

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and Chesterton



A stained-glass window of Saint Patrick from Saint Patrick's Catholic Church in Junction City, Ohio

£1

March 2026

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and St Lawrence (Chesterton)

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Parish Magazine articles (submitted by 16th day of previous month)

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Into the Desert: Reflections for Lent

At the beginning of Lent I was reminded of these words
by **Ruth Burgess**:



*The desert waits, ready for those who come,
who come obedient to the Spirit's leading;
or who are driven,
because they will not come any other way.*

*The desert always waits,
ready to let us know who we are –
the place of self-discovery.*

*And whilst we fear, and rightly,
the loneliness and emptiness and harshness,
we forget the angels whom we cannot see for our blindness,
but who come when God decides that we need their help;
when we are ready for what they can give us.*

The image of the desert speaks deeply into the season of Lent. It is a place we may approach willingly, or a place into which we sometimes feel driven. Either way, it waits for us. Not as a place of punishment, but as a place of truth — a place where we discover who we really are before God.

We may naturally fear the loneliness, emptiness and starkness of the desert experience. Yet the poem reminds us that we do not go there alone. We may not always see them, but God sends his angels — often in quiet, unnoticed ways — when we are ready for what they can give.

It has been a particular privilege over these past months to prepare candidates for Confirmation. To see faith beginning to take root and shape their understanding of Scripture is a wonderful reminder of how God continues to work in every generation. Watching their excitement build as the day approached, and sharing in the joy of the Confirmation service at which Bishop Robert presided and preached, was a true blessing.

Lent is also a season of learning and growth within our wider community. This year's Lent Lunches in the Parish Church will focus on the theme *Leaders in Education*. We are delighted that members of staff from several of our local primary and senior schools will be joining us to share insights from their work. Helping to shape young minds is both an enormous privilege and a profound responsibility, and we look forward to hearing how this vocation is lived out in our local schools.

On a more personal note, having our two grandchildren to stay over half term has also been a gift — especially when, for the umpteenth time, one of them asks, “Why?” There is something wonderfully Lenten about that question. Lent invites us to rediscover curiosity in our faith — to look again, to ask again, to seek deeper understanding.

For me, Lent is not simply about giving things up. It is about making a commitment: to do something better, something new, something perhaps even adventurous. It is a season of intentional growth, of drawing closer to Christ as we journey towards Holy Week and Easter.

The alternative Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent helps to focus that journey:

*Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

May this holy season be for each of us not only a desert, but also a place where angels minister, where faith deepens, and where we are prepared to share in the joy of Easter.

With best wishes

Graham

Reverend Canon Graham Morris

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIV FOR LENT 2026



Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion

Dear brothers and sisters,

Lent is a time in which the Church, guided by a sense of maternal care, invites us to place the mystery of God back in the centre of our lives, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.

Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection will be fulfilled.

Listening

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through listening. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

In revealing himself to Moses in the burning bush, God himself teaches us that listening is one of his defining characteristics: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry” (Ex 3:7). Hearing the cry of the oppressed is the beginning of a story of liberation in which the Lord calls Moses, sending him to open a path of salvation for his children who have been reduced to slavery.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy

teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen as he does. We must recognize that “the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church.”

Fasting

If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbour.

With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfilment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: “In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity.” Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, in order to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation that leads to pride, it must be lived

in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because “those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly.” As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since “austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic.”

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

Together

Finally, Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting. The Bible itself underlines this dimension in multiple ways. For example, the Book of Nehemiah recounts how the people gathered to listen to the public reading of the Law, preparing to profess their faith and worship through fasting, so as to renew the covenant with God (cf. 9:1-3).

Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance. In this context, conversion refers not only to one's conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality

and recognizing what truly guides our desires — both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity's thirst for justice and reconciliation.

Dear friends, let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.

I impart my heartfelt blessing upon all of you and your Lenten journey.

