

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

St John's – Focused on Christ, united in faith, serving our community
and a place of worship where all are welcome

Church Services in March

1st March:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am All-Age Service (CW)
6.30pm Evensong (BCP)

8th March:

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

15th March: Mothering Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am Morning Worship (CW)

22nd March:

9.00am Matins (BCP)
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)
followed by the APCM

29th March: Palm Sunday

9.00am No Service
10.30am Holy Communion (CW)

2nd April: Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Holy Communion

A short service of **Morning Prayer** is held in church **every Wednesday morning at 9.00am**

BCP - Book of Common Prayer
CW - Common Worship (Modern Language)

Contacts

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Contact Us

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Thank You

Our thanks to Linda and Keith for organising such an enjoyable afternoon Pancake Party which raised around £200 towards our ongoing church operating costs.

View from the Vicarage

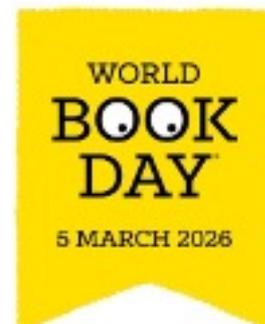
World Book Day is celebrated on 5th March this year, and readers of all ages will be reminded of the power of books to inform minds, stir hearts, and change lives. In schools and churches, homes and libraries, colleges and universities, books are read and enjoyed.

Yet among the countless titles printed throughout history, one book stands above all others — the Bible. The world's best-selling and most widely distributed book, the Bible has reached literally billions of people across the centuries. It has been translated into thousands of languages, carried across oceans by missionaries, printed in secret under persecution, and treasured in homes around the world. No other book has had such an extraordinary impact.

For Christians, the Bible is more than simply a bestseller. It contains God's living, active, and powerful words. Within its pages we encounter a grand story of redemption, from Genesis to Revelation. We meet a faithful God who creates, covenants, rescues, restores, and ultimately redeems humanity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible also speaks to the deepest needs of the human heart. It addresses sin and grace, justice and mercy, suffering and hope. Its poetry comforts the weary. Its wisdom guides the uncertain.

World Book Day is a celebration of literacy and learning, but Christians give special thanks for the Scriptures that continue to transform lives all around the globe. You don't even need a paper copy to enjoy its content - the Bible can now be read online (try BibleGateway.com), on mobile phone apps and on eReader devices — so why not give it a try!

God bless,
Phil Weston



News

Easter Egg Appeal — We will be celebrating Easter on the 5th April, a time which our children enjoy as they possibly over indulge with their chocolate eggs. But there are other children, in the care of *Save the Family*, who are not quite so lucky. Would you be willing to help us by buying an extra egg (or two) to brighten up their day. Eggs can be left at the Community Shop (by the Friday 27th March please) or brought along to our Palm Sunday Service at 10.30am on the 29th March.

Mothering Sunday — At our Morning Service on the 15th of March we will be celebrating Motherhood and all that that means. There will be Spring posies for the ladies and Simnel Cake for everyone during the time when refreshments are served at the end of the service.

World Day of Prayer — The annual World Day of Prayer service will be held in church on 6th March at 7pm.

Craft Evening



There will be a **Craft Evening** in church on **Saturday 14th March** at **7.30pm**. We shall be making crêpe

paper flowers (with secreted chocolates) in readiness for Mothering Sunday. Tickets are £10 each — light refreshments are included in the ticket price and all proceeds will be donated to church funds.

Please contact **Natalie Meara** for further details or to book your ticket.



natalie@ashtonhayes.church

Pause for Thought

by Alan Downen



"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land."
Song of Songs 2:11-12

There is a moment, it's unmistakable and almost breathtaking, which happens when the year turns. It starts very quietly at first — a snowdrop pushing through the cold soil, a lone blackbird singing from a bare branch at dusk, the first lamb finding its legs in a damp field. Then, almost overnight, the hedgerows whiten with blackthorn and hawthorn blossom, the air fills with the liquid notes of the song thrush, and the world seems to exhale after its long cold breath.

The Beloved in the Song of Songs must have known this moment well. The call to come away rings with urgent joy, now that winter has passed, the rain is over and gone (we hope!), and the earth is coming alive again. It is possibly the oldest and most irresistible of invitations known to the human race, one that resonates across every generation that has ever watched the seasons turn.

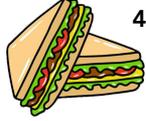
The Christian calendar is arranged around this same pulse of dying and rising. Lent mirrors the stripped, bare weeks of late winter — it is a season of quiet, penitence and self-examination. Then Easter breaks, always anchored to the spring equinox and the first full moon thereafter, as if the Church herself is waiting for the year to turn before she dares announce the resurrection.

The lilies adorning the church, the lambs in the fields, the chorus of birdsong swelling at first light — none of this is coincidence. Creation and faith speak the same language: death gives way to life, darkness yields to light, and our gardens burst into bloom once more.

Spring is theology written in flowers.



Our next Messy Church will be held in church on **Sunday, 8th March at 4pm**. At that event, there will



be food, singing Bible stories, and other fun activities. Open to children of all ages accompanied by an adult. Why not come along and join in?



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St John's Café



Our next afternoon café will take place on Thursday, 19th March, between 2.30 and 4.30pm for our for a free cup of tea, coffee or glass of squash, a slice of cake and a chance to meet up with neighbours and friends.

Opening Hours
Monday - Saturday
10am - 5pm
Late night Thursday
until 8pm.

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