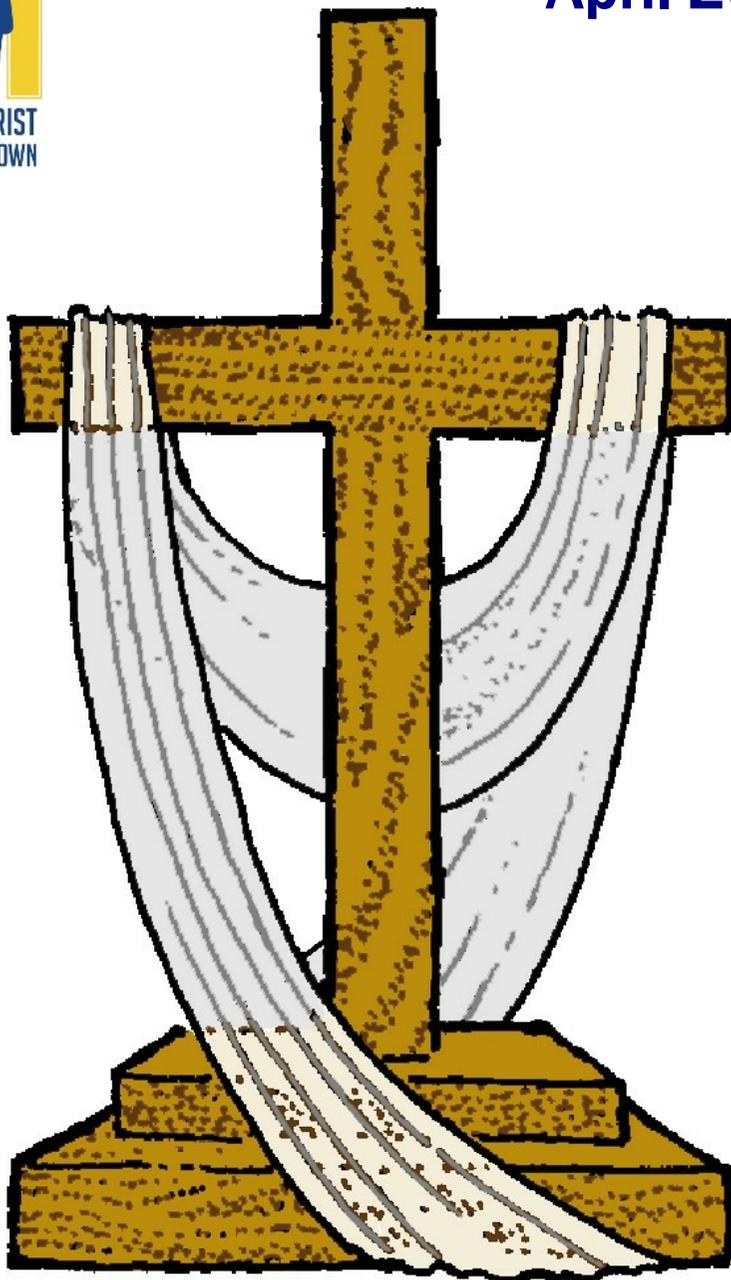


Shirley Parish Magazine

April 2026



SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE (see also inside the back cover)

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Social Media: [facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90](https://www.facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@shirleyparish5736>

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4904334906>



FOR ANY ENQUIRIES ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE OR THE EDITOR -

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Deadline for information and articles for next month's magazine: 12th of the month

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of the magazine are correct, the Parish cannot be responsible for any errors that may occur in the editorial or advertisements, nor for the actions of the advertisers.

