

Chalfont St Giles Parish Magazine



March - May 2026

The Parish Church of Chalfont St Giles

<https://csgparish.church>

in the Benefice of Chalfont St Giles with Seer Green and Jordans

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See inside back cover for details of other Parish roles

How to Contact the Magazine Team

Put your copy in the post rack in church (in the slot "Magazine Articles")

Email your copy to: stgileschurchmagazine@gmail.com

Deadline for the next issue: Friday 8th May 2026

Please send diary dates to:

Church - Parish Office at: saintgileschurch@gmail.com

or (01494) 258110

Secular - stgileschurchmagazine@gmail.com

Chalfont St Giles Parish Magazine is edited, produced
and distributed entirely by volunteers.

Welcome

Welcome to the spring edition of the parish magazine. It contains reports about and updates on all the events happening in and around the church in the next three months.

Though the usual contributors have been very reliable in producing material that is interesting and informative I did not receive much outside the usual topics so I have taken the liberty of writing about a trip we took recently which I know a number of you were interested in. I hope that some of you will be encouraged to contribute something different to future magazines.

The Editor



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Magazine articles and photos are always welcome and can be emailed to: stgileschurchmagazine@gmail.com or placed in the pigeon hole in church.



Rector's Letter

Walking the Road to Easter, and Beyond

As we move into the months of March, April, and May, the world around us begins to change, often so gradually that we hardly notice it at first. The mornings grow a little lighter, the air softens, and there are small signs of life returning in gardens and hedgerows. A few buds appear, birds seem a little

louder, and the days begin to feel as though they are stretching out again. It is a quiet kind of change, but a real one, and in many ways it mirrors the journey the Church invites us to walk during this season. March, for many of us, brings Lent. Lent is sometimes misunderstood as a gloomy or joyless time, but that was never its purpose. At its heart, Lent is about making space. Life is busy, often noisier than we realise, and it is easy to drift spiritually without meaning to. Days fill up, worries press in, and before we know it we have lost the habit of stillness, of prayer, of simply being attentive to God.

Lent is an invitation to return to those things, gently and without pressure. Some people choose to give something up, others take on a new pattern of prayer or reading Scripture, and some simply try to be a little more attentive to God in the ordinary moments of the day. There is no single way to keep Lent well. What matters is the turning of the heart.

The word Scripture uses is *repent*, which simply means to turn around, to face God again. And that turning is not meant to feel heavy or condemning. It is more like coming home. In the parable of the prodigal son, the father does not stand with folded arms waiting to rebuke his son. He runs to meet him. That is what God is like with us.

Patient, ready to receive, never weary of welcoming us back. Lent also reminds us that faith is not only about great moments of certainty or spiritual experience. Much of the Christian life is lived quietly, in faithfulness, in prayer that sometimes feels dry, in trust that continues even when life is difficult or confusing. Those quiet acts of faith matter deeply, even when they feel small.

By the time we reach April, we find ourselves in Holy Week and then Easter, which stand at the very centre of our faith. We walk with Christ through the events of those final days, we remember the cross, and then we hear again the words spoken at the empty tomb: “He is not here; he has risen.”

Those words are familiar, but they never lose their power. They remind us that darkness does not have the final word, that loss and sorrow are not the end of the story, and that hope is not wishful thinking but something grounded in what God has done in Jesus. Easter is not only a celebration of something that happened long ago. It speaks into our lives now. It reminds us that God is able to bring life out of places that feel barren, peace into hearts that feel restless, and light into situations that seem uncertain. Many of us carry burdens that others never see. The message of Easter is that none of those things are beyond the reach of God’s grace.

Then May arrives, and with it the sense that life itself is opening up again. Trees are in leaf, gardens are waking, and the world feels fuller. There is something deeply reassuring about the return of spring each year. It reminds us that seasons change, that winter does not last forever, and that renewal is written into the fabric of creation itself.

The Easter season continues through these weeks, and it quietly reminds us that resurrection is not only something we believe in, but something we are called to live. We are called to live as people of hope, patience, and steady trust, even when life is uncertain, even when the world around us feels unsettled or hurried. Faith, of course, is not lived alone. One of the quiet gifts of parish

life is simply being able to encourage one another, sometimes in ways we barely notice. A conversation over coffee, a familiar face in the pew, a kind word at the church door, or the simple act of praying for one another, these small things matter more than we often realise. They are part of how God cares for us, through one another.

If you have not been to church for a while, this season is a gentle invitation to come again. There is no need to feel that you must have everything sorted out before you walk through the door. None of us do. Church is not a gathering of people who have life perfectly together, but a community of people learning, slowly and imperfectly, to trust God a little more each day.

As we move through these spring months, my prayer for each of you is that you would know something of the peace of Christ in the middle of ordinary days, that you would find moments of stillness in the middle of busy ones, and that, perhaps in quiet and unexpected ways, you would become more aware that God is nearer than we often think, walking with us, patiently and faithfully, step by step.

