



## The Parish of St Mark and All Saints, Reading

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here. John 6:37

### A SEASON FOR GROWING TOGETHER

Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter (counting Easter Day). It brings the Easter season to a joyful climax as we remember the Holy Spirit being given to the Church. The following Sunday is Trinity Sunday, when we praise God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What comes to mind when you hear the word Pentecost? The sound of a rushing wind, flames like fire, and people speaking in many languages? But Acts 2 begins with a quieter detail that matters just as much: the disciples "were all together in one place." Because they were gathered—praying and waiting together—they were ready to receive the Holy Spirit and to be sent out as the first witnesses of the risen Christ. The Church is born, in other words, in community.

That still matters for us today. When we gather for worship, God shapes us in ways we cannot reproduce by ourselves.

God forms us through the liturgy: as we hear the Scriptures read and preached, pray together, confess and receive assurance of forgiveness, share the peace, and (week by week) are fed at Holy Communion.

Worship is not just something we watch or try to squeeze in; it is something we share. Following Jesus is never only private; it is something we learn together, across generations and cultures, as we encourage one another in faith and in service.

When we make space to meet with other followers of Jesus, we find encouragement, we learn to listen, and we remember that the good news is for everyone.

From Trinity Sunday onward we enter the long Season after Pentecost, often called Trinity season (or Trinitytide). It is a time to focus on steady, everyday discipleship: learning Christ, living his teaching, and bearing

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem...



and to the ends of the earth."  
Acts 1:8, NRSV

fruit in ordinary life at home, at work, at school and in our community.

That is why the liturgical colour is green. Green is the colour of growing things—of life, endurance and hope—reminding us that, by the Spirit's grace, God patiently grows holiness and love in us over time.

Week by week, in the lectionary and the Collects, we are led to grow and develop as we live out our faith. We ask God to deepen in us what he has begun, so that our faith takes root, our love stretches outward, and our lives become a quiet, faithful witness. Revd Jo

### CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

10th—16th May



Our Charity of the month for May is Christian Aid

"Together we must support families  
escape the cruel grip of urban poverty"

**7 days to make a difference**

[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Support our fundraising Quiz Night on 16th May  
in support of this important work.

### SUNDAY 17TH MAY

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING.

We have a joint 10am service at All Saints Church, Downshire Square which will be followed by the APCM (at 11.30am).

*There will be no service at  
St Mark's Church.*

Our church relies entirely on the generous financial giving of our community to support our Mission and Ministry, and to help keep our beautiful buildings open. If you would like to know more about becoming a regular donor please speak to us about our **Parish Giving Scheme**

or visit <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donate/>

Alternatively you can make a donation at <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/9a0a2324-3282-4e14-b1f8-dd36c01c9ea2>



Thank you!

#### OUR CHURCHES:

St Mark's Cranbury Road,  
RG30 2TA

All Saints Downshire Square,  
RG1 6NN

#### OUR STAFF:

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Revd Jane Lewis  
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#### Licensed Lay Ministers

Mrs Sylvia Cummins  
0118 9575049  
Dr Diana Matthews  
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#### Churchwardens

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#### Parish Office

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#### Hall Manager - St Mark's

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#### Hall Manager - All Saints

Please telephone the parish  
office—0118 950 2620

#### Safeguarding Officer

[stmarkandallsaints.safeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkandallsaints.safeguarding@gmail.com)



[www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-all-saints](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-all-saints)  
[www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-st-mark](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/reading-st-mark)



[www.facebook.com/StMarkandAllSaintsReading/](https://www.facebook.com/StMarkandAllSaintsReading/)

# HOLY WEEK AND EASTER ROUND UP

**School services** — It has been a real encouragement to welcome local schools into church again to celebrate the Easter story. We were especially delighted to host All Saints Infant School, where our 6- and 7-year-olds led the service so confidently and reverently. We also welcomed St Mary and All Saints School, with a memorable highlight from the Ensemble Club's beautiful rendition of "Be Still". Thank you to the staff, volunteers and helpers who made the visits run smoothly, and to the children who joined in so wholeheartedly. Sharing the Easter story with the next generation is a vital part of our mission, and it was a joy to see the church full of curiosity, questions, and song.

Our **Palm Sunday** worship began in the best way: together, on the move, following Jesus! It was wonderful to see the procession and to hear our voices raised in praise as we marked both the joy of the crowds and the shadow of the coming week. Thank you to everyone who struggled up the hill or met us on the road!

As the Holy week began, shared food, prayer and reflection helped to draw us more closely into the spirit of the season.



Agape Meal at St Mark's Church

The **Agape meal** was a real highlight: we enjoyed cottage pie and fabulous desserts, and shared bread and wine, gathered round the table, just as Jesus did with his disciples. It was a simple but moving reminder that Christ meets us at the table

and calls us to love one another.

The **Stations of the Cross** offered a prayerful way to walk with Christ on the road to the cross, making space for silence, scripture and honest intercession. A special thank you to Diana for leading us, and for a surprise visit from our Bishop, Mary, who



Compline in the Lady Chapel

joined us for worship on Tuesday.

