

# ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH WHITTINGTON PARISH NEWS



**MARCH 26**

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75p

# **St Philip and St James' Parish Church, Whittington**



A Ninth Century Chapel rebuilt in 1844

**In the Worcester South East Team**

## **St Philip & St James Whittington and St Mark in the Cherry Orchard**

**Vicar**

The Rev'd Andy Stand 01905 358150

### **Church Officers for Whittington**

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Miss Jayne Rayer 01905 351344

Asst. Warden: Mrs Brenda Giles 01905 25709

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Email: Janetpearson4@hotmail.com

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Safeguarding Officer: David Chestney 01905 359708

Elizabethan Room bookings coordinator:

Mrs Caroline Mayfield 01905 764822

Email: caroline.mayfield40@gmail.com

Magazine Editor: David Chestney 01905 359708

Email: david.battenhall@outlook.com

### **St. Martin with St. Peter**

**Team Rector:** Rev'd Peter Hart 01905 355119

**Assistant Curate:** Rev'd Richard Wood

**Assistant Curate:** Rev'd Mike Bunclark

### **Holy Trinity & St Matthew Ronkswood**

**Curate in Charge:** Rev'd Richard Wood

### **Team Administrator:**

Rebecca Caskie: Team Office, St Martins Church,  
London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED

Tel: 01905 358083

email: worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com

*For enquiries about Baptisms, Thanksgivings, Marriages and Blessings,  
please contact the Team Administrator as above.*

***The Team Office at St Martin's is open on Mon, Tues, Thurs & Friday,  
10am - 1 pm; visits ideally should continue to be by appointment.***

***Rebecca can always be reached by phone and email.***

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### **The invasion of Ukraine**

The twelfth instalment of Denys Bielov's account of his escape from Mariupol will be found on pages 14/15, again this month. Denys spends time applying for a visa in Berlin, and getting dental work done. See page 26 for ways that we can help Ukrainians fighting on the front line.

# Letter from the Vicarage

March 26

Hi Everyone,

How are you doing? I hope and pray that you are all keeping fit and well.



Some years ago, during my curacy in Bromsgrove, I was involved in helping the young people in the parish lead a number of acts of worship. The first I remember was the culmination of a Lent Group that we ran for the young people and was a reflection upon the Gospel story, using amongst other influences, the *Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis.

Another one, during Advent and the build up to Christmas, this time, used the Joan Osborne track *One of Us*, to ask the question, 'What if God was one of us, ... just a stranger on a bus, trying to make their way home'? The young people, being much better skilled in modern technology than I am, produced their own video to be shown while the track was playing in the background. For that worshipping community, at that stage and season of it's life, the worship the young people led was highly technical, making full use of the technology of the day.

I remember, too that we led a further act of worship, again during the season of Lent, and this time I suggested that as it was Lent, we should lead something that was simpler in its format and tone, something that was not reliant in any way on any form of modern technology; something offering, I guess, a more desert like experience. How successful it was is probably open to debate, but I still think the premise of doing something simple during Lent is good one.

I was reminded of this recently when an electrical survey was being carried out at the vicarage, and necessitated all plugs being pulled out of their sockets; so there was no computer and no broadband for a couple of hours or so.

Nor of course was there any power to boil a kettle to be able to offer the engineer a drink of tea or coffee - a case of proper Lenten fasting if only for those few hours!

It just highlights our dependence upon modern technology for many things.

I wonder, how would you cope in those circumstances? Would you be able to embrace the enforced simplicity? Or would you find yourself impatient to get back on-line?

I will confess, that of course I wasn't completely bereft of technology during the outage, as I did have my iPad with sufficient charge to be able to read some more of the book, I have designated as my Lenten reading this year, a book called *Heaven, Your Real Home From a Higher Perspective* by Joni Eareckson Tada.

I wonder how are you making space for Lenten simplicity this year? Are you finding it a help in terms of making space for your relationship with God? Is it leaving you wanting the season to be over and done with and unable to wait for Easter morning and the season of celebration and indulgence to begin?

I wish you all a continuing blessed and Holy Lent.