LEO PP. XIV (5 February 2026)



BCP Morning Prayer at St George the Martyr

Over recent months a small but growing group of parishioners has been gathering each Wednesday at 7.30am in the chapel of St George the Martyr at the Royal Agricultural University (accessible via the Stroud Road Entrance). What began as a simple wish to start the day in quiet prayer has become one of the most uplifting parts of our week. The chapel itself sets the tone; it's a wonderful building, sumptuously decorated with agricultural themes. The hush of the Victorian stone and woodwork seems to hold the prayers of generations before us. It is a peaceful and deeply grounding place in which to begin the morning.



Our service is lay led (with kind permission from Canon Graham) and follows the gentle rhythm of The Book of Common Prayer. Cranmer's famous 1662 text encourages us, the laity, to do this in the absence of a priest, and so we enjoy the old, familiar cadences of confession, readings and intercessions that create an atmosphere that is both reflective and reassuring. Those who join us comment that the language is beautiful without being difficult. Others speak of the sense of calm that settles as the words carry us forward at an unhurried pace. It is, quite simply, a moment of stillness before the day gathers speed.

We are joined by people of several denominations; Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Baptists, but the majority of us are drawn from the Anglican congregation that meets at 8:00am on Sundays at St John Baptist. We enjoy the meditative quality of spoken prayer. Some find that setting aside half an hour before the demands of the morning helps them feel lighter and more hopeful. Others value the connection with a tradition that links us to those who prayed these same words centuries ago. Whatever the reason, the experience remains the same. We leave feeling steadier, clearer, and better prepared for the hours ahead.

A quiet revival of The Book of Common Prayer has been taking place across the Church of England in recent years, led notably by younger adults. Reports indicate that millennials and those under forty are increasingly drawn to its steady rhythm, theological depth and dignified language. Clergy note a marked rise in enquiries and attendance at BCP services, and the Prayer Book Society has been overwhelmed with interest since the pandemic, much of it from people under thirty five who are discovering the text for the first time and finding in it a sense of rootedness and spiritual challenge.

We are also a friendly group. After the service we chat over decent coffee and easy conversation. Visitors remark on how welcome they

feel and how unusual it is, in the middle of the working week, to find such a simple moment of fellowship.

Please do join us and point anyone who might enjoy our worship and fellowship in our direction. As the world changes so rapidly around us, we are finding that many more people are open to joining us than we expected. The doors open at 7.10am and we finish at about eight. All are welcome.

Services take place at 7:30am every Wednesday (Hilary Term: 21st January to 25th March 2026) at the chapel of St George the Martyr at the Royal Agricultural University (accessible via the Stroud Road Entrance). For help with transport and for more details please call or message Benjamin on 07788 740404.

Benjamin Janes (Chief Executive, The Trust Partnership)



Cantores Chamber Choir

Darkness, Devotion and Hope



Cantores presents a reflective programme of music exploring some of the themes associated with the seasons of Lent and Passiontide. One of Bach's best-loved choral works, his motet Jesu meine Freude is paired with James MacMillan's deeply moving setting of the Miserere. The programme also includes motets by Lassus, Byrd and Schütz, alongside 20th Century English works by Howells and Sanders.

Saturday 21 March 2026, 4pm at St Mary's Church, High Street, Fairford, Gloucestershire GL7 4AF

Tickets £15 (U18s & Students £5) from the Cantores Website.

Saint Patrick



Saint Patrick was a fifth-century Romano-British Christian missionary and Bishop in Ireland. He's known as the apostle of Ireland and is the primary patron saint of Ireland. He's also the patron saint of Nigeria. In Patrick's autobiographical "*Confessio*" he writes that when he was about 16 he was captured by Irish Pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland. He writes that he lived there for six years as an animal herder before escaping and returning to his family. After becoming a cleric he returned to spread Christianity in Northern and Western Ireland. In later life he served as Bishop but little is known about where he worked by the seventh century. He had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland.

Legend credits Patrick with teaching the Irish about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity by showing people the shamrock a three leafed plant using it to illustrate the Christian teaching of three persons in one God.

Legends also credit Patrick with banishing snakes from the island of Ireland although apparently they have never been any snakes on the island.