Registered Charity number 1131912

OUR SERVICES IN APRIL

Please see page 17 for more information about our Holy Week and Easter services

| Date | Time | Service | Venue |
|---|---------|---|-------------------------|
| Wednesday 1st | 2pm | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| | 7.30pm | Reflective Worship | St James Church |
| Thursday 2nd Maunder Thursday | 7.30pm | <i>No morning service</i> Holy Communion | St James Church |
| Friday 3rd Good Friday | 10.30am | Walk of Witness | Our Lady of the Wayside |
| | 7.30pm | Taize Service | St James Church |
| Saturday 4th Holy Saturday | 7.30pm | Easter Vigil | St John's Church garden |
| Sunday 5th Easter Sunday | 10.30am | Parish Communion | St James Church |
| Thursday 9th | 10.30am | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| Sunday 12th | 8am | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| | 9am | Holy Communion | St John's Church |
| | 10.30am | Morning Worship | St James Church |
| Thursday 16th | 10.30am | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| Saturday 18th | 10am | Messy Church | St James Church |
| Sunday 19th | 10.30am | Parish Communion | St James Church |
| Thursday 23rd | 10.30am | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| Sunday 26th | 8am | Holy Communion | St James Church |
| | 9am | Morning Worship | St John's Church |
| | 10.30am | Worship 4 Everyone | St James Church |
| Thursday 30th | 10.30am | Holy Communion | St James Church |

Sunday Services at St James Church are live-streamed on YouTube -
<https://www.youtube.com/@shirleyparish5736>

KID'S CHURCH



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OUR PRAYER FOR THE TIME OF VACANCY

Heavenly Father,
thank you that we are held together as a community in your love.
Let us be ready to share the good news of Jesus with those around us.

Strengthen us as we patiently wait as a parish,
remembering that your Son is the Good Shepherd
who will guide us along our future path.

May we gently encourage one another,
be quick to listen
and humbly reach out to support those in need.

With everlasting hope,
we trust in you alone to provide in this new season.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Find out more at

<https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk/future-ministry-in-shirley-parish>



THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES 100 CLUB

Congratulations to the March winners

£50 ~ Sarah Penfold £25 ~ Debbie Blunt

DO YOU RECEIVE OUR WEEKLY EMAIL?

If not - please let Emily in the Parish Office have your email address so that she can add you to the mailing list. Thank you!

EARTH HOUR 2026 – A SMALL SWITCH, A BIG SIGNAL

On Saturday 28th March at 8.30pm, millions of people across the world will once again take part in Earth Hour - a simple, powerful act of turning off the lights for sixty minutes to show care for God's creation. Iconic landmarks from Big Ben to the Sydney Opera House will go dark in a shared moment of global solidarity. But Earth Hour is not really about the lights going off. It's about what we choose to switch on: attention, intention and hope.



What Is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour began in 2007 and has grown into one of the world's largest environmental movements. It invites us to pause, step away from our screens, and reconnect with the natural world, the world God has entrusted to our care. WWF describes it as a moment to "connect with what matters most – nature and each other".

People mark the hour in all sorts of creative ways:

- A quiet meal by candlelight
- Stargazing from the garden
- A screen-free hour of rest or prayer
- Storytelling with children
- Listening to the sounds of nature
- Crafting with natural materials

It's a gentle reminder that small actions, taken together, can make a big difference.

Earth Hour and the 5th Mark of Mission

The Anglican Communion's 5th Mark of Mission calls us:

"To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth".

Earth Hour is a beautifully simple way to live this out. It's not a protest or a grand gesture; it's an act of prayer. A moment to remember that creation is a gift from God.

By switching off for an hour, we join Christians across the world in saying:

We care about the climate crisis. We recognise our calling to be stewards, not consumers. We long for a world where all life can flourish.

... continued over the page



EARTH HOUR continued

How This Reflects Our Parish Ethos

Here in our parish, we have committed to care for creation, live sustainably and seek justice for the most vulnerable, human and animal alike. Earth Hour is another way to honour that commitment. Earth Hour is not about perfection. It's about participation. It's about saying, "I want to be part of the healing of the world, even in small ways".

An Invitation

This year, why not join us in marking Earth Hour?

- Switch off your lights at 8.30pm on 28th March.
- Light a candle.
- Pray for our world.
- Step outside and look at the stars.
- Share a conversation in the dark.
- Or simply rest, knowing that God delights in our small acts of faithfulness.

Together, let's make this hour a sign of hope—an offering of love for God's creation and a reminder that even the smallest light, when rekindled, can help illuminate a better future.

Rev'd Richard Haynes

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THIS MONTH'S ECO TIP ...



Instead of cling film - try re-useable stretchy plastic dish covers to protect food in the fridge.
Mine have lasted 6 years so far.

Kate Crocker

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Linda Pitt opened our March meeting with a welcome to all and commenced with prayers. Linda introduced our speakers Sandra Green, Administrator for Narthex and Amer Khan, Project Director – Community Engagement and Campaigning for Narthex - he is actively leading on multiple community-based projects in a bid to make Sparkhill cleaner, greener and a better place to live.

