



Sunday 26th February

First Sunday of Lent

1. Readings & prayers
2. St Mark's News
3. Church & Hall Diary
4. Cynthia
5. Friday Friendship group – 3rd March
6. Messy St Mark's – 5th March
7. Foodbank Collection
8. Parish Reorganisation
9. St Mark's Lent Appeal
10. Phase Coffee Morning – 18th March
11. Church Spring Cleaning – 20th May
12. Raising awareness of domestic abuse training
13. St Mark's Coronation Party – 7th May
14. Message from Michael's daughter
15. Prayers for Ukraine – 24th February
16. Lent Study Groups
17. World Day of Prayer Service – 3rd March
18. International Mail – Joy

Readings for 26th February

Genesis chapter 2 verses 15 – 17

Romans chapter 5 verses 12 - 19

Matthew chapter 4 verses 1 - 11

PRAYERS - From Churches Together in Hitchin:- We pray for the Lent Bible study groups being



arranged by **Churches Together** by member churches that they may be a blessing during this time of walking with Jesus. **Christchurch** particularly ask prayer for their groups as they open all their House Groups and follow the Churches Together Study. We pray with them that people may find a small group where they can study, pray and deepen their discipleship.

We pray for the **World Day of Prayer** service being held at Our Lady's this Friday, that its theme 'I have heard about your faith', chosen by the churches of Taiwan, may be an inspiration to us here and Christians throughout the world.

Wymondley Baptist Church ask that we support their depleted Church Leadership Team in prayer, as they now continue as a team of three. May they stay close to God as they seek advice and explore the way forward for our Church.

From St Mark's Prayer Cycle:- This week we pray for St Mark's Wardens, Treasurer, secretaries, welcomers and all on church rotas. We also pray for our local Social Services and those they support and care for.

Please pray for the residents of Burford Way, Carling Place & Rivermead

ST MARK'S NEWS

We are pleased to announce that The Rev'd Maxine Howarth Assistant Curate within the Watford Deanery has been appointed Team Vicar in the Hitchin Team Ministry with special responsibility for St Mark's Hitchin.

The Licensing and Installation service will be held on **22 May 2023 at 7.30 p.m.**

Please remember Maxine and her husband Peter and family in your prayers.

Due to two of Maxine's children expecting to sit exams this year at school Maxine will begin her ministry with the Parish on 22 May 2023. She and her family will not move into the vicarage until the summer holidays at which point she will take a few weeks off to have a family holiday and to move. We are grateful that Maxine has agreed to start her ministry at St Marks before the family are able to move.

CHURCH DIARY

Sunday 26th February – 8am Holy Communion.

10am Holy Communion with activities for children and young people.

Wednesday 1st March – 9.15am Morning Prayer

Friday 3rd March – 9.30am Little Lions baby & toddler group

1.30pm World Day of Prayer at Our Lady's – see details below

2pm – Friday Friendship Group – see details below.

Saturday 4th March – 7pm Church Quiz (fully booked)

Sunday 5th March – 8am Holy Communion. 10am Holy Communion with activities for children and young people.

4pm – Messy St Mark's – see details below.

HALL DIARY – *these are the non-church groups using the hall*

Monday 27th - Signing Group 8.30 – 12.30

Tuesday 28th – Rainbows 5-6pm

Wednesday 1st March – Home Education Hub 11am – 4.15pm. Yoga 5.15-7pm

Thursday 2nd March – Childminders Support Group 9.30-11.30am; Dorothy Wells Violin Group 4.15-5.15pm.

Sunday 5th March – Diocesan Group 6.30-9.30pm

CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS

CYNTHIA – we are saddened to announce that Cynthia died last weekend, having just had her 93rd birthday. She had been part of St Mark's family for many years. There is a condolence card in the church for people to sign, and we will let you know as soon as we hear what the funeral arrangements will be.

FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP GROUP - the next meeting of Friday Friendship Group on March 3rd is a talk by Colin Oaks titled "Hertfordshire and its Great History".

All visitors are welcome, come and find out more about the county we live in (£4 for visitors and £3 for members this includes refreshments)

We meet in the church hall for a 2pm. start. For more information contact Val via

admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

MESSY ST MARK'S – will be on Sunday 5th March at 4pm. Our theme is 'An Extraordinary Picnic – Loaves & fishes'. Do come along and join in – there's something for everyone!



FOODBANK COLLECTION – St Mark's Foodbank collection box will be out this Sunday. Items most urgently needed are:-

Carrier Bags	Fruit Juice (not squash)
UHT Milk	Tinned meat (not pies)
Dried Potato	Tinned Rice Pudding
Tinned Soup	Tinned Tomatoes

PARISH REORGANISATION - The Church Commissioners have now given their approval of the proposed scheme by which St Mark's along with St Faith's and Holy Saviour would become new parishes and the remaining part of the parish of Hitchin would be known as "Hitchin, St Mary". Allowing time for appeals against this decision, it is hoped this will come into effect on 1 April. In these circumstances, we are deferring our planned AGM on 26 March until **30 April** when we hope we will be able to have our first Annual Parish Church meeting. More information to come but please put the new date in your diary.