Saint Patrick's Day, considered his feast day, is observed on 17th of March, the supposed date of his death. It is celebrated in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora as a religious and cultural holiday.

Pam Barnes (from Wikipedia)

Thursday Drop In at the **Forum**

Next to the Church



*A chance to pop in for a chat with
friends*

over a cup of coffee
Thursday mornings
10am – 12noon

**A member of the Clergy will always be there
too.**

Highlights from the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Held on 21st January 2026

Last year Mr John Tiffney, Chair of the Friends of St John Baptist Churchyard, and Mr Mike Timbrell, of Sitech Surveyors of Cirencester, completed a project concerning Churchyard Records in the town. Their surveys included St John Baptist Churchyard and it details all the graves, monuments, names of people interred, etc., and there is a bound A3 book detailing this information available upon request from the vestry at St John Baptist. Additionally, they created a plan covering the cremated remains area at Holy Trinity. Their surveys may be useful to anyone searching for an ancestor back to c1630. John has also deposited the information with the Gloucestershire Records Archive, and the information is readily available online via a link on our website at: <https://cirenparish.co.uk/visit-the-parish/the-parish-church-of-st-john-baptist/churchyard-burials-1630-1873/>. The PCC thanks John and Mike for this important project.

The PCC is pleased that an active programme of using the Parish Church for commercial events for fundraising is being developed with the most recent being the 2 Lumos concerts in January 2026. Future events include a concert by the renowned Treorchy Male Voice Choir on Saturday the 21st of March 2026, Lie Down and Listen classical concert experiences on Friday 10th of April 2026 and Saturday 11th of April 2026; a Beer Festival, and a concert by celebrity organist Anna Sapwood at later dates in the year. In addition to trying to reduce or eliminate our annual financial deficit we believe these events also contribute to our objectives of outreach to the community; and encourages Canon Graham's dream and vision of our mission to reach beyond the walls of our buildings. We are very grateful to Peter Ewart and his Finance Committee for leading and working on this initiative.

The St John Baptist Project — installation of seven toilets with washing facilities, of which three, including one fully accessible cubicle, will be

inside the church and four within the South Porch; creating a permanent but flexible catering station in the South Aisle; and adapting oak pews, with castors, so that they can be easily moved to accommodate events or functions — should be completed this year. The Church will remain open throughout the works and at least one toilet will be available at all times. The works schedule will aim to minimise disruption to the life of the church as much as possible but there will be some noise at times and dust protection will be in place. In addition to improving the facilities for our parishioners, the community and visitors, the St John Baptist Project will contribute significantly to promoting our charitable fundraising by offering a competitive, high demand, value for money and, hopefully, preferred venue of choice for commercial events.

The PCC recently approved the acquisition of a new phone system which will properly serve our two office-based employees (Parish Administrator, Sarah, and Finance Officer, Hannah), the Shop, Canon Graham and Reverend Luke. It is hoped that this new system will help improve communication within the parish. Particularly, as it was recently noted that since Covid our staffing levels have been reduced whilst workload remains the same, and anything aiding efficiency is value added to the life and work in the parish.

Hever Castle is hosting our replica of The Boleyn Cup during their historical exhibition on Anne Boleyn, which is occurring on the quincentennial of her courtship by Henry VIII. Our Churchwarden, Nigel Brown OBE, received a gracious letter from Hever Castle on the loan of the cup. The letter emphasised that the “exhibition will focus on the objects and symbols that shaped Anne Boleyn’s iconography and the powerful legacy she left to her daughter, Elizabeth I”. Furthermore, the original cup is considered of deep significance to both mother and daughter, and represents a tangible link; and Hever Castle in their letter was very appreciative of the loan and significance of displaying our replica.

We continue with preparations for the Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) which is still scheduled for Sunday the 19th of April 2026 after the 10 am service at St John Baptist. Last year's APCM minutes and the minutes of a Special Parochial Church Meeting are available on the website at: <https://cirenparish.co.uk/community-and-whats-on/parochial-church-council/>. This year we will be holding elections of the laity to the Deanery Synod along with the PCC. If anyone is interested in participating in either of these, please contact our Churchwarden or Assistant Churchwardens, Canon Graham or Reverend Luke. A formal convening notice for the meeting will be published by the Vicar along with additional details closer to the date.

