



THE LINK



MAY 2026

£1.20

Diary for May 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

Thursday Mass at Hanslope, 9.30am

Friday Mass at Hanslope, 12noon

Rosary Group

Every 1st Saturday of the month at The Vicarage 4.30pm

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

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

May 2026

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Thur 7 th | Choir Rehearsals, Castlethorpe Church – 6pm to 7pm
Arcadian Opera Rehearsals, Hanslope Church – 7.20pm to 10pm
Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm |
| Sat 9 th | Castlethorpe Church Sculpture Tour – visit between 2pm and 5pm |
| Sun 10th | 6th Sunday of Easter, Service times as above |
| Mon 11 th | Hanslope's Fundraising Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm |
| Tues 12 th | Castlethorpe's Standing Committee Meeting, Castlethorpe Church - 4.30pm
Hanslope's PCC Meeting, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm |
| Wed 13 th | Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm |

- Thurs 14th Choir Rehearsals, Castlethorpe Church – 6pm to 7pm
Arcadian Opera Rehearsals, Hanslope Church – 7.20pm to 10pm
Ascension Day Sung Mass, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
- Sat 16th Castlethorpe's Monthly Coffee Morning & churchyard tidy up, 10am - 12noon
- Sun 17th 7th Sunday of Easter, Service times as above**
May Devotion, Hanslope Church – 5pm
- Mon 18th Cancer Support Group, Hanslope Church – 8pm
- Tues 19th Castlethorpe's PCC Meeting, Castlethorpe Church – 7.30pm
- Thurs 21st Community Lunch, Hanslope Church – 12.30pm
Arcadian Opera Rehearsals, Hanslope Church – 7.20pm to 10pm
Explorer Course, The Vicarage – 7.30pm
- Sat 23rd Plants Sale in aid of HO, Applegarth, 21a Castlethorpe Road 10am to 4pm
- Sun 24th Pentecost, Service times as above**
- Mon 25th Walsingham's National Pilgrimage 2026
- Wed 27th Carers' Support Group, Hanslope Church – 10.30am
Wholeness & Healing Mass, Hanslope Church – 7.30pm
- Thurs 28th Choir Rehearsals, Hanslope Church – 6pm to 7pm
Arcadian Opera Rehearsals, Hanslope Church – 7.20pm to 10pm
- Sun 31st Holy Trinity, Service times as above**

St James Church Cleaning (not every week or at exact times) Monday afternoons.
Any queries, please contact Mary Nokes on 01908 337939

Sunday & Feast Day Readings May 2026

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| May 10th | Easter 6 | white |
| Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 66; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21 | | |
| May 14th | ASCENSION DAY | white |
| <i>Benefice Sung Mass at Castlethorpe at 7.30pm</i> | | |
| Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20 | | |
| Thursday May 17th | Easter 7 | white |
| Acts 1:12-14; Ps 27; 1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11a | | |
| May 24th | PENTECOST | red |
| Acts 2:1-11; Ps 104; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23 | | |
| May 31st | TRINITY SUNDAY | white |
| Exodus 34:4-6 & 8-9; Ps 104; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18 | | |
| Thursday June 4th | CORPUS CHRISTI | white |
| <i>Benefice Sung Mass & Procession at Hanslope at 6.30pm</i> | | |
| Deuteronomy 8:2-3,14-16; Ps 147; 1 Cor. 10: 16-17; John 6:51-58 | | |

A Flurry of Important Feast Days...

Thursday 14th May

ASCENSION DAY

**Sung Mass at Castlethorpe
at 7.30pm**

The 40th Day of Easter when we mark
Jesus' return to Heaven.



Sunday 17th May

MAY DEVOTION

**Solemn Vespers & Benediction
at Hanslope at 5.00pm**

May is the traditional month for
honouring the life and work of Mary.

Thursday 4th June

CORPUS CHRISTI

**Solemn Mass at Hanslope
at 6.30pm**

followed by a **Congregational Meal**
at Hanslope Village Hall – sign up in
both Churches, tickets are £10.00.



Thursday 11th June

BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

at Hanslope at 7.00pm

followed by Pimms' and Strawberries

Bishop Paul is with us as six members of our
churches are baptised and/or confirmed.

From the Editor - And Into Summer

After the joy of Easter, suddenly it's summer busy-ness with the regular round of fundraising events, the famous Duck Race, Open Gardens and lots and lots of tea and cake. Then school holidays and autumn but first enjoy the coming season in our two brilliant villages. You will certainly need your diaries to hand when reading this issue – see p 10!

This month our *People Who Care* series is a well-known local figure, Julie Etheridge who is celebrating a thirty years' career as a home carer. The number of private companies offering a whole range of home care services has expanded in recent years enabling elderly and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes. Julie has been involved at the heart of this development. Carers are the quiet shadows, perhaps visiting a client up to five times a day, seven days a week. Some companies offer full day or live-in carers with expertise in more complex needs. The work is physically and emotionally demanding requiring limitless compassion. For those who receive these professional care services they are of inestimable value. *Mary Nokes*

PLANT STALL for HO

Please note - NEW DATE

SATURDAY MAY 23rd

**Applegarth, 21A Castlethorpe Road
10.00am – 4.00pm**

**Any plants we could sell? Please contact
Mary Nokes 01908 337939 or m.nokes@easykey.com**

From The Vicarage May 2026



Dear Friends,

Alleluia. Christ is Risen!

