

**ST LEONARD'S CHURCH SANDRIDGE  
PARISH MAGAZINE  
FEBRUARY 2024**



**FEBRUARY DIARY  
CHURCHYARD NEWS  
THE FIRST SIGN OF SPRING  
W I REPORT  
A BIRTHDAY PEAL  
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**

## FEBRUARY DIARY

**Sunday 4**      **Candlemas**

10.00am      Holy Communion

Tuesday 6      10.00am      Midweek Communion

Sunday 11      10.00am      Holy Communion

**Wed 14**      **Ash Wednesday**

**10.00am**      **Holy Communion with imposition of ashes**

**Saturday 17**      **10.00-12.00**      **Craft Church - free drop-in session for families, refreshments served**

**Sunday 18**      **First Sunday of Lent**

**10.00am**      **Holy Communion with imposition of ashes**

Tuesday 20      10.00am      Midweek Communion

Sunday 25      10.00am      Holy Communion

Tuesday 27      10.00am      Midweek Communion

## MARCH DIARY

Sunday 3      10.00am      Holy Communion

Tuesday 5      10.00am      Midweek Communion

**Sunday 10**      **Mothering Sunday**

**10.00am**      **Holy Communion with gifts of flowers**

**11.00am**      **Refreshments served, all welcome**

Tuesday 12      10.00am      Midweek Communion

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**[www.sandridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.sandridgechurch.org.uk)**

**The church is open daily from 10.00am until at least 3.00pm**

*Cover photograph: snowdrops and winter aconites at Audley End, Essex*

## Letter from our Vicar

Dear Readers

I am blessed with two granddaughters. One has just had her second birthday and the other is 18 months old. They are at the stage where they are talking quite a bit now and have started to learn some manners, saying both please and thank you. Sometimes they need prompting, but they can do it! I'm guessing the next bit of polite speech they need to learn is 'sorry'.



I still remember when my nephew Marc learnt to say sorry. He dropped a book on my dad's head: Marc was on the landing and my dad downstairs in the hall. When my dad yelped in pain, Marc sang out cheerfully "Sorry Grandad!" He'd learnt the word, but not at that point the meaning behind it.

A large part of being a Christian is learning to say sorry. I would say that it's actually an essential skill for all of us of any faith, little faith or no faith at all. It's an essential part of being human. And saying sorry isn't enough (although it's a start) – we have to feel sorry too. We have to empathise with the person we've upset, or regret our actions, or feel bad that we didn't get around to doing something we knew we ought to be doing. Christians would say that we also cause God sorrow when we don't behave as we should, so we need to say sorry to Him too – for failing to live as he has taught us through the example of Jesus Christ.

When we apologise to another person they may or may not accept our apology. They may or may not be able to forgive and forget. With God, He always accepts it when we say we are sorry (as long as we mean it!). With God, we can always start again.

One of the times we can say sorry for all we have done wrong is on **Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent**. This year it falls on **14 February** and everyone is invited to a **service at 10.00am** that morning for the tradition of 'ashing'. This is repeated the following Sunday, at the end of our normal Sunday service. Ash is an ancient sign of mourning and so at the Ash Wednesday service we are marked with a cross in ash and these words are used:

**"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.  
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ."** *(continued overleaf)*

Lent is a season of penitence and, as with Advent, its colour in church is purple, to denote both mourning and kingship. The church is not decorated during Lent and the prayers and hymns we use are more reflective.

These are the opening words we will hear on Ash Wednesday and the first Sunday of Lent:

*Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.*

*By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.*

*I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.*

*Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.*

If you feel you would like to say sorry, if you feel that you would like to give your regrets to God, then please do come along and be 'ashed'. There is great relief to be gained from knowing that you are loved and forgiven.

Yours in Christ.

