

THE LINK



St James Sunday school fun

February 2026

£1.20

Diary for February 2026

(Also visit stjameshanslope.org/whats-on)

Worship

Sunday Services

Parish Mass at Castlethorpe, 9.30am (Sunday School 9.15am during term time)

Parish Mass at Hanslope, 11.15am (Sunday School 11.15am during term time)

Evening Prayer at Castlethorpe, 5.00pm (2nd and 4th Sunday)

Weekday Services

Wednesday Mass at Castlethorpe, 5pm (Note 5.15pm from 25th February)

Thursday Mass at Hanslope, 9.30am

Friday Mass at Hanslope, 12noon

During LENT

Morning Prayer will be said on weekdays at Hanslope Church, 9.15am

Evening Prayer will be said on weekdays *bar* Fridays at Castlethorpe Church, 5pm

Compline by Candlelight will be said at Hanslope Church on Tuesdays, 9pm

Exposition: Silent Prayer Before the Blessed Sacrament at Hanslope Church, 6pm

Rosary Group – weekly and on tour on Saturdays during LENT

from 21st February

Following the Silence Prayer Group on Mondays

11 Weavers End, Hanslope, 5.30pm

Shrine Live Stream @walsinghamanglican.org.uk

Sunday Mass, 8.30am

Weekly Events

Mondays during term time

Little Angels – 9.30am to 11.30am

Wednesdays

Choir Practice – either Castlethorpe or Hanslope Church, 6pm

Fridays

Hanslope Church open for refreshments and reflection – 10am to 12 noon

Craftivists and Flower Team – 10am to 12 noon

Fridays during term time

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church, 2pm – 3pm babies and pre-school age

Little Lambs - Castlethorpe Church, 3.30pm – 4.30pm school age children

Inspire Youth Group - Hanslope Church, 4pm – 6pm

February 2026

Sat 7th Hanslope's Monthly Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon

Sun 8th **5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**

Tues 10th Hanslope's PCC Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm

Sun 15th **6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Service times as above**

- Mon 16th Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm
 Tues 17th Joint Parish Pancake Party, Castlethorpe Church – from 6.30pm
Wed 18th Ash Wednesday Sung Mass & Ashing, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
 Thurs 19th Joint Parish LENT Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm
 Les Misérables Screening, 21a Castlethorpe Road – 7.30pm
 Sat 21st Castlethorpe's LENT 1 Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon
 Rosary on Tour, 32, The Chequers, Castlethorpe – 4.30pm
Sun 22nd 1st Sunday of LENT, Service times as above
 Tues 24th Castlethorpe's Standing Committee Meeting, Castlethorpe Church – 4.30pm
 Wed 25th Carers' Support Group, Hanslope Church – 10.30am
 Explorer Course, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
 Thurs 26th Lentwise – Week 1, 11 Weavers End – 7.30pm
 Another Story Must Begin Course – Week 1, 21a Castlethorpe Road – 7.30pm
 Sat 28th Hanslope's LENT 2 Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon
 Rosary on Tour, Home Farm, Balney Grounds, Castlethorpe – 4.30pm

March 2026

- Sun 1st 2nd Sunday of LENT, Service times as above**
 Mon 2nd Teatime Treats, Lincoln Court – 2pm
 Tues 3rd Hanslope's Standing Committee Meeting, The Vicarage – 4.30pm
 Wed 4th Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
 Thurs 5th Joint Parish Lent Lunch, Castlethorpe Church – 2.30pm
 Lentwise – Week 2, 11 Weavers End – 7.30pm
 Another Story Must Begin Course – Week 2, 21a Castlethorpe Road – 7.30pm
 Sat 7th Castlethorpe's LENT 3 Coffee Morning plus Churchyard Tidy Up, 10am to 12noon
 Rosary on Tour, 69, Hartwell Road, Hanslope – 4.30pm
Sun 8th 3rd Sunday of LENT, Service times as above
 Family Fun Day, Castlethorpe Village Hall – 11am to 3pm

St James Church Cleaning (not every week or at exact times!) Monday afternoons. Any queries please contact Mary Nokes 01908337939