Lent, Holy Week and Easter proved to be an agreeably **busy time** in Church life. Almost everything was very well attended, both worship and social and fundraising activity too. Sunday worship in Lent was up in both churches, and by 25% at Castlethorpe compared to last year, and Easter Day worship was, incredibly, almost *double* what it had been in 2025! You can read about this in this edition of The Link as we asked a dozen regular worshippers to share their reflections on Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Similarly, May and June are to be busy too. The Easter season takes us to **Ascension Day**, May 14th (Day 40 of Easter), and **Pentecost**, May 24th (Day 50 of Easter). These are followed by **Trinity Sunday** (May 31st), the great feast of **Corpus Christi**, the *day of thanksgiving for the Eucharist* is June 4th, we will be having a meal after Mass that day so please sign up in both churches. A week later the Bishop will be here for **Baptism & Confirmation** on Thursday 11th June, the feast of St Barnabas the Apostle, we have six candidates from the two churches including four adults, two of whom are to be baptised.

May is also the traditional month for honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary, there will be a **May Devotion** of Vespers and Benediction on Sunday 17th May at 5.00pm at St James, and on Monday 25th a group of us will be attending the annual **National Pilgrimage to Walsingham**. There will also be an outing to the **Bishop's Regional Festival** in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, on Saturday 13th June, do sign up in church for both of these trips.

Since the last Link, both churches have held their **Annual Meetings**. We have elected two active and very committed Church Councils who really lead from the front, both in matters practical and spiritual, please give thanks for them as you pray for our shared life together.

In terms of **prayer**, please do make use of the new *Cycle of Prayer* which was published last month, and the new sets of thematic prayer cards – in Castlethorpe they are by the Votive Candle stand, at Hanslope by the image of Our Lady of Walsingham. These cards are for you to use personally, or to give to friends and family, and they are free!

With my prayers and every blessing for the remainder of the Easter season.

Fr Gary

COMMUNITY LUNCH

St James Church, Hanslope 12.30pm
THURSDAYS MAY 21st & JUNE 15th
 everyone welcome for homemade soup,
 crusty bread and pudding

2026 Teatime Treats at Lincoln Court

Mondays 2.00pm – 4.00pm

JUNE 1st CREAM TEA

NB NO MEETINGS on BANK HOLIDAYS 5th April or 4th May

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



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?**

Extracts

**“The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and
it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.
For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them anyway.”**

Do you recognise this month's extract? Answer p24



To keep up to date with
news log on to:

[Hanslope Open Gardens](#)

OPEN GARDENS

John Sorrell writes:

I'm really in need of more help in organising this event please which last time raised over £1000 for the Church. Thank you to those gardens which have volunteered to open on 20th & 21st June. We would like a few more gardens to join them please! We have a cluster of gardens opening in one of the new developments but it would be wonderful to have a few more "new development " gardens. Visitors are often looking for design and layout ideas and your garden does not have to be perfect or "finished". Gardens in development can be just as interesting. ALSO We are also looking for volunteers to help for part of each day with ticket sales, catering, refreshments and possibly parking control. Please respond by messenger or as per poster. THANK YOU.

Hanslope Open Gardens 2026



We are planning an Open Gardens Weekend
20th & 21st June 2026

Are you interested in opening your garden or
 allotment for the weekend and sharing its features?

We would love to hear from you soon.

It doesn't matter how big or small your garden is
 (some of the smallest are the prettiest) and it is not a
 competition and a few weeds can be attractive too!.

Can you help organise the event?

**Contact john.e.sorrell@gmail.com or
 send a message 07889 181158**

Raising funds for the St James the Great



Coming Up

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



Thursday 4th June: CORPUS CHRISTI

Solemn Sung Mass and Procession at St James at 6.30pm followed by a shared meal, as we give thanks for the gift of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life.

Saturday 6th JUNE ST JAMES MONTHLY COFFEE MORNING

10.00AM - 12 noon

Thursday 11th 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.

Saturday 13th June: The BISHOP'S REGIONAL FESTIVAL

Last year we went to Coventry, this year we are off to St Agatha's, Sparkbrook in Birmingham, a very different setting to our own! Sign up in Church ASAP.

Sunday 14th 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.

Saturday & Sunday 20th & 21st June: HANSLOPE OPEN GARDENS

Alternating with Castlethorpe's event it's Hanslope's turn to throw open the gardens of the village.

Saturday 4th JULY ST JAMES MONTHLY COFFEE MORNING

10.00AM - 12 noon

Saturday & Sunday 11th & 12th July: ST JAMES OPEN WEEKEND

The Church and Tower will be open once again for this annual event.

Saturday 25th July: St JAMES' DAY PATRONAL FESTIVAL

Joint Parish Sung Mass at 11.00am followed by Picnic in the Churchyard

Friday 14th August: THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Joint Parish Sung Mass at 7.30pm followed by drinks at Castlethorpe

Sunday 16th August: GARDEN PARTY FOR HO John Sorrell's garden

Monday 31st August: WALSINGHAM PILGRIMAGE FOR HEALING & RENEWAL

Once again we hope to take a coach to this popular Day Pilgrimage.

