

THE FRONT PAGE

Lent has started

This Sunday is the First in Lent, after this special season started a few days ago on Ash Wednesday. Quite a few people came along to one of our Communion services on that day, an appropriate thing to do – because, while Lent is traditionally a time to reflect on our weaknesses, our failings before God and our need of forgiveness, it leads us to Easter, which tells us of the wonderful victory that Jesus won, bringing us pardon from our sins, by his death on the cross. So Lent can be a time when we reflect on our need for God's mercy, but also be thankful that we have a relationship with Him through Jesus. And many people seek to deepen that relationship during this season. Here are a few ways we could do this...

Our Lent book: *In Quietness & Trust - Devotions from the Beatitudes*
Each year we suggest a book that people could read during Lent. This time it comes with a recommendation from the congregation at St Paul's, who used it last year. There are 40 reflections – one for each day. There are a few copies left at the back of our churches - if they run out, speak to Mark about getting some more.

Our Lent Meetings: *Thursday evenings, 7 for 7.15 at St Mark's*
This year we will have a series of special guest speakers who help us to celebrate what God is doing at this time across the world. We will be thinking about mission, in the widest sense. (See p.4 for dates and speakers.) I hope that we will find these meetings encouraging and challenging. (There are refreshments from 7pm, giving us a time to chat and catch up. We promise that everything will be finished by 8.45.)

Catherine's Harp Concert: *Saturday 7th March, 3pm at St John's*
With a mixture of beautiful music and uplifting testimony, this will inspire us in our faith. Feel free to invite friends.

I hope that you find each of these really helpful. Thank you, Mark

Sunday 22nd February 2026

Lent 1

Theme: Starting a church - The slave girl

Acts Ch. 16 vs.16 - 25

(Church Bibles - St. John's pg. 1112; St. Mark's pg. 1112)

9.00 am	Morning Prayer in St John's Church <i>(Preacher: Mark Galliers)</i> <i>Prayer after Church</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship with a Thanksgiving – St Mark's <i>(Preacher: Mark Galliers)</i> <i>Prayer after Church</i>
11.00 am (Premier)	Online Service on YouTube <i>(Preacher: Mark M)</i> (And also available at any time after this.)
3.00 pm	Baptism Service – in St John's Church
4.00 pm	Evening Communion in St John's Church

Activities this week

Mon 23 rd	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	10 - 11.30 am	Little Fishes in St John's Church
	2.00 pm	Bethany in St John's Church Hall
Tues 24 th	11.45 am	Stewsdays in St. Mark's Church
Weds 25 th	8.00 am	Morning Prayers on WhatsApp
	11.00 am	Wednesday Worshippers Holy Communion – St Mark's Church <i>(Preacher: Tom Linnane)</i>
	4.00 pm	Craft Group in St. Mark's Church
	7.00 pm	Ignite Youth Group - St Paul's Church
Thurs 26 th	10.30 am	Together in St John's Church Hall
	12 noon	Prayers for the Persecuted Church in St John's Church Hall
	7.00 for 7.15 pm	1st Lent Meeting in St. Mark's Church <i>(Preacher: Gerry Blake)</i>
Fri 27 th	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	5.00 pm	Prayers for our Mission Links – SJC
Sat 28 th	9.30am	Coffee Morning in St John's Church Hall

Sunday 1st March 2026

Lent 2

Theme: Starting a church - The jailer

Acts Ch. 16 vs. 25 - 40

(Church Bibles - St. John's pg. 1112; St. Mark's pg. 1112)

9.00 am	Holy Communion in St John's Church <i>(Preacher: Sheila) Prayer after Church</i>
10.30am	Holy Communion in St Mark's Church <i>(Preacher: Sheila) Prayer after Church</i>
11.00 am (Premier)	Online Service on YouTube <i>(Preacher: Mark M)</i> (And also available at any time after this.)
4.00 pm	Tea Time Church in St John's Church

Activities this week

Mon 2 nd	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	10 – 11.30 am	Little Fishes in St John's Church
Weds 4 th	8.00 am	Morning Prayers on WhatsApp
	11.00 am	Wednesday Worshippers – St. Mark's <i>First Wednesday Special</i> "The Wonder of Creation"
	7.00 pm	Ignite Youth Group
Thurs 5 th	10.30 am to 12 noon	Bethany Again in St John's Church Hall
	7.00pm for 7.15pm	2nd Lent Meeting - St Mark's Church <i>(Catherine Porter)</i>
		NO Thursday Evening Group
Fri 6 th	8.30 am	Morning prayers in St John's Church
	12.00 pm	Funeral of Robert Goggin in St John's Church (MM)
	5.00 pm	Prayers for Mission Links in SJC
Sat 7 th	3.00 pm	Harp Concert by Catherine Porter in St John's Church

Prayer after our Morning Services

We hope to offer this at St Mark's every Sunday, as well as at St John's.

Sunday 8th March 2026

Lent 3

Theme: **Mission Sunday**

Bible Passage t.b.c.

9.00 am	Morning Prayer in St John's Church <i>(Preacher: Catherine Porter) Prayer after Church</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship in St Mark's Church <i>(Preacher: Catherine Porter) Prayer after Church</i>
11.00 am (Premier)	Online Service on YouTube <i>(Preacher: Mark M)</i> (And also available at any time after this.)
4.00 pm	Prayer and Praise in St John's Church

Dates for Lent & Easter 2026

- **1st Sunday of Lent – 22nd February**
- **Mothering Sunday – 15th March**
- **Palm Sunday – 29th March** *(Clocks go forward)*
- **Maundy Thursday – 2nd April – Evening Communion Service**
- **Good Friday – 3rd April – Good Friday Service (10.30am)**
- **Easter Eve – Sat 4th April – Easter Reflection (4pm)**
- **Easter Sunday – 5th April – our traditional Easter services**

Our **Lent Meetings** start on **Thursday 26th February** (at St Mark's) then on each of the following Thursdays through until Holy Week.

