

Dadford with Stowe Parish Newsletter

March - April 2025

March and April are months when we celebrate new beginnings. We enjoy the sight of daffodils and crocuses brightening our gardens, lambs appear in the fields, trees blossom and (hopefully!) the days get a little sunnier and warmer. These new beginnings and signs of spring make us hopeful and for Christians this season gives us hope for an even better reason. For this is the season of SALVATION! as we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection and all that means for us today. Easter gives us the hope and promise of forgiveness and eternity with God through the sacrifice Jesus made if we follow Him as 'the way, the truth and the life'.

This season of hope starts with the period of lent, which begins on Wednesday 5th March. When we focus afresh on Jesus, on all He did for us, and on how we can best live in relationship with Him – which may mean asking for His forgiveness for ways in which we have fallen short.

The Apostle James wrote a letter in AD 40-50 to help Christians live out their faith in their daily lives. It is a wonderful, practical guide for Christians today and I will be leading an informal Lent group looking at this letter, so please come along and join me in Dadford village hall (details below). **EVERYONE IS WELCOME.**

Our Easter celebrations at St Mary's, Stowe include:

Palm Sunday – 9.45am Family Service - 13th April

Maundy Thursday – 7pm at St Edmunds, Maids Moreton - 17th April

Good Friday – 2pm Meditation service - 18th April

Easter Sunday – 9.45 Easter Family Communion - 20th April

"Christ is risen! Death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered" (S. Townend)

Happy Easter! from Rev Cathy



LENT in DADFORD VILLAGE HALL

Everyone is welcome to an informal and friendly look at the book of James and what it means to be a Christian in 2025. All at 10.30am.

Friday 14th March
21st March
28th March
4th April
11th April

Plus tea, coffee and cakes!

Any questions please ring Rev Cathy 01280 821976

Family Services

March 30th - Mothering Sunday

Ruth 1 - 4

When famine struck Israel Naomi and her two sons moved to Moab. There her sons died and she lived with their Moabite widows, Orpah and Ruth. We can imagine how she struggled with grief and loss in a strange land. It was she who stood in tears among the alien corn. When news came that harvests had returned to Israel she determined to make the lonely journey home. However, one daughter-in-law loved her so much that she followed Naomi to her village. Naomi's turmoil and despair turned to thankfulness and joy. She loved and cared for Ruth, gave her sound advice about gleaning in the field and rejoiced when her kinsman Boaz married Ruth. Naomi's grandson was King David. The line of David culminated in the redeeming love of Jesus on the cross.

Would we "wait upon the Lord" like Naomi?

April 13th - Palm Sunday

John 12, 12 - 15

In the sixth century BC the prophet Zechariah wrote, *"Rejoice, people of Zion, shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, triumphant and victorious but humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

When people from all the known world came to the Passover Festival in Jerusalem and heard that Jesus the preacher and healer would be there they eagerly cut branches from the palm trees and shouted, "Praise God. God bless the King of Israel!" for they thought anyone who could bring someone back from the dead must be the long-promised Messiah. They expected Him to defeat the Romans and restore their independence. Only later did they come to understand that Jesus the King of Love was lifting the oppression of sin and freeing them to serve God.

Get your palm cross today and remember Jesus' sacrifice.

SCENES FROM VICTORIAN STOWE & DADFORD JOHN WARREN IN STOWE CHURCH, DECEMBER 1874

The Revd. John Warren felt great satisfaction as he looked round his little church, freshly decorated for Christmas. Along the front of the gallery, large and clear, was the text **THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS**, beautifully set out in holly leaves on a bright red and blue background. (On Christmas Day from the pulpit the Reverend John would thunder the angel's great follow-up to Joseph: 'For he shall save his people from their sins'.) At one end of the bold text was a crown; at the other end, crossed keys. The thirty-year-old Reverend John had High Church leanings.

In its way, this Christmas Service could also be a celebration of his own first two years at Stowe. Everything that had happened in that time, apart from the poor Duchess's demise, had been most felicitous: the job as curate; the bonus of also being Domestic Chaplain to such an amenable and admirable Christian as the Third Duke; the imminent take-over from the startlingly rich vicar, the Revd. Uthwatt; and the according acquisition of a delightful vicarage (the large house where Dadford High Street meets the Dadford Road). He'd enjoyed his cricket, too. Apart from that match on the North Front against Maids Moreton, when, disappointingly, he had only made 2 and 1, though the visitors were three players short.

How different the church now looked! It had been something of a disappointment initially. Only recently, when officiating at a double wedding, when the elderly Stowe Head Carpenter, Henry Dunnett, had remarried at the same time that his grand-daughter had become the wife of the Master of the Duke's Fire Brigade, Warren had silently grieved at the church's spartan nature. Not a stained glass window anywhere. No seeming input from Stowe's two greatest, but godless, eighteenth-century grandees.