Rev Dan

Chalfont St Giles Parish Church

On Sunday 10 May 2026 at 11am (after the Parish Communion service), two special meetings will be held:

1 Annual Meeting of Parishioners

- To deal with the appointment of churchwardens

2 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- To elect members of the PCC (Parochial Church Council) and the Deanery Synod;
- receive the 2025 Trustees' Annual Report and Statement of Accounts;
- and consider other matters of parochial or general Church interest.



Churchwarden's Corner

Advent, through Christmas, and into Epiphany has been a very busy time. It has been wonderful to welcome new and old faces, schools and families into the range of services offered and to hear the Good News of Jesus. The good news for our church was that our attendance

figures for December were up 10% on the previous year.

Much of what is achieved is only possible through those who volunteer – whether it be on the PCC, working with the children, serving on the Fabric committee, caring for the finances, singing in the choir, serving tea and coffee, welcoming, cooking or presentation of the flowers.

Your PCC has been focussed upon three key areas, all of which we highlighted in the church survey completed last year.

Firstly, dealing with the Diocese on Parish Share, and this is now likely to result in a three year financial stability plan for the church where we move toward paying full Parish Share at the end of that plan. This is likely to take some time but a further update will be given at the APCM

Secondly, looking at how we can improve our facilities for the church and the community. Again, there are three elements to this. We are now very close to agreeing the handover of the Narcot Lane Youth Club from Action4Youth to the church. This is a tremendous opportunity for us to engage with the youth and families in the community when that deal is complete. We are also assessing how to improve the Reading Room and starting to investigate the possibility of a new building in the churchyard.

Thirdly, how to build on our children's work. We are grateful to Lauren, and especially Ed for all the hard work they have, and

continue to, put into the children. We are looking at how we can continue to build on this progress for the year ahead.

Finally, we have introduced Sermon series teaching (firstly on the Book of James and now on the Book of Psalms), and we are hoping to introduce a short section into the service where a member talks about their journey to, and through, faith. All of the things the church is doing are being increasingly communicated and advertised so that as many people as possible know what is happening and when. Alpha has been very well received by those coming (numbers ranging from five to nine) – do come and see (and you are especially welcome if you cook!!)

Richard Silman

ELECTORAL ROLL

The current Electoral Roll (ER) will be on public display in the porch between Friday 27th March and Friday 24th April. If your name is not on it and you wish to join, both ER and Consent Forms will be available in the back of the church from 27th March. If you do not wish to be on the ER but wish to receive information about church activities, please complete a Consent Form.

If your name is already on the list, you do not need to complete a form.

The last date for receipt of completed forms is Friday 24th April.

The updated ER will be displayed in the porch from Sunday 26th April until the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday 10th May at 11am.



Lent & Easter

Services & Events

St Giles Consort – **22nd March**

6pm - Out of the Deep

Palm Sunday – **29th March**

8am & 9:30am - Services

6pm - Choral Evensong

Maundy Thursday – **2nd April**

6pm - Communion Service

Good Friday – **3rd April**

Walk of Witness

10:15am - Living Word Church

10:30am - Deanway URC

11am - CSG Parish Church

2pm Hour by the Cross

Easter Vigil – **4th April**

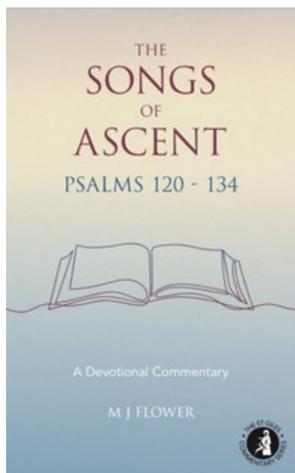
8pm - and Service of Light

Easter Day – **5th April**

8am BCP Communion

10am Easter Day Communion
with Easter Egg Hunt





In this issue, we have an extract from Mavis Flower's commentary on Psalms 120 - 134, known collectively as *The Songs of Ascent*, which is now available on Amazon and from book retailers; copies can also be found in church. This passage reflects on Psalm 134.

Previous titles in the *St Giles Commentary Series* - *Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians 1 and 2: A Devotional Commentary*; *Paul's letter to the Galatians: A Devotional Commentary*; *The Acts of the Apostles: A Devotional Commentary* and *The King and the Kingdom: A Devotional Commentary on Matthew's Gospel*, are all currently in print.

Psalm 134. The worship psalm

Come bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house the Lord! Lift up your hands in the holy place. And bless the Lord! May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth.

The redactor of the psalms has gathered together all the songs of ascent into one section of the psalter. All speak ultimately of the worship of the Lord who had done so much for His people, both individually and together. But now the psalmist turns again to their worship in the city of God, as they had approached it, going up to Jerusalem.

They have travelled back from far away Babylon. They may still be weary from the journey. They may not know what the future holds

for them. They have reached the end of one stage of their lives and are entering into the unknown. They may have physical or material needs. Some certainly have spiritual needs. But in coming up to the temple in Jerusalem, to Mount Zion, which for them had always been the city of David, but now even more significantly revered as the city of God, they have discovered a renewed intimacy with Him.