Finally, we were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our beloved Churchwarden, Aileen Anderson. She did tremendous work as part of the PCC, including Safeguarding and Health & Safety areas amongst other things; and she made an immense contribution to the daily life of our parish. She will be greatly missed and not forgotten. She remains in our prayers as do her family and friends.

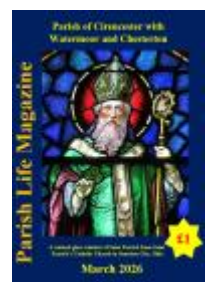
Mark Dennis, Secretary



Important Information

We have had to change the email address for the Parish Magazine.

From now on all articles for our magazine should be sent to cirenparishmagazine@gmail.com



We receive articles on a regular basis from several writers, but are always pleased to receive articles from new sources.

It is YOUR magazine

Alan Barnes (joint editor)



Letters to the Churches of Today.

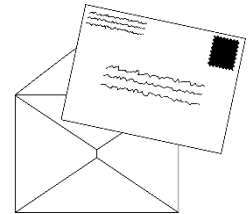
If St Paul were able to travel forward in time, what would he be writing to the churches of today. Here are some possible imaginary thoughts.....

HG

A Letter to the Church That Is Tired

Grace to you, and peace.

Not the kind sold in slogans, but the kind that sits down beside you when you cannot stand.



I know your works. I know how long you have kept the doors open, how often you have rearranged the chairs, how many prayers you have offered that seemed to fall straight to the floor.

You are tired. Tired of explaining yourself to a world that misunderstands you. Tired of apologising for sins you did not commit and defending sins you should have confessed.

Tired of being told to be louder, braver, purer, stronger, more relevant. Tired of surviving scandals that were not of your making and griefs that were.

Some of you are tired in your bones. Some of you are tired in your faith. Some of you are tired of hope itself.

But hear this:

your weariness is not hidden from God. You have not failed because you are exhausted. You have not lost your way because you are slower now. The Teacher you follow once slept through a storm.

I know that you fear becoming small. I know you measure yourselves against churches with brighter lights and quicker answers. You worry that your songs are quieter, you're certainty thinner, your numbers fewer.

But I tell you this:

a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will

not snuff out.

You have mistaken rest for retreat and gentleness for compromise.

*Return, not to your former energy, but to your first love.
Not the thrill of being right, but the ache of wanting to love well.
Not the dream of changing the world, but the practice of washing feet.*

Lay down the burdens I did not give you. Release the need to win every argument.

Let go of the lie that faith must always look like confidence.

If you cannot run, walk. If you cannot walk, sit. If you cannot sit, lie down and let others carry the song for a while.

I say to you what was said before:

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, but waiting is not wasted time.

Hold fast to what you still have:

*the habit of gathering, the courage to confess,
the act of loving and welcoming one another even when it costs more than it gives.*

And know this, Church who is tired:

the Kingdom does not depend on your adrenaline. The resurrection did not require the disciples' energy..... only their presence.

Be faithful, not frantic. Be gentle, not impressive. Be honest, not loud.

And when you have no words left, let your endurance itself become a prayer. Grace be with you. You are not finished. God still needs you.

(This is the first in a series of letters that St Paul could have written to the church today. The next few magazines will contain further articles).

Musings in Mark (Mark 9:14-29)



When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. [15] As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

[16] “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. [17] A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. [18] Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

[19] “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

[20] So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. [21] Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. [22] “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” [23] “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” [24] Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

[25] When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” [26] The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” [27] But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. [28] After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

[29] He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Jesus and the three had been up on the mountain meeting with God Elijah and Moses, an incredible experience, and having reached the valley chaos erupts. Have a deep, spiritual experience and something will happen to bring you down to earth!

Here the disciples - arrogantly or in faith? - responded to the cry of a suffering father. A demonic spirit destroying his son. Today some might say it was a seizure, but Jesus dealt with it differently.

