry, and then exchange it 1 to 1 for each Bingo Card.

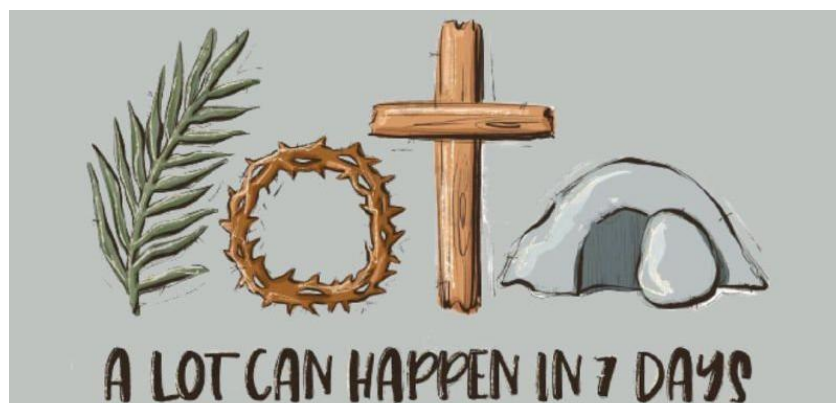
FROM THE REGISTERS

March 2026



BAPTISM

Grace Dennett



Stour Valley Benefice - Services for April 2026

Thursday, 2nd April – Maundy Thursday

Cathedral:	11:00	Chrism Eucharist	
Clare:	19:00	Holy Communion & Foot Washing	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Friday, 3rd April – Good Friday

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer & Litany	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Starts at Clare Priory:	10:30	Churches Together - Walk of Witness	
Poslingford:	19:00	Compline	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Saturday, 4th April – Easter Eve

Clare:	14:00	Baptism (Clementine Rhind-Tut)	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Hundon:	19:00	Easter Vigil & First Eucharist of Easter	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Sunday, 5th April – Easter Day

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Wixoe:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Poslingford:	16:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Wednesday, 8th April

Hundon:	10:00-Noon	Children's Easter Crafts	<i>(see above for more information)</i>
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Sunday, 12th April – Second Sunday of Easter

Hundon:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by Mrs Sarah Smith (Ordinand)</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	16:00	Evensong	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>

Sunday, 19th April – Third Sunday of Easter

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Poslingford:	16:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Saturday, 25th April

Stoke by Clare:	14:00	Wedding (Garwood & Cooke)	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
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Sunday, 26th April – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Wixoe:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Clare:	11:00	Morning Prayer & APCM	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Hundon:	17:00	Annual Parochial Church Meeting	-
Hundon:	18:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

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Closing date for copy: 25th of each month for inclusion in following month's edition