Thurs 26th Feb – Gerry Blake from Wycliffe Bible Translators

Thurs 5th March – Catherine Porter talks about her work in Japan

Thurs 12th March – Hannah & Rachel lead the evening

Thurs 19th March – Howard from Open Doors - the Persecuted Church

Thurs 26th March – something from closer to home

Thurs 2nd April – Maundy Thursday Service – The Lord's Supper

7 pm: refreshments – 7.15 pm: meeting – 8.45 pm (at the latest): finish!

Easter Cards Memo

As our Easter Coffee morning in March is so close to Easter this year, we will also be selling handmade Easter Cards at our **February Coffee Morning on 28th Feb**. There will also be Easter Gifts available in March and maybe some cards left too!

We look forward to seeing you at both Coffee Mornings and thank you for your support.

Stephanie and the Team

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

SUNDAY 10th May 2026

following the Joint Morning Service in St. John's Church

Part of our meeting will be to elect up to 4 **members** to the **Parochial Church Council (PCC)**, 3 **Deanery Synod Reps**, and 2 **Churchwardens**. Although we are hoping that some who are coming to the end of their terms will agree to stand again, there will also be space for new faces on the PCC. To be nominated you must be on the Church Electoral Roll. Also, if you are offering yourself, you must have someone who will nominate you and someone who will second that nomination at the Annual Meeting. If you wish to nominate someone else, please discuss it with them first to ensure they wish to be nominated. Finally, before you take any action, please commit your thoughts and actions to prayer.

Please use the official nomination forms these can be found at the back of both churches or in the Church Office.

Preparation of Church Electoral Roll for 2026

Under Church of England rules, we only have to prepare a new Electoral Roll every six years and this is **not** one of those years. So, if you are already on the list you don't need to complete a new form until 2031. *However, new people may want to come onto the Electoral Roll.* In order to be eligible for the Roll you must be 16 years old or over (*before 10th May 2026*), be baptised or being prepared for baptism in 2026, and live within the parish – or if you live outside the parish, you must have been attending church here on a regular basis for at least 6 months.

The significance of being on the Church Electoral Roll is that you are showing your support of our church and its work in our parish. It goes along with making a commitment to the church, by attending regularly, supporting the mission and ministry through regular giving, and giving of your time and skills in service.

The preparation of our Electoral Roll will take place from **Sunday 8th Feb until Sunday 12th April**. If you would like to be registered, please ask Mark or the office. *Thank you.*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Stewsdays

(LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH)

Tuesday 24th February at St Mark's Church

Please choose: Meatballs/Falafel

Doors open at 11.45am, lunch served at 12.15pm

Booking is **essential**: 01255 475704 (Church Office)

*If you think this is something you would like to know more about or get involved with
please have a word with Pam Dench*

Craft Group

(LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH)

Wednesday 25th February 2026 - 4pm at St Mark's

This month our Craft Group will be making a Denim "feather"

*Unfortunately, there won't be Craft Group in March as I am unable to be there.
Please let any potential Crafters know. Thank you, Pam*

Coffee Morning

(LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH)

Saturday 28th February 2026, 9.30-11.30am

in St. John's Church Hall

Catherine Porter's Visit

Catherine will be spending several days with us here in Clacton
as part of her time back in this country.

She will be able to tell us lots about what she has been doing in Japan,
something of her own personal testimony,
and we will also have a chance to hear her wonderful harp playing.

So let's get these dates in our diaries and on our calendars...

Thursday 5th – Sunday 8th March

Lent Meeting (Thurs 5th – 7pm for 7.15 – at St Mark's)

Harp Concert (Sat 7th – 3pm – at St John's)

Sun Morning Services (Sun 8th – 9am & 10.30am – at St John's & St Mark's)

Please continue to pray for Chris Pearce, who is at home, but still needs our prayers.

Please continue to pray for all those families, who we have had contact with, as they mourn the loss of their loved ones.

Please continue to pray for those we know who are not well or are undergoing or waiting for treatment at the moment.

Please continue to pray for the persecuted churches around the world. *Please ask about our regular Thursday Prayer Meetings.*

Please pray for our local schools – for the children and staff, in this new half term. Pray for Hannah and Mark as we offer help to them and we try to maintain all of our links with them.

Please pray for the new Archbishop of Canterbury, as she starts work in her new role. She will have an important influence on how the C of E tries to work through its present difficulties.

Amendment to Church Family Directory – Danielle Fenton-Jones – correct post code is **EX35 6JJ** and NOT EX35 6YY. *Thank you.*

Afternoon Services in St. John's at 4pm

Sunday 22nd February

(Fourth Sunday of the month)

Evening Communion

Sunday 1st March

(First Sunday of the month)

Tea Time Church

Sunday 8th March

(Second Sunday of the month)

Prayer & Praise

Sunday 15th March

(Third Sunday of the month)

Lego Church

Sunday 22nd March

(Fourth Sunday of the month)

Evening Communion

Normal Church Office opening times are

Monday 10.00 am - 1.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm - *Anita*

Wednesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm - *Anita*

Thursday 9.00 am - 1.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Friday 9.00 am - 3.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Saturday 9.00 am - 11.00 am - *Anita*

(On Fridays 9–10 am we have a Staff Meeting.)

Clergy day off

Mark – day off: Tuesday

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