Sunday & Feast Day Mass Readings

February 8th **5th Sunday (Sexagesima)** *Green*
Isaiah 58:7-10; Ps112; 1 Cor 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16

February 15th **6th Sunday (Quinquagesima)** *Green*
Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20; Ps119:1-34; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Matt 5:17-37

February 18th **Ash Wednesday** *Purple*
[Mass at Castlethorpe 7.30pm]
Joel 2:12-18; Ps 51; 2 Cor 5:2-6:2; Matt 6:1-6,16-21

February 22nd **Lent 1** *Purple*
Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Ps 51; Rom 5:12-19; Matt 4:1-11

March 1st **Lent 2** *Purple*
Gen 12:1-4a; Ps 33; 2 Tim 1:8b-10; Matt 17:1-9



From the Editor – And into Lent 2026

We are delighted to include an extra leaflet this month, *Making the Most of Lent, with details of our Lenten journey in the Benefice*. We hope it will prove really useful.

The second of our monthly features, ‘*People Who Care*’ – with contributions from local people who are (or have) spent their lives caring for and about others, is on p 26. After some persuasion, Dr John Sorrell has put pen to paper. He is well known in our congregations and beyond, but many will be unaware of the vast range of work he has undertaken and continues to do. And he doesn’t even mention care for his family, his gardening skills, and, more recently, his cake-making abilities!

Annual subscriptions are due! Many thanks for supporting The Link. Many of you still prefer the flexibility of the paper edition, but the online version is in colour throughout, allowing you to enjoy the photos we include. Past issues are free to view on the church website [The Link – St James the Great](#). The price remains at £12 for 10 issues thanks to support from our advertisers. Details on page 16.

Mary Nokes

From The Vicarage February 2026

Dear Friends,

And so the appearance of snowdrops is followed by the emergence of crocus. Friends in Cornwall are boasting that their early daffodils are in bloom (I have to make do with the supermarket!) whilst here the winter jasmine blooms, such small flowers but such an intense yellow. The days, however, are lengthening, and it is from the Old English word *lencten* that the English speaking Church across the world gains the word **Lent**. Lengthening days that take us from the darker, colder days of Winter to the longer warmer days of Spring. Lenten days that take us scripturally from the darker ravages of desert wilderness temptation, to the brighter and joyous celebrations of the resurrection at Easter.



This edition of the Link is published in the 17-day pre-Lent season which begins with *Septuagesima Sunday*, that is, the Sunday that is seventy days before Easter. If nothing else it serves as a reminder that Lent is very near and preparations for this Holy Season of Preparation are very much on the go! Lent's forty days and forty nights begin, of course, with **Ash Wednesday on February 18th** and our joint parishes service will be at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm that evening. Ash Wednesday is one of those very few occasions of the year when the Church prays all her members to be present and I do hope that you will make a note of the date in your diary and make a special effort to come along. Ash from last year's Palm Crosses is used and being all too aware of our human imperfections we each receive in ash, the sign of the Cross made on our foreheads, and as we receive that sign we not only recognise our failings but, of course, we express our desire for forgiveness and a fresh start.

Lent is about looking in and looking out. We are called to look at our relationship with God, with ourselves, with others, and with God's creation. We are called to reflect on our own lives, their joys and sorrows, those areas where we need to put wrongs right or tidy up loose ends, those things for which we might need forgiveness from others or from God or indeed to offer forgiveness to others too. Full details of our varied Lenten activities can be found in ***Making the Most of Lent***

the insert included with this Link for your reference. Once again, the aim is to provide a whole variety of ways which, I hope, will make Lent a time for spiritual growth and renewal for us all, both as individuals and together as worshipping communities. The Parish Prayer Cycle will also be republished in the next couple of weeks so do pick up one of these for use in your prayers at home. ***I do hope everyone can do something*** even if only something modest. The secular world often talks in terms of what *can be given up*, but it is often more helpful to think about what *you can take on*, something of value that might make a difference to both your physical and also your spiritual life, for instance, or be of benefit to other people.

Spiritual opportunities include opportunities for prayer, worship and study whilst our Lent Lunches support others, at home and overseas, including those who do not enjoy the many benefits of our own lives. On Fridays the **Friday 12 noon Mass** introduced at Hanslope in the autumn is being well supported and on weekdays there will be **Morning and Evening Prayer** led largely by members of the two congregations. You do not have to come every day, just once a week as a regular commitment would be of value, both to you and to others who pray alongside you.

