

Chronicle

THE MAGAZINE FOR

MARCH 2024

THE CHIRBURY HILLS



Find us via <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>, on Facebook at "Chirbury Hills Parishes" or via the Deanery website <https://pontesburydeanery.org/>



Kay Yeates, following her commissioning as a Local Lay Minister at Candlemas.

THE CHIRBURY HILLS GROUP OF PARISHES

is part of the Pontesbury Group Ministry, and comprised of the parishes of **Chirbury, Marton, Middleton w Corndon Marsh, and Trelystan & Leighton.**

Rector: Revd Bill Rowell (See details below).

Local Lay Minister: Mrs Kay Yeates (01938 561640).

At each church, contact the wardens as follows:

Chirbury - Tony Sheppard (01938 561821);

Marton - Maureen Jenkins (01938 561645);

Middleton - Kay Yeates (01938 561640) or

Emma Bailey-Beech (01686 669971);

Trelystan - Janet Jones (07967 312460);

Leighton - John Markwick (01938 555043) or Sally Beech (01938 554942).

TO CONTACT THE RECTOR - Revd Bill Rowell's home address is 17 Croft Road, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7QD. He will also be happy to meet by arrangement at any of the churches of the Group. His home phone number is 01938 552064, and mobile 07711 298104. Or you can email Bill at his home address

wkrowell@btinternet.com, or work address

rector.chirburyhillsparishes@btinternet.com

Links to contact Bill are also available via our "A Church Near You" pages on the web, the Pontesbury Deanery website, or our group Facebook page (see front cover of this magazine for details).

INFECTION PRECAUTIONS

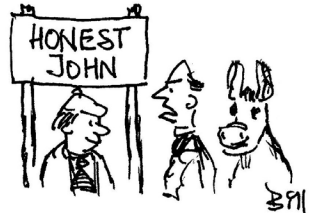
Outbreaks of Covid and flu over recent years remind us we still need to take hygiene and safety seriously. Hand gel remains available in our churches, and as we meet please allow people to keep a social distance if they wish, as some of our church attenders may need to guard against infection because of existing health conditions.

At services of Holy Communion we are now using the common cup. If you do not wish to receive from the chalice, we recommend that you leave the rail after receiving the bread. We still ask that if you experience symptoms that may be Covid or test positive within a week of attending church, that you let us know by contacting the Rector or a church warden.

We still need new **TREASURERS FOR LEIGHTON AND CHIRBURY.** If you think you could help, please speak to the Rector or Wardens.

Items for inclusion in the April magazine should reach the Rector by Sunday 17th March at the latest, please.

St Podwell's



"Yes, it might be fun for the kids, but a Palm Sunday donkey race is not appropriate, and that includes betting on it!"

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH:

Please consider giving a regular gift to your church via the **Parish Giving Scheme** - an easy way to support your church by Direct Debit. The Rector, church wardens and treasurers will be glad to provide further details.

SERVICES IN MARCH

<i>DAY</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>CHURCH</i>	<i>SERVICE</i>
Friday 1st St David	10.30 am	Leighton	Holy Communion
Sunday 3rd	10.00 am	Leighton	Holy Communion
Lent 3	11.15 am	Chirbury	Holy Communion
	6.00 pm	The Marsh	Evening Prayer
Sunday 10th	9.30 am	Marton	Holy Communion
Lent 4	11.15 am	Middleton	Mothering Sunday
Tuesday 12th	12.00 noon	Chirbury	Midday Prayers
Sunday 17th	10.00 am	Middleton	Holy Communion
Lent 5	11.15 am	Chirbury	Holy Communion
	3.00 pm	Trelystan	Service of the Word
Sun 24th	11.00 am	Leighton	Holy Communion
Palm Sunday	6.00 pm	Chirbury	Sacred Concert

Holy Week and Easter services are on page 10.