May Saints from the Church Calendar

May 2nd St Athanasius, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

AD 295-373 born at Alexandria (Egypt). Attended the first ecumenical council of Nicaea as a deacon. Later, as bishop of Alexandria, he upheld that council's doctrine in the face of opposition from Arians, including several emperors. Sent into exile a number of times. Venerated as the "Father of Orthodoxy" for championing Jesus' true and equal divinity.

May 14th St Matthias, Apostle

A companion of Jesus and a witness to the resurrection. Chosen by lot to take the place of Judas and so to share the apostolic ministry of the twelve (Acts 1:15-26). He is named in Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon).

May 25th Venerable Bede, Priest, Doctor of the Church

Born at Wearmouth in 673; died at Jarrow on this day in 735. A monk, historian of the early English Church, and master of the Scriptures and of the teachings of the Church Fathers. Known for his scholarly writings. Venerated as the "light of the Church" in the period called the Dark Ages and as a forerunner of the eighth and ninth century renaissance of the Western Church.

May 26th St Philip Neri, Priest

Born in Florence (Italy) in 1515; died at Rome on this day in 1595. An outstanding proponent of Church reform after the Council of Trent. Worked among the young and the poor in Rome and founded the Congregation of the Oratory. Honoured as a spiritual director, for his pastoral initiatives, and for his humour, simplicity, and charity.

May 27th St Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop

Born in Italy in the sixth century; died at Canterbury (England) around 605. A prior of a Roman monastery who was sent by Saint Gregory the Great (3 September) to preach the gospel to the English. Arrived in England the following year after being ordained a bishop while in Gaul. He evangelised the kingdom of Kent. Venerated by Catholics and Anglicans alike as founder of the metropolitan see of Canterbury.

May 31st The Visitation of Mary

This feast celebrates the Virgin Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, as told in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:39-56), and her example of faith in God's word and sensitivity to the Spirit. It was introduced into the Franciscan calendar by Saint Bonaventure in the thirteenth century and was extended in 1389 to the entire Latin Church to heal the divisions in the Western Church of the time.

LENT, HOLY WEEK & EASTER IN YOUR WORDS AND PHOTOS



We asked a Holy Dozen of regular worshippers to offer their reflections on aspects of our shared journey through Lent, Holy Week and Easter

Chris & Julie Stothard write:



Lent of course brought insights and challenges all of its own. Firstly, the challenge to read our Bibles (which will continue outside of Lent/Easter period I am pleased to report!), and as part of that there has been much to reflect of both understanding & interpreting what we have been reading, which has been a key part of the learning process. At a more practical level we have been engaged in some “Giving back” too via a major decluttering exercise on Higham Cross Road! Rosary was

also a new experience during Lent, and whilst I was unable to attend all the sessions, those I did attend I found very peaceful, informative and, with practice, meditative too.

As far as Holy Week worship was concerned - we both found some aspects of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday quite 'dark', in the sense of course, of being a true reflection of the reality of the death of Jesus and all that surrounded it. These were followed by two beautiful Services (particularly Saturday evening) focusing on the light that followed and the renewal of Faith that stems from that resurrection light.

Anne Adams writes:

I've often attended most Easter services but never have after completing so many Lenten activities. For me this significantly transformed the Easter experience. I felt this gave me a



glimpse of the apostles' journey before experiencing those dramatic few days of Easter.

During Holy week the Monday *Chrim Mass*, Tuesday *Stations of the Cross* and Wednesday *Wholeness and Healing Mass* gave me an amazing transition between Lent and Easter. Maundy Thursday was an intimate and spiritually moving service as the Last Supper and Washing of Feet would have been for the apostles. A friend and I found the vigil a truly invigorating process rather than the exhausted sleep, the apostles experienced. Good Friday with the veneration of the cross was truly moving and awe inspiring, when summed up by the choir singing 'God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten son.' Finally, I could understand the apostles' and the world's jubilation of the resurrection over Holy Saturday and Easter day. Now I am looking forwards to Ascension Day with the returning of Jesus to the Father. What a journey this has been!

Prester & Liz Coleman write:



I remember when in the run up to Easter, I first noticed houses with a sign in the window proclaiming "This is holy week." Surely every week was holy week? Didn't the old hymn declare "seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee?" So why single out a particular week? Hadn't Jesus, by his death, put us right with God, so that everything we do can be



offered to him, any week of the year?

I still feel the force of those questions. But one of the things Liz and I have learned over the number of years we have spent sharing in worship and fellowship with you, both at Hanslope and Castlethorpe, is

a deeper respect for the Christian year. To undergo a time of self-discipline in Lent helps us remember and enter into our Lord's earthly experience. The events of holy week - including Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Day – then take on a deeper significance. The awfulness of Good Friday gives way to the wonder of Easter Day. Christ IS risen! Hallelujah! This year we were able to join with you on Monday for the Chrism Mass at Lichfield, Wednesday's Healing Mass, Good Friday at Castlethorpe, and for Saturday's Easter Vigil at Hanslope. Each of these was solemn and wonderful in its own way (and it was a privilege to take some photos for sharing.)

If I had to pick a highlight, it would probably be the Easter Vigil. Standing outside the church in the dark, moving inside by candlelight, hearing the opening *Exsultet* beautifully sung, listening to the lengthy Bible readings as the wind continued to beat on the building, reverently kneeling to receive communion, watching the smiles as Fr Gary sprinkled Holy Water on us around the font... and afterwards that sense of shared joy, celebrated with a glass of something sparkling!