On **Maundy Thursday** we remembered celebrated the Institution of the Eucharist, and we were moved as the clergy washed the feet of members of the congregation. We ended the evening with quiet Compline in the beautifully lit and decorated Lady Chapel, a peaceful space to watch and pray as we entered the solemnity of Good Friday.

**Good Friday** was marked with both warmth and depth. Our **Messy Church** helped families engage with the story in hands-on, accessible ways, with activities focused on the life of Jesus through a series of eight images of the face of Jesus. Each image was linked to a different craft or activity, guiding us step by step through the story.



Exploring Temptation at Messy Church



Later, the **Hour at the Cross** gave us time to be still before God, to listen to the passion narrative, and to hold the needs of the world in prayer. Pictures also guided our meditation, as we reflected on a beautiful polyptych: a series of ten paintings of the Passion of Christ from the mid 16th century by an unknown artist.



Paschal Candle

**Easter morning** was a wonderful celebration of the resurrection, full of alleluias, joyful worship heartfelt thanksgiving—and chocolate! It was a delight to share Holy Communion together as we proclaimed, "Christ is risen!" Bacon sandwiches were a very

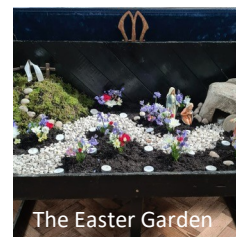
welcome reward for those who braved the early service!

Thank you to everyone who served in so many ways—music, reading, intercessions, serving, welcome, flowers, cleaning, sound, refreshments, and all the quiet acts of care that help our worship happen.



Ringing the Gloria

As we continue through Eastertide, we pray that the joy of Easter will take deeper root in us: that Christ's risen life will shape our home life, our work, our relationships and our service in the community.



The Easter Garden

## LENT CHARITY UPDATE

We started our fundraising during Lent at our Pancake Party on 24th February (a little delayed due to half term). Children had lots of fun with games, crafts and of course lots of pancakes. We raised **£100** for PACT (Parents and Children Together).

Then we had four Lent Lunch dates hosted between St Mark's Church and All Saints Church. These were a huge success often with 20+ people in attendance. A simple lunch was served (soup, bread and cheese) and a short Lenten reflection to end. Thank you to everybody who helped make these events a success and for the delicious home-made soup.

We raised **£271** from our Lent Lunch donations which has been sent to Church Urban Fund, who continuously campaign against UK Food Poverty.



Lent lunches supporting Church Urban Fund

# ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Be part of our annual meeting and come together to celebrate the life of the parish

Sunday 17th May at 11.15am at All Saints Church (following a joint 10am parish service)

**There will be no 9am service at St Mark's Church on this day!**

Join us for coffee and cake as we sit down and share our parish review, elect our church officers and join in the conversation as we think about our plans for the coming year.

Your PCC  
needs people  
like you!



Are you over 16?

Are you a communicant?

Have you been on the electoral  
roll for at least 6 months?

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is an important part of Church life. Our Parish has 12 PCC members as well as other key people who meet about 7 times a year, in addition to the main annual meeting in April. We discuss a variety of issues as well as plan the strategic growth of our two churches. We have fun, lively meetings where we can share our views and those of the congregation on important church matters.

We need people with a passion and with the drive and commitment to take our Parish forward in the community.

Could this be you?

If so, please speak to any member of the PCC (see picture board at the back of church) or speak to Rev'd Jo to find out more.

## CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

The church electoral roll is the Church of England's register of members for each parish. You can apply to join if you are baptised, are aged 16 or over, and either live in the parish or have worshipped regularly with us for at least six months. Being on the roll is a simple way to say "this is my church": it allows you to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (and to stand for the PCC), and it helps the parish show the strength of its congregation when planning and representing the church in the wider diocese. Pick up a form from the welcome table at church or talk to Kwaw or Revd Jo for more information.

## PCC VACANCIES

We have vacancies to sit on our PCC (Parochial Church Council). PCC members are vital to the running of our parish. They are the governing body of a Church of England parish and are trustees registered with the charity commission. We need people who have a passion and willingness to see the parish grow, who are willing to commit to all that we need to do in our parish and speak up in meetings, representing your own view as well as others in the parish. See our website for current PCC members.

Please speak with Revd Jo or Jackie John (PCC Secretary)  
for further information.

## WHAT IS A PARISH ANYWAY? - HOW THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IS ORGANISED

The Church of England is organised in levels so that local churches are supported and connected. In simple terms, it goes from the **parish** (our local churches) to the **diocese** (a group of parishes led by a bishop) and then to the **General Synod** (a national meeting where big decisions are discussed and agreed).

### THE PARISH: THE LOCAL CHURCH

A **parish** is the local area a church serves. Most people experience church at this level—Sunday services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and local community activities. A parish is usually led by a **vicar** (or another parish priest). Lay volunteers help in many roles. Each parish normally has a **PCC** (Parochial Church Council), a small elected-group that helps look after practical matters like money, buildings, and plans for the church's work. **Churchwardens** are key lay leaders who help the parish priest and support the life of the church.