Sandra commenced by telling us that Sparkhill Foodbank is run by Narthex Sparkhill, a local destitution and development charity. It is one of the largest Foodbanks in the UK, operating six satellites from its central warehouse hub: Sparkhill, Tyseley, Balsall Heath, Stechford and Hall Green, as well as at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and a Money Advice Service.



Crisis can affect anyone and many struggle and find it difficult in being referred to a Foodbank.

Referrals to the Foodbank come from Councils, Schools, Doctors and other sources. Foodbank volunteers welcome all who come to them with a smile, kindness and a listening ear. By listening, the Foodbank network can offer practical guidance, advice and support in the hope of reversing the current level of dependency on Foodbanks. Foodbank parcels provide three days of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food, for individuals and families. These are not available on a regular weekly basis.

The Narthex also operates Food Pantries, and they provide subsidised food for people on low incomes.

The Narthex Strategy is its Mission – to stop helping people in poverty and to start by helping them out of poverty.

At our next meeting on **Wednesday 1st April**, we look forward to welcoming the Rev. Theresa Jones speaking on Meditation, Mindfulness and the Wounds of Christ.

All our meetings are held in Church House at 2pm and visitors are always welcome.

Susan Knight

... continued over the page

MOTHERS' UNION continued

Sandra left us with a Shopping List -

- Tinned fruit
- Tinned Rice Pudding
- Tinned Vegetables
- Cartons of Custard
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Small Packets of Rice (500g)
- Long Life Milk – Skimmed or Whole



Donations of the above would be appreciated and can be left in the Foodbank box in St James Church or in the dedicated collection basket at your local supermarket – Thank You!



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A SPECIAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION IN HOLY WEEK

Wednesday 1st April 2026 – 2pm at St James Church

Following on from our midweek afternoon services for those in our Home Communion Community, we will once again be gathering during Holy Week for a special service of Holy Communion on Wednesday 1st April at 2pm.

Holy Week is the most sacred time in the Christian year — a time when we walk with Jesus through the final days of his earthly life, remembering his love, his humility and his willingness to draw close to us in our frailty. This service offers a precious opportunity for those unable to get to morning worship, to share in that journey together, in the quiet beauty of our church building.

As always, there will be refreshments afterwards, and plenty of time to sit, talk and reconnect.

As always, we would like to extend the invitation to anyone in the congregation who would like to come. Several members of our Home Communion Community have said how much they value not only being back in the church they love, but also the chance to see familiar faces — people they once worshipped alongside week by week. Your presence can be a real gift of encouragement and companionship.

If you would like to come along, please do.

If you need help with transport, or if you feel able to assist with setting up the service in any way, please contact me or Emily in the office.

Every blessing, Rev'd Richard Haynes



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REMEMBERING BISHOP ANDREW WATSON

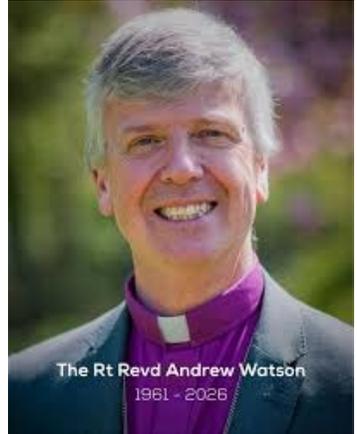
Many across the Church of England were deeply saddened to hear of the death of The Rt Revd Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford, who died peacefully on 3rd March after a short illness. Bishop Andrew was widely loved for his gentleness, his pastoral heart, and his deep commitment to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. His ministry touched countless lives — in parishes, in diocesan leadership, and through his writing and teaching.

In the final weeks of his life, Bishop Andrew's faith shone with a clarity that was both humbling and inspiring. Those close to him spoke of his remarkable peace, his trust in God's promises, and his desire that even his dying might point others towards the hope we share in Christ. He continued to pray for his diocese, for the wider Church, and for the world he served so faithfully.