On the subject of overseas, we continue to enjoy our link with **Bishop Matthias and the Diocese of Ho** in Ghana and with the parish of Agbozume. The Display Board at St James is always up to date with the latest News from Ho. Thank you again to everyone for their ongoing support for this area of overseas mission. Bishop Matthias is hugely grateful for your prayers and financial support.

Our Latest **Explorer Course** gets under way in Lent, for, I think, the 23rd time. So if you are new to our two churches and would like to know more about the faith and our worship, or if you are interested in exploring the possibility of Baptism and/or Confirmation, or you simply would like a refresher course on the basics, then please do sign up. And we are also offering two further Lent Groups, ones based on the popular stage show **Les Miserables** and another looking at living the basics of living the Christian life **Lentwise**. Full details elsewhere in this Link.

May Lent, when it comes, be a source of blessing to us all, *Fr Gary*




S James the Great, Hanslope &
SS Simon & Jude, Castlethorpe


LENT COURSES 2026




PAULA GOODER



LENT WISE



7.30 SPIRITUAL
ESSENTIALS
FOR REAL LIFE



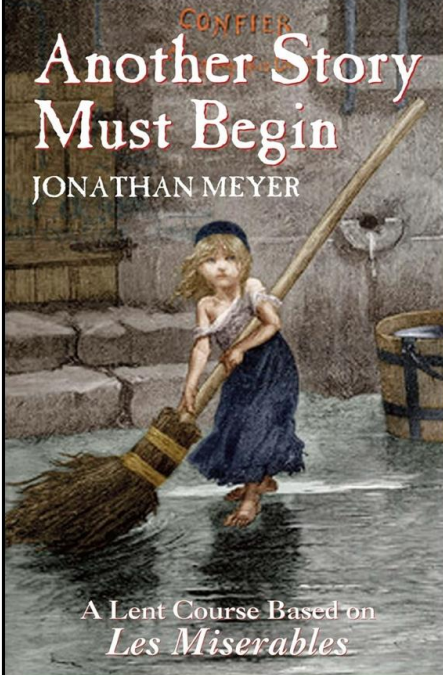
"User-friendly, undaunting and profound. The author is an experienced and trustworthy guide on our journey through Lent. With her help, Lent will be a journey of delighted discovery and not a miserable, dutiful trudge." Jane Williams

Lentwise explores five different spiritual essentials for our journey of faith, using passages from John's Gospel
Compass, Nourishment, Light, Shelter and Water
@ 11 Weavers End, Hanslope

CONFIER

Another Story Must Begin

JONATHAN MEYER



A Lent Course Based on
Les Misérables

Studying some of the themes and principal characters from
Les Misérables

We will explore the *Grace of God* alongside our *fallen state* & opportunities for *redemption*.

@ 21a Castlethorpe Road, Hanslope

Five Thursday evenings commencing 26th February -7.30pm

Sign up sheets in both Churches - film viewing 19th February

Septuagesima and the Pre-Lent Season

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed in the list of Sunday Mass readings a couple of very odd-looking alternative names for two of the Sundays before Lent. Septuagesima (in full, Septuagesima Sunday) is the name for the ninth Sunday before Easter, the third before Ash Wednesday. The term is sometimes applied also to the period that begins on this day and ends on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins. This period is also known as the pre-Lenten season or Shrovetide.

The other two Sundays in this period of the liturgical year are called Sexagesima and Quinquagesima, the latter sometimes also called Shrove Sunday. The earliest date on which Septuagesima Sunday can occur is January 18 (Easter falling on March 22 in a non-leap year) and the latest is February 22 (Easter falling on April 25 in a leap year).

Septuagesima comes from the Latin word for "seventieth" with Sexagesima and Quinquagesima equalling "sixtieth" and "fiftieth" respectively. They are patterned after the Latin word for the season of Lent, Quadragesima, which means "fortieth", as Lent is forty days long, excluding Sundays. Because every Sunday recalls the resurrection of Christ, they are considered "little Easters" and not treated as days of penance. Quinquagesima Sunday is indeed the fiftieth day before Easter (counting inclusively), but the numbers indicated by the names "Sexagesima" and "Septuagesima" do not correspond exactly to the interval between these Sundays and Easter.