### DEANERIES AND ARCHDEACONRIES— BETWEEN PARISH AND DIOCESE:

Parishes don't work on their own. Nearby parishes are grouped into a **deanery** so they can share ideas and work together. A deanery has a meeting called a **Deanery Synod**, where people from local churches talk about shared concerns and choose representatives for the next level up. Reading Deanery is one of the largest in the country! Deaneries also sit within an **archdeaconry**, led by an **archdeacon**, who helps the bishop with things like supporting clergy and caring for church buildings.

### THE DIOCESE: REGIONAL OVERSIGHT LED BY A BISHOP

A **diocese** is a larger area made up of many parishes. It is led by a **bishop**, whose job is to guide and support churches and clergy across the area. The diocese helps with training, appointing clergy, safeguarding, school work, and planning for mission and ministry. It also has a **Diocesan Synod**—a

representative meeting of clergy and lay people—which helps set direction and agrees budgets. The diocese also sends elected members to the General Synod. We are part of Oxford Diocese which has over 800 churches.

### THE GENERAL SYNOD: NATIONAL CHURCH

The **General Synod** is the Church of England's national decision-making body. It is a bit like a parliament for the Church: it debates important issues and agrees changes to church rules and policy. It includes bishops, clergy, and lay people (non-ordained members), so different voices are part of the discussion. Decisions made here help shape how the Church worships, organises itself, and responds to national issues.

Put simply: we belong to a **parish**. Your parish is linked with others in a **deanery**, and all the parishes together form a **diocese**. From dioceses, representatives go to the **General Synod**, where the Church makes decisions that affect the whole country.

Revd Jo

## PCC VACANCIES

### SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

After 3 years helping us stay safer as a church Levine has stepped down from this role. We wish her well in her new endeavours at work and we are thankful for all she has brought to the job. So, we are searching for a new Parish safeguarding officer. This is a crucial role in ensuring that our community places safeguarding at the heart of all we do. Full training is provided. The main responsibilities would be to meet with the vicar regarding any reports and keep our parish dashboard up-to-date. If you think you could help, please speak with Rev'd Jo or Jackie.



### ECO GROUP

Thanks to those of you who have enquired about the Eco group to help us work towards becoming more environmentally friendly in the parish, and consider how to best work towards an Eco Church award. We will be arranging a meeting soon but we still need passionate people to help us with our plan. Speak to Rev'd Jo or Jackie if you are interested.

### FLOWER ARRANGING HELP

We need a few extra volunteers to help the flower arranging team at All Saints Church?  
Do you have a bit of spare time in the week to help?  
Please speak to Sylvia or Jackie if you can help.  
Thank you

## FROM THE PULPIT (AND THE PEWS!)

The following was inspired by the Rev'd Jane's sermon of 22nd February 2026

The desert was a desolate location,

Dotted with the boulders and fantastic rock formations—the habitat of hermits.

And those disagreeing with the governors of the nation (a lonely place—free from distractions and worldly obligations).

In fact, the perfect place for Jesus to reflect and think after his baptism in the Jordan.

For forty days and nights, Jesus meant to be alone to ponder and pray,

But the devil intruded, refusing to go away.

Challenging Jesus, firstly to change some stones into bread, which in reply Jesus said... 'Man does not live by bread alone'.

Secondly, the devil took Jesus to a temple pinnacle,

And tempted him to jump and perform a miracle (by saving himself, by calling for help from angels and from God).

But Jesus simply answered... 'You must not put God to the test'.

Still the indefatigable devil would not rest, for he then took Jesus to the top of one of the highest of the local mountains

Saying ... 'Worship me and I will make you master of all nations'.

Unambiguously, Jesus replied... 'Satan be gone'.

Jesus then departed the desert (treading the path leading towards his preordained destiny).

Knowing that what his temptations had revealed to him was what it was that he would not/ could not ever be.

Submitted and written by Paul Farmer

## GLORIA! SUMMER CONCERT DOUAI ABBEY

**Tamesis Chamber Choir** warmly invites you to its summer concert—a joyful celebration of sacred music.

The concert features two exhilarating settings of the *Gloria*: Vivaldi's much-loved masterpiece and Bob Chilcott's enjoyable contemporary version. The programme also includes Buxtehude's *Magnificat*, Schütz's Psalm 100, and Gabrieli's *Jubilate Deo*, and will round off with a short piece you may not know: Amy Beach's *Peace I leave with you*.  
The organist will be Simon Dinsdale.

Douai Abbey is a delight to sing in: a gorgeous, inspiring building with a light, airy space and magnificent acoustics—perfect for this programme of high-quality choral music. There is plenty of free parking on site.

We are hoping for a beautiful summer evening, with interval refreshments (including wine and soft drinks) served outside in the Abbey's garden.



**When:** Saturday 20 June, 7.30pm

**Where:** Douai Abbey, Upper Woolhampton, Berkshire, RG7 5TQ

**Tickets:** £16 in advance or £20 on the door  
Under 18s and students £5

**Book:** Buy tickets online at [tamesischamberchoir.com](https://www.tamesischamberchoir.com)

Come and enjoy a fabulous evening of sacred music. This venue (and this music) deserves a full Abbey, We promise you'll go home with joy in your heart.

## A SIMPLE INVITATION TO PRAY



**GOD, THROUGH THE SPIRIT, LONGS TO MAKE GOD'S SELF KNOWN TO THOSE WHO DO NOT YET KNOW GOD.**

Thy Kingdom Come is a worldwide movement of prayer, taking place each year between Ascension Day and Pentecost. It encourages us to pray that God's kingdom would come in our own lives, in our communities, and in the lives of those we love.