He is the One whom they have come to worship, and to their surprise and blessing, many others have the same intention, many others have come too. With all their varied needs, each one has found the fulfilment of their desires in Him. God, their God, the God of Israel, has revealed Himself to them as their provider, sustainer, redeemer, protector, and also the One who is the Lord of heaven and earth, yet who has chosen them to be a people holy to Him, and who loves them, both as His people and as individuals, who have struggled up the hill together to worship Him.

And while they have found all that they need in Him, He has made them His servants. (verse 1). They had called upon Him in their need; in their trouble; in their heart search for His forgiveness; in their certainty of faith in His steadfast love. He has called on them to serve Him in the sanctuary.

This is a fitting conclusion to the songs of ascent. The pilgrims have arrived in the house of the Lord at night time. It is quiet. It is dark. What does the Lord have to say to them as they wait expectantly upon Him? There is so much that He wants to reveal to them, so many ways in which He wants to bless them. But the first thing they have to do is to 'stand', to stand quietly in His house with their

hands uplifted to Him, to bless Him.

Is this what servants do? Do not servants bustle about with the many services they have to perform for the comfort or pleasure of their master or mistress? Is there not always something that needs doing? Some task to perform?

We are reminded that there is no word for slave in Hebrew. Those who became servants to an Israelite master served him for seven years, and were then given the option of being freed from his service. But if they loved their master, and did not want to leave him, they could go to their master, who would lead them to the door, and bore through their ear with an awl. From then on, the servant wore his master's mark. They were his. They could serve him for the rest of their lives, (Exodus, 21:2-6). The mark made by the awl signified their total commitment to the master's will. It became an identifying sign for the servant of belonging to his master alone.

So all these servants of the Lord who were standing by night in the house of the Lord, had their master's mark upon them figuratively speaking. They were totally committed to Him, dedicated to Him. And the important aspect of their servanthood was not all the things they could do for Him, but their utter devotion to Him, and to Him alone, the One whom they worshipped. Their worship came first. 'Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord', says the psalmist. (verse 1). This is what blesses Him.

Day suggests that there is still an element of the Aaronic blessing here. (Day p 64). As the people receive the blessing of the Lord,

so they want to bless Him. Motyer helpfully explains that the primary meaning of the verb 'to bless', (*barach, Hb*) is to kneel down, to bow down. In religious use, it is nearer to 'bow in worship' than it is to 'praise'. The real clue, however, says Motyer, is what it means to bless the Lord. He notes that the same verb is used when *He* blesses *us*. The expression 'May the Lord bless you' is asking the Lord to look on us, discern our needs and meet them, that is to say, to review us and respond. Likewise, we say it reverently, when we bless the Lord, we review and respond to all His revealed excellencies. To bless God is to acknowledge gratefully what He is. This, says Motyer, is the climax of pilgrimage. (Motyer pp146-147).

So yes, we have an understanding of what it means to bless God. But in the light of what we have learned about blessing God, how can we possibly contemplate that He, the Lord of heaven and earth should bow down to us? Of course, His whole attitude to us is one of blessing and in blessing us it may be a blessing to Him to have a people who love Him, who recognize something, if not all that He has done in their lives, for His blessings go far beyond what we see and know. But these are people who are seeking to walk in faith and to please Him by their desire always to do His will. Perhaps that is what He 'bows down' to in His blessing of them. He is 'bowing down', to His work in them, the expression of who He is in what they are becoming as they walk by faith. They are becoming poor in spirit. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. They are becoming merciful even as their Father in heaven is merciful. (Matthew 5:3-11). They are *blessed*.

As the prodigal son returned to his father, the father ran and embraced him and kissed him. And he called the servants and said

to them, 'Bring forth the best robe and put it in him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found', (Luke 15:20-24).

So the father blesses the son for the blessing which the son had given him of penitence and faith and returning to his father. The father, representing God in this precious parable of Jesus, could be said to be bowing down to all that the son was displaying of a completely different attitude in relation to his father. For Christian believers, it could be as though God is bowing down to all that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, has done in their lives, His work in salvation, His filling of them with the Holy Spirit. God blesses all that speaks of Jesus, but He cannot bless that which does not speak of Him.

So the servant of the Lord lifts up holy hands in the holy place supplicating the Lord for his entire cleansing, for his entire blessing as he blesses the Lord. He blesses the Lord for the foundation in his life of the Lord's holiness, and His steadfast love, to which the pilgrim bows down in worship. This worship gives him the confidence to know that God will not refuse to bless a man or woman who looks to Him.

So the servant of the Lord lifts up his hands in the holy place to bless the Lord.

And as he is blessing the Lord, he himself is blessed. He is blessed by the Lord from Zion, the place of the worship of the Lord, where the Lord reigns, seated upon His throne. (Psalm 123:1; 103:19; 110:1). This is the place where God has put His Name, (1 Kings

8:20), towards which His eyes are always open night and day, hearkening not only to the prayer of the priests but to all who turn to Him, (1 Kings 8:30), all the people of the Lord. (2 Chronicles 6:21). And when He hears from heaven, His dwelling place, hearing He will forgive. (2 Chronicles 6:21).

