



# THE LINK



**Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2026    £1.20**

# Diary for March and April 2026

(Also visit [stjameshanslope.org/whats-on](http://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 (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)

### Weekday Services

Wednesday Mass at Castlethorpe, 5.15pm during LENT

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 21<sup>st</sup> February until 28<sup>th</sup> March*

### Following the Silence Prayer Group on Mondays

11 Weavers End, Hanslope, 5.30pm

### Shrine Live Stream @[walsinghamanglican.org.uk](http://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

## March 2026

- Sun 8<sup>th</sup>**      **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of LENT, Service times as above**  
 Family Fun Day, Castlethorpe Village Hall – 11am to 3pm
- Tues 10<sup>th</sup>      Castlethorpe's PCC Meeting, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
- Wed 11<sup>th</sup>      Explorer Course, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
- Thurs 12<sup>th</sup>      Lentwise – Week 3, 11 Weavers End – 7.30pm  
 Another Story Must Begin Course – Week 3, 21a Castlethorpe Rd – 7.30pm
- Sat 14<sup>th</sup>      Hanslope's LENT 4 Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon  
 Rosary on Tour, 7 Cooper Croft, Hanslope – 4.30pm
- Sun 15<sup>th</sup>**      **Mothering Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of LENT, Service times as above**
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup>      Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm
- Tues 17<sup>th</sup>      Hanslope's PCC Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
- Wed 18<sup>th</sup>      Explorer Course, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup>      Joint Parish LENT Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm  
 Lentwise – Week 4, 11 Weavers End – 7.30pm  
 Another Story Must Begin Course – Week 4, 21a Castlethorpe Road – 7.30pm
- Sat 21<sup>st</sup>      Castlethorpe's LENT 5 Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon  
 Rosary on Tour, 46 Harvington Crescent, Hanslope – 4.30pm
- Sun 22<sup>nd</sup>**      **Passion Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of LENT, Service times as above**
- Wed 25<sup>th</sup>      Carers' Support Group, Hanslope Church – 10.30am  
 Explorer Course, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
- Thurs 26<sup>th</sup>      Lentwise – Week 5, 11 Weavers End – 7.30pm  
 Another Story Must Begin Course – Week 5, 21a Castlethorpe Rd -7.30pm
- Sat 28<sup>th</sup>      Rehearsal-Louise Crane Conservatoire Student Musical Workshop,  
 Castlethorpe Church  
 Hanslope's LENT 6 Coffee Morning, 10am to 12noon  
 Rosary on Tour, 1 Eastfield Drive, Hanslope – 4.30pm
- Sun 29<sup>th</sup>**      **Palm Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of LENT, Service times as above**  
 Louise Crane Conservatoire Student Musical Concert, Castlethorpe Church

### 1.00am Sunday 29th March clocks will 'spring' forward one hour.



In 1916, Germany became the first country to adopt daylight saving time. The UK did the same a few weeks later, along with many other nations involved in the First World War. Within a few years, many countries across the world adopted the idea. However, its benefits have been an ongoing debate since then.

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

***Cover photo by Yvonne Smyth: Castlethorpe churchyard.***

## Sunday & Feast Day Readings Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2026

<b>March 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Lent 3</b>	<i>purple</i>
Exodus 17:3-7; Ps 95; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42		
<b>March 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>LENT 4 – Mothering Sunday</b>	<i>rose</i>
1 Samuel 16:1-13; Ps23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41		
<b>March 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>LENT 5 – Passion Sunday</b>	<i>purple</i>
Ezekiel 37:12-14; Ps 130; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45		
<b>March 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b>	<i>red</i>
Isaiah 50:4-7, Ps 22, Philippians 2:6-11, Matthew 26:14-27: 66		
<b>April 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>	<i>white</i>
<i>at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm</i>		
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Ps 116; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15		
<b>April 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>	<i>red</i>
<i>at Castlethorpe at 2.00pm</i>		
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Ps 31; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19,42		
<b>April 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>HOLY SATURDAY</b>	<i>gold</i>
<i>at Hanslope at 9.00pm</i>		
Romans 6:3-1; Matthew 28:1-10		
<b>April 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>EASTER DAY</b>	<i>gold</i>
Acts 10:34-43; Ps118; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9		

## From the Editor – And into Easter 2026

The church diary is joyfully full but please don't forget to add important events to yours post Easter – see *Coming Up this Spring* on the next page.

