

Wykeham Benefice News

April, May 2026

Happy Easter

Join us as the sun comes up at 6a.m. on Easter Day in Swalcliffe for the Lighting of the Fire and the first Holy Communion of Easter.



He is Risen indeed!

from our Rector

As I write this letter, the sun is shining gloriously and there is not a cloud in the sky. It is the warmest day of the year so far and I have been thoroughly enjoying seeing all the spring flowers bursting up out of the earth. After the surprise of discovering rows of daffodils on the Rectory's front lawn last spring, I have been eagerly looking out for their return this year. I was thrilled when I began to witness the first shoots rising out of the cold earth and now they are in full bloom once more, bringing me much delight every time I see them.

This same sense of expectation and anticipation runs through the season of Lent. Whilst it is, of course, a period of study and self-reflection, it is also a time where we look forward to celebrating, once again, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Easter story is one we all know well, but that should not stop us encountering it anew each year. Just as I knew the daffodils were going to rise up and decorate my lawn once again, and so waited for them celebrating. Each year Christ rises in our hearts reminding us of the joy and hope we have in him. Through the darkness and culmination of Holy Week and his Passion, Christ overcame the sting of death and granted us the gift of eternal life in him. What a reason to celebrate!

But the joy of Easter does not just begin and stop at Easter Sunday. We are blessed with a full 50 days of Eastertide where we can truly be joyful and celebrate. Over that period we are encouraged to spread joy and happiness through the Good News and relish the company of friends and family during the most important time of the Christian year. In church over these 50 days of Easter, we will hear stories of Jesus visiting his disciples and friends, revealing himself to them as the risen Christ and turning their fear, doubt and sadness into delight and hope.

During the final 10 days of the Easter Season we will begin to focus upon the Ascension. This year Ascension Day falls on Thursday 14th of May. Before he ascended, Jesus commissioned his disciples, telling them that the Holy Spirit would come as a gift to them and aid them in spreading the Good News of God. Through his Passion, Resurrection and Ascension we know of the coming Kingdom of God and Jesus' saving power. We can each be assured in the knowledge that the gift of the Spirit works through each of us, unveiling and encouraging in us in the discovery and utilisation of our own gifts.

We are all commissioned by God, to go out and spread the Good News. He calls each of us into a mission and relationship with him and so, what a good time it is to go out and walk with Jesus, sharing our joy this Easter.

So, how will you share your Easter joy this April?

I wish you all a very blessed Eastertide, Rev'd Emily

Parish News



A photo of St. Mary's, Broughton's beautiful pulpit sent in by Paul Bennett

Sibford

We were pleased to welcome Archdeacon David to lead us in our Service of Blessing for our recently completed reordering and carbon net zero projects. At Holy Trinity Church we are now reliant entirely on electric under pew radiators for heating, supplemented when needed by several free- standing radiators. Over the next few months, the PCC will consider how best to further improve the Church heating in a way that is cost effective and environmentally sustainable. Meanwhile, a limited number of electric personal heating pads have been placed in the Church. These may be of use by some of our congregation, particularly on very cold days.

Our Mothering Sunday Service was once again held at 3pm followed by tea and cake. Posies were prepared by members of the congregation and distributed during the service and several delivered to sick and housebound in the Parish.

Easter Eggs are once again being collected for Polly Preedy to distribute to the homeless and needy in Banbury.

Preparations are being made by a small team for our Annual Christian Aid Week 10 – 16 May. Delivery Only envelopes to every home in the Parish with Collection points at the Post Office in Sibford Ferris and The Rectory in Sibford Gower. There will be an on-line donation page and a Coffee Morning for Christian Aid. There will be a Christian Aid Service showing a film demonstrating the work of Christian Aid worldwide.

Arrangements are being made for the Annual Parish Church Meeting. (APCM) in May. We look forward to seeing the bluebells planted this winter and are hopeful that swifts will make their home in our boxes.

Holy Trinity Church has also been selected to take part in a trial contactless donation scheme by the Oxford Diocese. Based on mobile phone technology, 6 donation devices have been installed in the Church for a three-month period for initial evaluation.

Shutford

St Martin`s Church annual report and accounts have been produced and will be presented to the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting on 21st April.

Church finances are in good order thanks to the support of our core congregation and others who value the presence of the church in the village.