Across the 11 days, we'll be invited to use short daily Bible readings and reflections to help us notice the God who is with us in everyday life—in its joys and sorrows, and everything in between. From Ruth to Gideon, from Elijah to the early Church waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, these stories remind us of God's transforming presence, power and love at work in ordinary people and places.

One of the joys of Thy Kingdom Come is knowing we are not praying alone. Millions of Christians across the world—across many traditions and in countries around the globe—pray

during these days, united by Jesus' words: "Thy kingdom come."

It's easy to get involved. You are invited to think of five people you would love to see know Jesus, and to pray for them each day during Thy Kingdom Come. You might pray by name at home, light a candle, use the Church of England app, or join one of our church prayer times during the week. Our hope is simple: that, as we pray, those we hold before God will experience his love and be drawn to faith.

**Find out more:**

[thykingdomcome.global](http://thykingdomcome.global)

**Get involved at St Mark and All Saints by joining us for Compline (Wednesday and Sunday 9pm on Zoom) or Parish Prayers (Alternate Monday's 7pm on Zoom)**

## A NEW LAY WORKER

At our service at All Saints Church on Sunday 19 April, we celebrated as James Butler received the Bishop's Licence to serve as a Lay Worker in the parish. The licence was presented during the service by the Revd Canon Paul Cowan (Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire).



Lay workers are trained and licensed members of the church who support the clergy in the day-to-day life and mission of the parish. Depending on their gifts and training, they may help lead worship and prayer, preach, offer pastoral support work with children, young people and families, nurture discipleship through small groups, and encourage the church's witness in the wider community. James has a particular calling to help us think about our wider community, and how we can serve, listen well, and share the love of Christ beyond our church walls.



We give thanks for James and for all who serve in lay and ordained ministry among us. Please join us in praying for him as he begins this new chapter of service. Many congratulations, James!

## READING DÜSSELDORF CHURCHES INTERCHANGE:

### **"Facilitating personal relationships and understanding"**

**Reading Düsseldorf Churches Interchange seeks to enable and foster personal friendship, understanding, learning and mutual respect among Christians of all denominations in Reading and Düsseldorf.**

Established in a time of great difficulty in the late 1940s, the Reading Düsseldorf Association (RDA) is the overall twinning link between our two cities. Now over 75 years old, it affords wonderful opportunities to explore many aspects of life and culture that we have in common. It is as strong today as ever and has many thriving aspects.

Reading Düsseldorf Churches Interchange (RDCI) is one of these aspects and has been in place for over 50 years. RDCI has developed strong links between Christians in Düsseldorf and Reading and, among other activities, presently runs week-long ex-

change visits twice every three years, with programmes based on a topical theme. Participants stay in one another's homes, visit places of interest, share meals, discuss hot topics, attend worship and enjoy one another's company. In between exchange visits there are other local social events and an annual service, and we also keep in touch with Reading and Düsseldorf members via online meetings.

Our most recent visit to Düsseldorf was in June 2023, with the theme 'our changing climate', and the next one will take place from 22-29 August this year. These visits are full of interesting encounters and experiences.

The most recent visit to Reading was in July 2025, when the theme was 'Migration'. The programme is on our website at [ReadingDusseldorfChurchesInterchange/welcome](http://ReadingDusseldorfChurchesInterchange/welcome). **RDCI welcomes new participants.** Anyone

interested in participating in RDCI, and possibly also in an exchange visit, is encouraged to make contact to learn

more. Hosting our guests is a rewarding though by no means required element. Local organisers and contact information are to be found at [www.readingdusseldorfchurches.org/contactus](http://www.readingdusseldorfchurches.org/contactus)

**Everyone's interest and involvement are most welcome - please just contact any one of us**



# SUMMER EVENTS—FOR YOUR DIARY

We have a fun filled summer of social events planned for the whole community.

Pop the dates into your diary and get involved.

Everyone welcome!

The Parish of St Mark and All Saints, Reading



## JUMMABLE SALE

### Saturday 2nd May

1.30pm – 3.30pm

All Saints Hall, Downshire Sq

**GRAB A BARGAIN!**

Clothes, household bits, books, and toys. All proceeds to parish funds.

50p entry

All Saints Hall, Downshire Square, Reading, RG1 6NH Charity number 1160687



Our May events will be supporting Christian Aid as well as parish fundraising

The Parish of St Mark and All Saints, Reading

## QUIZ NIGHT

### Saturday 16th May

Prizes to win and raffle!

Cost: £8 per adult (includes buffet food at interval) Children are free.

When: Saturday 16th May

Where: All Saints Hall, Downshire Square, RG1 6NH

Time: 7.30pm start (arrive by 7.15pm please)

Fancy taking part?

Enter as a team of 2–6 adults. If you don't have a team we can arrange one for you. Sign up in church (speak to Ron or Jackie) or email: [stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com) to let us know you are coming.

Fundraising helping to support Christian Aid

ST MARK AND ALL SAINTS, INVITE YOU TO JOIN US AT:

Fun  
Activities  
Family  
Games  
Crafts  
Friends  
Faith  
For everyone!



