

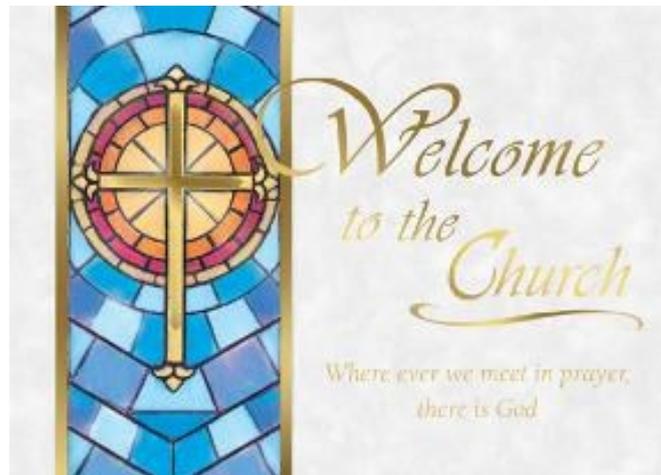


MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE  
PARISH CHURCH OF  
St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, RUNCORN.  
[www.runcornstmichaels.org.uk](http://www.runcornstmichaels.org.uk)

ISSUE 190

MARCH 2026

# GROWING TOGETHER



In GROWING TOGETHER THIS MONTH:  
HUMOUR NEWS

PUZZLE PAGE

SERVICES FOR MARCH/APRIL  
CELEBRATIONS

## Vicars Message

“From Dust you came, and to dust you shall return”



I write this message on Ash Wednesday, seated in a busy church hall, watching our community café grow, reflecting on the journey ahead of me this Holy Season. And it is very much a journey, one with ups and downs, dry deserts, and times of flowing waters. Much like the journey through the wilderness, our spiritual journey is one of challenges and joys. And there is no greater challenge than reflecting deeply on fasting, prayer, and sin.

Fasting, for those that do not know, is not an alien thing for us in the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer does indeed give us guidelines on when to fast, of which it does state “The Forty days of Lent”, and as far as possible I do feel that we *should* fast, as it has become a practice that we seem to have forgotten in the Church of England. But HOW do we fast? Well, it is important to note that fasting should only ever be done safely, and never if you have health concerns, are elderly or very young. Fasting should also be done for the right reasons, never for weight loss, vanity, or other.

Another very beneficial spiritual practice would be to increase our prayer time and devotions, which requires some reflection on what our present patterns are and asking some serious and honest questions. For example, one thing that comes my way sometimes is the struggle over not having time to pray! Yet, if we are truly honest, we probably spend too many hours on Social media, watching TV, and doing other tasks.

Finally, Lent is a time to reflect upon our own human brokenness, which begins today, Ash Wednesday, and those words spoken over you as the ash cross is marked on your forehead

*“From Dust you were made, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from Sin and turn to Christ”*

are an important reminder that we all sin and fall short of the standards of God. Therefore, all of us have a responsibility to combat those sins that separate us from God, because simply put, one day our eyes will close to this world and open in the next, and no amount of wealth, medals, titles, or other worldly goods can assure us of Heaven.

My friends, Lent is a Holy and sacred time of year, one which if approached correctly can enrich our journey of faith. There are many ways to approach Lent, and it is my prayer that you grow spiritually this season.

May you have a blessed and peaceful Lent.  
Amen.

*With every blessing,*

*Rev'd George*

### Record number of young adults join ministry experience year

A record number of young adults have joined a year-long placement scheme to experience ministry in the Church of England. The Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) intake this year is 121, the largest the scheme has had since it was founded more than a decade ago. This year's total means that more than 1,000 young adults, including this year's intake, have been part of the Scheme since it was set up in 2013.