Nick Fearn writes:

Sitting down to eat pancakes with the 'home team' was a lovely way to end the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party. We reflected on the success of the evening, the collective gathering of the Benefice and a job well done. We concluded Lent with another team effort of Soup and a Roll on Maundy Thursday.

47 acts of worship, 3 coffee mornings, 2 soup community lunches and an incredible amount of planning, we arrived at Easter Sunday and handing out chocolate eggs to the children in the congregation! I can certainly say that Lent is more intense than Advent! Teamwork and planning is key across the board.



It's also a privilege to be an altar server and to be part of a great serving team. Mike 'The Smoke' Parsons' experience makes sure the complex mechanics of the Easter Triduum services run smoothly.

Memorable moments were Charlie Parsons' bidding prayers on Maundy Thursday. He was super nervous but nailed it! The Watch, a fabulous display where the Lady Chapel is transformed into Gethsemane for intimate prayer and finally the symbolism of blowing out the candles after consuming the last of the Sacrament on Good Friday. It felt very 'final'.

Helen Hunter-Jones writes:



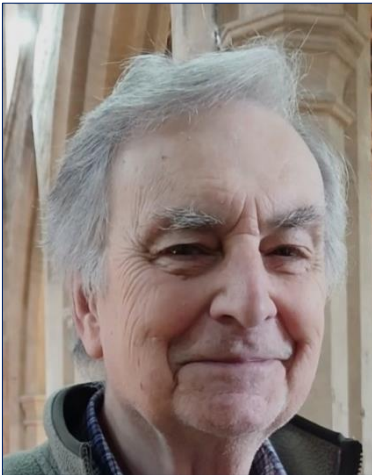
Holy Week for me is a very special time. My average week is one of full time work, travelling around the country, endless meetings and deadlines, running a home, still looking after everyone's needs, feeding, washing, cleaning, shopping etc etc. So very little time for any peace or quiet contemplation. Holy week however, I prioritise time, time to consider, evaluate, be grateful. It's a re-set and a reminder of the joy to be found in faith and the strength to be

found in collective worship. From Palm Sunday through to Easter Day, each service provides a different context to help my contemplation. Holy Week allows me to immerse myself in my faith, rejuvenate and step away from the endless (and often pointless or meaningless) tasks and 21st Century modern living.

Palm Sunday provides the reading of the Passion, always powerful and wonderfully read by members of the congregation. Maundy Thursday provides us with space to quietly sit with our own thoughts and prayers in the lovely candle lit Lady Chapel at Castlethorpe. Good Friday, whilst a sombre act of worship is also full of beauty and grace and the Saturday Easter Vigil is the culmination of the journey. This Mass is immersive, I love the staging, the candle lit church, the community

spirit. We all begin outside around the fire, then enter into the tranquillity of the church. There is an expectation hung in the air. We are together on this journey, together in our faith and devotion and tonight we are privileged to give praise and thanks to God, both together and individually as part of my own journey. As always It was a beautiful. spiritual week, both churches looked lovely. It was so nice to see all the servers, all the readers including those younger members saying the prayers, (what a great job they did!) Fr Gary and Fr Robin, the choir and the whole church community.

Tony Kempster writes:



My partner, Sue Collett and I attended all of the services during Holy Week, and I must say that the *Mass for Wholeness and Healing* had the greatest spiritual effect on me. The ambience of our church, especially the setting - the music and light - was important. The Mass was filled with physical involvement and was special in several ways. This included the presentation of The Holy Oils newly blessed and consecrated by the Bishop of Oswestry at the recent service at Lichfield Cathedral, which I had also

attended.

The *Mass for Wholeness and Healing* had four elements among which members of the congregation could choose (anointing with oil, lighting a votive candle, sprinkling with Holy Water and the laying on of hands). I chose the fourth element and was asked if I wanted a personal focus or one directed towards someone else I knew. I chose the former.

The laying of hands was a new experience for me and it took a little time for my mind to focus. But essentially it was the thought of approaching my 80th birthday. For some 30 years - after a career in science - I have been involved in political activism which is waning to some degree; and my prayer/contemplation was on future

commitments (*Quo vadis*). Time will show how the Mass has affected me, but my thinking is fresher and I pick up on things. I took note of the final exhortation of Fr Gary's sermon on Easter Day: 'to be a catalyst for good in the world'. I am praying hard about this.

Charlie & Rhian Parsons write:

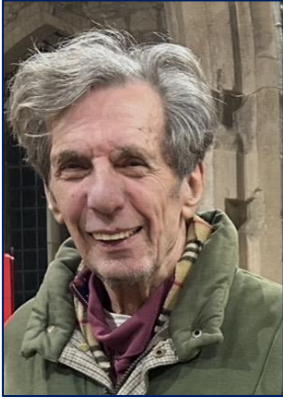
Holy Week always takes me on a very emotional journey, and this year was no exception. I benefitted emotionally and spiritually from fully participating in the Triduum and it was a joy to attend Mass at both churches on Easter Sunday.

The Triduum held several poignant moments for me this year. I always find the stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday deeply moving, and the choir's rendition of "God So Loved the World" during the Good Friday liturgy was, as always, beautiful. It was a privilege to serve during the Holy Saturday Vigil and there was an immense feeling of power and joy during the service especially as the congregation gathered in candlelight around the altar for the consecration. Then celebrating the joy of the risen Lord again on Sunday at 9:30 and 11.15 gave me the chance to listen to the familiar readings and sing the glorious Easter hymns twice over, which included several of my personal favourites.