ST MARK'S LENT APPEAL 2023 – following the recent devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria our Lent Appeal this year will support relief work among the victims. Many organisations are involved but we have chosen **Christian Aid** which is working with partners in the region to provide comfort especially among refugees for whom this is yet another tragic blow. For details see [Turkey and](#)

[Syria Earthquake Appeal - Christian Aid](#)

Gift envelopes are available in church today and throughout Lent, or you can give via the Donate button on the St Mark's website - [St Mark's Church – Hitchin](#) look for Lent Appeal on the drop down menu.

For further information, have a word with John.

Many thanks as ever for your generosity.

PHASE COFFEE MORNING AT ST MARK'S - As part of their 20th birthday celebrations, Phase would



like to hold coffee mornings across the churches in Hitchin on Saturday, 18th March from 10am-12.30 and St Mark's has agreed to hold one!

More information to come but, for now, please put the date in your diary. If you'd like to help on the day or by baking cakes, please let

Deirdre know via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE - ANNUAL CHURCH SPRING CLEANING - Please do put in your diaries our annual church spring cleaning on Saturday 20 May 9am-12 noon. We want to get the church looking as smart as possible ahead of Rev Maxine Howarth being installed as our new vicar on Monday 22 May.

RAISING AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE - There are still places available for the Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse module.

If you are thinking that you would like to be a member of the PCC when St Marks changes from the current DCC it is one of the requirements that you have attended Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse either Face to Face or On-Line.

The dates are as follows:

Wednesday 1st March 7pm at Church House Hitchin

Saturday 4th March 10.00am at St Thomas's Church 103 Bedford Road Letchworth SG6 4DU

Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse required attendees Church Wardens, Assistant Church Wardens, PCC Members, Pastoral Visitors, Home Communion Visitors, Baptism Visitors, Children Group Leaders. It is important that you attend.

Please confirm attendance by email via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

If you cannot attend on either date you can access this course online through using The Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal. Again, please confirm by contacting me that this is your chosen path.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY - ST MARK'S CORONATION

CELEBRATION – Come along and celebrate the Kings Coronation on Sunday 7th May with a party in the Vicarage garden, 1pm – 5pm. More details to follow.

Contact Joy via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

to register your interest.



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL'S DAUGHTER, ALEX - I'm running my second marathon — in Manchester — on 16 April to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity, in memory of my Dad, and I wondered if there might be anyone from St Mark's who knew Dad and might like to sponsor me. Here's the link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/alex-ronnie>

I'd be very grateful for any support.

PRAYERS FOR UKRAINE at Walsworth Road Baptist Church – Friday 24th February 6.30 - 8.30pm
We gather for a poignant prayer gathering, marking with much sadness and dismay, one year since the current invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Everyone is invited to gather with us, to bring a friend with them, as we gather to pray for an end to this conflict and for the safety of all those who remain in Ukraine, despite the ongoing threat to life.

LENT STUDY GROUPS - These are now taking place on various days and various places, using the study *A Search for Peace* by John Birch which can be downloaded at

www.faithandworship.com/Peace Bible Study

If you would like to join a group, it's not too late - contact Helen via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE Friday 3rd March 1.30pm at Our Lady's Church.

This year the service has been compiled by women in Taiwan. This is particularly apt as it is presently being threatened by China and needs our prayers. Refreshments will follow the service giving the opportunity to get to know people from all the churches in Hitchin. Further information Helen via

admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

INTERNATIONAL MAIL - Hi Folks I can't think why I have not told you all about this before now!! Every week I hand write a letter to my best friend Pats in Sicily. We have known each other since we were 11 years old (so yes 55 years agghhh) and started the Girls School together. Pats moved to live in Sicily many years ago but we have remained close and dearest friends always. She teaches English to her lovely Sicilian students many of whom I have had the delight of meeting when I have ventured over to stay with her. I send a parcel containing a selection of the weekend magazine supplements from the newspapers and anything else I think may be of help/interest for her lessons. We go on little adventures in Sicily, or did until COVID struck, but plan to renew these this year, and she comes over here at least twice a year. Although Sicily seems a long way away it's not. It's just a text message, an email or a live call or facetime. We have been through thick and thin together. There is no one else in my life who knows more about me and understands me as she does. I am very privileged to have her with me and call her my very very best friend and I love her dearly. I usually copy her in on my weekly musings for the Church Newsletter in two minds about sending this as she will think I have gone all soppy. Oh to heck with it yes I am feeling soppy and she above all will know what this means. Love you Pats xx
Joy

*If you would like to have a notice included please email
notices@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk*

Please send notices by 7pm on the preceding Wednesday.