The Lord will bless them from Zion, He who made heaven and earth. The One to whom the psalmist is praying for His blessing is not only the Creator, but the One whom even heaven and earth cannot contain, (1 Kings 8:27), how much less this house which human hands have made. But this is the One from whom help has come. (Psalm 121:2; 124:8).

So those who love Him, who worship Him in godly fear, are blessing Him, are acknowledging that the One to whom they come is the great God whose way is perfect, and all His ways are ways of justice, for He is a faithful God, just and righteous. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He is the One whose glory is above the heavens, and when the psalmist looks at the heavens, the moon and the stars which He has created, he falls down in worship. 'What is man,' he says, 'that You are mindful of Him, or the son of man, that You visit him? that You care for him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your Name In all the earth'. (Psalm 8:1-9).

The Lord has put His mark on His servants. As they come into the presence of a Holy God in His holy place, they are blessed. As they lift their hands to acknowledge His presence and to worship Him, the Maker of heaven and earth but present everywhere; our sovereign Lord who is in control of everything, and also alongside His servants; as they stand to worship Him in the temple, to bless Him on the grounds of His appointed sacrifices which speak of the

ultimate sacrifice for sins on the cross of Calvary, they are blessed. This is the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, He who hung there for sinful men and women to bring them to God, for His love for them is the love which can never diminish, the greatest blessing of all.

The whole of Psalm 134 is based on blessing. When we pray for the blessing of others, we are in fact praying for the Lord to review their case and react appropriately in meeting their needs, of which He is certainly more aware than we are. It is a loving way to pray for it brings them into the presence of the Lord and leaves them and the outcome with Him. (Motyer p139).

There is no such thing as blessing in isolation from the Lord Himself. But to live in service to Him is to live continually, perpetually, in the blessing of His presence where there is life for evermore (Psalm 133:3).

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name. (Psalm 103:1).

References: Day J., Psalms, (Sheffield Academic Press,1995); Motyer, Alec, A Scenic Route Through the Old Testament, (Inter -Varsity Press 1996); Motyer, Alec, Look to the Rock, (Inter-Varsity Press 1996); Motyer Alec, Journey, Psalms for Pilgrim People, (Inter-Varsity Press. 2009)



DELICIOUS SOUP

POP UP SOUP CAFÉ

Delicious **HOMEMADE** soup served
Every Friday 20th February to 27th March

In the Reading Room
11:30am to 2pm

At least four choices weekly
Check our Facebook page for the
flavours of the week

Donations support
The CSG Reading Room &
The Youth Club Project on Narcot Lane
Everyone welcome
Bring a friend



St Giles Consort

Directed by Dominic McGonigal

"Out of the Deep"

An hour of music and readings for Passion Sunday



*Including choral works by Gibbons, Lassus, John Milton Snr,
Taverner, Bruckner, Stainer, and hymns for all to sing.*

Sunday 22nd March, 2026 at 6.00 pm

Chalfont St Giles Parish Church

Retiring collection in aid of music in the church

**FAIR TRADE : LIVING THE BIBLE
THE MISSION IS STILL VALID AND THE WORK IS NOT
FINISHED**



MEANINGFUL CHOCOLATE EASTER EGGS

Thank you for your generosity in support of our efforts to tell the Christmas story via the Fair Trade advent calendars and having completed that task Fair Trade Christian Easter eggs are our next focus. If you would like to donate a Christian egg to the food bank and /or buy for yourself please let me know. I will have plain and milk eggs.

WHY ARE CHURCHES INVOLVED WITH FAIR TRADE?

Surprisingly I still from time to time get asked this question. It was answered not by me but in the service on February 1st when the OT reading was Malachi 3 and I now quote Malachi 3.5: 'So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows, the fatherless and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,' says the LORD Almighty.

I am sure that not all non-fair-trade products 'defraud labourers' but we can only have total confidence in those products which bear the Fair Trade symbol because we know that they have been audited. Sadly, every so often stories emerge of horrendous conditions in the fashion industry, on tea, coffee and sugar plantations, and in the production of chocolate for example.

NEW PRODUCTS

All the following new products are from Sunshine Nuts in Mozambique, farmed, processed and packed in Mozambique adding value in country of origin. True Origin, our supplier in the UK, works directly with Sunshine Nuts who invest 90% of their distributed profits back into community programmes: providing hope has never tasted so good. They have created thousands of jobs, planted cashew nut trees for smallholder farmers, continue to build homes for vulnerable farmers and support orphans. Sunshine nuts make the world's best ...to make the world better!