Obviously the disciples had tried the casting out instructions that they had seen Jesus use, with less effect and the boy is left helpless. The frustrations of the disciples - and the father - when prayer 'doesn't work'! After Jesus's successful intervention, the disciples in the privacy of being indoors ask the key question, "why couldn't we...?"

It's a very succinct answer, "only by prayer" (and fasting some manuscripts tell us.). But whichever answer you take, the key truth is Jesus telling us that there are situations that are only dealt with after we have asked God what is happening and how we pray. Peter in Acts 9:40 prayed before raising up Dorcas from death.

At Harnhill we found regularly that the issues for which prayer was asked were not always the true issue, we had to ask God what was going on. In Matthew 9, Jesus didn't deal with the paralysis, but the man's sins.

So the challenge as we pray for ourselves and others is to listen to God for the correct thing to pray for rather than heading in off your own bat as though you have all the answers. It doesn't mean don't pray for things, but talk to God first and get his advice and guidance - then you could be surprised at how effective your prayers are!!

Happy praying!

Rev Paul



God's love at the heart of the Cotswolds

LENT LUNCHES IN ST JOHN BAPTIST CIRENCESTER

I am delighted to announce the line-up of speakers for this year's Lent Lunches. After conversations with my team colleagues, we felt it would be valuable to invite leaders from our local schools to join us. I am pleased to say that the invitation has been warmly accepted, and five colleagues will be coming to share with us.

I encourage you to **put these dates in your diary now** and come along to enjoy the Lent Lunches, hosted by our Mothers' Union branch, as well as the talks from our guest speakers.

Any surplus funds from donations made at the Lent Lunches will be given to the Mothers' Union, to be distributed among their charitable aims.

We have asked them to 'reflect on how their life as a Christian, or their work in a Christian environment, shapes and informs what they do.'

26th February **Claire Stickney** Reception Teacher and RE lead at Powell's C of E

5th March **Jo Hiscock** Yr. 3 Teacher at Chesterton Primary

12th March **Jenny Laird** Head Teacher at Paternoster

19th March **Jo Lindley** Head Teacher at Kingshill

26th March **Lois Smith** Head Teacher at Watermoor C of E

Each session will comprise of:

Midday Eucharist in the Catherine Chapel (Optional)

12.30 p.m. – 1 p.m. Simple Lent Lunch

1p.m. – 1.20p.m Talk

1.20p.m. – 1.30p.m Questions



Mothers Union

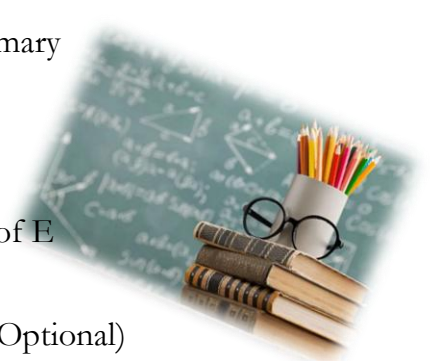
Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.

Aim & Purpose:

To demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.

Values:

Mothers' Union is firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos. Its governance, leadership, and programmes are driven by and undertaken through members around the world as they respond to God's call to faith and action.



All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place!

World Watch List 2026



According to *Open Doors*, the World's most dangerous countries to be Christian in 2026 are:

- 1) North Korea
- 2) Somalia
- 3) Yemen
- 4) Sudan
- 5) Eritrea
- 6) Syria
- 7) Nigeria
- 8) Pakistan
- 9) Libya
- 10) Iran

Dear God, be with all those Christians who are forced to hide their faith for their own safety. Protect them and keep them safe from those who seek to harm them. Give them wisdom and courage as they work to protect themselves, their families and other Christians within their community. Protect each of them from violence, from arrest and from all other kinds of persecution that they may face. Amen.

Pam Barnes (from Open Doors Magazine).