My son Charlie (5) wanted to share that he enjoyed saying prayers on Maundy Thursday. His personal highlight was serving at Hanslope on Easter Day. Whilst he has not fully grasped what Holy Week is all about just yet, it is clear that he has strengthen his relationship with God during the week.

With huge thanks to all who assisted with the visible acts during the week and did unseen work to prepare the Churches and organise all that Holy Week offered. Flowers arrangers and hot cross bun makers, those who sang, read, served and everyone in between, thank you. Every detail made a strong impact on the week.

Brian & Peggie Parsons write:

Our journey towards Holy Week began at the end of December when we started to worship at St James in Hanslope for the first time. We received the most special, warm and memorable welcome from the congregation, for which we are most grateful.



Fr. Gary offers a clear, unwavering leadership confidence to the voice of The Almighty in both Hanslope and Castlethorpe and it was so refreshing and comforting to be gathered in at a time when the Church of England is struggling to meet challenges on so many fronts. For us it has been the most unforgettable religious encounter in decades.

Fr. Gary places the Church and Christianity at the centre of the villages and his energy radiates through all activities, whether at a coffee morning or during worship, as he promotes the story of new life through knowing Christ in such an inclusive and energetic crusade. He is not suspicious of tradition and has been inspirational by welcoming, and not judging. We were included in the *Lentwise* course which immersed us in a Christian exploration, a journey with friends towards the Cross. This experience led us into the solemnity, sadness, and ultimate joy, of Holy Week.

Holy Week was a reminder that faith is a journey - an exhausting week of betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, death and new life and the Easter services were expressions of deep catholic spirituality and devotion. Hopefully we have been able to attempt to align our lives with Christ's path of humility and love and we are grateful to God for opening our minds. This is a reflection of our experience of how Fr. Gary, supported by Maria and the church congregations, together seek to serve Hanslope, Castlethorpe and the wider community. What a blessing.









Easter Eggstravaganza

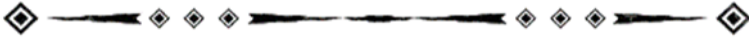
St James's traditional Bank Holiday Monday is always great fun. One of our new stallholders said:

"Thank you so much for inviting me today - it was a lovely event, I really enjoyed myself - the kids all seem to enjoy themselves and weather was lovely."

We hope to see Lizzie back at our Open Weekend on 11/12 July.

This year's event was held in memory of the late Martin Palmer. We were pleased to have his wife, Jane and the wider family providing help with egg hunt registration and marshalling.

We raised just shy of £850



HO NEWS



Easter greetings

May God richly bless you all

from Fr Dennis Obidiegwu (with Emmanuella) and Anthonia (with Anthony)
their adopted children.

EASTER MONDAY at St James



Norma's Birthday



Mum turned 90 on 19th April and many of our church family gathered to celebrate this amazing milestone! The club was decked out with flowers and an afternoon tea was enjoyed by many family and friends who shared this surprise, a secret that was hard to maintain but worth all the conspiring behind the scenes! This smile emulates the joy of the occasion so well!

Donations were made to Mum's chosen charity the RNLI, an overwhelming total of £867!! Thank you to everyone who gave and made this day so special.

Wendy Thomson



Extracts from p 8



Mother Teresa or Saint Mother Teresa (1910 – 1997) was an

Albanian-Indian Catholic nun, founder in 1950 of the Missionaries of Charity. This was initially dedicated to serving "the poorest of the poor" in the slums of Calcutta. Over the decades, the order grew to work in over 133 countries, [as of 2012] with more than 4,500 nuns managing homes for those dying from HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis, as well as running soup kitchens, dispensaries, mobile clinics, orphanages, and schools. Members of the order take the vows of chastity, poverty,

and obedience, and also profess a fourth vow: to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor. Mother Theresa's saintliness and enormous energy inspired a worldwide popular following in the late twentieth century. Her writings and comments have been widely published. Buildings, roads and even an airport have been named after her. She was canonised in 2016.

From Wikipedia and Mother 'Teresa Speaks' by Malcolm Muggeridge

105

During the recent power cut in Hanslope my neighbour told me about this phone number – and it worked! Passing it on in case it's useful to you.

nationalgrid Emergency information

Call our emergency number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year if you're experiencing a power cut or any problems with your power.

News from Castlethorpe



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 14th June 2026

1PM-5PM

RIVER TOVE, CASTLETHORPE

THE DUCKS ARE COMING...

Justin Lavender is co-Director of the Arcadian Opera. Advance News

ARCADIAN OPERA

Franz Lehar's

The Merry Widow

11&12 July 2026, Roxburgh Hall Theatre, Stowe

www.arcadianopera.com

Tickets now on sale for their summer production of this sparkling comedy romance. The Arcadian Opera, renowned for bringing imaginative traditional opera to Stowe employs professional singers for the principal roles, a chorus of talented and experienced local singers, accompanied by a professional orchestra. Performance starts 4.00pm with an hour and a half interval to enjoy your picnic in Stowe Landscape Gardens.



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
 email: 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?