His family have expressed gratitude for the prayers and support they received, and the Diocese of Guildford has paid tribute to a bishop who led with integrity, compassion, and a steady confidence in God's love. Even in his illness, he remained a witness to the truth he had preached for so many years: that nothing — not even death — can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

As we journey through Lent and approach Holy Week, Bishop Andrew's example invites us to reflect on the hope at the heart of our faith. In Jesus' death and resurrection, we find the assurance that God walks with us through every valley, and that the final word is always life.

We give thanks for Bishop Andrew's ministry, for the light he brought to so many, and for the quiet courage of his final days. May he rest in the peace of Christ and may his family and all who mourn him know the comfort of God's presence. In Shirley Parish, we continue to pray for his family (known to many in this parish) Beverly, Hannah, Sam, Joe, Lydia and the diocese of Guildford.



Rev'd Richard Haynes



If you would like to make a donation in his memory to support the mission and ministry of Guildford Cathedral the online link is <https://andrew-watson1.muchloved.com>

SINGING IN ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL 2026

In 2024 I wrote a piece for this magazine about my opportunity to sing in St Davids Cathedral with my Pop Voices choir. It was a truly wonderful experience so when the choir was offered the chance to do it again my hand was the first to go up!

Different songs, sung this time 'A Cappella' which produced a very different sound, as it was just the blending of voices with no musical accompaniment. We had four notes on the piano then we were off!

There were choirs from all around the country: Suffolk, Devon, Pembrokeshire and of course Solihull. 120 voices in all. This was great as it gave us the chance to listen to other groups and choirs singing in the cathedral and experience the blending of voices in that great space.

We sang a variety of modern songs including 'Summertime', 'Somebody to Love' by Queen and a joyous rendition of 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight' as a finale with the whole audience joining in with sounds from Africa.

Money raised went to a local hospice at home charity in Pembrokeshire, the Paul Sartori Foundation. A great experience and some wonderful memories.

Linda Alford





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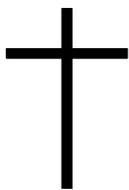
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RESURRECTION LIFE

Did you have 'a good Lent'? Were you able to make the journey with Jesus through the turmoil of those last days of His earthly ministry as He set His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing He would be killed there? I find the Lenten journey, particularly Holy Week (the week leading up to the crucifixion) harrowing, and by 3 o'clock on Good Friday - the hour at which Jesus traditionally died - I am wrung out.

All of which makes Easter Day and the weeks that follow, with the joy and reality of new life, so much the sweeter. No wonder Christians make this the most important day of the year - much more so than Christmas. God, in the resurrection of Jesus, has vindicated the way of love, truth, sacrifice and service, kindness and hope over the self-serving and grubby ways that seek power, self-advancement, privilege, hatred and division. Hallelujah!

It's all summed up in the poem 'Easter Wings' by the 17th century poet and priest George Herbert. For me, it's not the words of the poem so much as its shape - it's written in the shape of a butterfly's wings. Now that's clever; - to let both shape and words express something lovely, like the freedom and beauty of a butterfly on the wing. That sums up Resurrection life.

We are not asked to explain how the Resurrection took place. That is known to God alone, and we would trip ourselves up in all sorts of ways as we seek to find a rational explanation as to how it happened. But we are invited to live it - yes, live the Resurrection in ourselves - as we ask the Risen Lord to lead us through each day. In time, this constant invitation to live out the Resurrection changes our whole being, as we try, in the words of Mother Teresa to 'do little things with great love'.

The more I try and live out Resurrection life (more properly, the more I allow Jesus to live the Resurrection life through me) the more boundless I find it to be. Which I guess is why God gives us a season - seven weeks up till Pentecost - to allow this stupendous fact of the Resurrection to sink into us, call out a response from us.

Enjoy your Easter eggs, your Easter bonnets, your egg-pacing; in fact, have a great Easter. But don't let the Resurrection pass you by. It's the gateway to what Jesus calls 'life in all its fullness'.

Rev'd Roy Shaw



WHAT'S ON!



Coffee Morning

Monday 13th April

10.30am until 12 noon



at St John's Church
 Tilehouse Lane, Tidbury Green,
 Shirley B90 1PW

All will be welcome!



*Join us for coffee or tea,
 cake and chat*

Tuesday mornings in Church House
 10am - 11.30am

Suggested donation £2



Please note that the cafe will be closed
 on **Tuesday 14th April** while our
 volunteers have a well-earned holiday



PARISH GIVING SCHEME



We really do appreciate, and are truly grateful for, the financial support that we receive from our congregations. Each donation, no matter how big or small, really does go a long way to making a real difference to the work that we do.