Dear Members and Friends

On Wednesday February 11th members of Cirencester Mothers' Union hosted a soup lunch to raise funds for MU projects. We welcomed over 40 people, some regulars and some new faces, to the lunch held in the Parish Hall, Watermoor and it was a most enjoyable occasion. Importantly, over £200 was raised for MU projects. One such project is AFIA, (Away from it All holidays). During the course of the year the Diocesan Board of Trustees awards grants from the AFIA fund and last year £1000 was granted to the Churn Project, here in Cirencester. I'd like to share with you an email received from Rachel at the Churn Project.

'I just wanted to say thank you to the Mothers Union again for supporting us this past year with your kind donation towards an activity for the families at Christmas time. This Christmas we were able to put your money towards paying for a Pantomime for the children. We used a firm that specialise in this-travelling pantos - [Home | Chaplins Pantos 4Kids](#). We hired a local church hall, and they set up early and the children came after school for the show. It was such a special time watching them enjoy Little Red Riding Hood. The music, costumes and props were great. Your kind donation meant we were able to afford to give them a light supper. They had pizza, crudites and a Christmas cup cake before the show started. All in all, it was a wonderful evening. The Christmas panto and pizza supper event for families from both the Mini Toddler and Families Matter groups made an experience like this accessible locally. It helped improve parents' confidence and gave

families the opportunity to create lasting memories together. The evening also helped strengthen peer relationships within the groups.'

The AFIA fund also funded a coach trip to Weston-Super-Mare for the clients of The Family Haven in Gloucester. For some it is the first time they have been to the sea side, something I took for granted every year when I was a youngster.

Thank you for your support of our fund raising events, it is much appreciated. Our next fund raising event is a cake sale to be held in the Parish Hall, Watermoor, after the 10am service on Palm Sunday, March 29th.

With love and prayer

Kathie Cottey

Dates:-

Wednesday March 4th at 2.30pm in the Parish Hall, Watermoor. Speakers Pauline Skinner and Caroline Winters. 'Brief Talk on Their Lives'. There will also be a Bring & Buy Sale

Saturday March 14th 9.30am until noon. Making Posies for Mothering Sunday in the Parish Hall Watermoor.

Thursday March 26th at Noon Corporate Communion in the Parish Church

Thursday March 26th at 7.30pm Chill & Chatter in the Vicarage

Sunday March 29th Palm Sunday cake stall in the Parish Hall Watermoor after the 10am service.

Wednesday April 1st at 2.30pm in the Parish Hall, Watermoor. Our guest speaker is Bishop Bob.

All are welcome at our meetings, members or not.

Soup Lunch pictures:





As Spring approaches, our thoughts turn to preparing our gardens for what we hope to be an abundance of flowers, fruit and vegetables. We also, perhaps need to prepare our own **Garden of Life**.

When you plan your garden this Spring,
Plant three rows of peas:
Peas of mind
Peas of heart
Peas of soul.

Plant four rows of squash:
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness.

Plant four rows of lettuce:
Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be happy
Lettuce really love one another.

No garden should be without turnips:
Turnip for service when needed
Turnip to help one another
Turnip the music and dance.



Water freely with patience and
Cultivate with love.
There is much fruit in your garden.
Because you reap what you sow.

To conclude; our garden
We must have thyme:
Thyme for fun
Thyme for rest
Thyme for ourselves.

*From 'Crosstalk':
The Parish Magazine of
St Batholomew and St
Chad (May 2014)*

‘Walk The Churn’ to support invaluable local community charity



The Churn Community Hub (formerly The Churn Project) is asking local people to put their best foot forward on Saturday, 9th May, and walk 25km of the River Churn, from Seven Springs near Cheltenham to Cirencester along the Churn Valley Way, to celebrate its 25th anniversary and raise vital funds.

Set up in 2001, the charity supports anyone in Cirencester (and surrounding villages) who is at a point of crisis or transition in their lives or who is experiencing loneliness or mental health issues. Last year it directly supported over 1,700 people from across the community through a mix of group activities and one-to-one support.

Registration for the 25km sponsored walk is just £8 per adult and £4 per child (children must be accompanied) and whilst dogs are free to enter, they must be kept under control at all times. Once signed up, walkers will be able to create a fundraising page on The Churn’s JustGiving site. Raise £100 (per person if entering as a family/team) and receive a participation medal; raise £250 (per person if entering as a family/team) and receive both a medal and an event t-shirt.