The third of our monthly features, 'People Who Care' – with contributions from local people who are (or have) spending their lives caring for and about others, is on p 26. Many thanks to Janine Moore of Hanslope Care who was persuaded to give me the information.

Last call for subscriptions! Many thanks for all your renewals. Your support is greatly appreciated. However, if you have not renewed your subscription yet (details on p28) sadly, from next month (April) we will assume you no longer wish to receive a copy. Deliveries of the paper or online versions will cease.

*Mary Nokes*

# Coming Up this Spring



*Details of these, and other (yet to be announced) events will appear in due course, but please put the dates in your diary!*

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: ASCENSION DAY**

Marking the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the Easter Season and Jesus' return to the Father. Sung Mass at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: MAY DEVOTION**

Honouring Mary in her traditional month of May. A simple service of Vespers and Benediction at St James at 5.00pm

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May: PENTECOST**

The 50<sup>th</sup> and final day of Eastertide is Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May: NATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM**

Join our parish group heading to Norfolk for this annual pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June: CORPUS CHRISTI**

Solemn Sung Mass and Procession at St James followed by a shared meal, as we give thanks for the gift of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life.

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June: CONFIRMATION SERVICE**

The Bishop will be with us at 7.00pm at St James on this feast of St Barnabas the Apostle to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June: CASTLETHORPE DUCK RACE**

Once again the *Race of a Thousand Ducks* will be taking place on the River Tove, raising valuable money towards the life and work of the local Church.

# From The Vicarage March 2026

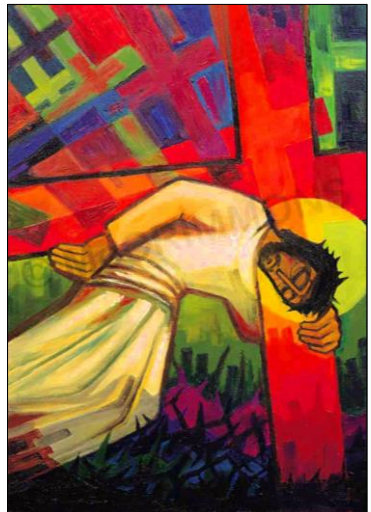
*Dear Friends,*

And so Lent is under way. After the respite of **Mothering Sunday** we move towards the climax of Lent. First we enter 'Passiontide' (from Lent 5, March 22<sup>nd</sup>), *passio* is the Latin for suffering, and crosses and crucifixes will be veiled in preparation for our Good Friday worship. This brings us to the final days of Our Lord's life and on Palm Sunday we enter with Jesus into Jerusalem waving our palms in joyful expectation.



On Thursday in Holy Week (April 2<sup>nd</sup>) we reach what I always refer to as **The Great Three Act Play of our Faith**. To make real sense of Easter Day we all need to reflect on those days that precede it. The worship of the Church tries to capture the essence of those turbulent three days, known historically as *The Sacred Triduum*. If you haven't experienced worship on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Saturday before then see if you can make the extra effort to come along, I know that those who have come along in previous years are looking forward to it and keen to encourage *you* to give it a go too.

**Holy Week** is quite a commitment but I know from my personal experience that the extra effort made to try and be a part of the Holy Week events will reap an enormously beneficial spiritual reward as we try and move from the palm waving exuberance of Palm Sunday, to the multi-layered events of the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, the shocking events of Calvary and then the joy of Easter. Our special services on these days aim to capture something of the essence of the human emotions. Do try and go the extra mile and try and fit in an extra service (or three!!) if you can.



Back in 2008, we introduced **Stations of the Cross as a Holy Week Devotion**, this year on Tuesday evening in Holy Week, and this prayerful journey through a series of visual images depicting the events from Maundy Thursday night to Holy Saturday has proved very profound for young and old alike. Also in the midst of Holy Week, on Holy Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, there is the special annual service, **The Chrism Mass**, at which Priests renew their sacred vows of ordination before their Bishop. In addition, holy oils for baptism, confirmation and the anointing of the sick are blessed and consecrated for use, and distributed to the parishes. This year's service will be at Lichfield Cathedral again, and once again there will be a group of us of all ages going along and enjoying lunch together afterwards. Time flies, but it seems remarkable that Bishop Paul has been our bishop for three years already, and this will be his fourth series of Chrism Masses!