Church attendances remain stable, but we look forward to younger people joining us to help keep the church available for all to use.

Our new Family Service is now held in the afternoon with a special one for Mothering Sunday in Shutford Village Hall. This was cafe style with tea and cake and flowers to take home.

Lent Lunches have been held including one in Shutford on 30th March raising funds for Banbury Beacon Centre.

There is to be a Good Friday Children and Family Activity morning in Shutford Village Hall – see separate poster on the back page. We celebrate Easter Day with Holy Communion at 9.30am.

The churchyard snowdrops have faded and have been replaced by daffodils and primroses – it`s worth a visit to spend some quiet time on the bench or in church, which open every day.

Shutford Village Fete is on Saturday, 20th June in The Manor field.

Ken Jeffs



*Photo kindly sent in by
Ken Jeffs*

Swalcliffe

The first few months of 2026 at have seen the PCC focused on several projects which are significant to the stewardship of Swalcliffe church.

Illumination of the medieval wall paintings and monuments

Three years ago, we began major work for the conservation of nationally important medieval wall paintings and seventeenth century family monuments. The final phase of this work is to install spotlighting to illuminate these significant features and in recent months a lighting scheme has been designed and a supplier with specialist church skills appointed. Once approvals are finalised, we anticipate the scheme being implemented over the next few months. This will add a further dimension to the visitor experience, whether during ad hoc private visits or at organised events. We're aware from our visitors' book that we receive people from around the world, and enjoyment of our church as a distinctive architectural and heritage asset will be materially enhanced by this lighting investment.

Stained glass windows

Our conservation aspirations relate also to the stained glass windows, starting with the large east window of the chancel. In addition to preserving beautiful craftwork, the effort will repair cracked panes and fill holes, which in turn supports all the investment of recent years in addressing damp issues through improved drainage to create a more stable interior climate. Following some recent successes in attracting grants, as well as some private donations, work is underway on securing the further substantial funding required. This is a significant, time consuming and skilled effort and our gratitude is due to those driving the initiative.

Roof beams

On a less glamorous but critical, priority issue, we have taken further steps in addressing rotten roof beams. Following the retirement of our previous longstanding church architect we have appointed a new professional who has engaged immediately in the roof situation and initial structural engineering design work has been commissioned. The generous funds raised through last December's Swalcliffe Christmas Market are enabling this work to move forward.

Treasurer

Another development which ensures a sound footing for the church's ongoing operation is that the role of church Treasurer has been taken over by Peter Morgan. He succeeds Robin Grimston. We thank Robin heartily for his many years of service as Treasurer and welcome Peter to the role with great appreciation for his interest in supporting his village church.

Churchyard

Finally, on a topic close to the hearts of many in the village who look up admiringly at the church tower and see the church clock partially obscured by a wonderful but large holly tree, the planned work to reduce the crown did not receive permission in time for pruning prior to the current nesting season and will now take place in the autumn. As the churchyard now starts to bloom into life, we thank our gardening team for all they do, and we also ask for additional volunteers for the season ahead. Please call 07768 773933, or speak to anyone involved in the church, if you might be able to help.

Tadmarton

Easter is nearly upon us and let's hope that the spring flowers and extra daylight make us all rejoice that winter is well behind us.

We held our Lent Lunch in the Village Hall on 10 March when we enjoyed some wonderful soups and cheeses. Not forgetting the opportunity to meet up and chat.

We collected donations of £320 for Polly who feeds the homeless in Banbury everyday and who is to many of us a current day Saint.

Mothering Sunday was on 15th March when we held a lay led special service to give thanks for all that our mothers have done for us. We also celebrate the 'mother church' According to AI it originated in the 16th century and gave domestic servants a day off to visit their home parishes and families.

We also held a new service on the evening of Monday 30th. This was a service of shadows and involved readings, silence and some music etc. as the service progresses, candles were extinguished until the church was in absolute darkness as it marks Jesus' death. Thank you, Emily, for arranging this.

We are holding our Annual Church Meeting in the Village Hall after the 11.00am service at around 12.15pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Easter Garden at Broughton

Broughton with North Newington

As we journey through Lent, we now look forward to the Easter services. Over the Easter weekend, we encourage you to join us on Good Friday the 3rd April for what will be a very moving benefice Devotional Service at 7pm. Also the special Easter Day service on Sunday 5th April.