Cashew nut butter

Containing 98% cashews this delicious butter can be spread on toast, muffins or crumpets or used in baking to make delicious biscuits or stirred into pancake batter for a glorious nutty flavour. The 386g jars cost £9.00

Sweetly spiced cashews

Coated in a delicate blend of sugar and spices, and roasted in sunflower oil, these cashews strike the perfect balance between crunchy, comforting, and crave-worthy. Perfect as a satisfying snack, sprinkled over porridge, yoghurt or a gorgeous dessert for a sweet-meets-savoury treat. However you serve them, they are as versatile as they are delicious. 200 g £7.00

Garlic and herb cashews

Expertly seasoned with a fragrant blend of garlic and herbs. Roasted in sunflower oil, these cashews deliver the perfect crunch with a rich, aromatic flavour in every bite. Perfect as a satisfying snack, scattered over salads, paired with drinks, or added to grazing boards for a herby hit of flavour—these cashews are as versatile as they are delicious. 200g £7.00

TRANSFORM TRADE - a Christian faith based charity

A huge thankyou to the PCC for donating part of the annual tithe to Transform Trade and thank you to everyone for your donations who make tithing possible. Here are three beautiful things that Transform Trade are assisting.

1. Transform Trade came together late last year with a producer owner group to **produce, certify and launch their very own artisanal Green Tea.**

This is a huge step for the community - the result of months of careful planning and development. Now, the producer-owned premium green tea opens up new markets for the group and means they can get a fairer share of the profits from their hard work.

2. Thanks to your support, Tanzania Delicious Cashews were able to train their lead farmers in evidence-based advocacy and how to work well with local government. This training was put to use quickly and has already been effective. They've secured better access to local investment funds - and **commitments to improve road maintenance for vital rural roads** that farmers depend on.

3. Along with groups all across India, Transform Trade campaigned for the harmful UPOV91 seed sharing restrictions evident in many UK trade deals to be taken out of the UK - India trade deal. Our generosity helped power this campaign. As that deal progresses through the final stages of scrutiny before coming into effect, **Transform Trade** are **celebrating that there is no UPOV91 provision in it** - that the Government listened to the loud calls. That means farmers in India can continue to share and store their seeds without fear of repercussions.

All of this is just a snapshot of what our generosity helps to fund—three examples that give us an idea of the bigger picture. It's about creating changes to trade—both big and small— that help producers get a fairer deal. That's the difference our support makes.

Many thanks to Transform Trade for these updates on 3 of their projects. 'Keep the change donations', unless specified for the food bank are given to Transform Trade.

FAIR TRADE STALL

Once a month there is a Fair Trade stall at the back of Church. I regularly have new products so please come and have a look. By so doing you are helping your neighbours across the world who are working hard to make life better for themselves and their children.

Future dates are:

March 22nd, April 26th

Also in Chalfont St Peter Church Hall on the first Wednesday of the month.

10.00am to 12.00 (great homemade cake as well!)

REDUCE YOUR PLASTIC WASTE

Don't forget we are able to supply refills in reused plastic bottles. We stock washing up liquid, toilet cleaner and laundry liquid, all from Bio D, a leading supplier of environmentally friendly products, manufactured in the UK.

FOOD BANK

Supplies are still required by the foodbank ; demand remains high and we continue to supply them so please do not stop your generous donations.

“A poor man’s field may produce an abundant harvest but injustice sweeps it away.” Proverbs 13 v23

Margaret Dykes 07919314461
margaretdykes@btinternet.com



CHALFONT ST GILES PARISH CHURCH

2PM -SAT 28 FEBRUARY
PAUL MNATSAKANOV
PIANO

Prize winning pianist

PLAYS MOZART, BEETHOVEN, BACH,
TCHAIKOVSKY AND DEBUSSY

Tickets £15 each

£5 for those in full-time education

Via Eventbrite scan QR code

Call Mrs Ann Newcombe on 01494 873343
or Claire Long on 01753 783739



This event is a fundraiser for the Friends of Chalfont St Giles Parish Church, charity number 1008935

Two wreath-making evenings in November

Once again, the wreath-making evenings took place in November, and were a great success. We had first-timers and regulars alike. Some came with their own decorations and then shared them with those who hadn't realised they could bring their own

Eileen Baldwin agreed to make the mulled wine for both evenings; she served it and worked in the kitchen too. Wenzel's very kindly donated delicious mince pies again, and everyone had seconds of each.



Every wreath made was completely unique and lovely. Some had fairy lights, others had bows, baubles, fir cones and even spices. There was lots of fun and laughter, then each evening, without being asked, our visitors helped to clear up the 'mess.' Yes, it was a lot of hard work, but it was worth seeing the ladies' faces, and one very brave gentleman, proud of what they had done, some for the first time. Finally, after everything was paid for, we did make a profit, but not so much as in previous years. Any profit we make goes towards providing flowers in church throughout the year so it is really worthwhile.

Everyone is welcome, so may I suggest you put a reminder in your diary to watch out for the dates in November and then come along to a very enjoyable evening.