Meanwhile the Wednesday in Holy Week has now become a focus for the **ministry of healing**. It is (equally amazingly) now *fifteen and a half years* since the bi-monthly Masses for Wholeness & Healing began and an initial congregation of a ten or so has grown steadily over time and now includes people from elsewhere in the Deanery too. Alongside this has grown also a much greater awareness of the many other areas of need that exist within the local community, all of which might come under the banner of 'wellbeing'. We have the carers' Group, the Cancer Wellbeing & Support Group, Teatime Treats, Community Lunches, Coffee Mornings and collect for the MK Foodbank and other initiatives besides.

Can I also ask you to pray for those currently attending our **Explorer Course** at present. Nurturing those who wish to learn more about Faith is a critical part of the work of the church, the church would die without such work! Some are attending the brush up their basics whilst others are pondering on the possibility of Baptism and Confirmation. The Bishop is coming on June 11<sup>th</sup> to baptise and confirm, it might even include the 150<sup>th</sup> Confirmation candidate since my arrival here in 2003.

This comes with my prayers and best wishes as we journey together through the pilgrimage which is Lent. I look forward to sharing a celebratory glass of something after the First Mass of Easter on Holy Saturday night, probably my favourite feast day of them all!

*Fr Gary*



# Holy Week 2026

## March 29<sup>th</sup> – April 5<sup>th</sup>

- PALM SUNDAY** 9.30am Sung Mass *at Castlethorpe*  
 \*11.15am Procession & Sung Mass *at Hanslope*  
 \*Meet on the Market Square for the Procession of Palms
- HOLY “Fig” MONDAY** 11.00am The Bishop’s Annual Chrism Mass  
 7.30pm Said Mass\*\* *at Castlethorpe*  
 9.00pm Compline by Candlelight *at Hanslope*
- HOLY “Temple” TUESDAY** 6.15-7.15pm Confession *at Hanslope*  
 7.30pm Said Mass *at Hanslope*  
 8.00pm Stations of the Cross *at Hanslope*
- HOLY “Spy” WEDNESDAY** 7.30pm Mass for Wholeness & Healing  
*at Hanslope (including an opportunity for Confessions to be heard)*
- MAUNDY THURSDAY** 7.30pm Mass of the Last Supper *followed by*  
 9.00pm Watch of Silent Prayer *at Castlethorpe*  
*ending with 11.45pm Compline by Candlelight*
- GOOD FRIDAY** 10.00am Morning Prayer *at both churches*  
 10.15am Confession *A Priest is available at Castlethorpe*  
 11.00am Family Walk *Castlethorpe to Hanslope*  
 2.00pm The Good Friday Liturgy *at Castlethorpe*
- HOLY SATURDAY** 9.00pm Easter Vigil, & Candlelit First Mass in  
 the Resurrection Night *at Hanslope*  
*Followed by Drinks and Nibbles*
- EASTER DAY** 9.30am Sung Mass *at Castlethorpe*  
 11.15am Sung Mass *at Hanslope*
- EASTER MONDAY** Easter Egg Hunt at Hanslope from 11am

### MORNING & EVENING PRAYER

*Morning Prayer at Hanslope Monday - Friday at 10.00am*  
*Evening Prayer at Castlethorpe Monday – Wednesday at 5.00pm*



## 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

March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Bingo April 27<sup>th</sup> – Quiz

**NB BANK HOLIDAYS 5<sup>th</sup> April or 4<sup>th</sup> May  
NO MEETINGS**

Transport available on request  
More information please contact  
Ann Ellis 01908 511435

## Extracts

*He alone loves the Creator perfectly who  
manifests a pure love for his neighbour.....*

Do you recognise this month's extract? Answer p 28.



## **LENT, HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2026**

**St James Church, Hanslope 12.30pm**

Thursdays March 19<sup>th</sup>

Collection for  
Willen Hospice or Farm Africa

**SS Simon & Jude Church 12.30pm**

Thursday March 5<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup>

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

### **EASTER FLOWERS at ST JAMES**

Do join us as we prepare for Easter on

**HOLY SATURDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

from 10.00am – 1.00pm

or pop in for half an hour, everyone most welcome.

And if you can help with garden flowers,  
greenery or a financial donation, it would be  
**VERY** much appreciated!

Contact: Mary Nokes [m.nokes@easykey.com](mailto:m.nokes@easykey.com)  
or any member of the Flowers Team

# **PLANTS FOR HO**

**BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> MAY**  
at Applegarth, 21A Castlethorpe Road  
Can you think of this event when you're  
planting seeds or  
splitting up established plants please?