The 17-day period beginning on Septuagesima Sunday was intended to be observed as a preparation for the season of Lent, which is itself a period of spiritual preparation (for Easter). In our two churches we circulate information about our Lent programme and make plans for keeping Lent well. In many countries, however, Septuagesima Sunday still marks the traditional start of the carnival season, culminating with Rose Monday and Shrove Tuesday, sometimes known as Mardi Gras. In some Christian traditions purple is worn in this pre-Lent season too and an *Alleluia* is literally buried in the churchyard, not be used again until Easter!

Fr Gary



HANSLOPE AND DISTRICT CANCER WELLBEING & SUPPORT GROUP

Meets on 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm
Venue– St James the Great, Coffee Area
Contact – John Sorrell 07889 181158

HANSLOPE & DISTRICT CARERS' SUPPORT GROUP

Meets for a tea, coffee, piece of cake
and a chat and support on the
FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF MONTH
1030am to 1230am— venue:
St James the Great Coffee Area
Contact - 07889181158



**DO
YOU
CARE?**

2026 Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court

Mondays 2.00pm – 4.00pm

February 2nd Jan Shipton reading Pam Ayres

March 2nd – Bingo

April / May **one** meeting Monday April 27th

Transport available on request

More information please contact Ann Ellis
01908 511436



WINTER COFFEE MORNING on Saturday 7th February

10am-12noon at St James the Great, Hanslope

Bacon Butties, Homemade Cakes, Raffle...



LENT, HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2026



Coffee Mornings

Saturdays 10.00am – 12 noon

Ss Simon & Jude, Castlethorpe:

February 21st, March 7th and March 21st

St James the Great, Hanslope:

February 28th, March 14th & March 28th

We are also a collection point for the MK Foodbank

– Bring a Donation!

2026 LENT LUNCHESES

St James Church, Hanslope 12.30pm

Thursdays February 19th and March 19th

Collections on these two occasions for

Willen Hospice or Farm Africa

SS Simon & Jude Church 12.30pm

Thursday March 5th and April 2nd

Join us for homemade soup, a pudding, a cuppa & chat



**LENT, HOLY WEEK
& EASTER 2026**

Joint Parish Pancake Party



Shrove Tuesday

February 17th 6.30-8.00pm
at Ss Simon & Jude, Castlethorpe

Lord have mercy

Lent, as one of the penitential seasons, is a period when many church members like to reflect on their lives and give themselves a bit of a spiritual spring clean.

At every Mass there is an opportunity for us to call to mind those things of which we might be sorry or ashamed. Lent is a good time to focus on these things, either to make sure we bring them to Mass with us or,

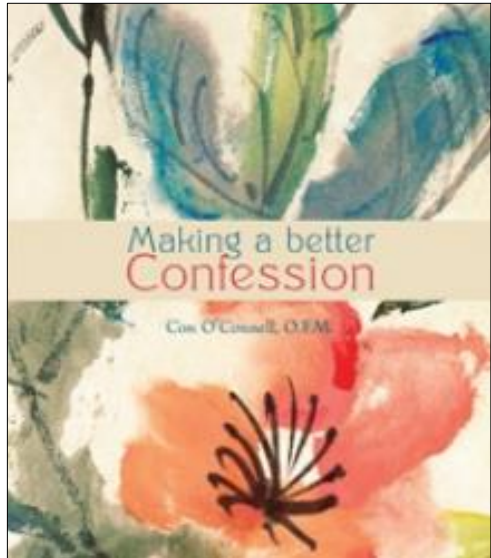
If, as a part of that deep reflection, you would like to arrange to make a private sacramental confession then your clergy are available to help.

Lent is a great time for a personal spring clean and Christian people are encouraged to see Lent as an opportunity to make themselves ready for the fresh start that Easter Day represents.