*Revd Wendy*

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## **Special services at St Leonard's church this Easter**

**Thursday 28 March at 8pm**  
**Maundy Thursday: Holy Communion**

**Friday 29 March at 2pm**  
**Good Friday: a service to reflect on Jesus' final hour on the cross**

**Sunday 31 March at 10am**  
**Easter Sunday: Holy Communion**



## House Lane churchyard tidy-up

With spring approaching (hopefully) it is time to give the House Lane churchyard one of its periodic tidy-up sessions. This will take place on **Monday 19 February between 10.00 and 12.00**. If the weather is really awful, then we will move it to the following Monday, **26 February**.

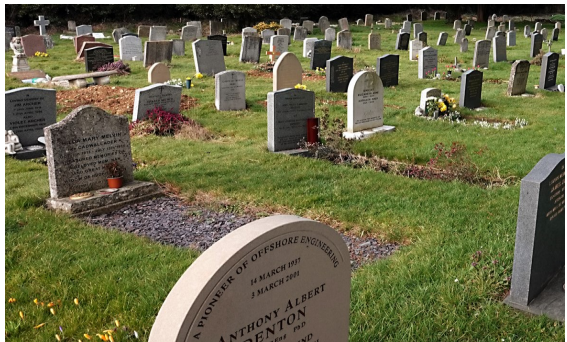
We will aim to:

- dispose of remaining Christmas tributes and dead flowers and plants
- dispose of unwanted or unauthorised items, including empty plant pots, plastic wrappings, artificial flowers, broken items, rotting items made of wood, items made of glass or other breakable materials
- tidy away dead growth etc. left on graves from last year
- plan a programme of levelling and grassing graves which require this. This will mainly affect fairly recent graves. If you think this affects a family grave and would like to talk to us, please do get in touch.
- check grave stones to see they are safe
- and - if there is time - trim some of the hedges

The more people that come along, the more we can get done. After doing all this, we will be able to ask the professional lawn mower to re-start the mowing. You will be most welcome to join the working party and we are always especially glad to see those who have family and friends buried in the churchyard. Please bring gloves and your own tools. Why not put the date in your calendar:

**Monday 19 February  
10.00-12.00** or (in the event of snow or heavy rain)  
**Monday 26 February?**  
We hope to see you then.

*Revd Wendy*



### CHURCHES TOGETHER IN MARSHALSWICK LENT TALK - 11 FEBRUARY

In previous years, CTM has held a Lent course. This year, there is a pre-Lent talk on **Christ's Costly Gift of Reconciliation** on **Sunday 11 February** at Marshalswick Baptist Free Church to which all are welcome.

Tea will be served at 4.00pm and the **Lent talk is 4.30pm to 5.30pm**.

## W I report

At our January meeting our speaker was Marion Brown, one of the 41 Deputy Lieutenants for Hertfordshire, who gave us a very interesting and interactive talk about the Lieutenancy and her role in taking it out to the people of Hertfordshire. Because members of the Royal Family cannot visit every organisation as they would wish, a Lord-Lieutenant is appointed to represent them on official occasions and the Deputies also help further.



*Marion Brown DL*

Our present Lord-Lieutenant is Robert Voss, who is also the President of the Hertfordshire scouts. Robert was awarded a CBE ‘for services to British Industry and voluntary work in the UK’ in the 2014 New Year’s Honours List and was appointed Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire by The Queen in 2017, a position he will hold until 2028. In February 2020, The Queen sanctioned Robert being honoured as a Commander in the Order of St John (CstJ). He is also Patron and President of a number of local and national charities and is active in Holocaust education.

Other important work for the Lord-Lieutenant and his Deputies includes welcoming new British citizens at County Hall in Hertford, where they must take an oath, promise to obey our laws and take a full part in society. People often seek to gain citizenship because they admire and share our values. Did you know that we have five official British values, namely democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs, and individual liberty? We also have access to free healthcare and education.

The King has many roles, including Head of the Commonwealth, which gathers together 56 countries. One third of the world’s 8 billion population lives in a Commonwealth country. The King plans to continue the work of the Prince’s Trust, soon to be renamed the King’s Trust. Other duties that Deputies take on include presenting the Prince’s Trust awards to young people, who have been supported through mentors and work experience and then need to give a presentation on their experience to the Deputy Lieutenant.

