THE LISTENING POST

ST MARY'S CUDDINGTON

April 2026 Edition 122

Jesus Christ is Risen Today! Alleluia!

A very Happy Easter to you all from St Mary's.



Holy Week and Easter through the Years in Cuddington

Over the centuries there has been both change and continuity in the ways in which the congregation at Cuddington has marked Holy Week and Easter.

Until 1538 Cuddington Church stood in what is now Nonsuch Park. Medieval churches were places of colour, where vivid ritual conveyed the message to the congregation. The will of Alice Rogers dated 1492 suggests that one of today's Easter ceremonies would have been familiar to the medieval congregation: she left a quart of barley for the maintenance of the Paschal light, a candle which, perhaps, then as now, was first lit on Easter morning and carried in procession into the church to symbolise the dawning of the light of the risen Christ after the darkness of Good Friday.

The medieval church was demolished to make way for Nonsuch Palace in 1538, and the remaining parishioners would probably have attended services in Cheam, Malden or Ewell, until an Iron Church was opened at the top of The Avenue in 1867, followed by the present church in 1895. A year-round reminder of the Resurrection is provided by the east window in the present Children's Chapel (originally referred to as the Choir Aisle), given by Mrs Jordina Jackson, showing the risen Christ with three women – probably Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Joanna or Salome – and Peter and John, going to the tomb, and encountering angels telling them of the Resurrection.



In 1896, the congregation marked Holy Week and Easter in the present church for the first time. As now, services were held each day in Holy Week, and on both Good Friday and Easter Day there were services at 8am, 11am and 7pm. The Three Hours service between 12 noon and 3pm on Good Friday appears to

have been introduced to Cuddington by the Revd Robert Winnett in 1943, the year after he became Vicar. He explained in the parish magazine 'The service consists of prayers, hymns, and addresses on Our Lord's Words from the Cross, with ample periods for silent meditation.'

By 1939 the Easter Day services had been increased, with Holy Communion services at 7am, 8am, 12 noon and 7.45pm, but the mid-morning service, at 11am, was still Mattins. There was also a 'Children's Egg Service' at 3pm, and Evensong at 6.30pm. In 1941 the 3pm was listed as Children's Service (Egg Service for Hospitals), so perhaps the children were encouraged to bring eggs to be taken to local hospitals. Our present custom of holding a Dawn service was introduced by the Revd Andrew Sillis in 2009, when it was held at 5.30am.

Flowers play their part in the Easter celebrations, and by the 1940s there are references in the parish magazines to special floral decorations at Easter. We don't know which flowers were used in the early years, but perhaps they were similar to those at St John's, Old Malden; the Malden parish magazine recorded in 1891 that 'the neighbouring hothouses and conservatories' had produced 'an abundance of spiraea, white lilac, narcissus, etc.' Often an Easter Garden has been made, sometimes blessed during one of the Easter Day services (photograph by Eric Milton).



The Choir has often provided musical inspiration to the congregation's observance of Passiontide. The earliest parish magazine held in the church covering the relevant part of the year shows that *Olivet to Calvary* was the cantata chosen for 1939, when it was sung on the evening of Good Friday (which remained the occasion for the Passiontide cantatas for some time). The same work, by John Henry Maunder (who was Organist at Christ Church, Sutton, from 1913 to 1920) was most recently sung at St Mary's last year.

Perhaps the cantata that has been performed the most often here is *The Crucifixion*, combining the music of Sir John Stainer (whose grandson lived in The Avenue in the mid-20th century) with words written, or selected from Scripture, by the Revd William John Sparrow Simpson; this was, for instance, sung in 1947, and has been chosen again for 2026. Other choices have ranged from Handel's *Lenten Cantata*, in 1950, to *The Wilderness* by Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1832) paired with *The Reproaches* by John Sanders (1993), in 2014.