Every blessing,

Andy.



# What's on at Whittington March & April 2026

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March</b>    | <b>Lent 2</b>   |
| 11.00am                               | Parish Communion  |
| 3.30pm                                | Forest Church   |
| <b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March</b>  |   |
| 10.30-12noon                          | 'WW1 Soldiers commemorated in Worcester Cathedral Cloisters' - <b>Talk in Church</b> , Refreshments afterwards. |
| <b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March</b>    | <b>Lent 3</b>   |
| 11.00am                               | Family Service  |
| <b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>   | <b>Mothering Sunday</b>   |
| 11.00am                               | Family Service  |
| <b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March</b>  |   |
| 6.30pm                                | PCC Meeting on Zoom   |
| <b>Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March</b> |   |
| 10.30-12noon                          | Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room  |
| <b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March</b>   | <b>Passion Sunday</b>   |
| 11.00am                               | Family Communion  |
| <b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>   | <b>Palm Sunday</b>  |
| 11.00am                               | Family Communion  |
| <b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April</b>  | <b>Maundy Thursday</b>  |
| 7.30pm                                | Holy Communion at <b>St Martin's</b>  |
| <b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>    | <b>Good Friday</b>  |
| 2.00pm                                | 'An Hour at the Cross'  |
| <b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April</b>  |   |
| 10.30-12noon                          | Yew Brew in Elizabethan Room  |
| <b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April</b>    | <b>Easter Day</b>   |
| 11.00am                               | <b>Easter Family Communion</b>  |
| 3.30pm                                | Forest Church   |



Church of St Philip & St James Whittington WR5 2RQ  
**Holy Week and Easter services 2026**



**Sunday 29 March ~ Palm Sunday**  
11.00am Service with the Passion Gospel

**Friday 3 April~ Good Friday**  
2.00pm An Hour at the Cross  
Guest speaker: Debra Hill

**Sunday 5 April~ Easter Day**  
11.00am Easter Family Communion

[www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk](http://www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk)

[worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com](mailto:worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com)



*St Philip & St James, Whittington*

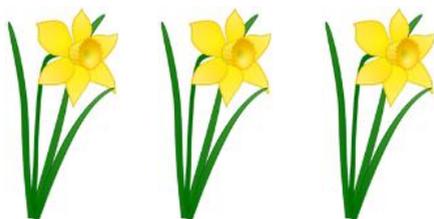
# *Mothering Sunday*



*15<sup>th</sup> March*

*at 11.00am*

## *Family Service*



*All welcome*

*[www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk](http://www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk)*

**From the Parish Register at Whittington**

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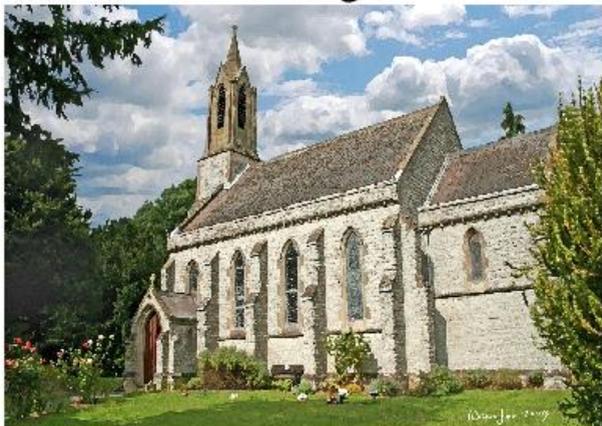
**Baptism**

**8th February 2026**

**Gracie-Iris Meek**

**Daughter of Jordan &  
Josephine Meek**

*Church of St Philip & St James,  
Whittington*



*Lent Appeal 2026  
For the Food Bank*

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# FOREST CHURCH

**SUNDAY 1 MARCH**

**3.30pm - 4.30pm**

**Whittington Churchyard**

We will be considering the abundance of life in God's good creation, the life of early spring and how to listen to one another, how to care for God's creation, and to share all the good that God has provided.