<p>Come and join us for</p>  <p>10.30 am - open and free to all! (Followed by midday prayers)</p>	<p>At Chirbury Church on Tuesday 12th March</p>  <p>Followed by Midday Prayers</p>
<p>Easter Crafts and Activities including making the Easter Garden - at Chirbury Church, Thursday 28th March, 10.30 am</p>	<p>Egg Hunt at Leighton Church Saturday 30th March, 2.00pm!</p>

Nature Notes . . . Migrants

Out walking the other day I disturbed a decent-sized flock of smallish birds feeding in bushes along the lane - all a fairly uniform pinkish-brown in colour, and maybe between a finch and a starling in size. As they took flight I saw a flash of bright yellow and red on each bird, and only then did I realise I'd seen my first ever waxwings. Yellow on the wings (and the tip of the tail), together with bright red tips to its flight feathers that look like tiny blobs of sealing wax (hence the name) are diagnostic. This has been a "waxwing winter", with large numbers of birds crossing from their northerly breeding grounds to winter in Britain. A few arrive every year, but an invasion of this sort happens only every so often. To find them in numbers this far west shows just how many have reached us this winter.

They'll be thinking now of heading for home, as will the surprisingly large number of other migrants who choose Britain as a winter destination - redwings and fieldfares, rarer small-bird visitors like snow buntings and great grey shrikes, and of course the wildfowl waders that spend winter along our coasts and in our wetland areas. And many of our resident species will be added to by large numbers moving across from the colder and icier continent - blackbirds, starlings and even wood pigeons among them.

As they leave, the summer visitors will begin to arrive. The first is usually that little warbler called chiffchaff after its distinctive song. They don't migrate very far south, and increasing numbers are spending winter in the south of the UK, maybe one or two thousand birds each winter, so I'll be listening out for them this month. Those birds that migrate further south - say to sub-Saharan Africa - among them the chiffchaff's close relative the willow warbler, have a longer and more hazardous journey, made more so by changing weather patterns that are extending the area of the Sahara, along with the many shot by hunters in southern Europe. Not surprisingly their numbers are falling, with some (the turtle dove for example) in danger of disappearing completely from the UK.

All migrants are facing new pressures from climate change, some obvious, some more subtle. Milder winters mean that when summer migrants arrive, they face more competition from resident species, surviving British winters in better numbers than they used to, partly because winters are milder, partly because of the food we put out for them. Migrating birds don't do so in a random way, but mostly follow established flight paths, along which some of the pinch points are under increased pressure from human development. Changing weather patterns may mean an increased risk of the sort of storms that can blow birds off their chosen route. It's sad to think that the rarities that twitchers flock to photograph are probably lost for good, never to make it home.

Why do the waxwings I saw sometimes migrate in huge numbers, and other times don't? The answer is probably to do with fruit trees (waxwings love fruit and berries). A really good fruiting year may often be followed by a bad one, in which an expanded population of waxwings finds itself very short of food. Nothing for it, then, but to travel!

DEANERY THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH - RUTH LEIGH

Ok, it's Lent for most of this month. I'm not going to guilt trip you with, 'have you given anything up/taken anything on?' You know all this stuff. But I do have something very special for you. It was new to me, perhaps you already know it, so apologies if you do - you can turn onto the next article...a poem: The Father, the Son, by Roger McGough.

It is unusual to find me here, in town.
I never did like crowds. The smell,
The dust, the racket. I can do without it.
But it's a special occasion, and well,
I haven't seen him in a while.

Followed his career with interest, mind.
Well, hardly career but he's made his mark
They all have, and good on them I say.
The whole country needs shaking up
And they're the boys to do it.

Things are coming to a head now.
History in the making, you can sense it.
That's why I am here. I may be old
But not too old to lend a hand
Lift a sword and strike a blow for freedom.

Unless this Jesus can provide the glue
By all accounts he knows a thing or two.
Peace is what he preaches. A coded message
That's clear to understand: There'll be no peace
Until Rome has been driven from this land.

It's very hard not to be shaken by the time you get to the end of this poem. Each verse serves to build up a great sense of expectation, and then we discover that the father's own son is the betrayer. The father does not know this - but we do. We are forced to realise that Judas is not just a cardboard cut-out figure. He had a father and a mother who loved him. Judas' motivation remains one of the big mysteries of our faith - what was in him that made him do it? There are many theories, books have been produced, dissertations written. But this side of heaven - we just don't know.