# MARCH CHURCH SERVICES

**Sunday 1st March (2nd Sunday of Lent)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Café Church



**Wednesday 4th March**

10.00am Holy Communion



**Sunday 8th March (3rd Sunday of Lent)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Wednesday 11th March**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Sunday 15th March (Mothering Sunday)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion



**Wednesday 18th March**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Sunday 22nd March (5th Sunday of Lent)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion



**Wednesday 25th March**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Sunday 29th March (Palm Sunday)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Monday 30th March**

3.00pm Service of the Word

**Tuesday 31st March**

3.00pm Service of the Word

## BIBLE READINGS FOR MARCH

**Sunday 1st March**

Genesis 12: 1-4a  
John 3:1-17

**Sunday 8th March**

Exodus 17: 1-7  
John 4: 5-42

**Sunday 15th March**

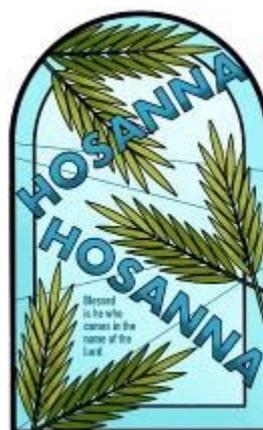
Colossians 3:12-17  
Luke 2: 33-35

**Sunday 22nd March**

Psalms 130  
John 11: 1-45

**Sunday 29th March**

Psalms 118: 1-2, 19-29  
Matthew 21: 1-11



# APRIL CHURCH SERVICES

**Wednesday 1st April**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Thursday 2nd April (Maundy Thursday)**

7.30pm Holy Communion & Vigil

**Friday 3rd April (Good Friday)**

3.00pm Stations of the Cross

**Saturday 4th April (Easter Eve)**

8.00pm Service of Light

**Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Wednesday 8th April**

10.00am Holy Communion



**Sunday 12th April (2nd Sunday of Easter)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Wednesday 15th April**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Sunday 19th April (3rd Sunday of Easter)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Wednesday 22nd April**

10.00am Holy Communion

**Sunday 26th April (4th Sunday of Easter)**

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Holy Communion

**Wednesday 29th April**

10.00am Holy Communion

## St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

### Upcoming Events for your diary

March 20th: Easter Bingo Tickets £1 or pay on the door (bring your own nibbles and drinks)  
7.00pm start

May 16th: Quiz Night Tickets £10 (inc refreshments & Picture Quiz) (but bring own drinks)  
7.00pm start

June 26th: Organ Recital Tickets £10 (inc light refreshments) @ 7.00pm

July 18th: Summer Fayre 12.00noon to 4.00pm

September 26th: Farmhouse Supper Tickets £15 (inc Hot & Cold Buffet and 'Kiwi Chorus')  
6.30pm to start at 7.00pm

December 6th: Police Band Concert Tickets £12 (inc Mulled wine and mince pie) @ 5.00pm

December 9th - 12th: Christmas Tree Festival and Grand Draw

Watch this space for more upcoming events

### Afternoon tea, anyone?

Do you take afternoon tea? Ever wondered where it started? The custom seems to date back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the seventh Duchess of Bedford, Anna Russell. The Duchess got hungry at about 4pm each day, calling it "that sinking feeling". As it was still four hours until dinner (at 8pm), she began to have sandwiches or a small cake with some tea. Her friends thought this was marvellous, and the idea spread quickly through (hungry) upper class circles. Soon, it seems, everyone in England was looking forward to Afternoon Tea, and a great British tradition was born. Though, during the last century, the sandwiches and cake gave way to biscuits, still we reached for the teapot each afternoon. Not so much anymore, it seems. In the last five years, sales of tea and biscuits have dropped. Perhaps we are drinking coffee? The research was done by retail analysts Mintel.



### Activities at St Michael's Church

#### St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

Tea & Toast in the Church Hall

Next Tea & Toast is on 4th April & 2nd May

@ 10.00am to 12.00 noon Admission: £2.00

#### Community Café

In the Church Hall every Wednesday from 11.30am—2.30pm.

A place to relax, have a natter, try some crafts and of course a cup Tea or Coffee.

#### Knit and Natter

Knit and Natter meets in the Church Hall every

Tuesday from 10.00am to 12noon.