**Contact: [revrichwood@gmail.com](mailto:revrichwood@gmail.com)**



## **The Season of Lent in the Worcester South East Team**

***Stations of the Cross & Compline \****

**Wednesdays, 7.00pm at St Martin's Church**

***Prayer Walks around St Martin's Parish***

**Tuesdays, 2pm *from Church***

***Lent Group led by Revd Andy Stand***

**Tuesdays, 2.30pm**

***The Vicarage, 11 Jasmine Close, St Peter's, WR5 3LU***

***Lent Bible Study & Prayer Group led by Peter Hart***

**Wednesdays, 11.15am**

***Lower Vestry, St Martin's Church***

***\* Stations of the Cross & Compline also on Zoom at 8.30pm,  
contact Mike Bunclark for joining details [mbunclark@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:mbunclark@tiscali.co.uk)***

## A letter from Bishop Hugh for Parish magazines.



Dear friends,

It has been 3 weeks since my installation service at the Cathedral, and I have been blown away by the warmth and generosity of the welcome that you have all shown me. From rural church communities and meals in the local pub; to worship in the oldest church building in Worcester, where children told us how to live ‘in heaven on earth’; to visits to primary and secondary schools, where I was asked questions as diverse as ‘What is your favourite Tesco’s meal deal?’ and ‘What is the place of religion in politics?’. I’ve had a morning spent with clergy and LLMs on our response to the climate crisis; a lunch with our wonderful retired clergy; an evening with ordinands training for ministry; and important conversations about how we build a diocese that puts children and young people at the centre of everything.

All of this (and that’s just a few of the highlights!) has given me so many opportunities to listen and learn, and to start to get to know this wonderful diocese.

And there’s still so much for me still to discover; so many people to meet, churches to join for worship and hopes and worries for me to hear. If you’d like to see what I’m discovering as I get out and about, I’m putting out a brief video every week or so, and you can find it on Facebook or Instagram.

In all of this, the thing that has struck me most, is the deep faithfulness of the church across the Diocese. In all the joys, and in the midst of challenges too – and I’m hearing about them as well – there are people serving their schools, churches, workplaces and communities with astonishing generosity and commitment.

It has been such a privilege to start getting to know you all. I look forward to meeting many more people, churches and communities in the months to come – and do please invite me along.

Please keep praying for me, as I continue to pray for you.

God bless Hugh



# Whittington CE Primary School

## Year 4 – Experience Lent - 2

During the visit, we spoke to some of the children about how they felt when they visited our lovely church.

Take a look at some of the children's comments:

I like feeling close to God and Jesus because they are good. I also love the activities.

Kenzie

When I'm in church I feel safe and comfortable as God is in the room with us. I am learning lots about Lent!

Emilie

Our church is very special. I really like all of the activities. I feel happy being in church.

Emma

Whittington Church is a comforting and welcoming place. Our church friends are lovely and very kind that they spend time with us.

I especially like thinking about Acts of Kindness and how we can do good things.

Phoebe



Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last' John 15:16

To love , to learn, to flourish – together

# Escape from Mariupol

## by Denys Bielov - 12



Towards the end of my studies in architecture at the Dnipro Academy in 2009, I was looking at my city of Mariupol thinking how to make it even more beautiful. When at home during my academic holidays, I often walked around the city. I found that some urban planning impressed me! But I also noticed mistakes and defects and tried to come up with solutions. I acquired further knowledge and became interested in city planning. I have accumulated a collection of project proposals for Mariupol, which I am still working on. It is a pity that all my hand-drawn sketches remain in Mariupol.

During my first weeks in Berlin (Episode 11 in the February 2026 magazine), I became inspired and sketched an idea for extending the tram line from the central market of Mariupol to the historic part without damaging the wonderful buildings and the spatial composition of the city streets. After looking at examples in Warsaw and Berlin, the solution came to me and my thoughts of a new urban development proposal evolved.