If this is something you have not done before but would like to explore first, then please do contact one of the clergy and make an appointment to talk about it or pick up a copy of Con O'Connell's very useful booklet '*Making a Better Confession*' from church which takes us through what a right relationship with God, with ourselves, with others and with God's creation, might look like, and asks of us probing questions about each area. This can be a helpful preparation for coming to Mass as well as specifically for making your Confession formally.

Opportunities will be advertised to make your confession during Lent in the March *Link* or by private arrangement. Simply ask one of your clergy to arrange a time. There will be further advertised times in both churches during Holy Week. Having the weight of one's sins lifted is a truly joyful thing for which we can indeed be thankful.

Fr Gary



“My Favourite Christmas Moment was...”

Last month we asked a random sample of those actively involved in aspects of our Advent and Christmas worship, what moments they had taken away from Christmas in 2025. Unfortunately, one page of memories was omitted. Here they are now with apologies to our contributors.....

““Our fabulous Carol Service and especially the Benefice Choir who truly excelled themselves.” *John Sorrell*



“The anthem “*Still, Still, Still*” sung so beautifully by The Choir at the Carol Service, I found it very moving”. *Trish Kempson*

“All the “firsts”, the first post-Carol Service drinks at Chris and Julie’s home in Higham Cross; first “real” baby Jesus at the 3pm Crib Service; the first ever *Compline by Candlelight* on Christmas Day before the Crib. Christmas isn’t the easiest time for me, but this year I have found peace, solace and stillness, amidst all the busyness of my working life.” *Maria Ecclestone*

“The full Church lit by candles waiting for the opening notes of *Once in Royal David’s City* to begin the Carol Service. This service with its wonderful carols and Readings marks the start of Christmas for me”.

Judi Leon

“Our Choir singing at the Carol Service so beautifully, Fr Gary singing *The Pogues* at the post-Carol Service social gathering, and the children’s faces as they met a real baby Jesus at our *Pop-Up Nativity* which was truly warming and meaningful, blessings indeed.” *Wendy Thomson*



Pop Up Nativity at Hanslope in full flow with a large congregation

St James & SS Simon & Jude Sunday Schools Christmas Party



A wonderful afternoon party for the Sunday School children and families from both churches! Much fun and joy was shared! Thanks to a great team who made it happen and all who attended!

St James Sunday School is back



At our first session we thanked God for our special Christmas memories, including: football strips, a book all about me, time with family and our wonderful nativity play with a real baby Jesus! We learned about Jesus's baptism



and then re-created our own baptisms of special friends and a baby Jesus! Also, we made doves to take home to remind ourselves of this special time and that the Holy Spirit is always with us! Well done children!

Wendy Thomson

The Benefice Choir had a happy evening together with a post-Christmas dinner at the Navigation



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or contact your local distributor – see page 31

Hanslope – June Paterson; Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn

Extracts

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness:

Only **light** can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate:

Only **love** can do that.”

Do you recognise this month’s extract? To find out where these lines come from see bottom of p 28.

News from Castlethorpe



It's been a quieter few weeks! Our first Coffee

Morning of the year was held in the Village Hall on 17 January, alongside an invitation to anyone who wanted to find out more about the Duck Race and was interested in volunteering.

A good turnout enjoyed bacon, sausage and mushroom baps

as well as a wide range of cakes and an impressive selection of raffle prizes!

It's not, however, too late if you would like to volunteer to assist with the **Duck Race**. It's on Sunday 14 June and we'd love to hear from anyone who would like to help putting up (or taking down) marquees, manning a games stall, helping in the Information Tent, serving cakes... or anything else you can think of! It takes a lot of people to make the day a success! If you would like to know more, please see Melissa or any Castlethorpe PCC member. Thank you.

So, what's happening in the next few weeks?

If you missed the Soup and a Roll on 5 February, do put dates for our **Lent Soup and a Roll** lunches in your diary! They are on Thursdays 5 March and 2 April (Maundy Thursday) at 12.30pm. You would be most welcome to join us for some homemade soup, a pudding, a cuppa and a chat.

Lent Coffee Mornings are on Saturdays 21 February, 7 March and 21 March. The usual format and time – 10am -12 noon, and we're also collecting for MK FoodBank so if you can bring a tin or packet with you, that would be great. Bags are available in the porch if you are able to bring more.