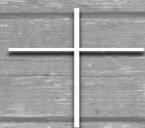
Sylvia Morrison-Moore

Mothering Sunday

Sunday 15th March
9:30am



THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE



GOOD FRIDAY

WALK OF WITNESS

- 10:15AM MEET AT LIVING WORD CHURCH
- 10:30AM DEANWAY URC
- 10:30AM CSG PARISH CHURCH

HOUR BY THE CROSS
2-3PM CSG PARISH CHURCH

BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE FOR US IN THIS: WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. ROMANS 5:8

Churchwatch 2025

In 2025, we recorded the numbers of visitors for the first time, an initiative prompted by Kathleen Martin. The season ran from April 29 to October 3, during which we recorded 885 visitors. This number does not include those attending our Talks & Tours programme, which will be covered elsewhere. Having just analysed the figures, the results are quite revealing and should promote changes in our approach to Churchwatch in 2026.

August was our most popular month with 221 visitors, spearheaded by Jan Bradley who set a month high total of 20 on Saturday 16th, passing Roger Foord's noble 15 on August 1st. May was our next highest month, recording 203 visitors with Sylvia Morrison-Moore welcoming 20 people through the door on the bank holiday - May 5 - which saw 30 visitors overall. September also saw 203 visitors and produced the highlight of the entire season, when Sue Dorman, Lynda Weiss and Rachel Leonard welcomed 65 people on Saturday 6th- a truly amazing effort. Sue had 34 visitors, a Churchwatch highwater mark that will take some beating! Remarkably, her 34 comprised 13 different groups, the largest numbering only 4. And all within a two hour shift! Congratulations Sue- you are Churchwatcher of the Year for 2025.

June was our least popular month with only 120 visitors, a figure which included 28 for the Bucks Art Fair. July fared slightly better with 123, Ray Luker topping the charts with 12 on July 12th.

Looking at the numbers by each day is also revealing:

Tuesday	117
Wednesday	160
Thursday	151
Friday	111
Saturday	264
Sunday	32*

Although Sundays have only one shift, it is still our least popular

day, which somewhat surprised me. Clearly 2-4pm on a Sunday is not a popular visiting time. Saturdays are clearly our peak time and together with bank holidays, must be our prime focus in the coming year. Fridays are also fairly quiet which causes me to suggest the following changes to our programme for 2026:

Ensure every shift on a Saturday has a volunteer as a matter of priority;

Offer 3 shifts on every bank holiday;

Consider offering our Talks & Tours on a Friday 2-4pm where possible;

Change the Sunday shift from its current 2-4pm to the two hours following services- say 12.30- 2.30pm.

Churchwatch 2026 will begin on Easter Monday (April 6) and run to Friday 2 October.

While footfall is not the only consideration, there is a strong relationship to voluntary donations- the more people, the more offerings. The above changes should help maximise visitor numbers.

I am conscious that our 885 visitors were accommodated thanks to our hardcore of only 20 churchwatchers. As our numbers continue to dwindle, we will not be able to offer the same level of service- it may be that we have to drop Tuesdays from our rota. I am loath to do this so please- more volunteers! If a few more can commit to one shift per month, the picture would be transformed. We keep the church relevant, open for the needy and collect additional revenue.

Any thoughts on the above would be most welcome- you know where to find me.

Tony Ferguson
tony@ibl.ie
07769 361 795

A Victorian Christmas with Denise Beddows

Award-winning, best-selling author and local resident Denise Beddows gave a fascinating talk on 5th December about how Christmas was celebrated in Victorian times, offering an engaging glimpse into the traditions that shaped the festive season we know today.

Drawing on her extensive research, Denise explored traditional foods, decorations, parlour games and seasonal customs, while also tracing the growing influence of German traditions on British celebrations. She didn't limit her focus to the Victorians' well-known "frillery and flummery," however, but looked further back to earlier Christmas customs — and forward to the ways many of these traditions are still observed across the UK.

Food proved one of the evening's most intriguing themes. Although turkeys arrived in Britain in the 16th century, they did not become the standard Christmas meal until the mid-20th century. Equally unexpected was the history of the Christmas pudding.

Today's rich, sweet dessert evolved from a medieval savoury dish known as "frumenty" or "plum pottage" — a thick stew of beef or mutton, dried fruits (then called "plums"), spices, wine and breadcrumbs. Over time, this hearty mixture transformed into the familiar festive favourite.

As well as the origins of many customs including the Christmas cracker, we learned that decorations also have an intriguing past. In the early 19th century, households created goose feather Christmas trees by dyeing feathers green and attaching them to wire branches — an economical and surprisingly eco-friendly alternative to fir trees.



Throughout her talk, Denise reminded the audience that many customs we consider timeless are relatively recent inventions. Her presentation was both informative and entertaining, leaving listeners with a deeper appreciation of the history — and evolution — of the festive season. We

are enormously grateful to Denise for her support of the Friends of the Church in giving her time and sharing her knowledge as a fundraiser towards the work of the charity.

Claire Long

Moonrakers - Magic, Myth and Mystery in British Folk Music

We are delighted to welcome **Moonrakers** to the church with their brand-new programme, *Magic, Myth and Mystery* on Thursday 30th April.