We Value Old Fashioned Customer Service
 A Local Trusted Family Business Since 1989



Specialist in UPVC & Wooden Doors



No Call Out Charge



No Fix No Fee



All Work Fully Guaranteed



10% Senior Citizen Discount



For More Advice & Help Call Christopher:

07772 111 222

UNIVERSAL BLINDS

Made to measure fitted blinds

- * Quality Blinds made more affordable
- * Complete shop at home service
- * 1000's of fabrics to choose from
- * 3 day service on Roller & Vertical Blinds
- * 5 year warranty on vertical and rollers



Call now to book your appointment:
 01908 510333 or 07980 979420
 e-mail-sales@universal-blinds.co.uk
 www.universal-blinds.co.uk

**FREE Measuring
 and FREE Fitting**



All types of blinds supplied & fitted including:

**Pleated, Metal Venetian,
 Woods, Rollers, Romans,
 Perfect Fit, Vertical, Vision,
 Curtains & Shutters**

TIMBER TROLLS

Pergolas - Sleeper Beds - Fencing - Decking
 Playhouses - Green Walls - Block Paving
 All Garden Maintenance - And Much More...

Chris Parker: 07907323068
 TimberTrollsUK@gmail.com

TimberTrollsUK
 on Facebook and
 Instagram



SPEEDYIT
SUPPORT

LAPTOP & COMPUTER

Printer, Apple Mac, Setup, Repairs, Internet, Network Wireless, Virus Infection,
Hacked Data Recovery, Mail Setup, Home/office Computer Problems
7days service, Qualified & Experienced

No Fix- No Fee. We Visit You

01908 489139, 07925 338435

info@speedyITsupport.co.uk Pclaprepairs@gmail.com



HIRE YOUR VILLAGE HALL

Support our community

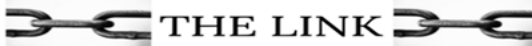
Special rates for village residents!

See our website www.hanslopevillagehall.co.uk

or contact manager@hanslopevillagehall.co.uk

07517 535898

BRINGING TOGETHER ANGLICAN AND METHODIST NEWS FROM
HANSLOPE AND CASTLETHORPE CHURCHES



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £12 pa
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026 (10 issues)

ONLINE IN COLOUR OR Black/white PAPER COPY
DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

TO RENEW or SIGN UP FOR A NEW SUBSCRIPTION

ONLINE go to our shop at:

<https://st-james-the-great-hanslope.sumupstore.com/product/the-link-paper-copy>

or contact your local distributor – see page 31

Hanslope – June Paterson; Castlethorpe – Nick Fearn

NEWS FROM THE METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES

- 10 May Revd. Stephanie Hibberd (Chapel Anniversary)
 17 May Revd. Chris Batten
 24 May No service at Hanslope (see below)
 31 May Revd. Margaret Goodall



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

CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY – SUNDAY 10 MAY

We celebrate the Chapel's Anniversary at our afternoon service which starts at 3.00pm and will be followed by afternoon tea.

FROM OUR MINISTER

REVD. DR. KOFI TEKYI-ANSAH

Dear Friends, Greetings and blessings to you and your family for a peaceful and joy filled May.

Worldly Wealth with Eternal Purpose

Luke 16:9 "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." Someone once said, "Money talks... but mine keeps saying goodbye!" Another person prayed, "Lord, if I had more money, I would give more." And the Lord gently replied, "What about what I already gave you?"

It is interesting how we often think the issue is how much we have, when God is actually looking at how we use what we have. If we are honest, many of us don't have a "money problem"—we have a stewardship question. And that is exactly what Jesus addresses in Luke 16: This month, we are called to rethink how we see and use worldly wealth. In a world that measures success by accumulation, Jesus shifts the focus to assignment. Wealth is not just something to keep—it is something to deploy. You and I were not created merely to earn, spend, and store. We were created to make an eternal impact. Everything in your hand—money, time, influence, opportunities—is a tool given by God for a purpose greater than yourself. These resources are temporary, but what you do with them can have eternal consequences. When



Jesus speaks in Luke 16:9, He is not just talking about generosity; He is talking about strategic stewardship—using what is temporary to secure what is eternal.

Understanding the Assignment

Worldly wealth is a test, not a trophy. It reveals where your heart is, what you value, and who you trust. When we hold tightly to what God has given, we limit its impact. But when we release it in obedience, it multiplies beyond our imagination. Your resources are seeds. When planted in the lives of others—through kindness, generosity, service, and giving—they produce relationships, transformation, and eternal fruit.

Eternal Perspective

One day, money will lose its value. Possessions will fade. Systems will pass. But people will remain. Jesus teaches that when we use what we have to bless others, we are making deposits in eternity. There will be people in heaven whose lives were touched because you gave, served, or helped when it mattered. That is the kind of wealth that never fails.

Practical Kingdom Living

This is not complicated, but it is intentional:

- Use your resources to lift others, not just yourself
- Turn opportunities into acts of generosity
- Invest in people, not just possessions
- Support the work of God with joy and consistency
- Be a channel, not a container
- Small acts, when done with the right heart, carry eternal weight.

A Call to Action

This month, make a deliberate decision: Do not let what is in your hand die in your hand. Ask yourself:

- Who can I help this week?
- What can I give that will make a difference?
- How can I turn my resources into eternal impact?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for entrusting us with resources, opportunities, and influence. Teach us to see beyond the temporary and live for what is eternal. Deliver us from selfishness and fear. Make us wise stewards, generous in heart and bold in action. Use what we have to touch lives, build Your kingdom, and bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Declaration for the Month

I am a faithful steward.