On Thursday 14th May at 7pm, St Mary's church will host the Benefice Eucharist for Ascension Day.



On Saturday 30th May, the wedding of Lucy and Sam will take place at St Marys. We wish them a wonderful day with friends and family and we will include them in our prayers as they start their married life together.

Looking ahead to June, our BCP Choral Evensong service will take place on the 28th at 6pm.

A request from Georgina Style

St Mary's, Broughton with North Newington Church Spring Clean.

Saturday 2nd May 2026 at 10.30 am.

Please come and lend a hand, any questions Ring Georgina Style 01295 738307

Epwell

APCM

This year our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is due to take place on Monday 11th May at 6.30pm in St Anne's and is open to all.

Holy Week

Holy Week began with the Benefice Palm Sunday service on 29th March and there was the traditional procession around the village, singing and carrying Palm crosses, before the service in the church. The Easter Sunday service takes place on 5th April and will be led by Glyn Evans. Everyone is most welcome and there will be refreshments and chocolate eggs for all.

Lent Lunch



The PCC hosted a Lent Lunch in the village hall on 2nd March with a delicious selection of home cooked soups supplied by Susie, Lindsay and Carolyn accompanied by fresh bread rolls

made by James. Thanks to everybody who supported the event and donations from the lunch were given to support the work done by the "Let's Play" organisation

raising a fantastic £175. A representative from the charity came and gave a short presentation about their important ongoing work with families and young children within the Banbury area.

The charity cheque of £175 was presented for the 'Let's Play Project' to representative of the charity, Toni Milns (*second from the left in the photo*) by Andrew McHugh, and other PCC members, Carolyn Koch de Gooreynd and Chris Hurst.

Thoughts for Prayers

By the time this newsletter is published, Easter will be upon us and it will be a time of celebration for our 'risen Jesus Christ'. So let us REJOICE!

There is much to be concerned about in the world and millions are suffering. Praying for those in need may seem like an uphill struggle. What can we do by ourselves? This verse below, highlighted in the Lent course, 'Come and See', run by Bishop Steven, is of great comfort when we may feel overwhelmed by world problems or the inadequacy of our faith.

You may like to pray with this ancient prayer in mind, highlighting each prayer you offer to God with this verse. I hope you will find it brings you confidence to utilise your gifts in sharing the joy of Easter, as Emily says, and lifts your hearts.

Ephesians 3:20-21:

"Glory be to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine"

Wishing you a joyful Easter, Carolyn



The chancel window
at St. Anne's Church, Epwell
depicting the risen Jesus Christ

Date in April	Location	Time	Service	Liturgical colours
Maundy Thursday, 2nd White	Sibford	7.00pm	Benefice Eucharist for Maundy Thursday	ES
Good Friday, 3rd Red (but no hangings)	Tadmarton	2.00pm	Good Friday Meditation	JT
	Broughton	7.00pm	Devotional service	ES
Sunday, 5th Easter Day White or Gold	Swalcliffe	6.00am	First Communion of Easter	ES
	Sibford	9.30am	Holy Communion	JT
	Shutford	9.30am	Holy Communion	ES
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	GE
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
	Swalcliffe	11.00am	Holy Communion	BF
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	ES
Sunday, 12th Easter 2 White (ES Away)	Sibford	8.00am	BCP Holy	JT
	Swalcliffe	9.30am	Holy Communion	JT
	Sibford	10.00am	All Age Family service	Lay led
	Epwell	10.00am	Family service	Lay led
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	GE
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
	Shutford	4.00pm	All Age Family Service	Lay led
Sunday, 19th Easter 3 White	Sibford	9.30am	Holy Communion	ES
	Shutford	9.30am	BCP Holy	BF
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	JT
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	ES
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
	Swalcliffe	6.00pm	BCP Evensong	ES
Sunday, 26th Easter 4 White	Shutford	9.30am	Holy Communion	JT
	Sibford	9.30am	Holy Communion	GE
	Swalcliffe	9.30am	Holy Communion	GA
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	ES
	Broughton	11.00am	All Age family service	ES
	Tadmarton	11.00am	All Age Family service	JT

Rector: The Rev'd Emily Robottom-Scott (ES)

Associate Minister: The Rev'd Canon John Tattersall (JT)