Something to ponder on for the remainder of Lent. Have a blessed month ahead of the joy that is to come.

And my son knows that. That's why
He got involved. To fight for the cause.
A chip off the old block and no mistake.
But smarter. Not like his old man, hot-headed.
He likes to plan. Take stock. Cool in a crisis.

Ah, there's something happening now.
You can hear the cheering? It must be them.
The crowd is ecstatic, and the soldiers,
Under orders, keeping out of the way.
Nervous too, a good sign that, I'd say.

But where's my lad? Ah, there he is
At the back, following at a slower pace.
Looks strangely downcast, I must confess.
But no doubt the sight of his old dad
Will bring a smile to his face . . .
'Judas! . . . Judas!'

From the Bishop of Hereford

I have just read the Rule of St. Benedict, to my shame for the first time. It is a monastic rule from the 6th century that sets out the disciplines and structures for the effective running of a monastery. The rules of poverty, chastity and obedience are highly restrictive; the punishments for violations severe; the lifestyle highly demanding. Praying at set offices eight times a day (including at 2 in the morning) meant that the monk would rarely get more than few hours of unbroken sleep. Central heating was for wimps and the diet uninspiring. Although eased in later centuries, it has been the basis for the monastic tradition in Western Europe ever since. It's not the sort of discipline that works in everyday life, but that doesn't mean it has no value. It is designed to foster Christian virtues of humility, and obedience (albeit expressed through submission to the Abbot), and a growing Christlikeness.

Most of March will be the season of Lent, when we Christians have traditionally given up things that give us pleasure to focus on our spiritual journey. As our world has changed it seems increasingly anachronistic. Our culture screams at us from the lifestyle sections that the way to real fulfilment is getting what you really desire. The idea that giving something up might be good for you, other than as a grudging acknowledgement of post-Christmas weight gain, is anathema. Consumerism works by creating desire and then offering to fulfil it. But our strongest desires are not necessarily our deepest ones. Giving things up or fasting can get us in touch with these deeper desires that only God can satisfy. There is evidence that restricting calories by intermittent fasting or turning our mobiles off is actually good for us physically and psychologically.

A good Lent can be like leaving the Christmas presents unopened under the tree until Christmas day. There is a joy in the opening that is enhanced by the waiting. So, as well as helping us grow closer to God, our Lenten restraint can amplify the joy of Christ risen when we get to that glorious Easter celebration.

I once gave up tea and coffee for Lent and had my first large cup on Easter morning. Before I knew it, I'd done three services and built a compost heap! Lent can be spiritual dynamite.

+Richard

Deanery News editor: Alison Bebb - alisonbebb5@gmail.com - Items for inclusion to be submitted by 10th of previous month please.

Caring for God's Acre - THE STORM COCK SINGS

March is a great month to search for and listen to mistle thrushes. They start to breed in February and by March can be heard proclaiming from the tops of tall trees. Unlike other thrushes such as song thrush or blackbird, mistle thrushes are known for singing during stormy weather, hence the name storm cock. They are also called Throstles, an old word for thrush. By perching high to sing, they amplify their already loud song which can be heard up to 2km away.

Compared to other thrushes the mistle thrush's song is more monotonous and piercing but still a joyful sound to hear and a herald of spring. You can identify the three thrushes by their song and once you have learned the difference they are quite easy to separate. Have a listen on the RSPB website as a starting point.

Mistle thrushes favour parkland conditions with big trees and grassland, where they feed on a wide variety of invertebrates. Churchyards and cemeteries can be perfect for them having mature soils full of invertebrates, few or no pesticides and mature trees for perching and nesting. Many burial grounds contain evergreen trees which were planted during the nineteenth century, these are now mature and offer excellent habitat for thrushes as well as other birds and animals.

Mistle thrushes are currently in decline in the UK, and churchyards and cemeteries may be important strongholds for them. We would love to know how many churchyards have mistle thrushes breeding in them, and if you hear one singing, this will be a male who is proclaiming his territory so a good indicator of breeding. Please let Caring for God's Acre know by making a record on iNaturalist, you can do this by recording the song or taking a photo of the bird. Alternatively you can email wildlife@cfga.org.uk.