## MESSY CHURCH

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, DOWNSHIRE SQUARE

## SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY

### 2.30 - 4.30PM

For more information call Revd Jo 07977 142450 or email [stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com)

Messy Church is a family activity and children must be accompanied by an adult.

## ALL SAINTS FAMILY

### COFFEE AND CATCH UP

## WED 20TH MAY

Church open after school for refreshments and a chat

Everyone is welcome



PLEASE COME IN





## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are busy planning our summer events and needs lots of help and donations to help make it happen!

**Sat 6th June—Parish Summer Fair—All Saints Hall**

**Sat 20th June—Family Fun Day—St Mark's Church**

**Plants**—indoor and outdoor plants needed for both—can you make cuttings? Grow some seedlings?

**Cakes**—any bakers out there? We'd love some home-made cakes to sell at both events

**Raffle**—as always, if you have anything at home that could be used for a stall or the raffle please do bring them into church

**Help**—please do put the date in your diary—we need lots of helpers on the day.

## Caribbean Evening

Saturday 4th July

7pm—10pm

St Mark's Hall, Cranbury Road

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY FOR AN  
EVENING OF FUN, FABULOUS FOOD, MUSIC  
AND RUM PUNCH!

Further details to follow

## EXPLORERS LATEST ADVENTURE

The Explorer group went out 'exploring' on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April.

It was great to have 7 of us enjoying exploring then having a chat, a drink and for some cake. We went to find out more about the Thames Valley Hospice Superstore. I had heard good reports on their café and some of the cakes were suitable for people with allergens e.g. Gluten Free. We weren't disappointed.

At times if you weren't aware that you were in a charity shop you would have thought it was an out of town normal superstore. It's amazing how they upcycle their donations. Do you ever need clothes altering? You can take them to their sewing department and their prices seem reasonable. [Thames Hospice Superstore](#) | [Thames Hospice](#) We will be adventuring again so watch out for announcements.



# STIRRING UP A LIFE WITH MEANING

## HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR SOUP?

When Winston Churchill once dined at a well-known London restaurant, he tasted his soup and sent it straight back to the kitchen. “It has no theme,” he complained.

He went on to say that a good soup should have a theme. And honestly, the same is true for so much of what sticks with us: a good book, a meaningful concert, a memorable film, a powerful sermon, a beautiful work of art. And it’s true of a good life, too.

Joan of Arc, the French martyr, put it simply: “God must be served first.” That was her theme. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he desired to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:2). That was his theme. Again and again, we see it: every truly devoted Christian lives with a central, guiding focus — an overriding theme.

Which brings it close to home: what’s ours?

Pastor and psychologist Dr. Curtis Nigh offers this challenge: “If the heart does not have a noble or goodly theme, then it develops an anti-theme.” In other words, if we don’t intentionally shape our lives around what is good and holy, something lesser will quietly take its place.

To be a Christian is to embrace a compelling, Christ-centred theme. It shapes our priorities, our decisions, our relationships

and our hope. It isn’t simply an idea we admire from a distance — It is not simply an idea we admire — it is the heartbeat of a life lived for God.

*“If the heart does not have a noble or goodly theme, then it develops an anti-theme.”*

If that sounds a little abstract, here’s a down-to-earth way to think about it: your theme is what you naturally drift towards when you’re tired, stressed, excited, disappointed, or making a big decision. It’s the “main storyline” your choices keep reinforcing.

So it can help to ask a few gentle questions: What do I spend most of my time thinking about? What do I daydream about when I have a quiet moment? What am I most afraid of losing? What do I reach for when I need comfort?

Most of us don’t have just one clear theme all the time. We can carry competing themes — approval, comfort, success, control, security — and they can sound reasonable until they start calling the shots. The good news is that Jesus doesn’t expose our “anti-themes” to shame us; He does it to free us and re-centre us.



One simple practice is to put your theme into a sentence you can actually remember. Not a slogan to impress people — just a clear aim before God. Something like: “To know Christ and make Him known,” or “To love God and love my neighbour,” or even, “In this season, I want to learn to trust Jesus more than I trust myself.”

Then give that theme something to grab onto. Choose a short passage or verse to return to (like Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 2:2), and build small rhythms around it: a few minutes of prayer before you pick up your phone, a weekly Sabbath pause, saying “yes” to one act of service, or having one honest conversation where you practise grace instead of winning.

And when you notice your life losing its flavour — when the days feel scattered, thin, or reactive — you can treat it like Churchill treated that soup. Not with fussiness, but with clarity: “This has no theme.” Then you come back to the One who gives life its true centre. In Christ, a themed life isn’t a narrow life; it’s a deeply grounded one.

## PATRONAL FESTIVAL: THE FEAST OF ST MARK



Last Sunday we were delighted to celebrate the Feast of St Mark as the Patronal Festival of St Mark’s Church. It was a joyful and prayerful service, with a warm, family atmosphere, and it was wonderful to

welcome people of all ages and backgrounds to worship together and give thanks for our parish’s life and witness.