What God has placed in my hands will not be wasted.

I use my resources for eternal impact.

Lives will be blessed, destinies will be changed, and God will be glorified through me.

Closing Insight

When purpose drives your resources, your life produces results that outlive you.

KT-A



SUNDAY 24 MAY – UNITED CIRCUIT SERVICE

You are invited to the United Circuit Service at MK Rose in Campbell Park. The Heartwarming Day service, which will be led by Revd Dr Brenda Mosedale, will start at 10.30am.

What is the Milton Keynes Rose?

Designed by internationally renowned artist Gordon Young, The Milton Keynes Rose is a vast and impressive open-air circle with markings based on the mathematical beauty of a flower. 106

granite pillars of varying heights emerge from the surface, many of which are inscribed with dates of events that have local, national or international significance.

Purpose The Milton Keynes Rose provides a place where citizens and

visitors can gather to mark national, local or personal occasions, be they historical, in joy or in remembrance. It is a place for the people of Milton Keynes to celebrate, commemorate and mark occasions important to them – a place where hundreds can gather to mark Armistice Day or one person can remember another in a personal moment. It is not a sombre place, but a place of coming together and celebration.

REVD PAULETTE TEDD

Revd Paulette Tedd, formerly of Freeman Memorial Methodist Church, has been recommended for entry into full connexion and ordination on 28th June 2026 at Telford

International Centre at 10.45 am and Shrewsbury Abbey at 4pm. Before ordination there will be a Testimonial Service, which will take place at Oakley Methodist Church in Bedford, on 20th May 2026 at 7.00 pm.

If anyone wishes to attend Conference, Revd Paulette will be issued with tickets so you can sit in the main body of the congregation. In addition, tickets will be released online in April. Please see the link below with information about Conference.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/structure-and-governance/the-methodist-conference/conference-2026/>



BRIC-A-BRAC SALE AND POP-UP CAFÉ

We will be holding another bric-a-brac sale plus pop-up café on **Saturday 16 May** between 10.00am and 12.00pm. We will have a wide variety of pre-loved **bric-a-brac, books, toys** etc. etc. There will also be a **raffle**. Pop along, have a browse and enjoy a **cuppa and slice of homemade cake**.



POP UP CAFÉ & BRIC-A-BRAC SALE

Saturday 16th May
10am to 12pm



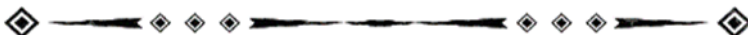
Books and jigsaws for sale
~ have a look!
Bic-a-brac ~ find a bargain
Raffle as well!!



Tea, coffee, biscuits,
homemade cakes, hot
chocolate!!



Methodist Church
High Street, Hanslope
(next to the Crispy
Duck)



People Who Care

Julie Etheridge, home carer



Julie and her siblings were all born and brought up in Crawley, Sussex. She left school at fifteen and found work as a Dentist's receptionist. However, on her first day she was roped in to be the dentist's nurse. She enjoyed the work. During the next few years she worked for Unigate and Sainsbury's accounts department.

Then in the early nineties her brother and wife moved to Milton Keynes. She came on a visit, liked the place and decided to stay. She worked at a bookies and met Jim, her partner, when she gave him the wrong winnings total.

Then in 1996 she decided to try out being a carer with a local company. Initial training consisted of shadowing an experienced carer. Within two days she says she was hooked and has loved the work ever since.

She started on training courses, eventually achieving Level 5 in Health & Social Care. In the early 2000s she joined with a friend to help run a care company, first working from her sitting room. The company expanded from six carers and 12 clients to when she left it had 96 carers and 111 clients.

Julie was never just a desk-based manager, she support the teams working with them and obtained vital background knowledge of every client. This did get her into trouble once when a concerned carer couldn't access a home. Julie knew how to break in. Sadly, their client had died. When the police were summoned one of them insisted on handcuffing Julie until she could prove she had a right to be there.

Her experiences with the local police were not all bad – in the blizzards of 2011, her car became stuck in a drift. She was rescued and then taken round Milton Keynes by police in a 4 x 4 to look after the rest of her clients.

Julie now collects her state pension but still works part time. She says she would hate to give up. And she still cares passionately. I really got to know Julie in Ann Nixon-Caney's final weeks when she would quietly come back during her off-duty times to sit with Ann so she was not alone. She says she never did the work— often unpleasant, heartbreaking, frustrating or challenging – for any thanks or praise.

“It's a personal thing, coming home at the end of a shift, looking in the mirror, and saying to myself, I did that, I made a bit of difference today.”

MN



In Remembrance

8th April 2026 burial of Ashes at St. James the Great

Irene Evelyn STANTON

Died 21st January 2025 aged 90 years

Baptism

19th April 2026 at St James the Great

Frederick Christopher Martyn WILSON

Bobs Ramblings May 2026

Welcome to this month's Ramblings and I trust you are all keeping well. The weather is very favourable now, so I mustn't grumble, except for a shower or two for the early plants.

Great news for MK Dons who have won promotion to Div 1. The Northampton Saints still riding at top position after beating Exeter and Bath recently. The Cobblers have not maintained their Div. 1 status and will be relegated to Div. 2.