All the best,

Harriet Carty -
Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor



SAINT OF THE MONTH - GEOFFREY STUDDERT KENNEDY: 8TH MARCH

Not all the men and women honoured on special days in our annual calendar actually have the title of “saint,” implying some universal process of recognising a special holiness or courageous faith - there are also many whose lives and examples have seemed to our own Church to be worth remembering. Among these is the World War I army chaplain Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, known affectionately by the troops as “Woodbine Willie,” after the cigarettes he handed out.

Born in 1883 and brought up in the Quarry Hill area of Leeds, known then for its slums, Geoffrey was the twelfth of fourteen children, his father being the local vicar. This was an area of great poverty and frequent outbreaks of diseases such as cholera. Geoffrey attended Leeds Grammar School, and won a place at Trinity College, Dublin, graduating with First Class Honours in classics and divinity. Following his father into the Church, he served curacies in Rugby and Leeds, then in 1914 took on a parish in the poorest area of Worcester. He was known for his instinctive generosity, even giving away his bed to a family in need in his Worcester parish.

When war broke out he offered to serve as a chaplain, and in 1915 was sent to Rouen, and then to the front. There he lived alongside the fighting men in the trenches, sharing their life and offering support and comfort. He also went with the troops into the thick of battle despite his fears: he felt strongly that as their padre he should be with his men where danger and death were closest at hand. In 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery in the attack on Messines Ridge. Under heavy fire he helped find and rescue those who were wounded, both friend and enemy. He was always ready to return to the front, living through the horrors of the Battle of the Somme.

World War I will always be remembered for its war poets, and Kennedy was among them. His powerful verse was expressed in the straightforward colloquial language he heard the soldiers use. He published a collection under the name of Woodbine Willie, entitled “Rough Rhymes of a Padre”. It sold out in weeks, and a second collection followed. His poems pulled few punches in describing the horrific waste of young lives that war brings. He also wrote books to share his strongly held and very practically expressed Christian faith.

After the war he returned to his parish, but then began to take on the role of a speaker, campaigning at home and abroad for the cause of Christian Socialism. His down to earth style of speaking was effective and popular. Always asthmatic and a heavy smoker, he began to suffer ill health, but continued his mission of touring and speaking until his sudden death in Liverpool in March 1929.

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

A prayer of St Columba:

My dearest Lord,
be thou a bright flame before me,
be thou my guiding star above me,
be thou the smooth path beneath me,
be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
today and evermore.

Amen.

Columba was an Irish abbot and missionary who helped establish the Christian faith in what is now Scotland, in the 6th Century. He founded the abbey on Iona, still today a place of pilgrimage.



Fighting Stigma and Isolation in Brazil - this year's USPG Lent Appeal

This year's Lent Appeal from USPG supports Casa A+, a project established by the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil, alongside local medical professionals, in the central Brazilian region of Tocantins. This is a part of the country with a great deal of poverty, in which over 40% of those who have serious health conditions can't afford to access essential medication.

In particular, people living with HIV (and their families) face a social stigma and isolation which makes their situation worse. Sinval, a young man whose HIV was at first undiagnosed, is now also severely disabled following a stroke. His mother Creuza, who is also his full-time carer, was struggling to find proper care for her son, until she made contact with Casa A+.

Dr Alexandre Janote Maior, an integral part of Casa A+'s mission, shares his thoughts: "Casa A+ is more than a medical facility; it's a beacon of hope for marginalised groups. Our work here had reignited my faith in humanity's capacity to bring about positive social changes."

Now Sinval is able to receive the medical care he desperately needs at Casa A+. The team there organise his travel to the centre, where he receives consistent medication guidance, and is provided with a standard of care that has greatly improved both his and his mother's quality of life.

Casa A+ also provides outreach services to challenge the stigma surrounding HIV, helps educate the local communities, and campaigns for policies that will support and protect people who are marginalised and vulnerable.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES . . .

PALM SUNDAY - 24TH MARCH

- 11.00 am Group Service of Holy Communion at LEIGHTON,
with palm crosses and a reading of the Passion Gospel.
6.00 pm Sacred Concert at CHIRBURY,
hymns, anthems, readings etc with a Holy Week theme.