In addition, we're holding a **Churchyard Tidy Up** on 7 March, so we would love to see anyone willing to prune, trim, mow and generally help make the churchyard ready for spring. We had a wonderful gang come before Christmas, and it would be great if you could join us again – with secateurs, loppers and strimmers if you have them! You will be rewarded with a cuppa and a cake!

Finally, it's **Family Fun Day** on Sunday 8 March. Kimberley Tibbs, who organised the Castlethorpe Christmas Fayre in December, has kindly offered to hold this event, with money raised again being donated to the church. Thank you so much, Kimberley!

It's from 11am-3pm in the Village Hall and features Walters, face painting, tombola and stalls, plus delicious food from Baked by K!



**Lent Coffee Mornings @
Castlethorpe Church**
Saturday 21st February
Saturday 7th March
Saturday 21st March
from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Churchyard Tidy Up on 7 March
Can you help?**

**PROCEEDS FROM THESE COFFEE
MORNINGS WILL GO TOWARDS
RAISING FUNDS FOR A NEW
LAWNMOWER FOR THE CHURCHYARD**



Family-run bakery based in Hanslope, offering:

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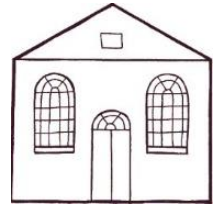
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07517 535898

NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES



1 February	Mrs Elaine Zemzem
8 February	Revd. Kofi Tekyi-Ansah (Holy Communion)
15 February	Mrs Marian Ballance
22 February	Mr Derek Beaumont
1 March	No service at Hanslope due to the Circuit Service (details below)

Sunday services are usually held at 10.30am and are always followed by tea and coffee. We are a family friendly Church.

HOLY COMMUNION



Holy Communion is usually celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. However, this month it will be celebrated on 8 February when our Minister, Revd. Kofi, will be leading the service.

CIRCUIT SERVICE

We hold a Circuit Service four times a year to enable our congregations to come together for worship and fellowship. The next Circuit Service is being held on Sunday 1 March, 10.30am, at Church of the Servant King, Furzton and will be led by Revd. Sonia Hicks. This will also be a welcome service for Deacon Ian Murray.

TUESDAY MORNING COFFEE SHOP 10.00am - 12.00pm
Pop in for a cuppa and a chat.

Meet up with old friends and make some new friends.
We'd love to welcome you to our warm and cosy Tea Room....

JOAN SCOTT - 6 April 1941 – 19 January 2026



We are saddened to report the passing of Joan Scott, a much-loved member of our congregation. Over the years Joan played a huge part in our Church family – she was a Sunday School teacher, she ran the Tuesday Coffee Shop with Ellen Astridge, tended the Chapel's garden, and she used her many talents in service to the Chapel.

Joan passed away on 19 January at Ashby House Care Home, MK where she had been living since moving from Lincoln Court.

Joan's funeral will be held at 10.45am in the Oak Chapel at Crownhill Crematorium on Monday 9 February.

Dress code is smart casual and colourful – like Joan.

Family flowers only please, donations are gratefully received in memory of Joan for Parkinsons UK and may be made online via <https://www.justgiving.com/page/joanscott>

We send our heartfelt condolences to her sons Matt and Ben and all her family.

ARE WE AS ECO-FRIENDLY AS WE COULD BE?

Last year the Methodist Conference set a target of becoming a net zero emissions Church by 2030. As a result of this, Hanslope Methodist Church registered to become an Eco Church and since then we have been looking at ways to be more eco-friendly.

At the beginning of this year the Methodist Church published “Five ways to be better for the Environment” and these are reproduced below:



1) Rethink your food choices

Food production accounts for a significant portion of global emissions. You don't need to go fully vegetarian, but try incorporating more plant-based meals into your week. Even swapping one or two meat-heavy meals for plant-based alternatives can make a difference. To go a step further (because why not?), buy seasonal, locally-grown produce. This will reduce transportation emissions and support your local economy.