You ask “Why are you doing this, there are no guarantees that Mariupol will be liberated”. There are no guarantees, but I have faith. I believe that Mariupol will be liberated. The occupiers are currently in control but that does not give them the right to be there. Secondly, these projects and ideas are like anchors that prevent me from drifting away from my goal. When I work on them and write about Mariupol, I feel the sweet taste of my homeland, which reminds me what I am striving for.

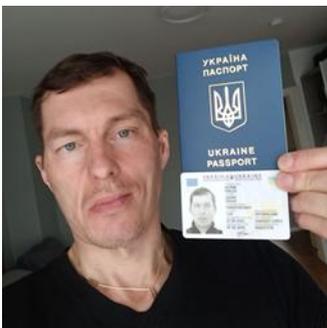
### **Applying for a British visa ... and the Dentist**

On 13 February 2024 I started the online visa application. My friend, Tanya, helped me to avoid making mistakes. I had to fill in my visa sponsor's details and Joe, in Worcester, provided all the information. On 19 February the documents were submitted. Olena, from Worcester County Council, later told me my application was submitted on the last day before Britain started issuing ‘Homes for Ukraine’ visas for only eighteen months instead of three years. I was incredibly lucky and received a three-year visa but no physical documents, meaning I couldn't book an appointment at the visa centre, where I had to go in person with the documents. Everything came to a halt for several weeks. All I could do was periodically visit the Ukrainian migration office. But every time I was told, "Wait for our SMS." I told Joe that my arrival in Worcester had to be postponed. *Continued..*

Joe and Ella agreed to wait as long as necessary. Now, the end of March, I still had no documents. I felt terribly depressed.

Then unexpected news arrived that Olya's sister urgently needed to come and stay with her children. I would have to leave their home. My delayed documents became even more stressful. Rumours began to circulate that Ukrainian documents would soon stop being issued. I felt as if the clouds were closing in. On top of this, my tooth, long neglected, ached. I didn't have insurance, and dentistry in Berlin is very expensive. Tanya gave me the address of a Ukrainian dentist in Wrocław, Poland. The prices there were four times lower than in Berlin. So, as soon as I received my documents I would go to Wrocław. On 3<sup>rd</sup>. April, a miracle! At my sixth visit to the migration service, I was given my passport and ID card. It really seemed as if God had intervened.

I informed Joe and Ella that I had the documents and could move forward. I was finally able to provide evidence that I was living in Ukraine at the time of the Russian invasion. The next day Ruslan accompanied me to the visa centre. On the way, I saw several Ukrainian flags hanging from windows, which cheered me. But Ruslan said there were fewer flags. Have people become tired of the Ukraine-Russian war? Don't they understand that if Ukraine falls, this 'show' will very quickly end up here? These are the real plans of the Kremlin. After two years living under occupation, I understand. Sticking the Russian flag on the ruins of the Bundestag is one of the favourite fetishes of Russian propaganda. The destruction and sacrifice of Mariupol and other cities were supposed to demonstrate this to the whole world. This is the most terrible war since World War II. And it's not on another continent, but here, close by. Ruslan reminded me that I was starting to boil over and get angry. "Don't get so boiled up! Germany is helping a lot!"



I applied successfully for a visa and submitted my biometric data. To take my passport for my trip to Poland, I had to pay a special fee of €100. My ID card remained at the visa centre until my return. I informed the dental clinic that I was ready to go as soon as possible, and they agreed to book an appointment for the evening of 11 April, a week later. Until then, I fought the toothache with painkillers and exercise. Physical activity temporarily reduced the pain, so I was able to hold out. Back to Poland and the Dentist.



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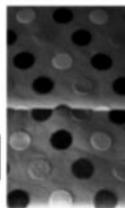
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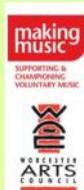
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Registered Charity Number 512073



# Community Hall Update

## WHAT'S ON - REGULAR CLASSES YOU CAN JOIN

Please contact the class organiser for more information, costs and to pre-book

### MONDAY.

10.30am - 11.30am. Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: [aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk)

5.30pm. The Star Project Children's Theatre (Term time only) with Jo Payne.