For Christmas, at least, the ancient pillars would be dramatic, twined all around in ivy. On the pulpit, most satisfactorily, was a triangle, symbol of the Trinity, made of straw, on a blue background, and edged with ivy leaves. Meanwhile, the front of the reading desk was ornamented with the word **ALLELUIA**, again in straw on blue. Below each window, most charmingly, were beds of moss with crosses and triangles made of flowers, and above the east window, usually so starkly empty, there was now an arch in red, with the text **GOD WITH US** writ large. And as the final *jeu d'esprit*, the font was now a striking green and white, decked out with immortelles on moss.

It was a pity the Third Duke would soon be off to Madras. Warren would miss his new boss, twenty years his senior. How awful it must have been when, at twenty-five, he was faced with Second Duke's debts of more than £1 million!. But such a turnaround! An improved water supply, a gas plant and hot-air heating! Good men appointed to run and restore his various estates, like the excellent Uttleys, newly arrived at Home Farm!

The junior John Uttley, of course, had helped Ann with all the church decorations. Warren's eyes twinkled hopefully. There would be a full-to-bursting church, ablaze with colour and sweet with the smell of fresh flowers! And his dear wife Ann, as ever, conjuring magic sounds from that squeaky harmonium! He smiled contentedly. It was time to dot the i's and cross the t's on his sermon. . .

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News from National Trust Stowe



We had great success with the For Your Tomorrow exhibition, welcoming over 80,000 visitors over 6 weeks from October to mid-November and were delighted with the positive response from the public and stakeholders. It was great to see many first time visitors to Stowe from all over the country. The garden and Park team worked hard to put back and repair the garden after the event and then it was straight into Christmas.

We have also been hard at work over the Winter months with a lot of our main pruning within the garden and parkland being carried out. Leaf clearing around the garden is always high on our list of jobs too, to ensure a good display of our Winter and Spring flowers of Snowdrops, Aconites, Daffodils and Fritillaria.

One of our latest projects has been the restoration of Bellgate Lodge and its surrounding Landscape. Although the building was finished early last year the garden still needed restoration, so this Spring we will be putting in a Potagers style garden on the Parkland side of the lodge. On the garden side a Landscape style garden will be planted to tie in with the rest of the garden of the same period.

God's promises

God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But

God has promised *strength for the day*,
Rest for the labourer, *light for the way*,
Grace for the trials, *help from above*,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

World Day of Prayer - Friday 7th March 11am at the Salvation Army

This annual service is part of a wave of prayer which encircles the globe and is a Churches Together event.

This year we are praying with and for the Cook Islands and its people as they celebrate 200 years of Christianity and is prepared by Christian women from there. The theme is 'God made you wonderful'.

All are welcome to this lovely service. There will be refreshments after the service.



*Congratulations to **James Close-Smith** who is engaged to be married to Xenia Gravell from Wiltshire in August this year; and to his twin sister **Isobel Close-Smith** who will be marrying Harry Ewert from Dorset at Stowe Church in the summer of 2026.*

As we head a little nearer to Spring and slightly warmer weather we look forward to getting together for our WI meetings. On **13th March** we will be welcoming Peter Cave who will be telling us more about the City of London and on **10th April** Natalie Kimberley will be enlightening us on her involvement with Forest School. 2.30pm in Dadford Village Hall if you fancy joining us.

Look forward to seeing you soon, Loreen



March 4th - Shrove Tuesday is a Christian Holy day that marks the beginning of Lent, a traditional 40-day period of fasting and prayer leading up to Easter. The word "shrove" comes from the Roman Catholic practice of "shriving," or confessing sins.

What is the story behind pancake Tuesday?

Pancake Day is the Tuesday before the Christian period of Lent; a traditional time of fasting and restraint. The idea of making pancakes likely came from a desire to use up the 'forbidden' ingredients (fat, eggs, etc) before the Lenten fast began.

COFFEE MORNING
Monday 14th April
DADFORD VILLAGE HALL
10.30 - 12.00

Everyone is welcome to this FREE coffee morning, with delicious cakes, hot cross buns, tea and coffee. There will also be craft for children of all ages to enjoy

Any questions please ring Rev Cathy 01280 821976



March 30th, Mothering Sunday- a small bunch of flowers will be given to all the ladies in the congregation and traditional simnel cake will be served with coffee.

What's been happening at St. James and St. John Church of England Primary Schools in Akeley and Chackmore



After a chilly start to the year we were excited to welcome all our pupils back after the Christmas holidays. The PTFA helped us ease back in with a 'comfy' day where children (and staff) could wear pyjamas, onesies or comfy wear, along with slippers inside and enjoy a hot chocolate at breaktime. The children really enjoyed the treat- especially as it was a very cold day!