# Easter Monday Eggstravaganza

Come and join  
the fun at  
St James  
the Great,  
Hanslope

6th April 2026

11am to 3pm

Easter Egg Hunt,  
Stalls,  
refreshments  
and a raffle



Registration from 11am with 3 staggered  
age group egg hunts from 12:15pm

## Welcome



St James welcoming baby Kristopher for the very first time who was born in January, with Annette , Ben and Lorelai Hughes.

## February Coffee morning

A very busy morning with lots of good conversations, much laughter and some new faces.

An excellent £368.91 was raised with over 50 people present. Thanks to all involved.



## Inspire get stuck in!

Cleaning brass!





## A Journey to the Confessional

*Anne Adams, a member of our Church Choir, writes about the Sacrament of Confession*

I thought it may be useful to others to reflect on the challenges in my journey to making my first private, sacramental Confession. As a qualified psychologist I made the common mistake of seeing 'the sacrament of confession' as a kind of therapy and the priest as type of therapist. But the confessional is about our relationship with God with the Priest supporting that connection and ultimately the forgiveness of our sins.

My misunderstanding meant I felt guilty about loading a priest with my sins. What helped me was firstly understanding the stages and role of confessions as very different to talking therapies. Next was a little book called 'Making a Better Confession' which helped me plan and feel comfortable with the process.

Key Aspects of the Sacrament:

- Purpose: The sacrament offers God's forgiveness, healing the damage caused by sin and strengthening the soul.
- Four Parts: Confession (naming sins), Contrition (expressing sorrow), Make reparation (Absolution / Penance for your sins) Receive absolution (priest's prayer of forgiveness) and experience freedom, healing, growing in god's love.
- The Priest's Role: Acting in the person of Christ, the priest hears confessions and provides pathways to reparation and absolution. Bound by the "seal of confession" to absolute confidentiality.
- Timing: At least once a year. Central to Lent fostering spiritual renewal, repentance, and preparation for Easter. Likewise in Advent, or at any point where we feel the need.

### Steps to Make a Confession:

1. Examination of Conscience: Reflect on sins since the last confession.
2. Confession: Confess sins clearly and simply to the priest.
3. Act of Contrition: Express sorrow for sins.
4. Absolution: The priest grants forgiveness.
5. Penance: Perform the prayers or actions assigned by the priest.

In his booklet *Making a Good Confession* Con O'Connell highlights the following:

1. Plan: Carefully reflect on your sins and write notes before your confession.
2. Balanced: Don't try to confess everything throughout your life in one confession.
3. Reflect: Unpack different levels and types of sins through MY RELATIONS WITH:

- a) God (being faithful, making time and focusing on god).
- b) Those nearest to me (respect, acceptance and forgiveness for them).
- c) Everyone (lacking charity, community contribution, despise some and avoiding others and praying for Christian unity).
- d) Gods creatures (environment, creatures, wastefulness, materialistic).
- e) Myself (Angry with myself, lustful, lazy, self-obsessed, over-sensitive).

This process has been a major transformation in my life and my relationship with god. If you availed yourself of the Sacrament of Confession, I sincerely urge you to try have a go.

## Making Your Confession in Holy Week

### Holy Tuesday

at St James 6.15-7.15pm

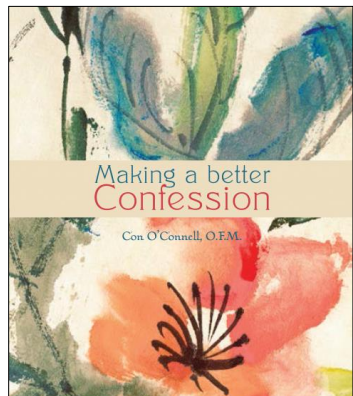
### Holy Wednesday

after the Mass for Wholeness & Healing at 7.30pm

### Good Friday

10.15am at Castlethorpe

*or at any mutually convenient time by appointment with Fr Gary*





# Forty Days and Forty Nights

Fr Gary looks at the number 40 in the Scriptures

Forty days and forty nights is surely one of the most well-known of Lenten hymns. Had you ever thought about the many other references to forty in Holy Scripture? You might be amazed to discover how significant the number forty is! Do get your Bibles out and look these up!