This month rail traffic has been varied with a Steam Locomotive and repainted Class 37 and 57 locomotives. My first photo is of the repainted 37521-57311 into a Black Lined livery on Eastleigh to Crewe working on 8th



Apr. A smart looking WC Pacific 34046 Braunton on the 14th Apr working from Crewe to Southall. A West Coast Railway



pairing of 47237-33025 heading to Southall on the 16th Apr. 57012 was put in charge of



removing the old stock from Southall to Carnforth on the 22nd Apr. 37510 with 37800 on the



rear towing 156470-497 to Wolverton Work from Long Marston on the 22nd



Apr. Finally on the 25th Apr 165126 ran from Reading to Wolverton Works for a full refurbishment I believe.



That's all for this Month and I really hope you have enjoyed the varied selection.

Bob

Daily Bible Reading Scheme

May 2026

5th Week of Easter – Mon 4 th	Acts 14:5-18	John 14:21-26
5th Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 14:19-28	John 14:27-31a
5th Week of Easter - Wed	Acts 15:1-6	John 15:1-8
5th Week of Easter - Thurs	Acts 15:7-21	John 15:9-11
5th Week of Easter - Fri	Acts 15:22-31	John 15:12-17
5th Week of Easter - Sat	Acts 16:1-10	John 15:18-21
6th Week of Easter – Mon 11 th	Acts 16:11-15	John 15:26-16:4a
6th Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 16:22-34	John 16:5-11
6th Week of Easter - Wed	Acts 17:15, 22—18:1	John 16:12-15
<i>Ascension Day – Thursday 14th</i>	Acts 18:1-8	John 16:16-20
6th Week of Easter - Fri	Acts 18:9-18	John 16:20-23
6th Week of Easter - Sat	Acts 18:23-28	John 16:23b-28
7th Week of Easter – Mon 18 th	Acts 19:1-8	John 16:29-33
7th Week of Easter - Tues	Acts 20:17-27	John 17:1-11a
7th Week of Easter - Wed	Acts 20:28-38	John 17:11b-19
7th Week of Easter - Thurs	Acts 22:30; 23:6-11	John 17:20-26
7th Week of Easter - Fri	Acts 25:13b-21	John 21:15-19
7th Week of Easter - Sat	Acts 28:16-20, 30-31	John 21:20-25
Week 8 – Mon 25 th	1 Peter 1:3-9	Mark 10:17-27
Week 8 - Tues	1 Pet 1:10-16	Mark 10:28-31
Week 8 - Wed	1 Pet 1:18-25	Mark 10:32-45
Week 8 - Thurs	1 Pet 2:2-5, 9-12	Mark 10:46-52
Week 8 - Fri	1 Pet 4:7-13	Mark 11:11-26
Week 8 - Sat	Jude 17, 20b-25	Mark 11:27-33
Week 9 – Mon 1 st June	2 Peter 1:2-7	Mark 12:1-12
Week 9 - Tues	2 Pet 3:12-15a, 17-18	Mark 12:13-17
Week 9 - Wed	2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12	Mark 12:18-27

Personnel Anglican

www.stjameshanslope.org

www.castlethorpechurch.org

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Gary Ecclestone SSC, The Vicarage, Park Rd, MK197LT
07354 369772
parishpriest@handcparish.co.uk

Hon. Assistant Priest: Fr. Robin Carter 07783 164240

Safeguarding Officer: Melissa King 07525 668446
safeguarding@handcparish.co.uk

Baptism Co-ordinator: Sue Collett 07734 772030
baptisms@handcparish.co.uk

Funeral Co-ordinator: Glyn Hollinshead 07947 478189
funerals@handcparish.co.uk

Children's Ministry: Wendy Thomson Children@stjamesthegreat.co.uk

CHURCHWARDENS

Hanslope Glyn Hollinshead, 1 Warwick Rd, Hanslope 07947 478189
Castlethorpe Nick Fearn, 32 The Chequers 07790 529454

PERSONNEL METHODIST

The Revd Kofi Tekyi-Ansah kofita@me.com
Colleen Carter, Pastoral Secretary colleencarter6150@gmail.com
Jim Speirs Senior Steward

MAGAZINE EDITING TEAM

Canon Mary Nokes, 92 Western Drive, Hanslope MK19 7LE 01908 337939
Joel Sandham 07712 522676
thelink@handcparish.co.uk

Hanslope News: Diane Gordon 53 St James Close Hanslope 07885 686162
dianegordon58@btinternet.com

Distribution Hanslope: June Paterson, 5 Manor Close 01908 510193
Castlethorpe: Nick * Jenny Fearn, 32 The Chequers 07790 529454

To receive a paper copy of the Link please contact your parish representative
For an online colour copy contact the link@handcparish.co.uk

DEADLINE for the JUNE EDITION
Wednesday 27th May
covering June 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th
to our email thelink@handcparish.co.uk

OUR NEWLY ELECTED PCCs



Hanslope: (L to R) Joel Sandham; Kathryn Pope; Glyn Hollinshead; Maria Ecclestone; Sue Collett; Fr Gary Ecclestone; Gina Harper; Diane Gordon; John Sorrell; June Paterson and Wendy Thomson



Castlethorpe (L to R) Matt Malloy, Garry Stubbs, Stewart Tate, Yvonne Hands, Nick Fearn, Judi Leon, Mike O'Shea, Rhian Parsons, (Minus Trish Kempson).