Everyone welcome, especially newcomers.



#### VML

Sing-along sessions on Tuesday nights @ 7.00pm in the Church Hall. So come along have a cuppa and a sing-along for just £2.



One of my churchwardens is a stickler for 'Health and Safety'...

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



### March Birthday

Congratulations Stephanie Ashley and Lizzy Ratcliffe who celebrate their birthdays on March 1st, to Rhi Lawton who celebrates her birthday on

March 2nd, to Joan Clare who celebrates her birthday on March 15th and to Barbara Houghton who celebrates her birthday on March 30th.

## Peaceful mind in Lent

*Lent is a time of prayer and inward reflection, when we take stock of where we are with God...with this in mind, the following may be helpful.*

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Matthew 11: 28-30.**

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." **John 16:33**

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him." **James 1:12**

## Earth Hour 2026 – a time to turn off your lights

The Earth Hour 2026 takes place on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March, when at 8.30pm in their local time millions of people worldwide will turn off their non-essential lights for one hour. Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this global initiative will aim to raise awareness of the earth's climate crisis, and to encourage environmental action through sustainable, actionable lifestyle changes. The first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, and has since become a global movement. The 2025/26 theme is 'Giving an Hour for Earth' is encouraging people to adapt sustainable habits in their daily lives. And while our lights are off for an hour, Earth Hour will encourage us to spend the time in nature, or stargazing, or engaging in environmental, educational, or sustainable activities.

More info at: <https://www.earthhour.org>



## LENT LUNCHEs and PRAYER TIME 2026

During Lent we will be holding Lent prayer time and lunches on Fridays in the Church Hall **until 27th March** The prayer times will be half an hour of creative prayer, easy to join in with, **starting at 12.00noon.**

The prayer time will be followed by a bread and soup lunch, kindly provided by Robbie and VML helper's at **12.30 p.m.** Donations this year again will be sent to Runcorn Food Bank.



**ALL WELCOME, WHENEVER YOU CAN MAKE IT**

## Prayer for March 2026

*(based on Jn3:21, Jn 14:6, Jn 8:12, Jn 16:33, Heb 13:5)*

Lord,  
In these weeks leading up to Easter, many of us spend time reflecting on what Jesus has done for us and how he can help us live our lives.

But we live in a harsh, confusing world, where traditional values are upended and we can hardly believe some of the things we hear from powerful world leaders. Truth seems to be lost in the darkness.

Lord, your word tells us that, **whoever lives by the truth comes into the light.**

Jesus says He is **the Truth**. He also says He is the **Light of the world**. Help us to hold fast to these facts. Help us to remember that Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble – so we shouldn't be surprised – but that He has overcome the world – so we should be encouraged.

Whatever is going on in the troubled world around us – we can live by the real Truth – and in the real Light – Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who will never leave us or forsake us. Thank you so much.

In Jesus name. Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

## The Seven Deadly Sins: Greed

*'How much money is enough? Just a little bit more.'*(John D Rockefeller).

In the second of our series on the Seven Deadly Sins, we are looking at greed. It is the overwhelming desire for *more and more* in our lives. In our consumer culture it can be hard to tell the difference between needs and wants - e.g. buying a new laptop or shoes for different occasions? We need to ask the question: *How much is enough?*

Jesus was approached by a man who wanted Him to settle a dispute about family inheritance. He said, ***'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'***(Luke 12:15). Jesus goes on to tell the story of a rich farmer who builds bigger and bigger barns, but whose life is unexpectedly cut short by death. He concludes: ***'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'***(21).

How do we overcome greed and become *'rich towards God'*? Paul writes: ***'I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.'***(Philippians 4:13). Overcoming greed involves learning to be content in whatever situation we find ourselves, in need or plenty. Paul is not saying that there is anything wrong with having food, money or possessions, but these cannot be the primary source of our contentment. The secret of contentment is found in a transforming relationship with Jesus: ***'I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.'***(13). He is the one who enables us to overcome greed and know riches.