The Parish Giving Scheme is the simplest way to give plus it reduces the time that we spend administering your donation and any gift aid.

The Scheme is confidential and secure and can be used for both one-off donations and for regular giving.

Visit our website <https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk/giving> or scan the QR code above. Thank you!

SHIRLEY PARISH

KNOWING CHRIST
NEARING HIM KNOWN

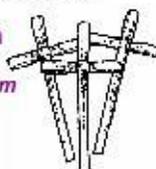
Holy Week and Easter in Shirley Parish

DRAW NEAR

St James Church, Church Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2AX

Sunday 29th March - Parish Communion at 10.30am

Jesus, amid the cheering crowd, rides a donkey into Jerusalem
We will read the Passion Narrative from Matthew's Gospel and take palm
crosses home with us



**Monday 30th March - we meet together for
Compline at 7.30pm**

Jesus visits his friends in Bethany and Mary anoints the feet of Jesus
A short, contemplative service to end the day, focusing on quiet reflection,
repentance, and protection

**Tuesday 31st March - we meet together at 7.30pm to reflect on the
'Stations of the Cross' - Jesus' journey during his final days on earth**

Jesus foretells the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter

**Wednesday 1st April - we welcome members of our Home Communion
Community for a service of Holy Communion at 2pm**

and we meet together for a Reflective Worship service at 7.30pm

Judas makes a deal with the high priests; he turns Jesus over for thirty silver coins



Thursday 2nd April - Holy Communion service at 7.30pm

The Last Supper takes place, Jesus institutes the sacraments of the Eucharist
and priesthood, and washes his disciples' feet

There will be a symbolic washing of hands for those that wish to take part.
After the service there will be a time of quiet reflection using Psalm 88 while
the altar is stripped to symbolise Jesus being stripped of his garments before
the crucifixion

**Friday 3rd April - we join with the other churches in Shirley on
a 'Walk of Witness' starting at Our Lady of the Wayside**

Church at 10.30am and processing to Parkgate
Jesus is sentenced to death by crucifixion, he died on the cross and was laid
in a tomb

The church will be open for private prayer and reflection during the afternoon

At 7.30pm we meet together for a Taize Service

Meditative worship, characterised by candlelight, long periods of silence, and simple,
repetitive songs designed to foster contemplation and reconciliation.

**Saturday 4th April - we meet together at 7.30pm in the garden
at St John's Church, 176 Tilehouse Lane, Tidbury Green,
Shirley B90 1PW for an Easter Vigil**

As the sun sets we will share communion, renew our baptism vows and light the
Paschal Candles

Sunday 5th April - Jesus is risen! Alleluia!

We celebrate together with a service of Holy Communion
and Kid's Church at 10.30am

All are welcome to join us for any or all of these services



SAME OLD, SAME OLD

Well, here we are at Easter – and guess what the sermon subject is likely to be? Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

In so many ways it really could be ‘same old, same old’ and the preacher could just repeat last year’s sermon. Let’s face it, nothing will have changed in the Easter story in the last 12 months.

Or has it? For me, and I suspect for most folks, 12 months can be a ‘long’ time; and things change in our lives. Babies are born, youngsters change school, teenagers leave school, young people move out, friends die, accidents happen, and pains and sorrows come and go.

Around all of that personal business the world turns: there are holidays, seasons, catastrophes, people hurting people, people caring for others and on and on it goes. Things might repeat but they are never truly ‘the same’.

So it is with the Easter story. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Really? In the midst of my life and the world around me? In the centre of your life and your community?

Is it any less amazing today than it was last year, or the year before, or a decade previously or when the women went to the tomb that first Resurrection Day?

In so many ways I need to hear this story again – but anew. New, not just because the preacher will (hopefully) have made it register with what’s happening around my small community today and new because I am not the same person I was a year ago – for better or worse!

I shall hear those words differently this year than ever before. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

So ...