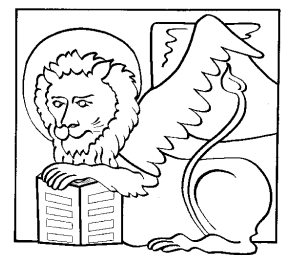
We were inspired by Kwaw’s thoughtful sermon, reminding us of Mark’s example and inviting us to renewed faith and courage in sharing the good news.

Special thanks, too, to the choir and musicians for lifting our voices in praise and helping us worship with joy.

A Patronal Festival is always a shared effort, and we are thankful to everyone who prepared the church, arranged flowers, set up the space, and helped with hospitality. It was a real pleasure to stay on for our shared lunch afterwards—thank you to all who cooked, brought food, served, and cleared away. The conversations around the hall were a reminder that church is not only what happens in the service, but also the fellowship we share as we look out for one another.

As we continue through Eastertide, may St Mark’s example encourage us to listen attentively to

Christ and to share the good news with simplicity, courage and love.



Thank you again to everyone who made the day so special, and to all who came and joined in.

If you are new, or returning after some time away, you will be very welcome at our services—please do introduce yourself to the clergy or churchwardens.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

• Lonely? • Looking for Company? •  
 • Want to make new friends? • Building Community? •  
 • New to the area? • Bored at home? • Bereaved?  
 • Fancy a chat? • New Baby? •

## Coffee on Mondays

Join us for coffee and a chat.

Every Monday  
10:30-12.00



Church also open for prayer and reflection.

## Fancy a cuppa?

Join us at our regular Monday coffee mornings at All Saints Church or at our monthly charity coffee mornings in the Downshire room All Saints Hall.  
 (For full details see below).

## Coffee, chat and companionship

### Everyone is welcome

Coffee is also served on Friday mornings at 8.40 (term time only) before our weekly Infant School service.

## CHARITY COFFEE MORNING

10.30am—11.30am

Downshire Room, All Saints Hall  
 Includes raffle, tombola and bring 'n' buy

**2nd Saturday in the month (except Nov)**



**23rd May**—Duchess of Kent Hospice and Institute of Cancer Research  
**13th June**—Operation Smile and Smile Train

25% of the fundraising from each coffee morning will be donated to Parish Funds, the remaining donations go directly to the charities listed.

## We're hosting a coffee morning

Join us for a coffee and a friendly chat every Tuesday morning. Make new friends and enjoy a slice of home made cake!

Everyone's welcome.

Free event

Every Tuesday  
11am to 12 pm

Parkside Care Home

Parkside Road,  
Reading  
RG30 2DP



Call us to reserve your spot or find out more  
**0118 952 8910** ext 1200

We may record or monitor our calls.



## STRENGTH AND BALANCE CLASS

St Mark's Hall, Cranbury Road,  
Reading, RG30 2TA

**Tuesday 9.30am—10.30am**

A friendly, supportive exercise class designed to strengthen muscles and bones, improve balance and mobility and help you feel more confident on your feet.

£8 per class (first session free)

Classes led by a qualified level 4 exercise instructor.

**Contact Laura for more information on 07762 151932 or email**



Although ongoing health issues and age are limiting my fundraising, I would like to acknowledge the fantastic support my friends at St Mark and All Saints Churches and other friends have given me over the past fifteen year (and continue to still support and give) and as an (unofficial) ambassador for St Mark and All Saints, I am pleased to write to tell you have helped raise an amazing £83,000 for mostly local charities. Congratulations. You are amazing. This could not have been achieved without your support and generosity.

Best Wishes, Paul Farmer

## OPEN GROUP

We meet at 2.30pm in the Downshire Room, All Saints Hall (unless otherwise stated) Payment is £10 per year (excluding July/ Aug and Dec) or £2 per meeting.

**Wednesday 22nd April - 'My childhood and working life'** - talk by Jenny Henshall

**Wednesday 27th May - 'Ayres and Greyces'** - poems, odes and acoustic R 'n' R

**Wednesday 17th June—'My cruise to Antarctica and Falklands'** (exploration!) - Dr Jane Sellwood

## LINK GROUP

Link Group usually meet on Wednesdays at 11am until 12 noon (in the Downshire Room, All Saints Hall, Downshire Square) for coffee, chat, prayer and study of a bible passage. If you would like to join us or find our more, please ask.

Our dates for the summer will be.

**Wednesday 13th May**  
**Thursday 11th June**  
**Wednesday 8th July**

## BADMINTON CLUB



**Monday 7.30—9.30pm**  
**Tuesday 7.30—9.30pm**

All Saints Hall £4

Bring a racket, Tuition available.

## PRAYERS...

Do you have something or someone you would like us to pray for?

We are happy to receive weekly prayer requests using the prayer boxes in church or by speaking to the wardens or clergy on a Sunday morning. If your request is not for yourself, please check that the person for whom you are requesting prayer is happy for you to share information with us. In public prayer only first names or initials will be used. God, who knows all things, hears beyond the words we speak aloud to the intentions of our hearts and will not fail to listen. If you would like someone to pray with you, please speak to one of the clergy or ministry team.