At our next meeting on Tuesday 13 February from 7.30 pm, we shall be celebrating our birthday with board games and a quiz, followed by special refreshments. Visitors, who are very welcome, pay £1 which includes a raffle ticket and refreshments.

*Christine Nutton, Vice-President*

## The first sign of Spring

The first sign that spring is on the way is the sight of snowdrops: one of the first plants to flower once winter is past, even in snow. Snowdrops were often viewed as a symbol of hope for better times, though to see a single flower was considered bad luck, but a carpet of snowdrops is a truly glorious and cheering sight in early spring.



Snowdrops have a long association with Candlemas on 2 February, which commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the temple. This is why they are also known as Candlemas bells and were used to decorate churches.

Snowdrops are not native plants: they were introduced from Europe, possibly as early as the 16th century, though first recorded in the wild in the 18th century. They spread by bulb division and are easy to propagate after flowering by dividing the clumps of bulbs and replanting. They do like damp soil and are often seen growing in abundance near water or in woodland.

Snowdrops were traditionally used as a painkiller and, more recently, a compound in the bulb has been used to develop a treatment for dementia, but note they are poisonous if eaten.

The genus name *Galanthus* comes from the Greek *gála* (milk) and *ánthos* (flower) so they are sacred to all mother goddesses, including Persephone, Queen of the Underworld. Considered a symbol of the afterlife, they were often grown in graveyards. Enthusiastic collectors of the many varieties are



known as galanthophiles: collecting snowdrops reached a peak in Victorian times and is very popular again today. A record price of £1,850 was paid for just one snowdrop bulb on eBay in 2022 – reminiscent of tulip mania in 17th century Holland!

In Hertfordshire, snowdrops can be seen at Benington Lordship, Stevenage, from 3 to 25 February, and at St Paul's Walden Bury near Hitchin (the Queen Mother's childhood home) on Sundays 28 January to 10 March. Further afield, Audley End gardens just over the border into Essex are worth a visit; further still is Walsingham Abbey in north Norfolk.

**Ros Adlard**

## **PARISH COUNCIL SUPPLEMENT (abridged draft minutes)**

### **AT THE MEETING OF SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2024, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED:**

There were apologies received and accepted from Councillors Twidell, Reid, Leonard, Ahmed and Chalkley.

#### **Disclosures of Interest**

There was none.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 December 2023 were reviewed. They were agreed to be a correct record and it was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved and signed by the Chair.

#### **Questions to Officers**

There was none.

#### **Public Participation – an opportunity for residents to raise issues or ask questions of Members**

There was none.

### **CLERK'S REPORTS**

#### **Monthly Accounts**

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 14 December 2023 to 10 January 2024. It was unanimously resolved to approve the schedule for payment on 12 January 2024.

#### **Jersey Farm Open Space Pump Track Update**

Members received an update from the Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer. It was noted that a response from the Parish Council's traffic consultant to the County Council's Highways Department was due to be posted on the District Council's planning portal to allow other interested parties to comment. Also noted was that a new planning application, incorporating the boundary within which traffic control would be undertaken, may need to be submitted.

#### **Bus Shelters/Community Shelters**

Councillors discussed a communication received from the Intalink Highways Officer at Herts County Council regarding the creation of 'Community Bus Shelters', being an enhanced version of what is currently used. Following discussion it was unanimously resolved to ask the Clerk to arrange a meeting to discuss the project further.

#### **Sustainability Policy**

The Parish Council's Sustainability Policy was reviewed, after which it was unanimously resolved to re-adopt the policy until the next review (two years).



## **Matters of Note**

- 1,470 kgs of clothing and shoes were recycled through the Parish Council's clothing banks in October and November.
- Cllrs Wells and Twidell have replaced timber posts at two points within the Woodland Park to reduce the risk of incursion.
- A report regarding the purchase of an electric vehicle versus retaining the current parish van will go to the Committee for Sustainability in late January. A further report may then go to the Finance Committee in February and to Full Council in March if needed. Also on the agenda will be the Parish Event to agree recommendations to Full Council to ensure the event is held sustainably.