Sponsorship packages for local businesses are also available, providing a fantastic opportunity to support the event whilst enhancing their social impact in the community.

Sarah Bourne, Chief Executive Officer of The Churn Community Hub says: “Our ‘Walk The Churn’ event on Saturday, 9th May, will be a wonderful celebration of those in the community we have been privileged to serve over the past 25 years, as well as an opportunity to enjoy a ramble through the beautiful Churn Valley whilst raising much-needed funds to support our ongoing work. This promises to be a wonderful event and I very much hope people will join us.”

To register for the 25km sponsored walk, visit www.charity-hub.co.uk/TheChurn Local businesses interested in sponsoring the event should contact Kathryn Bell on 01285 380 038.

To find out more about The Churn Community Hub, to support, or volunteer for us, please visit www.thechurn.org.uk

Katherine Crawshaw



Piano available

Do you know of anyone who would like a piano? Someone setting out on a musical journey or maybe needing a smaller piano to fit a limited space?



Zender compact upright piano, standard keys.

Width: 1.26m Height 1m Depth 0.46m

Further details contact: howardgray@cirenparish.co.uk



And Finally...

This is the transcript of a genuine radio conversation between a US naval ship and Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in 1995.

Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees north to avoid a collision.

Canadians: Recommend YOU divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Americans: This is the captain of the US navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: No, I say again, divert YOUR course.

Americans: This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the US Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north, that's ONE FIVE degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure safety of the ship.

Canadians: We're a lighthouse. Your call.....

From A Bucket of Suprises, compiled by

J John and Mark Stibbe

With kind permission



Organ Recitals At St John Baptist

Wednesdays at 1.10pm 2025 - 26



Wednesday 1st October
David Price (Portsmouth Cathedral)

Wednesday 5th November
Andrew Parnell (Ely Cathedral)

Wednesday 3rd December
John Wright (Cheltenham)

Wednesday 7th January
James Henderson (Sherborne Abbey)

Wednesday 4th February
Timothy Selman (Lincoln Cathedral)

Wednesday 4th March
Stephen King (Brentwood Cathedral)

Wednesday 1st April
Pavlos Triantaris (Letchworth)

Wednesday 6th May
Johannes Opfermann (Freiburg)

Wednesday 3rd June
Barney Silverstone (London)

Wednesday 1st July
Mark Brafield (Guildford)

Wednesday 5th August
Charles Wooler (Concert Organist)

Treorchy Male Voice Choir In Concert



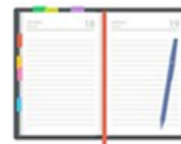
Saturday 21st March 2026, 7.00pm
St John Baptist Church, West Market Place,
Cirencester, GL7 2NH

Tickets £26.95. Available via online link:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/pcc-of-cirencester/t-mjovraa>

With International Guest Artists

Dates for March 2026



Weekdays

9:15 – 9:45am	Morning Prayer	St John Baptist
12 – 1pm	Eucharist - Catherine Chapel	St John Baptist

Saturdays

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
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Monday, Wednesday & Friday

5 – 6pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist
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Weekdays

9am – 10am	Wednesdays Drop In at St Lawrence
10am – 12pm	The Parish Forum Open (except Wednesday)
10am – 12pm	Thursdays Drop In at The Parish Forum

**

1 Mar, Sun

8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	All Age Eucharist	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Non-Eucharist Family Service	Holy Trinity
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
2:30 – 4pm	Quarter Peal	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Choral Evensong	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Restore@4	St Lawrence

2 Mar, Mon

9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
5 – 5:30pm	Organ Vespers	St John Baptist
5:30 – 6:30pm	Vicars Open Office	Parish Forum
7:30 – 9pm	Lent Group	Parish Forum

3 Mar, Tue

6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	St John Baptist
7:30 – 9:30pm	Christian Wellbeing Course	St Lawrence