## Forty Days

According to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Jesus spent "forty days" in the desert before beginning his public ministry (see Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2). Matthew's Gospel even specifies that it was "forty days and forty nights" (Matt 4:2). Whether or not this period of Jesus' life was precisely forty days is irrelevant theologically, since the number "forty" is highly symbolic in all biblical literature, representing "a long time," especially a time of trial or testing. Consider the following:

In the story of **Noah** and the Great Flood, it rains for "*forty days and forty nights*" (Gen 7:4, 12, 17; 8:6).

It takes a full *forty days* to embalm the body of **Jacob**, according to Egyptian practice (Gen 50:3).

**Moses** spends "*forty days and forty nights*" on Mount Sinai when receiving the Law from God (Exod 24:18; cf. Deut 9:9-25).

**Moses** spends another "*forty days and forty nights*" on the mountain, encountering God a second time (Exod 34:28; cf. Deut 10:10)

The **Israelite spies** scout out the Promised Land for *forty days* (Num 13:25, 34); but due to their lack of faith, God requires the Israelites to wander in the desert for *forty years* (see below).

The Philistine **Goliath** taunts the Israelite army for *forty days* before David fights him (1 Sam 17:16).

The prophet **Elijah** travels *forty days and forty nights* to Mount Horeb to encounter God (1 Kings 19:8). The prophet **Ezekiel** lies on his right side for *forty days* to symbolize the sins of the people of Judah (Ezek 4:6). The prophet **Jonah** preaches in the Assyrian capital, "*Forty days more, and Ninevah shall be overthrown*" (Jonah 3:4).

After his resurrection, **Jesus** appears to his disciples for *forty days*, before ascending into heaven (Acts 1:3).

#### **40 years is an important biblical theme too...**

1. In the days of Moses, the **Israelites** wandered in the desert for *forty years*, as mentioned in numerous biblical texts (Exod 16:35; Num 14:33-34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 8:2-4; 29:5; Josh 5:6; Neh 9:21; Ps 95:10; Amos 2:10; 5:25; Acts 7:36, 42; 13:18; Heb 3:10, 17).
2. Several biblical figures are *forty years old* when they marry (**Isaac** in Gen 25:20; **Esau** in Gen 26:34), or when other life-changing events take place (**Joshua** in Josh 14:7).
3. After some Israelite spies scout out the Promised Land for *forty days* (see above), God requires the **Israelites** to wander in the desert for *forty years*, due to their lack of faith (Num 14:33-34).
4. Several of the "Judges" enable the land of Israel to have "rest" for *forty years*, including **Othniel** (Judg 3:11), **Deborah** (5:31), **Gideon** (8:28), and **Eli** (1 Sam 4:18).
5. When the Israelites sin, God lets their enemies dominate or harrass them for *forty years* (the **Philistines** in Judg 13:1).
6. Ezekiel prophesies that the **Egyptians** will also be punished for *forty years* (Ezek 29:11-13).
7. Several great kings reign over Israel for *forty years*, including **David** (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11; 1 Chron 29:27), **Solomon** (1 Kgs 11:42; 2 Chron 9:30), **Jehoash** (2 Kgs 12:1; aka Joash, 2 Chron 24:1).
8. Forty years is an especially prominent time period in the **Acts of the Apostles**:
9. a man healed by Peter and John is said to be "more than *forty years old*" (Acts 4:22);
10. Moses was *forty years old* when he killed the Egyptian (7:23); Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush takes place *forty years later* (7:30);
11. the Israelites spent *forty years* in the desert (7:36, 42; 13:18);
12. and King Saul supposedly ruled over Israel for *forty years* (13:21).

Wherever the word forty appears, you can be sure that God is at work.

# News from Castlethorpe

## A busy start to Lent in Castlethorpe!

### Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party

A flipping good time was had at Ss Simon & Jude as over 70 people came together to share 6 litres of pancake batter all lovingly crafted into the finest Castlethorpe Crepes. A great team effort helped make and serve over a 150 pancakes. A great way to kick off the Lenten season, even on the dreariest of evenings!



After the rush it was lovely for the home team to sit down together, decompress and try to wrestle the bottle of wine off Melissa!



## Ash Wednesday Service



As sleet fell, the Benefice gathered to mark the beginning of Lent. Fr Robin joined Fr Gary to preach. In his sermon he invited us to pause and consider the deeper movements of our spiritual lives through Lent. He refrained from quoting religious scholars to reference the more relatable Pooh Bear, much to Fr Gary's amusement.