Contact: [director@thestarproject.info](mailto:director@thestarproject.info)

### TUESDAY.

4.00pm to 6.30pm. Dance (for 3 year olds and above) with Elizabeth Gibbs

Contact: [lizdance@icloud.com](mailto:lizdance@icloud.com)

6.30pm - 9.30pm Gong Bath + Sound Meditation with Angela Latham.

Contact: [evenstartbabe@msm.com](mailto:evenstartbabe@msm.com)

(varying monthly dates available)

### WEDNESDAY.

4.30pm to 5.30pm Yoga with Natalie Houlding.

Contact: [natalie@zafyoga.com](mailto:natalie@zafyoga.com)

6.30pm to 7.30pm. Pilates with Rebecca Hadlington.

Contact: [fitness-worcester.com](http://fitness-worcester.com)

### THURSDAY.

10.00am (for 10.15am start) to 11.00am Zumba with Denise Wrafter

11.00am to 12.00noon Yoga with Denise Wrafter.

Contact: [denisewrafter@outlook.com](mailto:denisewrafter@outlook.com)

7.15pm - 9.15pm T'ai Chi with Dr Marc.

Contact: [marc@obelison.com](mailto:marc@obelison.com)

### FRIDAY.

9.45am to 10.45am Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: [aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk)

6.00pm to 7.00pm. Duke Yoga with Fiona

Contact: [fib42@hotmail.com](mailto:fib42@hotmail.com)



Community Hall Management Committee  
[info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk](mailto:info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk)

Responsible for managing, maintaining, developing and running the  
Community hall.

## Bishop Hugh introduces teaching morning on Climate Justice.



“In my head I knew the climate crisis was real, but it wasn’t until I visited an Extinction Rebellion event that the Spirit moved and I realised that to cherish creation should be at the heart of what it means to be a disciple. I’m really pleased that that climate justice is the topic of my first teaching morning as Bishop of Worcester and hope that we will all leave here a bit more committed to it in our hearts.”

The morning sessions involved three speakers talking about our prophetic challenge to the extractive economy. The Revd Dr Peniel Rajkumar is Director of Global Mission and Theologian at USPG and an Honorary Canon of Worcester Cathedral. He talked about the importance of having humility, hope and hostility and the importance of moving beyond the theologies of stewardship and sustainability, which reduce nature to the object of human management. He said:

“Hearing the cries of the planet needs to go hand in hand with hearing the cries of the poor, and transformation can only start with genuine repentance. We can’t continue to consume at exponential rates but should be questioning and disrupting the very things on which our world is based. We need truly transformational discipleship and must learn to be guests at the tables of other peoples’ projects, particularly those on the margins of society. God’s power to transform the world is found in places where we least expect it.”

### Economic Justice

Sarah Edwards is the Executive Director of Just Money Movement and spoke on the importance of economic justice. Sarah unpicked what we mean by an extractive economy, which is about taking something out without any plans to put it back; and highlighted the systemic extractionism in our society. Many organisations work in an extractive manner and many of these extractive practices are only possible because of our banks. There are also companies which use tax havens to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

Sarah also highlighted our Christian teaching and heritage as a way to highlight these inequalities. She said: “There is much in our Christian tradition which can help us to reimagine our economic life. The bible tells us that everything belongs to God.

We are only stewards and should be accountable for all we are doing in the world around us. In Jesus' teaching there are numerous occasions where he rebukes the wealthy and is one in a long line of prophets who focussed attention on the injustices in society. There are ways of doing business which seek human flourishing and we should be campaigning for change. By working together as a movement, we can bring about global transformative change and seek a greener, fairer future together."

## Climate Justice

Robin Parry, Minor Canon at Worcester Cathedral spoke about Eco Spirituality, reminding us that climate change affects everyone, but not equally. Those who bear the heaviest burdens are the poorest nations, while those whose energy-demanding lifestyles have created the climate crisis are the rich nations.

Robin said: "The world is profoundly interconnected and we're all participants in structural sin when it comes to climate crisis. It is not all our fault, but we are part of the problem and do have some culpability. Three things should matter to Christians: People - climate change threatens human flourishing; all creatures – climate change is having devastating consequences on plant life and non-human animals; and justice, which is a core part of our faith. Rich countries must significantly reduce their carbon emissions, and we all need to adapt to deal with climate change, ensuing that adaptation prioritises vulnerable communities."