MONDAY 25TH MARCH

- 7.00 pm Taizé Worship for the beginning of Holy Week at MIDDLETON,
with chants from the Taizé Community and quiet prayers.

TUESDAY 26TH MARCH (also - THE GATHERING, 7.00pm, see page 11)

- 10.30 am Holy Communion at CHIRBURY,
our monthly traditional language service with Holy Week readings

WEDNESDAY 27TH MARCH

- 12.30 for 1 pm Prayers at the frugal lunch at MARTON VILLAGE HALL.
7.00 pm Agapé Supper (venue to be announced - see weekly sheets),
Holy Communion within a simple shared meal,
as done in the early Church.

MAUNDY THURSDAY - 28TH MARCH

- 10.30 am Messy Easter at CHIRBURY,
The Easter story, and the chance to do some messy Easter crafts
and to make the Easter Gardens for Chirbury and Middleton -
fun for children and parents (etc) together.
7.00 pm Eucharist of the Last Supper at TRELYSTAN,
remembering the events of that holy Thursday
under the beautiful Gethsemane Window of Trelystan Church.

GOOD FRIDAY - 29th March

- Please see weekly sheets and special posters for details of the
GOOD FRIDAY WALK, as there will be some changes this year.
7.00 pm Night Prayer for Good Friday at LEIGHTON.

EASTER EVE - 30th March

- 2.00 pm Easter Egg Hunt and Making the Easter Garden at LEIGHTON.

EASTER DAY - 31st March

- 9.00 am Easter Communion (short service) at MARTON.
10.00 am Easter Communion (short service) at LEIGHTON.
11.15 am Easter Communion at CHIRBURY.
11.15 am Easter Family Service at MIDDLETON.
3.00 pm Easter Communion at TRELYSTAN.
6.00 pm Easter Communion at the MARSH CHAPEL.

A very warm welcome to all of our services for this special season.

This Month

Sunflowers

It may seem a bit early yet, but - given a spot of decent weather, you can plant your sunflower seeds at the end of this month or the beginning of March. Seeds were handed out at our service on 28th January, but they're still available and will be till Easter - why not have a go and see if you can grow the tallest?

SPONSOR THE VICAR

Revd Bill's Lenten sponsored thing is to walk 200 miles and lose a stone. He's raising funds for this year's Lent appeal by USPG, the Anglican mission society founded by Thomas Bray (born in Marton and christened at Chirbury), which is for work with stigmatised families in Brazil (see story on page 9). Sponsor forms are available!

GROUP MEETING

PREPARING FOR VACANCY - PLANNING FOR GROWTH

This is a meeting open to everyone, with refreshments, planned for Tuesday 5th March. I complete my term of office as Rural Dean at Easter, and I want to devote some extra time to parish work, knowing that we will need to be robust and resilient, and better at reaching out into our communities, if we are to be ready for the vacancy which will take place early next year. What can we do to serve our communities? How can we enrich our worship, and make it more participative? How can we reach out to younger families? How can we ensure financial viability? And what could you do to help? I have some ideas, and even some plans . . . but I want to hear yours, too!

PLEASE COME! 7.00 PM.,

The Gathering

AN EVENING OF PRAISING AND WORSHIPPING GOD
MARTON VILLAGE HALL - EVERYONE WELCOME!

Tuesday 26th March - Refreshments at 7.00 pm
Worship at 7.30 pm

Lent Group - Tuesday each week, 2.00 pm, in the café at Chirbury Shop, by kind permission of Dawn - ALL WELCOME!



SARAH AND FRIENDS

An evening of music from:

The Beatles, Bob Dylan,
Norah Jones, The Kinks,


Simon & Garfunkel,

Johnny Cash, Carly Simon,

and many more

performed by local singer Sarah Williams

In aid of
St. Michael's
Church,
Chirbury



Wednesday 13th March 2024
St. Michael's Church
Chirbury
7:30 – 9.00pm

Tickets £10
Available from Chirbury Stores

Refreshments available

A Sacred Concert for Passiontide ~

**MUSIC AND READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK, WITH
THE BENEFICE CHOIR :: Chirbury Church, 6pm - 24th March**