We were also delighted to welcome Justin back and the choir's anthem was magnificent.

## The Rosary Group on Tour



The Rosary Group kicked off its Lenten Roadshow at The Chequers. Led by Hanslope Churchwarden Glyn. A rather cosy shot of the 10 of us with Fr Gary behind the camera making up 11. Join us at other locations every Saturday during Lent at 4.30.

## Lenten Coffee Mornings



These kicked off on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February. Thanks to Tracey, Karen and Val who hosted the morning ably assisted by June and Pat on the raffle. We welcomed over 40 people raising £244.70 for our new mower. Thanks to everyone who helped and supported. See you on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

## Foodbank collection

During Lent, we're collecting for MK Foodbank. Bags for life are available in the porch at Ss Simon and Jude. If you could take a bag with you and fill it we'll make sure it gets to the people who need it.

## Family Fun Day



### Castlethorpe Short Mat Bowls Club Charity Event & Open Day

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2026

11:00 - 16:00

Castlethorpe Village Hall

*Why not come and have a go at short mat bowls?*

*Tea and cakes will be available, along with a raffle and bowls target practice.*

All proceeds will be donated to Willen Hospice.



Will soon be upon us! On Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March, Kimberley Tibbs, who organised the Castlethorpe Christmas Fayre in December, is holding another 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!

## Soup and a roll

Our final **Lent Soup and a Roll** lunch on Maundy Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 12.30pm. You're most welcome to

join us for some homemade soup, a pudding, a cuppa and a chat.



## Family-run bakery based in Hanslope, offering:

Cupcakes & Celebration Cakes  
 Traybakes  
 Cream Teas  
 Cinnamon Buns (& other flavours)  
 Sausage Rolls  
 Buffets for all occasions

[www.facebook.com/the.cake.tin.mk](http://www.facebook.com/the.cake.tin.mk)  
 email: [the.cake.tin.mk@gmail.com](mailto:the.cake.tin.mk@gmail.com)  
 Tel 07467336585






All available to order –  
 Contact us to discuss  
 your requirements!

# Christopher

## THE LOCKSMITH

### ARE YOUR LOCKS BEHAVING BADLY?

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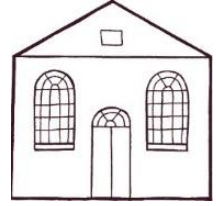
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# NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH



## SUNDAY SERVICES

8 March	Revd. Stephanie Hibberd (Holy Communion)
15 March	Mr Bola Odunlami
22 March	Mr Richard Adjei
29 March	Mrs Jackie Commey

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

## EASTER SERVICES

### GOOD FRIDAY – 3 APRIL



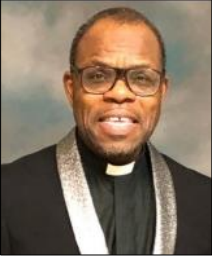
Our 10.00am service, which will be led by Revd. Stephanie Hibberd, will be followed by Hot Cross Buns, Tea and Coffee.

### EASTER SUNDAY – 5 APRIL

We celebrate Easter Sunday with breakfast (croissants, muffins, tea and coffee) at 10.00am. Revd. Stephanie Hibberd will then lead the Easter Sunday service.



## LENT: A SEASON OF RETURNING TO GOD



Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During the holy season of Lent, we are called into a shared journey of self-examination, repentance, prayer, and renewed obedience. Lent began with Ash Wednesday, when we hear the sobering yet grace-filled words of Scripture: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). These words remind us of our human frailty, yet they also turn our hearts toward the God who alone gives life and breath to all.

Lent is not a season of despair, but of hope. The prophet Joel calls us, “Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love” (Joel 2:13). In this season, God invites us not merely to feel remorse, but to return with all our hearts to the One who restores and renews.

During these forty days, we walk with Jesus as He is led into the wilderness (Luke 4:1–2), learning again that “one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Luke 4:4). Through prayer, fasting, and acts of generosity, we are gently reshaped so that our lives may reflect the love of Christ more clearly.

As a church family, we walk this Lenten path together, fixing our eyes on Jesus, who “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). The cross assures us that God enters fully into human suffering, and the promise of Easter reminds us that suffering and death do not have the final word (Romans 8:11).

Our prayer is this: “Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us” (Psalm 51:10), that we may be prepared to rejoice fully in the resurrection of our Lord.

