

**The Parish of Freshford with Limpley Stoke and
Hinton Charterhouse – Newsletter – March 2026**



A message from the Rector

Greetings.

This month I am writing about two related issues – how we can look at Lent positively, and how we can raise £20,000. I am launching an appeal to raise this to cover our shortfall. You may remember last month that I mentioned this need for a gift day.

First – a positive Lent. As I write this, we have begun the Christian season of Lent. This season lasts for forty days (not including Sundays). It is a time when Christians reflect and prepare for the celebrations of Easter. Some set aside time to study the Bible and meet with other Christians to reflect on Jesus' life. For others it is a formal time of preparation for baptism. Other people fast, eat frugally or give up treats following the example of Jesus, who fasted for forty days in the wilderness. Jesus gives clear guidance about our behaviour, and therefore our motives.

“When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6: 16-18)

People also give to charity; this reflects Isaiah 58: 1-12 – when the prophet also looks at our behaviours.

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke. Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter...

There is no right way to do Lent – no points to be scored. It is a time for personal reflection – to take stock – maybe look at our life balance and priorities. It is not a time to set ambitious targets that we then fail to meet, and then become demoralised! It is helpful to regard this time as a good opportunity to reset the balance of our lives, maybe look at both our diaries and our prayer life. Does one dominate (and perhaps reduce) the other? This is a helpful quote from a “Rule” - describing the way of life for a person entering a Christian community. It is written out of love and not fear, and seeks to invite and not prescribe, to guide and not force. It can apply to all of us on a faith journey.

Spiritual life is life drawn from the Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead and turns the whole world into a new creation. The Spirit within you will bear fruit of simplicity and goodness, modesty and joy, sobriety and gentleness. He will give you interior freedom to bring your love to perfection. He will make you into a new person.

So don't carry on a futile battle against yourself, don't divide yourself into good and evil; resist the temptation to analyse yourself – turn your attention to the Lord instead, and be deeply receptive. Accept yourself in his light and concentrate on the mission you have to accomplish.

God's Spirit will bring you to simplicity in an undivided dedication to Him and to your fellow-creatures. He gives you no programme but the chance of turning yourself towards love hour by hour. And so spiritual life is not a burden but a liberating vocation. It is much more a matter of simplifying, than of complicated methods and extraordinary performances.

So how is this related to our financial appeal? Please do not be offended. I am **not** suggesting that this giving could be your Lent activity!



Easter Gift month

We are needing to raise £20,000 to balance to books. Over the next 5 years one of our aims (in Vision 2031 – from maintenance to mission) is to be financially sustainable – paying our way, not reliant on reserves and supporting Christian mission. There will be an opportunity to give over 4 Sundays – March 22nd, 29th, April 5th, and April 12th. More details to follow. Please enable us to start in balance.

In my ministry over the years, the majority has been outside church, and with people of all walks of life, all stages of faith, and at times of need – when God is somehow much clearer to sense and seek. I help others to see him. It is my passion to help others see the gifts of life and hope given by God. Then faith, and the community, grows (Acts 2: 42-47)

This is the underlying intention of our work in the Parish of Freshford with Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse. We set out to tell the good news of Jesus. Please help us. We shall publish more details and ways of giving in the next few weeks. May God bless yours and my time this Lent.

Finally, we can look ahead to the programme of services for Passiontide, and the great Easter celebration of the resurrection of Jesus - the reason for the hope that we have. Everyone is welcome to any of these services.

News from St Peter's

St Peter's churchyard is showing clear signs of Spring as the bulbs we planted at the Open day in November have started to come up. It will look glorious in the coming months.

We will soon complete work on the path around the church to make it accessible to all.



Services continue as advertised with one new development. On February 22nd, when Nigel was away supporting the licensing of Revd Ben Notley, Associate Minister in St Andrews, Foxhill (and who helped us out last year before Nigel arrived), a newly formed team lead the liturgy of Morning prayer with great style and coordination. Their ministry was appreciated by all. We hope to develop a lay-led service once a month.

The Romans bible study continues on Thursdays at 10.30 – midday, in St Peters – anyone welcome – our next meeting in March will be on Thursday 12th – then weekly.

Nigel

News from St Mary's

It's official - Spring starts at St Mary's in March! After our **BCP Communion service at 12.30pm on Sunday 1st March** we will be looking forward to:

Saturday 14th March Spring Cleanup from 10.00am - 12.00

All welcome to make our church and churchyard look beautiful for spring. Please bring garden tools for the churchyard but cleaning materials will be available for inside. Warm drinks and snacks provided!

This will make the church look especially nice for:

Sunday 15th March 10.30am Common Worship Communion service for Mothering Sunday. Do join us for this special service.

Sunday 29th March 5pm BCP Evening Service

Forthcoming events to look out for over the next few months...