On at least one occasion, our choir has proclaimed the message of Easter well beyond the parish boundaries: in 1966 the choir, augmented by other members of the congregation, sang at Guildford Cathedral on the Sunday after Easter Day, and chose for the anthem the 'Easter Hymn' from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. When the Dean of Guildford (the Rt Revd George Clarkson, former Bishop of Pontefract) commended this choice, the Organist John Avery admitted, 'Well, it's really opera', to which the Dean replied 'Then we should have more opera!'

Church Finances Update from the Treasurer

We are well into 2026, our APCM will take place on 17th May, and the Annual Report will provide a detailed breakdown of our income and expenditure for last year across all of our funds. 2025 ended much better than I expected with a surplus of just over £9,000 before the annual revaluation of our investments. The 2025 Income and Expenditure charts are shown on the back page.

The main reason for this improvement was the very successful Gift Day at the end of November which added around £20,000 to our funds. Thank you all for your generosity.

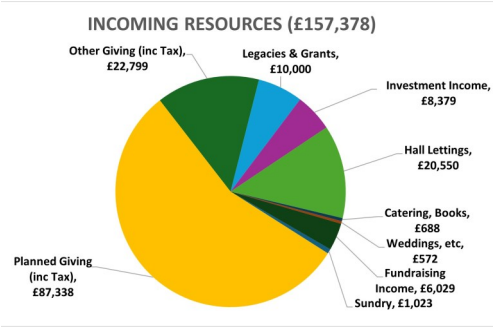
As you know, the intention is to replace the existing old and inefficient oil-fired boiler with a more effective and eco friendly heating system in the church, and the PCC has designated the proceeds from the Gift Day for this purpose. A subgroup of the Estates Committee, are currently working through the various options to come up with a proposal for the PCC to consider later in the year. The chosen scheme will require further fundraising and we will be searching for available grants, in due course.

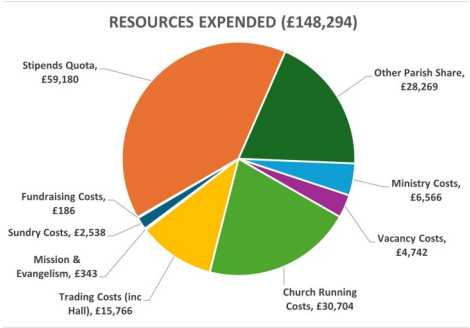
So far in 2026 we are close to the budget we have set for the year. Unfortunately, once again we are expecting a deficit. For January and February this amounts to just over £7,000 and by the year end it's likely to be £12,000.

I have mentioned in the past that we are able to fund this deficit because we have reserves that have come about as a result of the legacies received over a number of years. We were lucky to have received £10,000 in legacies in 2025.

It is important that we work to at least match our day to day spending with income so that our reserves are not diminished and we can use them in a productive way to further our mission here at Cuddington.

With this in mind **I would urge us all to review our giving**, especially if we haven't done so recently, to try to narrow that gap.





April Services and Events

Wednesday 1	**20.00**	**Holy Week Communion Service**
Thursday 2	**20.00**	**Maundy Thursday Communion & Footwashing**
Friday 3	**10.00**	**Good Friday Family Service**
Good Friday	**10-12**	**Children's Craft Workshop in Cuddington Hall**
	12-14	***Walking in the Footsteps of Christ***
	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**
Easter Day	**08.00**	**Holy Communion**
	09.30	**Easter Sung Communion**
Wednesday 8	**10.30**	**Knit & Natter in the Leverton Room**
Saturday 11	**TBA**	**Marriage Preparation Day**
Sunday 12	**08.00**	**Holy Communion**
	09.30	**Sung Communion**
	18.00	**Evensong with the Ripieno Choir**
Monday 13	**19.30**	**Knit & Natter in the Leverton Room**
Wednesday 15	**20.00**	**PCC Meeting in the Cuddington Hall**
Thursday 16	**14.30**	**Thursday Club in the Cuddington Hall**
Saturday 18	**10.00**	**Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall**
Sunday 19	**09.30**	**Sung Communion and Children's Groups**
	18.00	**Evening Service for Young People**
Sunday 26	**09.30**	**Sung Communion**
Wednesday 29	**19.15**	**Men's Meal at Ewell Toby Carvery**

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