4 Mar, Wed

10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
1:10 – 1:50pm	Organ Recital	St John Baptist
6.30 – 8pm	Stations of the Cross followed by Eucharist	Holy Trinity

5 Mar, Thu

12:30 – 1:30pm	Lent Lunches	St John Baptist
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6 Mar, Fri

2 – 3:30pm	World day of Prayer Churches Together	Holy Trinity
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
5 – 5:30pm	Evening Prayer LF	

7 Mar, Sat

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
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8 Mar, Sun

8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Service of the Word	St Lawrence
1 – 2pm	Baptism	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Evening Prayer	St John Baptist
5 – 6:15pm	Bell Ringing	St John Baptist

9 Mar, Mon

9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
7:30 – 9pm	Lent Group	Parish Forum

10 Mar, Tue

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity
7:30 – 9:30pm	Christian Wellbeing Course	St Lawrence

11 Mar, Wed

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6.30 – 8pm	Stations of the Cross followed by Eucharist	Holy Trinity

12 Mar, Thu

9:15 – 10:45am	Seedlings	St Lawrence
10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lent Lunches	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist

13 Mar, Fri

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall

14 Mar, Sat

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
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15 Mar, Sun

8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
4 – 5pm	Choral Evensong	St John Baptist
4 – 5pm	Restore @4	St Lawrence

16 Mar, M

9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour of	St John Baptist
5:30 – 6:30pm	Vicars Open Office	Parish Forum
7:30 – 9pm	Lent Group	Parish Forum
7:30 – 9pm	Quarter Peal	St John Baptist

17 Mar, Tue

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity

18 Mar, Wed

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour of	St John Baptist
7 – 9pm	Full PCC/ Accounts	St Lawrence
6.30 – 8pm	Stations of the Cross followed by Eucharist	Holy Trinity

19 Mar, Thu

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lent Lunches	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist

20 Mar, Fri

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall

21 Mar, Sat

10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
7 – 9pm	Treorchy Male Voice Choir Concert	St John Baptist

22 Mar, Sun

8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
4 – 5pm	Evening Worship	St John Baptist

23 Mar, Mon

9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
5:30 – 6:30pm	Vicars Open Office	Parish Forum
7:30 – 9pm	Lent Group	Parish Forum

24 Mar, Tue

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity

25 Mar, Wed

10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6.30 – 8pm	Stations of the Cross followed by Eucharist	Holy Trinity

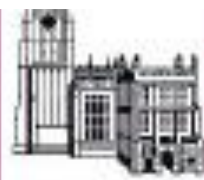
26 Mar, Thu

9:15 – 10:45am	Seedlings	St Lawrence
10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
12 – 1pm	Mothers' Union Corporate Communion	St John Baptist
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lent Lunches	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist

27 Mar, Fri		
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
3 – 5pm	Cirencester Food Pantry	Parish Hall
28 Mar, Sat		
10 – 10:30am	Said Eucharist - Catherine Chapel,	St John Baptist
29 Mar, Sun		
8 – 9am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
8 – 9am	Holy Communion BCP - Lady Chapel	St John Baptist
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	Holy Trinity
10 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St John Baptist
10:30 – 11:30am	Eucharist	St Lawrence
4 – 5pm	Reflective Service	St John Baptist
30 Mar, Mon		
9:45 – 11am	Little Angels	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
7:30 – 9pm	Lent Group	Parish Forum
8 – 8:30pm	Said Compline	St John Baptist
31 Mar, Tue		
10:30 – 11:30am	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
2:30 – 3:30pm	Guided Tour	St John Baptist
6:30 – 9pm	Bell Ringing	Holy Trinity
8 – 8:30pm	Sung Compline	St John Baptist

Extracted from Parish Calendar 17/02/2026





CHURCH SHOP



Open Monday to Saturday 10am ~ 4pm

Why not take a look at our Parish Church Shop, there's more than you expect!

Books
CDs

Gifts
Cards

Souvenirs
Bibles

Diaries
Calendars

Maps
Pictures

Icons
Prayer Books



Website: <http://www.cirenparish.co.uk>

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