After Easter I am hoping to form a **Benefice Choir** to sing at various times throughout the year in all our churches. Good sight reading will be important as the idea is to have just one or two rehearsals before each event, namely a Songs of Praise service with one or two short anthems and hymns sung in harmony, Harvest Festival, a service for Advent perhaps and definitely at a Carol Service, and then other services as things develop. This is definitely **not** a traditional choir for every Sunday with a weekly choir practice, so the commitment will only be for the specific events. I can't yet give a specific date for launching the choir as I am having a second hip replacement scheduled for April which will put me out of action for a bit!

Concerts in St Mary’s on Sunday afternoons in June

The Friends of St Mary’s are planning a series of summer concerts starting at St Mary’s at 3.00pm in June. Preparations are underway for a Woodwind Quintet and a harpist to play for an hour or so. Further details to follow.

David

News from St John’s

March started with a visit from Archdeacon Charlie who preached on The Wedding at Cana. Tuesday Evening Prayer continues in the warmth of a home and those who come very much appreciate the service.

We are wanting to smarten up the church as well as repairing the collapsed ceiling. The slightly tatty outside gates have been removed, and we have started tidying up the entrance and plan to redecorate it. The noticeboard will be sanded down and oiled and the path will be power washed to make it less slippery.

Liz

News from the School

As we continue to support collective worship on Tuesday afternoons, we are starting to look forward to Easter. We have two services planned for the children in the church - one will be at the end of this term, on Maundy Thursday, when a small group children will have their feet washed as we retell the story of the Last Supper and Jesus, the servant king.

When the children return to school after their holiday, we will be holding our second service which will celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. In this way, we hope that the children will be able to put the Easter story, and the momentous events of that week, into context.

Penny

Services

1 st March 10.30	St John the B, Hinton Charterhouse	Common Worship Holy Communion
1 st March 12.30	St Mary’s Limpley Stoke,	BCP Communion
3 rd March 5.30	Alan’s house, Hinton Charterhouse	Evening prayer
8 th March 10.30	St Peter’s, Freshford	Common Worship Holy Communion
10 th March 5.30	location tbc	Evening prayer
15 th March 10.30	St Mary’s, Limpley Stoke	Mothering Sunday Common Worship Holy Communion
17 th March 5.30	Liz’s house, Hinton Charterhouse	Evening prayer
22 nd March 10.30	St Peter’s, Freshford	Common Worship Morning prayer
24 th March 5.30	Liz’s house, Hinton Charterhouse	Evening prayer

Services for Easter

Sunday 29th March

Palm Sunday

10.30	St John the B, Hinton Charterhouse	Common Worship Communion
5.00	St Mary's, Limpley Stoke	BCP Evening prayer

31 st March	Liz's House, Hinton Charterhouse	Evening prayer
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Wednesday 1st April Bath Abbey

Bach St Matthew Passion

Tickets <https://bathboxoffice.org.uk/whats-on/j-s-bach-st-matthew-passion-9fhy>

Thursday 2nd April

Maundy Thursday

9.00am	St Peter's, Freshford	School service
c/o Louisa Kyle, Penny / Nigel		
8.00pm	St Peter's, Freshford	An informal service to remember the Last Supper

3rd April

Good Friday

11.00

Walk of Witness
Start: Rose and Crown, Hinton Charterhouse
Route: St John the Baptist - prayers
 Hinton Priory
 Pipehouse Lane
St Mary's (across the fields) - prayers
 Galleries
 Along to **St Peter's**
Meditation service 1.00 (an hour at the cross)

5.30	Bath Abbey	Stainers crucifixion Free entry
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April 5th

Easter day

6.30 am	St Mary's, Limpley Stoke	Sunrise - open air Communion service
9.00	St Peter's, Freshford	Holy Communion
10.30	St John the Baptist, HC	Easter family Celebration and communion Followed by Easter egg hunt

12th April Easter 1

St Peter's, Freshford

Holy Communion and baptism

Ladies Wednesday walking group

The next date for the walking group is the 11th of March, followed by the 8th of April, 13th of May, 10th of June and the 8th of July. There won't be a walk in August. Dates from September onwards to follow.

Wednesday afternoons - Tea, cake & chat

Please do come and join us in the Old Bakery on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30 – 4.00 for tea, coffee and cake.

Zoom sessions

If you don't get out much and feel like a chat, a small group of us zoom together for 45 minutes on a Monday morning. To give it a try, please contact Penny Jones on jonespennyg@gmail.com. Penny

Need a lift? Think LINK

A reminder that the Limpley Stoke and Freshford LINK service is available to residents in both villages who lack the means to get from A to B. Volunteer drivers will transport you to a doctor's appointment or local hospital, as well as to shopping or social visits. The service includes the delivery of prescriptions from the Galleries for those unable to collect them. If you have a car and some free time, why not consider becoming a LINK driver. Details at freshford.org.uk or you can contact the LINK co-ordinator on 07714 169216.

List of contacts

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