In mid- January, Years 5 and 6 enjoyed a magnificent trip to the Harry Potter Experience where they had a VIP tour and an interactive workshop linked to creative writing. The children and adults had a fabulous time and returned feeling enthused (and a bit tired!). We look forward to seeing the magic coming through in their writing!

The Rocksteady concert, that was unfortunately postponed just before Christmas due to illness, has been rescheduled for the end of January. Children who have Rocksteady lessons are able to choose to play drums, keyboard, electric guitar, bass guitar or voice. They work together in their bands to learn a song and work towards a big performance every term. We loved seeing (and hearing!) the children's bands and enjoyed a morning of rock songs and music.

There have been several sports competitions that we have had teams participate in this term. Some of our Year 3s and 4s took part in a very chilly Football tournament at the end of January, there was a Year 1 and 2 team who enjoyed a Targetball competition and a group of Year 5s and 6s took part in a Handball tournament. We were delighted and proud of them all for the teamwork, perseverance, positivity, resilience and sportsmanship shown.

Before half term the children also enthusiastically participated in the School Disco. There were two halves, one for Foundation and Key Stage One and the other for Key Stage Two, the children in both having a fabulous time. Thank you to the PTFA for their work in organising this and for the school staff who supported it.

Break the rules day was also before half term. A chance for the children to come to school with messy hair, odd socks, temporary tattoos or glitter for a small donation. The children really enjoy their chance to 'break' the rules and it's fabulous to see their personalities shining through their choices.

After half term we look forward to the costumed delights of World Book Day, where we share the joy of reading and enthuse each other with new books to discover. Our Year 1s will enjoy a trip around the local area, finding out about local features and facilities. The Year 3s and 4s are already beginning work on their production at the end of term. The whole school looks forward to some interesting science sessions as we will take part and celebrate science week at the start of March. We will finish the term off with Mother's Day assemblies at both sites (Mums, tissues at the ready!) and a whole-school celebration of Easter, with our annual Easter Eggstravaganza at the Chackmore site.

With Spring around the corner, we look forward to the lighter evenings and brighter days ahead, with the promise of spring flowers emerging and birds returning to our gardens.

Date 2025	Warden/Sidespeople	Prayers	Refreshments
March 2nd	Andrew Rudolf/Loreen and Hilary	Liturgy	Lyn East
March 9th	Laurence Gibson/Chris Close-Smith	Tamara Kimpton	Elsbeth Mullineux
March 16th	Tamara and John Kimpton	Tony Meredith	Kay Murray
March 23rd	Gill Smith/Patricia Forbes	Gill Smith	Tamara Kimpton
March 30th	Nancy Pullin/Lyn East	Family Service	Nancy Pullin
April 6th	Richard and Essex Close Smith	Liturgy	Gillian Macdonald
April 13th	Andrew Rudolf	Family Service	Germain Radcliffe
April 20th	John and Tamara Kimpton	Andrew Rudolf	Elsbeth Mullineux
April 27th	Gill Smith/Loreen and Hilary	Kay Murray	Lyn East

Date 2025	Flowers	Cleaning	Prayer-board
March 2nd			Kay Murray
March 9th	Lent		Lyn East
March 16th	Lent	Nancy Pullin & Hazlewoods	Tamara Kimpton
March 23rd	Lent		John Kimpton
March 30th	Lent		Gillian Macdonald
April 6th	Lent	John & Tamara Kimpton	Gill Smith
April 13th	Lent		Kay Murray
April 20th	Easter: Loreen and Hilary & helpers		Lyn East
April 27th		Chris Close-Smith & Venice	Tamara Kimpton

Date 2025	Time	Service	Lead/Preach	Chalice
Mar 2nd	09:45	1662 Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	Andrew Rudolf
Mar 5th		Ash Wednesday		
Mar 7th	11:00	World day of Prayer		
Mar 9th	09:45	Mission Morning Prayer	L - Andrew Rudolf P - Rev David Chawner	
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Mar 16th	09:45	Common Worship Communion	Rev Hans Taling	John Kimpton
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Mar 23rd	09:45	Morning Prayer	L - Gillian Macdonald P - Paul Mileham	
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Mar 30th	08:00	Said 1662 Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	
	09:45	Family Service	Rev Cathy Pearce	
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Apr 6th	09:45	1662 Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	Lyn East
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Apr 13th	09:45	Family Service	Rev Cathy Pearce	
	18:00	Deanery Evensong		
Apr 17th		Maundy Thursday		
Apr 18th	2 - 3pm	Meditation	Rev Cathy Pearce/Andrew Rudolf	
Apr 20th	09:45	Easter Family Communion	Rev Cathy Pearce	Andrew Rudolf
Apr 27th	09:45	Morning Prayer	L - Andrew Rudolf P - Keith Croxton	