Before you listen to this year’s Easter Sermon, think about the changes you’ve had in your life since last year and the world around us. How much more do you need a living Christ today? May you say in your depths, with me: *Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!*

Rev’d Dr Jo White



THE CROSS OF JESUS

*The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;
 a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;
 a picture of death, yet the key to life;
 a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;
 a picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness;
 a picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love;
 a picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast.*

EASTER DAWN

Creation holds collective breath
 In darkness, cold and deep;
 Has hope and joy been claimed by death?
 Has love been laid to sleep?
 The solid seal, the heavy stone
 The chill of Friday's gloom
 Leave faith to flicker all alone
 Beside a borrowed tomb.

But, as the night begins to fray
 The soldiers faint with fright!
 An angel rolls the stone away
 At dawn's first glint of light.
 No linen shroud can hold Him now
 The grave has lost its prize,
 No thorns are seen upon His brow
 As Love and Triumph rise!

Let hallelujahs wake the earth!
 Let bell-sound rend the skies!
 For Christ has won our second birth
 By His triumphant rise!
 The empty tomb, the open door
 Proclaim the darkness gone;
 Death was defeated evermore
 On Easter's glorious dawn!

By Nigel Beeton

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- Supporting those who want some company
- Help around the house with cooking and cleaning
- Support with daily activities such as dressing, washing, and personal care
- Respite care to relieve family members or other full-time carers
- Live-in care services
- Palliative care for support during those tough times
- Medication support
- & so much more



APRIL WORDSEARCH

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with his disciples, he warned them he was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink. The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and his blood, was about to be ushered in. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that this fearful cup might be removed from him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. From Easter onwards we can only approach God through his Son, Jesus Christ, not on our own merit.



APPROACH
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COVENANT
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DRINK
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GETHSEMANE
GOD
JESUS
LAST
LAW
MEAL
NEW
OLD
PASSOVER
REMOVED
THANKS
WARNED
WILL
WINE

*Answers are
on page 24*



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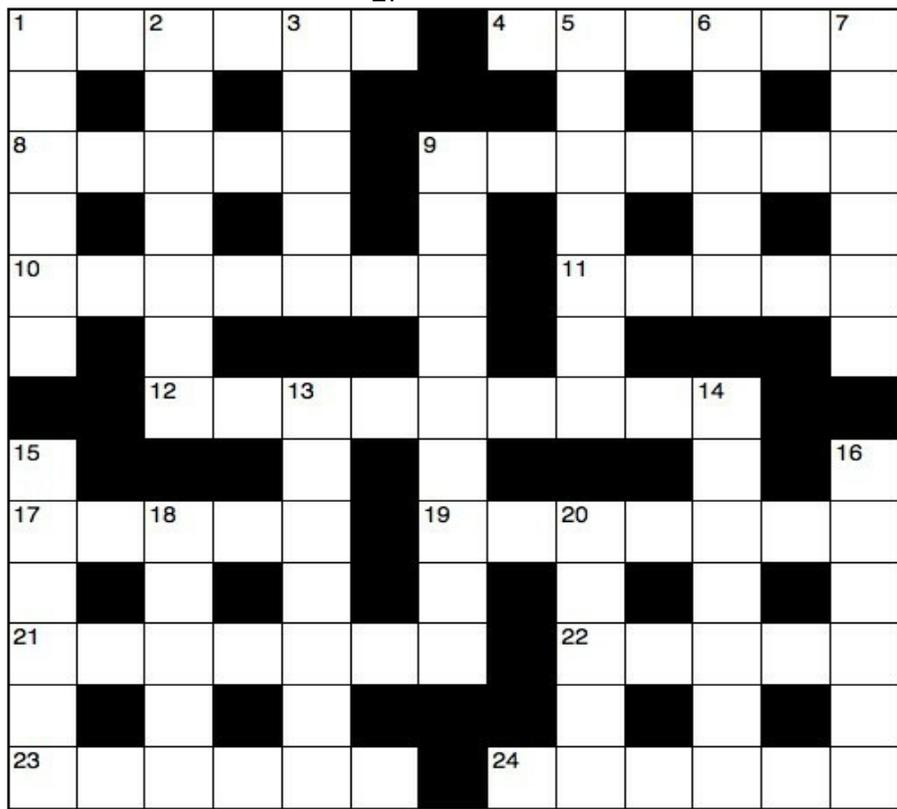
THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3–4) (5)
- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

