

Contacting Jane during March and April

For March and April this year I will be spending most of each week away from Hitchin, focusing on family matters. I will be back in Hitchin for the weekends, and at certain points during the week. During this time, if you wish to contact me, the best way to do so will be via email, which I will be able to access easily (jane@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk). If you don't have email access, then do feel free to leave phone messages on the Vicarage answer phone and I will return calls as soon as I'm able. On weekdays, if urgent help is needed, please do contact either of our Readers, John Richardson (435595) or Andrew Parr (456184) or a member of our Pastoral Committee. This will be a very different experience of Lent for me and one in which, strangely, there will be a lot more time to pray! Therefore, if there are particular things you would like me to pray for during this Lent, then I'd love to hear from you and to be able to pray for you during my time away. Do let me know how best I can pray for you by dropping me an email or popping a note through the Vicarage letter box at any time during Lent.

Jane

Receiving the news sheet by email, submitting notices or contacting us: if you would like either to receive this news sheet via email in future or to have a notice included in the next news sheet, please email notices@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk or ring Deirdre Parr on 456184. **Please send notices for inclusion in the news sheet by 7pm on Wed evening.**

While a few telephone numbers of church members may be included in this web version of the notice sheet, most contact details for events are published only in the hard copy, available in church or in the email version. If you have no access to these, please contact Deirdre Parr using the above email address or phone number.

St Mark's Church



A member of Churches Together in Hitchin

5 March 2017

First Sunday of Lent

Services and events today

8.00am	Holy Communion (p59 in folder)
10.00am	Holy Communion (p59 in folder)
1.00pm	Baptism Service
6.30pm	SIX:30 Service
8.00pm	Sunday Social at The Angels

Readings for today

Genesis 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7
1 Peter 4: 7-11
Matthew 4: 1-11

St Mark's extends a warm welcome to newcomers

If you are new here, do introduce yourself to Jane, our Vicar, or to a Welcomer or Warden, and feel free to take and fill in one of the newcomers' cards which you'll find on the Welcomers' table near the entrance to the hall.

PLEASE TAKE THESE NOTICES HOME WITH YOU

www.stmarks-hitchin.org.uk



Follow us on Twitter: @stmarkshitchin

Hymns for 10.00am

AMNS 224	Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
AMNS 56	Forty days and forty nights
AMNS 343	Be thou my vision
SF 4	To be in your presence
SF 2	Lord, the light of your love is shining

Diary for the week beginning Monday, 6 March

Tue 7	8.00pm	Deanery Synod at Holy Saviour Church
Wed 8	9.15am	Morning Prayer
	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Thur 9	12-2pm	Hall cleaning
	6.30pm	Group With No Name

Next Sunday, 12 March – Second Sunday of Lent

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Holy Communion
11.30am	Annual General Meeting
7.00pm	Year 13 Concert

Prayer Ministry

If you wish to pray with someone or to be prayed for at the end of the 10am service, Andrew will be near the side altar to listen, talk and pray with you.

From the St Mark's Cycle of Prayer, we pray for:

St Faith's Church; Garden House Hospice, Lavender Fields Cheshire Home and Stagenhoe Sue Ryder Home; Mulberry Way, Beechwood Close, Bedford Road from Fishponds Road roundabout, Firs Close and Frank Young Court

From the Churches Together in Hitchin Prayer Link, we pray for:

the **CTH** Lent Groups starting this week asking that they may be a time of meaningful fellowship for all who take part;

Christchurch as they prepare for their 'Big Wedding Evening' taking place this month;

a peaceful transition for **Holy Saviour** while their organ is being renovated.

Notices

St Mark's Lent Appeal 2017 - *Healing Syria's wounds*

This year's Appeal is once again for Syrian refugees and this time we are supporting the work of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in the country itself and the surrounding countries of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Though there are some fragile signs of peace, the plight of those who have left their homes is as severe as ever and medical care is essential for those who are in camps and for those who are trying to return home. MSF is one of the most respected and effective medical organisations in the world (Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1999) and has a reputation for going into places when others hold back. It is not yet permitted to go into government-held areas and it is too dangerous to work in territories controlled by Islamic State, but it is already on the ground in other parts of the country and surrounding states and hopes to step up its work as soon as possible. Our contributions will help it to do so. For more information, go to the website www.msf.org.uk/country/syria or have a word with John Richardson.