2) Reduce energy consumption at home

Simple habits like switching to LED bulbs, unplugging devices when not in use and adjusting your thermostat by just a couple of degrees can significantly cut your energy use – but don't forget to get the blanket out! To go a step further invest a bit more, consider a smart thermostat or improve your home's insulation to maximise efficiency year-round.

3) Rethink your transportation

Could you walk, cycle, or take public transport for some of your regular journeys? Even carpooling when possible, reduces emissions

per person. If you drive, maintaining proper tyre pressure and reducing idling time improves fuel efficiency. For those considering a new vehicle, exploring electric or hybrid options is worthwhile and will make a massive difference.

4) Embrace mindful consumption

Before buying something new, ask yourself if you really need it. Could you borrow, rent, or buy second-hand instead? Fast fashion and single-use items create enormous waste. Choosing quality items that last longer, repairing what you have and supporting companies with genuine sustainability commitments all help reduce your environmental impact. January is a good time to peruse in second-hand shops and find gems in unwanted Christmas gifts.

5) Reduce water waste

Shorter showers, fixing leaky taps and turning off the water while brushing your teeth are simple changes that conserve water. If you have outdoor space, consider collecting rainwater for plants. Full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher are more efficient than multiple partial loads.

Each step might be small, but put together, they make a massive difference for each of us and the planet.



**FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND KEEP UP TO DATE WITH
OUR NEWS – HANSLOPE METHODIST CHURCH**

People Who Care – Dr John Sorrell, CStJ, FFOM

My family were innkeepers. I grew up in a pub in a poor area of Devonport squeezed in between the Navy dockyards in the 40s and 50s.

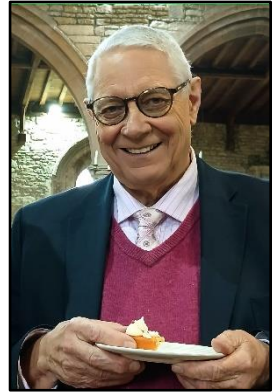
My father was very community minded and involved in a lot of charitable activities. Towards the end of his life he received the MBE for his charity work. This ethos of his has rubbed off on me. Growing up in a pub meant that there was little boundary between your friends and your customers.

My Christian faith grew by osmosis, “Nanny” took me to Church from a very young age and I was confirmed when 13 but it was not until I was at university that I recognised that Jesus was truly my saviour, my redemption from sin and God’s judgement by his death on the Cross and his Resurrection.

I had wanted to be a doctor since about the age of six and to care for those in trouble. As a junior doctor in Northampton, I became involved in training first aiders with the British Red Cross. During my GP training I helped facilitate a support group for patients with psoriasis also setting up a similar group for the parents of children with eczema.

On coming to Hanslope as the only GP (in 1976), in addition to my professional work, I became very involved in many community activities with my patients. For example, setting up the drama group and becoming a Trustee of Hanslope Village Hall. I also joined St John Ambulance as a volunteer and spent many happy hours training first aiders and participating in many of their Public Duties. My favourite being at pop concerts in Milton Keynes Bowl.

After 20 years as a GP I retrained as a specialist in occupational medicine working in many different employment environments. This led me to various additional voluntary activities including membership of the Association of Local Authority Medical Advisers, becoming their



Chair – and for several years their Webmaster. This organisation supports and mentors doctors, working with local authorities, the police and the fire service.

In 2007 I was diagnosed with cancer which was successfully treated. I had been very involved in pastoral care both in my job and with the Church in Hanslope. Father Gary was developing a Wellbeing Strategy for the parishes and as part of the development of pastoral care I suggested we formed a Cancer Wellbeing and Support Group. This would be a place where patients with cancer and their relatives could meet and discuss mutual concerns or problems. We still meet monthly.

At about this time the Patient Participation Group at Hanslope Surgery was looking for a venue for their newly formed Carers Support Group. I became involved in facilitating this group which also meets in St James Church. I now also chair the Milton Keynes Cancer Forum.

Care and support of people in trouble, using my professional skills and knowledge, has been a very important part of my life and something that has driven me since a very young age. I have always been mindful of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:34-40:

³⁴ 'Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

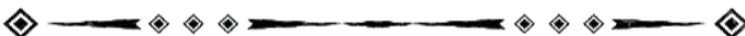
³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

³⁷ 'Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰ 'The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."