Moonrakers, an Oxford-based four-piece group, have built a strong reputation for bringing both traditional and contemporary folk music to new audiences in venues of every shape and size across the UK. Their rave reviews reflect the care and creativity behind their arrangements and song selections, resulting in performances that are both captivating and beautifully crafted. Their previous concerts in the area have been a big hit, and we are delighted to welcome them back.

Moonrakers is a professional ensemble and features Celtic harp, cello, fretted instruments, keyboard, flutes, and rich female and male vocals. Blending music with engaging storytelling, their new programme explores the hidden superstitions, folklore, and intriguing tales woven through the roots music — an evening that promises to be both entertaining and enlightening.

Tickets are £12 (on sale in March) and can be reserved by emailing info@friendsofchalfontstgilesparishchurch.co.uk. This event is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Church.

Claire Long

Moonrakers

www.moonrakers.net

Magic, Myth & Mystery

A narrated music show that explores the folklore and superstitions of these islands. Informative and entertaining!

An uplifting journey - BBC
The real deal - The Living Tradition



Thursday 30th April
7.30pm

Chalfont St Giles Parish Church

Tickets: on sale in March but can be purchased now at £12 via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) or reserved by emailing info@friendsofchalfontstgilesparishchurch.co.uk.

This concert is a fundraiser, promoted by the Friends of the Church, charity number 1008935

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A Pictorial History of Chalfont St Giles 1895-1985

As part of the Talks & Tours programme prearranged by the Friends of the Church, there will be a fascinating presentation in the Memorial Hall at 7pm on Friday 17 April, 2026.

Between 1945-50, Wally Newton (who worked for Pathe News) took a series of photographs of Chalfont St Giles. In the early 1980s, he presciently interviewed many of the older residents of the village, many of whom produced their own photographs. The result is a treasure trove of images. Combined with contemporary newspaper articles and enhancements from AI, we will trace the evolution of Chalfont St Giles in the 20th century. If you like nostalgia and surprises, save the date!

There will be a £5 cover charge, all proceeds going to the Friends.



One ticket £5



Two tickets £10





Ascension DAY

14 May 2026

9:30am Parish Communion with choir

I am ascending to my Father and your
Father, my God and your God. John 20:17

PENTECOST

S E R V I C E

24 MAY SUNDAY / 9:30AM



MISSION TO SEAFARERS

Thank you all for the donations and card buying in support of the Mission to Seafarers.

I was able to send a cheque for £200 from donations and also I sold over £350's worth of cards. The Mission continues to be very grateful for your support.



*Choral
Evensong*

Sunday
March 29th
&
May 24th
6pm

“Get Your Kicks on Route 66”

When my husband, Andrew, first announced that his ambition was to drive the length of Route 66 I must admit I was severely underwhelmed. I have little knowledge of popular American music of the 1950s and 60s which seemed to be his inspiration along with Billy Connolly’s travelogue. And, to my shame, I had not read “The Grapes of Wrath” or seen the classic film. So for the best part of two years I managed to avoid any further discussion of this project until I realised that if we were going to do it eventually then it had better be sooner rather than later.

The only difference between this and previous road trips in the States, as far as I could see, was that I didn’t have to plan the route. I bought the definitive guide book, “EZ Route 66” (I didn’t understand the title until we were halfway through the trip) and started looking at the logistics. We decided we could do it in somewhere between two and three weeks so Andrew booked flights and a car and I started planning what we needed to look out for along the way. One early decision was that we would do it West to East because that just might make the jet lag, which I have dreadful trouble with, easier to deal with on the way back. Luckily the guidebook, which basically followed the more traditional direction also had a box at the bottom of each page which gave directions in reverse. The text which described the attractions, however, had to be read from the bottom up which meant that sometimes I had to say “We have just passed....” Instead of “Look out for....”

We flew to LA on 23rd May, spent our one prebooked night in a hotel, picked up the car, the smallest available, and set off for Santa Monica Pier which is the official end of the route.. The young man in the 66 merchandise kiosk confirmed we had the right guidebook, gave us a few helpful tips and wished us luck. It then took us the best part of a day to drive the 70 miles out of the Greater Los Angeles area, which was well below our provisional

target of 200 miles. The problem is that we always had to navigate by the guide book to follow the right route and this meant passing through all the congested neighbourhoods. Satnav would simply have bypassed the route and used the freeways. Luckily we had the guidebook and an experienced and extremely proficient navigator (though I have to admit about halfway through the trip I had a crisis with left and right for a number of days which did lead to some U turns and a few terse conversations.)

There are a number of places along the way where we knew we would be stopping for a closer and more leisurely look. The first was in Arizona where we visited the Meteor Crater, the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest where we saw petroglyphs in a parched and baking landscape. We drove through Santa Fe, New Mexico, a city unlike any other I've ever seen with its Pueblo style architecture in terracotta coloured adobe. We were unfortunately unable to stop except for some quick photos as the whole place had parking meters, the workings of which we couldn't fathom.