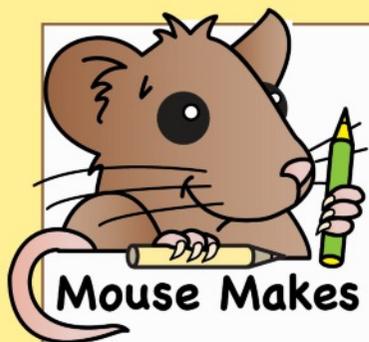
- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)



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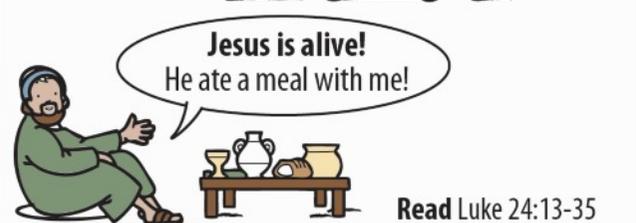
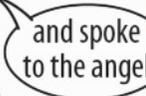
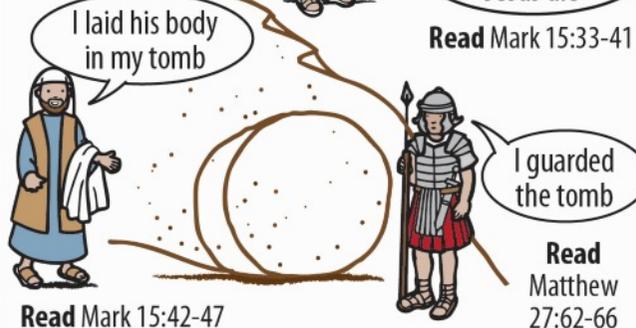
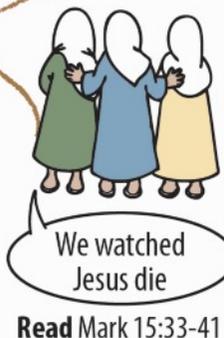
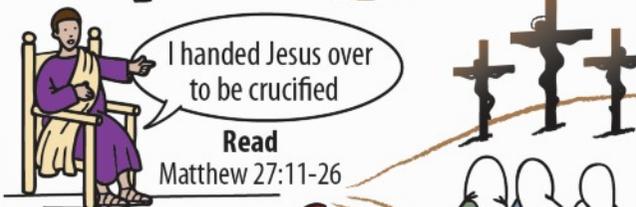
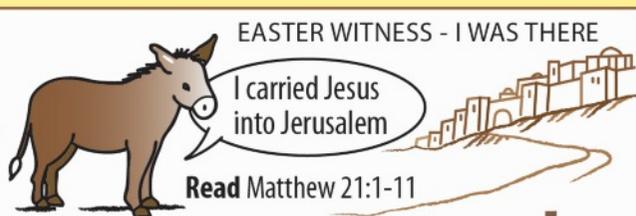
Answers are on page 29



Mouse Makes

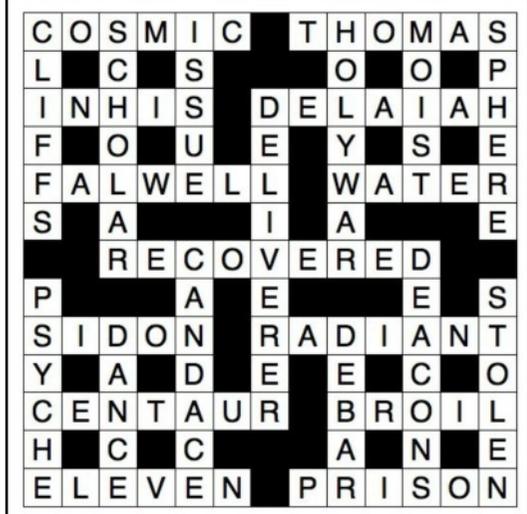
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 GOOD NEWS • CHRIST
 SAVIOUR • EASTER • JOY



PUZZLE ANSWERS

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Parish Wardens

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email: lindaalisonpitt@gmail.com

Gill Hanton Tel: 07973 942145
email: gill.hanton@btinternet.com

Deputy Warden - St James the Great Church

Kate Crocker email: kate_crocker@hotmail.com
Tel: 07562 664163

Deputy Warden - St John the Divine Church

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*If anything is concerning you, please talk to Sue Harries, Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
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Do you need a



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