From the Registers

In Remembrance

29th January 2026 Funeral at Oak Chapel, Crownhill Crematorium

Roy Fredrick Rootes

Died 7th January 2026 aged 85 years

30th January 2026 Funeral & Burial at St James the Great

Joanne Madeley

Died 31st December 2025 aged 54 years

Extracts (page 16)

Martin Luther King, Jr. "A Gift of Love: Sermons from Strength to Love and Other Preachings",

In early 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr prepared for his campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, probably the most racially divided city in the USA. It became the turning point in the 1960s civil rights movement.

He drafted the final sermons for *Strength to Love*, a volume of his best-known homilies. King had begun working on these during a fortnight in prison in 1962.

Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, *A Gift of Love* illustrates King's vision of love and peaceful action as a social and political force for change.

Bobs Ramblings February 2026

Hello to you all and welcome to another page of my ramblings and photos taken in our area of unusual railway locomotives passing through the Parishes. This month has been quiet and off course the weather has not helped. During the New Year holidays Network Rail carried out a major rebuild of all the point work and overhead gantries at Hanslope Junction so no trains at all were running.

Our local professional sports teams are performing well with MK Dons in the top three, The Saints sitting on top of the Gallagher Premier but lowly Cobblers finding Division I difficult at the moment.

This month I have only managed a couple of photos, so I have included a few last years shots that had not been published.

The first shot is of the extremely late Inverness Sleeper headed by 92010, this train usually passes through around 07.00. Then the unique liveried 68014



returning to Wembley after a service at Crewe.

This last section are all locomotives-units that are new this year. The Hitachi Avanti Class 805 Evero Bi-Mode units that now



work the Euston to North Wales trains. The 370/2 Bombardier units replaced the Siemens 350/2 units on the Euston-Birmingham services. The Stadler



Tri-Mode Class 93, with 93003 passing my old station on its way to Wolverton. Finally, an unbranded Class 221 Meridian on a Lumo Test Train for the new Euston to Stirling service.



I hope you like the photos this month and hopefully a better selection next month

Bob

Daily Bible Reading Scheme

February 2026

Pre Lent:

Week 5 – Mon 9 th	1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13	Mark 6:53-56
Week 5 - Tues	1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30	Mark 7:1-13
Week 5 - Wed	1 Kgs 10:1-10	Mark 7:14-23
Week 5 - Thurs	1 Kgs 11:4-13	Mark 7:24-30
Week 5 - Fri	1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19	Mark 7:31-37
Week 5 - Sat	1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34	Mark 8:1-10
Week 6 – Mon 16 th	Jas 1:1-11	Mark 8:11-13
Week 6 - Tues	Jas 1:12-18	Mark 8:14-21

Lent:

Thurs after Ash Wed.	Deut 30:15-20	Luke 9:22-25
Fri after Ash Wed.	Isa 58:1-9a	Matt 9:14-15
Sat after Ash Wed.	Isa 58:9b-14	Luke 5:27-32
Lent 1– Mon 23 rd	Lev 19:1-2, 11-18	Matt 25:31-46
Lent 1 – Tues	Isa 55:10-11	Matt 6:7-15
Lent 1 – Wed	Jonah 3:1-10	Luke 11:29-32
Lent 1 – Thurs	Esth C:12, 14-16, 23-25	Matt 7:7-12
Lent 1 – Fri	Ezek 18:21-28	Matt 5:20-26
Lent 1 – Sat	Deut 26:16-19	Matt 5:43-48
Lent 2 – Mon 2 nd	Dan 9:4b-10	Luke 6:36-38
Lent 2 – Tues	Isa 1:10, 16-20	Matt 23:1-12
Lent 2– Wed	Jer 18:18-20	Matt 20:17-28
Lent 2 – Thurs	Jer 17:5-10	Luke 16:19-31
Lent 2– Fri	Gen 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a	Matt 21:33-46
Lent 2– Sat	Mic 7:14-15, 18-20	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

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DEADLINE for LENT to EASTER EDITION

WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY

**covering Sundays 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th March & 5th April
 to our email TheLink@handcparish.co.uk**



The Team – Epiphany 2026