In particular we invite you to pray :

- For God's guidance and Blessing on our community .
- For peace in the world
- For the People of Gaza and Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East and all those affected by war, terror or violence of any kind.
- That we might seek to safeguard the integrity of creation.
- That our local churches will be a place of welcome and kindness for those seeking refuge.
- For wisdom and understanding in the heated discourse around immigration in the UK,
- For our local elections, our government and council.
- For the work of the Christian Aid
- For our Parish care homes and those who live, work and minister within them
- For those who are struggling with mental health issues
- For those who are lonely or in need
- For all who are sick and those who care for them
- For those who have died, or whose year's mind falls at this time.

## WALSINGHAM MASS



### NEW MEETING TIME 7.30PM

The cell of our Lady of Walsingham meet to celebrate Mass at 7.30pm at All Saints Church (on the first Monday of the month (excluding bank holidays):

- Monday 11th May
- Monday 1st June
- Monday 6th July



MAD Club meets one **Tuesday** a month, for fun, games, crafts and time together to grow in our faith and make an even bigger difference in our world. We finish with a simple meal together- Why not invite a friend? For more information talk to Revd Jo or Iva Butler.

## A PRAYER FOR OUR TIME

God of truth and justice,  
we pray for our nation in this election season:  
for all who vote, that we may do so with wisdom and care for our neighbours;  
for those who stand for election, that they may speak with integrity and listen with humility;  
and for those who are elected, that they may serve with courage, compassion and a commitment to the common good.  
Guide all in authority to seek peace, protect the vulnerable, and work for what is right; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## JOIN US FOR PRAYER ...



**Compline** (Night prayer) is online each Wednesday and Sunday night at 9pm .

**Parish prayers** meet fortnightly online on alternate Monday evenings at 7pm, to pray for the Parish and our community.

**Everyone is welcome to join us at these times.**

*"Rejoice at all times, pray without ceasing give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## NEW MONTHLY BOOK GROUP

### — WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED?



We're exploring the idea of a monthly book group at church.

The plan would be simple: choose a book with a spiritual theme, read it over the course of a month, and then meet for an informal, friendly discussion—over a glass (or cup) of something nice.

If you'd like to take part (or help shape what the group looks like), please speak to Revd Jo.

# GENEROUS GIVING

If you are shopping online then please consider first registering with easyfundraising.



Raise **free funds** every time you **shop online**

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)—perhaps the easiest way to support our church financially if you shop on-line. Many companies ‘donate’ a small percentage of the total cost of your goods to your nominated charity and it costs you nothing.!

Just hover over the QR code with your camera on your smart device and it will take you to St Mark and All Saints Reading easyfundraising’s cause page.

**You spend, retailers donate**

Sign up to easyfundraising and see your favourite retailers donate to

St Mark and All Saints Reading

whenever you shop with them

**Sign up and get started**

*Thank you for everything you currently do. It makes a huge difference.*

Don't forget our Parish is also a charity and there are many ways you can support us.

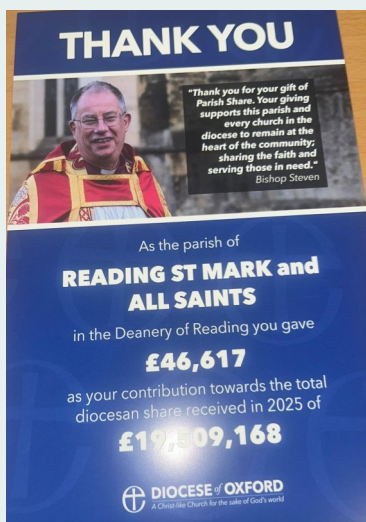
- You can remember loved ones by **sponsoring our weekly service sheets**. We recommend a donation of £20 and we can print a short tribute (up to 50 words) on the front of the service sheet on your chosen date.
- If you're a fan of online banking why not give **direct by BACS** to St Mark and All

Saints Church PCC.  
Sort Code **30-91-31**,  
Account number **02374937**.

- Become a **regular giver** by setting up a regular amount via the Parish Giving Scheme—<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donate/>
- **Scan the QR code in the service sheet** (and the front of this newsletter) and make a donation on your smart phone with your card.

## PAYING OUR WAY

The Bishop of Oxford has recently written to thank us for paying our **Parish Share** in full and on time last year. Parish Share is the contribution each church makes to a central diocesan fund. It helps pay for clergy stipends and housing, training for lay people and clergy, safeguarding, and legal support for churches, as well as grants to support local mission and ministry. The amount each church pays is weighted so that larger and more affluent churches can support smaller churches and those, like ours, serving diverse communities in areas of greater need.



On behalf of the parish and the diocese, thank you for your continued generosity and for the vital part it plays in the work and mission of our parish.

## HALLS FOR HIRE

Our two beautiful Church halls are available for regular hire for groups and organisations or one off hire for parties and events.

Rental income from our halls plays a huge role in balancing the parish finances so please consider us if you are looking for a space and recommend us to your friends.

The Downshire Room at All Saints is also available separately for smaller groups.