**WEEKLY THEMES FOR LENT**

Week 1 – Repentance and Return (Joel 2:12)

Week 2 – Trust and Dependence (Psalm 62:1)

Week 3 – Prayer and Listening (Psalm 46:10)

Week 4 – Mercy and Compassion (Luke 6:36)

Week 5 – Sacrifice and Obedience (Philippians 2:5)

Week 6 – The Way of the Cross (Matthew 10:38)

**A PASTORAL PRAYER FOR LENT**

Merciful and faithful God, we come before you in humility,  
remembering that we are dust, yet trusting in your steadfast love.

Turn our hearts back to you; cleanse us, renew us, and strengthen us to  
walk in the way of Christ.

Prepare us through this season to share in the joy of resurrection life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Revd Kofi Tekyi-Ansah*

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – FRIDAY 6 MARCH 2026**

The World Day of Prayer takes place each year on the first Friday of March. Churches of all denominations get together to celebrate this international, ecumenical, global Service. The service this year has been written by the women of Nigeria with the theme “I will give you rest: Come”. A service is being held at Stony Stratford Methodist Church, Silver Street, MK11 1JS at 10.30am. All are most welcome.

**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....

## People Who Care – Janine Moore

Care matters! The who, the how and the why!

Janine is the Managing Director of Hanslope Care, a regulated care service for adults, young people and children based in Hanslope. It has supplied services on behalf of the NHS and locally based private people since 2017 and the NHS endorsed service for local people who chose to live their last days and weeks at home.



Less known is that Janine is an Oxford University History graduate (Mansfield College) and had set her sights on an academic life. She recently obtained a post graduate certificate in Translational Health Science (Oxford – Harris Manchester) and plans to write a book about social inclusion and care.

Janine says everything changed for her when she watched her dad learn how to live with the consequences of cancer. Peter ‘Pete’ Luck was a working man, never took a day sick from work, never willingly saw the doctor. He was born in Castlethorpe and moved to Hanslope to start his own family. He liked a beer in The Globe (and when that closed, he happily defected to the Watt’). He certainly didn’t like to be told what to do or told what was bad for him. Typical of his generation he was stoic about his diagnosis. He closed his business, ‘clearway engineering’, sold his van, paid the mortgage, ensured Mum would be ok, but he didn’t consider how he would live afterwards and what care needs he might require if he survived. And survive he did.

Janine explained, in truth the aftermath hit the entire family like a sledgehammer as dad struggled. For him the cure was far worse than the disease. Management became something he would not willingly discuss; he certainly wouldn’t ask for any help even when it was needed. The cancer affected his identity and sense of worth, as well as his outlook on life. It triggered embarrassment, shame and isolation. Before this happened, dad was fiercely independent, a loyal and good friend he loved outdoor activities, was proud, sociable and very active. Afterwards,

he resisted going out, and his new sedentary lifestyle triggered other complications, especially a susceptibility to pneumonia.

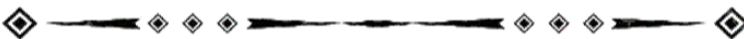
Finding positive and supportive care solutions was exceptionally difficult. Along the way it became apparent that many other local families were in the same boat facing the same daily challenges. The professional focus on the medical stuff placed living well, feeling safe and maintaining dignity a secondary concern. This really does not help people make the transition to needing positive care.

Most local people do not qualify for social care support from our local authority. This is means tested and for those that do not qualify they are left, like dad, seeking solutions without guidance and over-relying on family to fill the care gap. Like dad, they ask for support too late to get the best benefit. Janine says having a little care on a regular basis is an investment that prevents a crisis that could become very costly.

After Peter died, Hanslope Care was founded as a memorial to her father – to use Janine and her family’s experiences to help others obtain the right support at the right time. She is always happy to chat to local people, even if that ultimately means they use a different company for any reason. She understands how exhausting it is to be a primary carer for a family member and how humiliating it can be asking for help.

Fast forward to 2023. Janine’s best friend told her that her disabled goddaughter had been assaulted in her care facility. As a result, her parents had brought her home. Then the reality sank in about the absence of support, and they needed urgent help meeting complex care needs. Janine’s goddaughter is non-verbal, non-mobile, has a rare genetic disorder and suffers extreme epilepsy, she is also sweet natured, cheeky, curious and a practical joker! This young lady and her dedicated family inspired Janine to expand Hanslope’s license to drive inclusivity, and led Hanslope care beyond its original vision.