Gift envelopes are available today and each Sunday during Lent. Please give as you are able, cash or cheque payable to St Mark's Parish Church, gift-aided if possible. Many thanks for your generosity.

Annual General Meeting: next Sunday, 12 March at 11.30am

At the back of church today are the papers for next Sunday's meeting (financial statements, reports on all aspects of church life and the agenda). Do help yourself to a set. If you are reading this online and won't be in church to collect them, the papers can be emailed to you. Please email Jane (jane@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk) after 5 March to request them.

Nomination forms for DCC members, Churchwardens, Deanery Synod reps etc are also the back of church. Please consider whether you, or someone you know, could serve, particularly as a member of the District Church Council (a role for three years plus a two-year vacancy this year) or as one of our representatives on the Deanery Synod. The AGM offers a chance to get a full picture of the life of our church and to hear about future plans. Please do try to come along.

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll is the membership list of those who consider themselves part of our church family. If you are over 16 and are not on the roll, but would like to be, please see Jane or pick up a form at the back of church.

Churchwardens

From this year's AGM, we will have a Wardens' team of 8: 2 Churchwardens, 4 Deputy Wardens (who help with the Sunday duties) and 2 Assistant Fabric Wardens. We are delighted that two members of the congregation have already indicated their willingness to take on the role of Assistant Fabric Warden. However, we need to invite two more people to join this Wardens' team as one of our Churchwardens and one Deputy Warden have indicated their desire to stand down. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of being Churchwarden or of helping as a Deputy Warden on a Sunday morning, please talk to Louise, Tricia or Jane.

Volunteers sought for church-only cleaning

For some years, we have relied on volunteers to clean the church and hall but, in recent years, have struggled to get new volunteers to relieve those who have been doing it for a long time, and it has become increasingly hard to juggle cleaning times with increased hall use. So, in December, with the agreement of the DCC, we engaged a commercial cleaning company to undertake the weekly cleaning of the kitchen, hall, foyer and toilet areas, which they now do every Thursday between 12 and 2. It was felt more appropriate that the church continue to be cleaned by volunteers from the congregation. The Wardens propose to put together a rota of volunteers to come in weekly and do a basic tidy-up of the church, plus (if time and energy allow) undertake one or more tasks from a rolling list. If you are willing to be on this rota, please talk to Louise or Trish.

Good Friday Workshop: 14 April, 2.30-4.30pm

The planning is now well underway for this year's workshop. If anyone has any jars (at least as big as a normal jam jar and without labels, please) we would love to have them. Please bring them to church to give to Jane. Also, we need a few extra pairs of hands on the day to help with craft activities and with the refreshments at the end. If you can help in either way, please let Jane know: jane@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk or 434686.

Safeguarding Training: Tuesday 11 July, 7.00-10.00pm

Booking is now open for this training session at Holy Saviour Church. To book onto the session you need to follow the link <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/deanerysafeguarding/> If you have any problems booking or do not have internet access, please contact Pauline Banks, St Mark's Safeguarding Officer.

Year 13 Recitals at St Mark's, 7.00pm on 12 March

Once again, St Mark's will be providing the venue for final year music students from the three Hitchin secondary schools to perform their examination pieces. Tickets available today in church from Shirley Basford: £3 for adults, £1 aged 19 and under – includes post-concert drink (no interval this year).

Traidcraft Stall after the 10am service today

Do support the stall if you can. The new Spring catalogues are available to take away; orders can be made via Maggie Mellersh or the website.

Real Easter Eggs

If you would like to order a Real Easter Egg, please sign up on the order sheet at the back of church by the end of March. These are the only Fairtrade Easter Eggs which tell the real story of Easter, using a 24 page story and activity book. Original: £3.99, Dark Chocolate: £5.50 and Special Edition: £8.50. Contact Maggie Mellersh for more details.

Free Trade and Fairtrade: Towards Trade Justice in the Post-Brexit Era -- Saturday, 11 March 10.30-12.30 at Our Lady's Church

The Westminster Catholic Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission invites members of all Hitchin churches to join them for a discussion on this important theme led by Mary Milne, Traidcraft Campaigns Manager. Refreshments from 10am. Free but please register at:

<https://fairfretrade.eventbrite.co.uk>

PHASE

The March Prayer Guide, which has a suggestion for prayer for every day, is available from the Mission table.