May

Date in May	Location	Time	Service	Liturgical colours
Sunday, 3rd Easter 5 White	Shutford	10.30am	Benefice Eucharist	ES
Sunday, 10th Easter 6 White	Sibford	Sibford	Sibford	ES
	Swalcliffe	9.30am	Holy Communion	JT
	Sibford	10.00am	All Age Family service	Lay led
	Epwell	10.00am	Family service	Lay led
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	ES
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
Shutford	4.00pm	All Age Family Service	ES	
Thursday, 14th Ascension Day White or Gold	Broughton	7.00pm	Benefice Eucharist for Ascension Day	ES
Sunday, 17th Easter 7 Sunday after the Ascension White	Sibford	9.30am	Holy Communion	ES
	Shutford	9.30am	BCP Holy Communion	JT
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	BF
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	ES
	Swalcliffe	6.00pm	BCP Evensong	ES
Sunday, 24th Pentecost Red	Shutford	9.30am	Holy Communion	BF
	Sibford	9.30am	Holy Communion	ES
	Swalcliffe	9.30am	Holy Communion	GE
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	JT
	Broughton	11.00am	All Age family service	JT
	Tadmarton	11.00am	All Age Family service	ES
Sunday, 31st Trinity Sunday White or Gold	Sibford	9.30am	Patronal Festival Eucharist	ES
	Epwell	9.45am	Holy Communion	JT
	Broughton	11.00am	Holy Communion	ES
	Tadmarton	11.00am	Holy Communion	JT
	Shutford	6.00pm	BCP Evensong	ES

Assisting Priests:

The Rev'd Brian Fairbank (BF); The Rev'd Canon Glyn Evans (GE), The Rev'd Graeme Arthur (GA), The Rev'd Hazel Scarr (HS), The Rev'd John Smith (JS),
The Rev'd Prebendary Olwen Smith (OS)

Reading Tables

April

Date in April	OT Reading	NT Reading	Gospel	Liturgical colour
Thursday, 2nd Maundy Thursday	Exodus 12 v. 1-4, 11-14	1 Cor 11 v. 23-26	John 13 v. 1-17, 31b-35	White
Friday, 3rd Good Friday	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Sunday, 5th Easter Day	Jeremiah 31 v. 1-6	Acts 10 v. 34-43	John 20 v. 1-18	White & Gold
Sunday, 12th The Second Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v. 14a, 22-32	1 Peter 1 v. 3-9	John 20 v. 19-end	White
Sunday, 19th The Third Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v. 14a, 36-41	1 Peter 1 v. 17-23	Luke 24 v. 13-35	White
Sunday, 26th The Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v. 42-47	1 Peter 2 v. 19-25	John 10 v. 1-10	White

May

Date in May	OT Reading	NT Reading	Gospel	Liturgical colour
Sunday, 3rd May The Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 7 v. 55-60	1 Peter 2 v. 2-10	John 14 v. 1-14	White
Sunday, 10th May The Sixth Sunday of Easter	Acts 17 v. 22-31	1 Peter 3 v. 13-22	John 14 v. 15-21	White
Thursday, 14th May Ascension Day	Acts 1 v. 1-11	Ephesians 1 v. 15-end	Luke 24 v. 44-end	White & Gold
Sunday, 17th May The Seventh Sunday of Easter (Sunday after Ascension Day)	Acts 1 v. 6-14	1 Peter 4 v. 12-14; 5 v. 6-11	John 17 v. 1-11	White
Sunday, 24th May Pentecost (Whit Sunday)	Acts 2 v. 1-21	1 Corinthians 12 v. 3b-13	John 20 v. 19-23	Red
Sunday, 31st May Trinity Sunday	Isaiah 40 v. 12-17, 27-end	2 Corinthians 12 v. 11-end	Matthew 28 v. 16-20	White & Gold

*Children and Families, don't miss out on Good Friday activities at
Shutford Village Hall*

St Martin's Church Shutford, on behalf of
The Wykeham Benefice Group of churches,
invites you to a

Children & Family
free activity morning

Good Friday, 3rd April
in Shutford Village Hall - 10am-Noon



With crafts, activities and refreshments,
come and have fun exploring the true
meaning of Easter. Bring along your own
Easter craft ideas to share.

Everyone welcome.

Articles for June/July 2026 to be sent in by 12th May
to carolyn.kdeg@zen.co.uk. Thank you.