***'Contentment makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor.'***(Benjamin Franklin).

## Granny retired? You've got to be kidding....

The idea that grandmothers retire into an unburdened world of gardening and tea-drinking, golf and knitting is no more than a pleasant fantasy these days. Instead, nearly 63% of grandparents provide some sort of childcare to their under-16-year-old grandchildren. That amounts to around seven million older people, aged mostly between 55 - 74. As many as one in three is doing the school run. Nearly one in five is spending more than 10 hours a week giving other childcare. America has a nickname name for them: the 'granny nannies.'

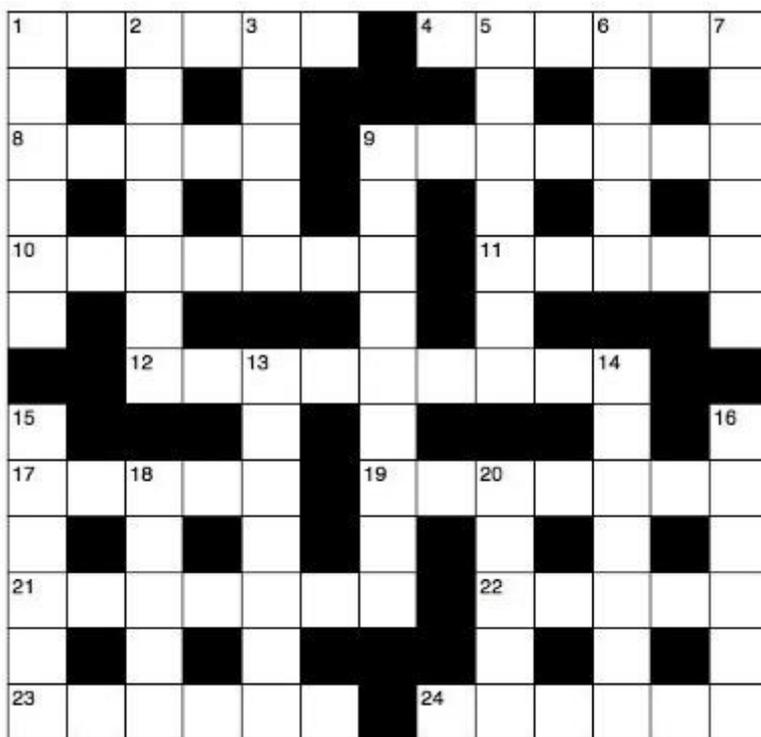
Granny nannies do it for good reason: to enable their own children to be able to work longer hours. But granny nannies not only care for their grandchildren, they may also be providing comfort for elderly relatives of their own - and hold down a part-time job at the same time.



Perhaps Super-Granny-Nannies is the correct name for them!

## What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Jeremiah

Jeremiah is described as *'a true, honest, and God-revealing companion for the worst of times.'*(Eugene Peterson). He was a priest from the village of Anathoth, near Jerusalem. His ministry to Judah began in 626 B.C. and continued until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Jeremiah brought a message of judgment and hope: ***'See, I have set you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.'***(1:10). During Jeremiah's ministry, Judah had rejected the Lord for idols (2:13). They claimed to be God's people, yet they refused to heed God's word by refusing to be corrected and following false prophets who spoke what the people wanted to hear. Therefore, Jeremiah was the prophet of judgement. He called Judah to repent, but they refused (6:16-17). However, he also brought a message of hope. He preached that they should trust God (9:23-24) and that a faithful remnant would be restored to the land (23:3; 31:7-9). Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet, who felt compelled to speak God's word (20:9). His life was characterised by sorrow, *'O my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.'*(8: 18). His people continually refused to listen to him, rewarding his labour with rejection and persecution. Much of Jeremiah's message remains relevant today, because we still fall into idolatry, whether it is wealth, talents or social standing. Sin requires repentance and restoration; obedience brings blessings and joy with it. However, Jeremiah also points to Christ, as the one who makes this possible. He showed great compassion for His people and shed tears for them. He suffered their ingratitude, but still forgave them.



## CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

See how you get on with this crossword. There is no prize, but whoever gets it back to the Editor by March 22nd will be entered on a Roll of Honour in the next edition of *Growing Together*.

### Across

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
- 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
- 8 "They — — , " you will say, "but I'm not hurt!" (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
- 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
- 10 Jewish (7)
- 11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
- 12 'A truthful witness gives honest — , but a false witness tells lies' (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
- 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
- 19 'Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature' (Galatians 5:13) (7)
- 21 'As you can see, he has done nothing to — death' (Luke 23:15) (7)
- 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
- 23 'All the people — — one man, saying, "None of us will go home"' (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
- 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham's side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

### Down

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
- 2 'In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea' (Acts 27:30) (7)
- 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
- 5 'But I have a baptism to — , and how distressed I am until it is completed!' Luke 12:50) (7)
- 6 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — — ' (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
- 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
- 9 'For I desire mercy, not — , and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6) (9)
- 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob's well (John 4:5) (7)
- 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
- 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
- 16 One of Paul's first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
- 18 Donkeys (5)
- 20 Raked (anag.) (5)



Crossword answer  
February

### ROLL OF HONOUR

Four people got the crossword answer and they were

Jim & Shelagh Goffin,  
Wendy Sefton,  
Margaret Myers  
&  
Sue & Chris Challoner



March  
2026



## Please Pray



Please remember the following people in your prayers throughout this month.

**Graham & Nicola Aylett**

**Barbara Done**

**Helen Browne**

Also please remember in your prayers anyone that you know who are housebound or in hospital.

If you would like us to pray for someone close to you then let the Pastoral Care Team or vicar know.

....and the recently bereaved, especially any families known to you

## IN MEMORY

In March 2025, the following person had their funeral at St Michael's. They will never be forgotten, because we still have the memories of that person and they are always with you/ us. So please remember this person in your prayers and thoughts.

**Walter Yule**



## INFORMATION

**Revd George Roach**  
01928 832734

Email: [vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com](mailto:vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com)

**Not on a Monday**

### Churchwardens

**Chris Challoner** 01928 761704

**Robbie Littler** 07718 133018

Also if there is a Safeguarding issue please email [Duncan Prince on safeguardingsmaa@gmail.com](mailto:Duncan Prince on safeguardingsmaa@gmail.com)

If you want to book a wedding, baptism or funeral please phone this number 07718 133018 and ask for Robbie

Or can go to our website:  
[www.runcornstmichaels.com](http://www.runcornstmichaels.com)

Very often, when people first turn towards God and realise that God loves them and that everything about them matters to Him, a wave of joyful emotion overwhelms them. But actual faith is mostly the realisation that, even though we don't in the least deserve it, God believes in us and finds us lovable. This is astonishing. - *Philip Pare*

## Debt Awareness Week 2026 – 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March

Everybody seems to be in debt these days, from households across the UK, right up to the public sector. Our household debt is a burden to us. As of April 2024, the total debt per household (including mortgages) averaged £65,143. Many households struggle with 'problem debt', ominously relying more and more on credit cards and payday loans to simply meet essential living expenses. This bleak situation, often called a 'debt trap', can ruin lives. At the same time, our national public debt is at record levels and rising. According to Goldman Sachs, it now stands at 101% of GDP. At the end of 2024, our national debt was the third highest of European countries. And high interest rates and inflation have only increased the cost of servicing this enormous debt, which in turn puts pressure on public finances. While the government struggles, hundreds of thousands of households are seeking personal help. Debt advice charities like StepChange, Citizens Advice and CAP (Christians Against Poverty) have reported a record-high demand for help. The strain of living with unmanageable debt can affect your mental health, reduce your productivity, and increase your reliance on public services. So this year's Debt Awareness Week will encourage people to not be ashamed of their debt, but instead to seek free, confidential, and professional advice on dealing with it.

### More info at:

CAP - <https://capuk.org>

Citizens Advice - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

StepChange - <https://www.stepchange.org/debt-awareness-week.aspx>