## **COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Grant Applications**

There were no applications this month

### **St Leonard's Lych Gate**

Cllr Roberts updated members on the progress of the Lych Gate restoration project. It was reported as proceeding well.

### **Meetings of Committees:**

Members noted this month's committee meetings:

- Planning Committee – see below.

## **MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA**

- The Parish Conference is expected to be held in May this year. Details to follow.
- Herts County Council will decide in February whether to revoke the closure authority issued in relation to the public right of way through Oaklands College.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

It was noted that the Planning Committee met on 18 December 2023 and 8 January 2024.

The planning applications commented on since the last Full Council meeting are:

- 45 Windmill Avenue AL4 9SJ 5/2023/2335
- 13 Pirton Close AL4 9YJ 5/2023/0942

Please note: Planning applications received at the Parish Office from the Planning Authority *after* the Parish Council agenda has been published may also be discussed at the meeting, as may applications of complexity or applications likely to impact heavily on the Green Belt.

**Next meeting date: 14 February 2024 at 7.30pm  
Marshalswick Community Centre**

## ***Sandridge* by Sue Oldfield, a member of the Priory Club**

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## A Birthday Peal

To celebrate my 80th birthday, I organised a peal at Sandridge with friends. I ring regularly with three of them at Lemsford and Kimpton and I taught Hana Booth here. The sixth ringer was one of my oldest friends, Clarke Walters, whom I first met in Cambridge on 11 December 1961. In those days, all candidates for Oxbridge had to come in person there to sit two days of exams and interviews. Since Monday evening was the practice night at Great St Mary's, this was an obvious place for ringers to go after a day's exams.

Three of those I met there subsequently went up to Cambridge at different colleges and we have remained close friends ever since. Clarke later became a member of the band at Westminster Abbey for 30 years, ringing for many state occasions, but now rings mainly at a village church near Rugby.

Deciding what to ring was not easy. I wanted something that fitted the varied capabilities of the band, would keep them interested with a few novelties, and would be almost certain to succeed. I chose mixed doubles, where the tenor always rings last, and where half of the methods were less familiar – and certainly not rung on the ten bells of the Abbey. It was a wise choice, for everyone enjoyed the challenges and we had some excellent ringing. We then celebrated further in the Queen's Head.

On Thursday 21 December, in 2 hours and 30 minutes, a peal of 5040 Doubles, being 240 changes of Grandsire and 480 each of St Nicholas, Winchendon Place, St Remigius, Huntley, St Simon's, St Martin's, St Osmund, Eynesbury, Reverse Canterbury Pleasure and Plain Bob. Judith Titmus, Treble; Vivian Nutton 2; Robert Crocker (conductor) 3; Clarke Walters 4; Hana Booth 5; Ron Titmus, Tenor. It was also Hana's first peal 'inside'.  
*Vivian Nutton*

### Magazine distribution

The magazine is available free of charge to anyone via email.

Please contact the Magazine Editor on:

**news.stleonards@gmail.com** if you wish to receive a monthly copy.

Paper copies are available free in the church, at Carpenter's Nursery and in the Village Stores. For people unable to obtain copies in either way, contact Peter Hyde to arrange for a copy to be delivered.

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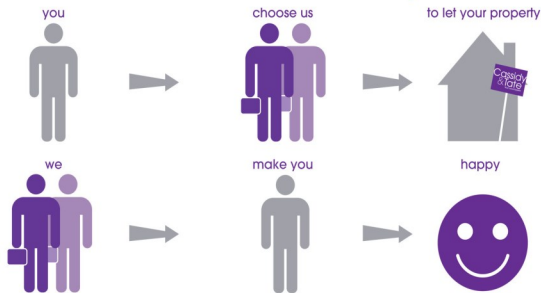


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