**All Saints Hall, Downshire Sq, RG1 6NH**

Email the Parish Office:

[allsaintsreading@gmail.com](mailto:allsaintsreading@gmail.com)

or [stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkandallsaints@gmail.com)



or call 0118 9502620

**St Mark's Hall, Cranbury Rd, RG30 2TA**

Email Sharon: [st.mark.church.hall@gmail.com](mailto:st.mark.church.hall@gmail.com)

or telephone 0118 9502620

# THE MONTH AHEAD...

## May

Fri 1st	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 2nd	<b>1.30</b>	<b>Jumble Sale AS Hall</b>
Sun 3rd	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 4th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
Tue 5th		NO EVENTS
Wed 6th	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 7th		NO EVENTS
Fri 8th	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 9th		<b>Wedding at AS Church</b>
<b>Sun 10th</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	<b>2.30</b>	<b>Messy Church AS</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 11th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
	7.30	Walsingham Mass AS
Tue 12th	<b>4.30</b>	<b>MAD Club (AS hall)</b>
Wed 13th	<b>11.00</b>	<b>Link Group AS Hall</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 14th		NO EVENTS
Fri 15th		NO EVENTS
Sat 16th	<b>7.30</b>	<b>Quiz night AS Hall</b>
<b>Sun 17th</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>Joint parish service All Saints</b>
		<i>(no service at St Mark's Church)</i>
	<b>11.15</b>	<b>APCM All Saints Church</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 18th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
	7.00	Parish Prayers
Tues 19th		NO EVENTS
Wed 20th	<b>3.00</b>	<b>Family catch up AS Church</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 21st		NO EVENTS
Fri 22nd	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 23rd	<b>10.30</b>	<b>Charity coffee (AS Hall)</b>
<b>Sun 24th</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 25th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
Tue 26th		NO EVENTS
Wed 27th	<b>2.30</b>	<b>Open Group (AS Hall)</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 28th		NO EVENTS
Fri 29th		NO EVENTS
Sat 30th		NO EVENTS
<b>Sun 31st</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)

## June

Mon 1st	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
	7.30	Walsingham Mass AS
Tues 2nd		NO EVENTS
Wed 3rd	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 4th		NO EVENTS
Friday 5th	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 6th	<b>2.00</b>	<b>Parish Summer Fair (AS)</b>
<b>Sun 7th</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 8th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
	7.00	Parish Prayers
Tue 9th	<b>4.30</b>	<b>MAD Club (AS hall)</b>
Wed 10th	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 11th	<b>11.00</b>	<b>Link Group AS Hall</b>
Fri 12th	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 13th	<b>10.30</b>	<b>Charity coffee (AS Hall)</b>
<b>Sun 14th</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 15th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
Tue 16th		NO EVENTS
Wed 17th	<b>2.30</b>	<b>Open Group AS Hall</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 18th	<b>3.00</b>	<b>All Saints Family catch up AS</b>
Fri 19th	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
	<b>3.00</b>	<b>Family catch up AS Church</b>
Sat 20th	<b>2.00</b>	<b>Family Fun Day SM</b>
<b>Sun 21st</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Mon 22nd	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
	7.00	Parish Prayers
Tue 23rd		NO EVENTS
Wed 24th	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
Thurs 25th		NO EVENTS
Fri 26th	8.45	School Family Worship AS preceded by coffee
Sat 27th		NO EVENTS
	9.00	Compline (zoom or telephone)
<b>Sun 28th</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>St Mark's Eucharist</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>All Saints Eucharist</b>
Mon 29th	10.30	Coffee on Mondays AS
Tue 30th		NO EVENTS

# FUTURE DATES 2026

## May

- Sat 2nd—Jumble Sale AS Hall**
- Sat 16th—Quiz night AS hall**
- Sun 17th APCM—Joint service @ 10am AS**

## June

- Sat 6th Parish Summer Fair AS Hall**
- Sat 20th Family Fun Day SM**

## July

- Sat 4th Caribbean evening SM Hall**
- Sunday 12th Messy Church**
- Sat 18th RSO concert at All Saints Church**

## September

- Sat 12th Ride and Stride/ Macmillan cancer fundraising event (also Table Top at SM Church)**

## October

- Scottish Dance SM tba**

## November

- Sat 14th Parish Christmas Fair**

## December

- Sat 5th Christmas Tree Festival**

Do email the parish office for any social or fundraising event suggestions. Further events will be added to the list throughout 2026

## SUNDAY ZOOM

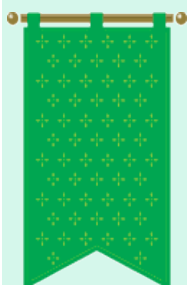


We recognise that it can be difficult for some members to get to church each week, particularly in the colder months of the year. We aim to live stream one service each week over Zoom.

If you are unable to join us in person, please do consider joining our worship online.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85678162379?pwd=ZytBWFpleGdlUXovdGcyeEZOelZBdz09>

Meeting ID: 856 7816 2379 and Passcode: worship (or 7805385 if dialling by phone) You can also join by telephone by dialling: 0208 080 6592 or 0203 481 5237



## CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

**GREEN** — Green is the traditional liturgical colour for the weeks after Pentecost. The Pentecost season largely overlaps with spring and summer, which is fitting because green symbolizes growth: growth of plant life and crops, and growth of the church in discipleship and faith.

## ... A FINAL THOUGHT!

### THE TASTE OF OUR WORDS

I try to watch the words I say,  
And keep them soft and sweet;  
For I don't know from day to day,  
Which ones I'll have to eat.!