In Tulsa, another beautiful city with an abundance of Art Deco buildings, we visited the Bob Dylan Centre where we got in free because Andrew is a retired police officer. This was a pleasant surprise which only came about when the elderly man doing the "meet and greet" outside admired Andrew's driving skills as he moved the car which he had parked illegally and I casually mentioned he had been a police driving instructor. The centre itself was beautifully laid out with some superb photos and lots of information. Next door was the Woody Guthrie Centre which I found even more interesting and where I resolved to read "The Grapes of Wrath".

In Oklahoma City I'd hoped to visit the memorial to the victims of the 1995 bombing but navigation turned out to be a nightmare. We kept losing the 66 signs (some states are more generous with them than others) and having to retrace our steps to find the right

road. When we eventually emerged the other side of the city we decided to call it a day and press on. In St Louis we admired the arch and took photos and crossed and recrossed the mighty Mississippi. Springfield, Illinois gave us the chance to visit the Lincoln Museum (excellent), the Lincoln House and the modest tomb in the local cemetery. (right)



In many ways it was the smaller unexpected things that gave us the most pleasure. We met a herd of wild donkeys in Oatman as we crossed the Black mountains in Arizona. They blocked the road and tried to intimidate us into giving them food. In Amarillo, Texas, we came across the Cadillac Ranch, an arrangement of Cadillacs buried nose down in the ground. (see below) We were invited to add our graffiti to them but we are far too old to regard that as anything but vandalism so we declined. In Shamrock, Texas we ate lunch in a beautifully restored Conoco Art Deco gas station, which is now a fifties style diner. In McClean, Texas, we arrived quite late and could only find one motel and no restaurant. As we checked in, contemplating the two apples and half a bag of crisps in the car, the youthful



receptionist said casually, “The steakhouse round the back closes at nine.” Panic over though we did have to eat microwaved popcorn for breakfast courtesy of the motel. We did decide against the barbed wire museum which had limited appeal.

At Chandler, Oklahoma we followed the invitation in the guidebook and called on the author, Jerry McClanahan, who was mowing his lawn. He was delighted to see us and showed us all his 66 memorabilia, signed our guidebook and sold us two pictures. Near Arcadia in the same state we found a notice board by the side of the road commemorating a 66 road trip made by Paul McCartney and Nancy Shevell in 2008 during which they got lost and stopped to ask a startled resident if they had found the right road. In Galena, Kansas, we found a vintage car rally blocking the road so had to walk that bit.



Marshfield, Missouri, had a quarter size replica of the Hubble telescope in front of the town hall, a tribute to local boy, Edwin Hubble. (above) Rolla,



Missouri, had a half size replica of Stonehenge for no discernible reason and without much discernible likeness to the original to anyone who has actually seen it.

We finally reached Chicago with a long drive through the city to the side of the lake where the

end is marked with a simple sign. Though the official length of 66 is 2448 miles we had actually covered 3420 miles in sixteen days. The extra miles are accounted for by diversions to see the sights, and occasionally getting lost and having to retrace our steps. Mainly it was a result of always taking the oldest possible 66 (it has shifted about quite a lot during its life). Quite often this was a gravel or packed earth road, bumpy and throwing up clouds of

dust or mud if it had just rained. Our only major disagreement came when we found one of these mud roads covered with an enormous puddle. I felt it was wrong to risk it as our hire company and insurance would not be happy if the engine died in the middle. Andrew was so desperate to continue he waded through it to prove it was shallow enough to navigate, which it was. We visited all the little communities and saw a lot that had died when the road had bypassed them. Andrew drove every single mile as that was his ambition. When possible we were accompanied by suitable music relating to the towns and states we were passing through from “California Dreaming” to “My Kind of Town”, or “Get your Kicks on Route 66” for the whole journey.

I did enjoy it much more than I expected. The scenery was spectacular in parts and the history of the road and the people who used it turned out to be more interesting than I thought. I have read “The Grapes of Wrath” at last and found it a very harrowing read. And I get to choose our main holiday next year.

Rachel Leonard

Quiz Corner

A little difficult last time so no all correct entry. I hope this one is a bit more straightforward. These are all clues to states or state capitals of the USA. Numbers in brackets are numbers of letters in the answers.

- 1..Pullover recently acquired (3, 6)
2. Young man decides to propose, by the sound of it (6)
3. An honest army post (9)
4. Not particular about which white robe? (6)
5. Accolade missing ancient city for Scottish singer (8)
6. Claims previous ownership of gardening equipment? (5)
7. Jupiter’s moon with another state (4)
8. If you missed one you have to reorder (3,6)
9. Sounds like an improvement in health (7)
10. US shade with a party (8)

Answers to previous quiz: 1. Tottenham 2. Windsor 3. Slough 4. Wavertree 5. Selby 6. St Ives 7. Rusholme 8. Itchen or Redditch 9. Wallesey 10. Dover and Deal