*Hanslope Care’s logo inspired by St James Church weather hound was chosen as a testament to ongoing commitment to local service.*



## Extracts - p 9. Quote by St Bede the Venerable



The monk, Bede (c.673-735 AD) lived at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. His tomb is in Durham Cathedral. He is one of the most influential figures in English Christianity, a prolific writer and revered scholar. His *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is the main source for our understanding of the origins of the English and dawn of Christianity in Britain.

It was the first written history of the English people, completed two centuries before there was a unified England, and the first written work to use the word **English** and the **BC / AD** dating system.

Bede knew the earth was a sphere, developed a sense of the movement of the sun in northern and southern hemispheres by studying the varying length of shadows and knew the moon influenced the tides. After the early churches major debates over the dates for Easter, it was Bede who devised a refined calculation. His tables came to be accepted in the British Isles, the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century and in Rome in the tenth.

Information from: *The Conversation - Fix the date of Easter? Bede would be spinning in his grave* by Hannah McKendrick Bailey, Lecturer Medieval history, Oxford; Wikipedia: Easter; Synod of Whitby etc.



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**Hanslope – June Paterson; Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn**

## Bobs Ramblings March 2026

Welcome again to my page of different rail traffic along our part of the WCML. It has been an odd year for our weather so far. Certainly, different to when I was younger when January would be cold and frosty with the start of February snow. This year we have all been drenched as well as being cold. Most of our local sports teams are having success with The Saints getting through the initial stages of the Cup, MK Dons in play off places but the lowly Cobblers really struggling in Division 1.

This month again a good mix with Steam, Vintage Class 50, and different livered locos.

Let us start, on the 6<sup>th</sup> Feb, the Rail 100 livered Freightliner Class 66501 on a London Gateway to Ditton liner. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Feb, the EPR livered 37215 running on a



Leicester to Wembley. A triple header with 60099 leading 56045-103 light engine move from Willesden to



Colwick on the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. A very dirty 66850

towing a refurbished snow plough on the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb working the Wolverton



Works to Rugby.

A Euston to Carlisle charter saw repainted 50050 Fearless powering along



the down slow on the 12<sup>th</sup> Feb after its MK pickup. Finally running over 3 hours late is

34067 Tangmere on the 13<sup>th</sup> Feb heading for Southall from Carnforth.



An enjoyable mix this month lets look forward to some more next time.



Bob.

## Daily Reading Scheme

### Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2026

	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Gospel Reading</b>
3rd Week of Lent – Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	2 Kings 5:1-15a	Luke 4:24-30
3rd Week of Lent – Tues	Daniel 3:25, 34-43	Matt 18:21-35
3rd Week of Lent – Wed	Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9	Matt 5:17-19
3rd Week of Lent – Thurs	Jeremiah 7:23-28	Luke 11:14-23
3rd Week of Lent – Fri	Hosea 14:2-10	Mark 12:28b-34
3rd Week of Lent – Sat	Hosea 6:1-6	Luke 18:9-14
4th Week of Lent – Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 65:17-21	John 4:43-54
4th Week of Lent – Tues	Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12	John 5:1-3a, 5-16
4th Week of Lent – Wed	Isaiah 49:8-15	John 5:17-30
4th Week of Lent – Thurs	Exodus 32:7-14	John 5:31-47
4th Week of Lent – Fri	Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22	John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
4th Week of Lent – Sat	Jeremiah 11:18-20	John 7:40-53
5th Week of Lent – Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Daniel 13:1-62	John 8:1-11
5th Week of Lent – Tues	Numbers 21:4-9	John 8:21-30
5th Week of Lent – Wed	Daniel 3:14-20, 91-95	John 8:31-42
5th Week of Lent – Thurs	Genesis 17:3-9	John 8:51-59
5th Week of Lent – Fri	Jeremiah 20:10-13	John 10:31-42
5th Week of Lent – Sat	Ezekiel 37:21-28	John 11:45-56
Holy Week – Mon 30 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 42:1-7	John 12:1-11
Holy Week – Tues	Isa 49:1-6	John 13:21-33, 36-38
Holy Week – Wed	Isa 50:4-9a	Matt 26:14-25

## Personnel Anglican

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[www.castlethorpechurch.org](http://www.castlethorpechurch.org)

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\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

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**DEADLINE for the APRIL EDITION**  
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**to our email [TheLink@handparish.co.uk](mailto:TheLink@handparish.co.uk)**



*Palm Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2013*