**CHURCH OF ST PHILIP & ST JAMES**  
**CHURCH LANE, WHITTINGTON**  
**WORCESTER, WR5 2RQ**

**Saturday 7 March**

**10.30am**



**WW1 Soldiers Commemorated  
in Worcester Cathedral Cloister**

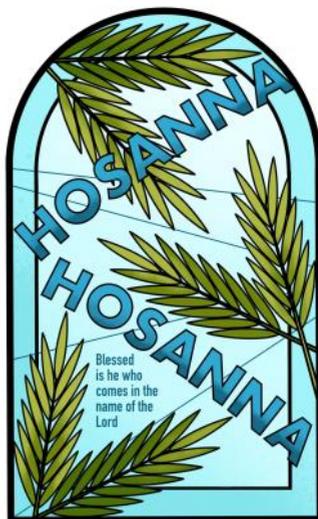
**Illustrated talk by Malcolm MacLeod**

**Followed by refreshments**

Free entry with donations to church funds

[www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk](http://www.whittingtonchurch.co.uk)

Team Office 01905 358063 [worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com](mailto:worcestersoutheastteam@gmail.com)



Blessed  
is he who  
comes in the  
name of the  
Lord

# Helping the people of Ukraine on the front line



UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE FREEDOM COMPANY (WEST MIDLANDS)

[Ukrainefreedomcompany.org](http://Ukrainefreedomcompany.org)

Patron: Maj Gen Arthur Denaro CBE, DL

## COMFORT BOXES

Contributions are required to provide individual 'comfort' boxes for the men and women fighting at the front. These may contain some or all of the following items:

First Aid kit items: Bandages: Antiseptic cream: Lip sol: Wet wipes: Soap: Tissues

Female sanitary products: Toilet rolls: Toothpaste/brush: Small towels

Candles (including tea lights) Sewing kits Tea: Coffee: Sweets/chocolate

Thermal underwear: socks:

Tinned food (ideally with ring-pull top) - e.g. sardines: baked beans: soups: fruit:  
or packets of dried foods – e.g. pasta; noodles; soups; 'instant' oats

Cooking utensils - army mess tins: enamel plates/mugs: cutlery: small pots/pans:

DO NOT INCLUDE ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR CIGARETTES AS THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE CONFISCATED BY CUSTOMS.

## MEDICAL SUPPLIES

\*\*\*\* There is a desperate ongoing need for medical supplies and first aid kits – priority items required being tourniquets, wound dressings, bandages of all types, etc.

While many medical items in the UK are required to have a 'use-by' date, and often consequently get destroyed, UFC can often divert these for use in the Ukraine – please consider approaching contacts at local hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, paramedics, etc. requesting that they give consideration to donating such supplies. In addition, there are many mobility aids retained by ex-patients who find it difficult to return them - we are happy to accept such items including wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches, walking sticks, limb splints etc.

\*\*\*\*We are now able to accept financial donations via our dedicated bank account – please consider a 'one off' donation, or a monthly standing order, details as follows:

Metro Bank Account: Ukraine Freedom Co (West Midlands)

Account No: 56781099 – Sort Code: 23 - 05 - 80

If able to assist, please contact your local UFC representative, who can also arrange collection throughout the area: Brian Watkins email: [lovelacewatkins@uwclub.net](mailto:lovelacewatkins@uwclub.net) mobile: 07771684000

## Our love affair with our phones

It was 150 years ago this month, on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1876, that the world's first telephone call was made. Alexander Graham Bell called his assistant and said: "Mr Watson, come here. I want you." That phone call was the beginning of a worldwide addiction to phones. Phones spread quickly, constantly improved, and after more than 100 years of landlines, mobile phones arrived.

The first was introduced by Motorola in 1983 in the USA. The Motorola DynaTAC 8000X weighed nearly two pounds and cost around \$3,995. The first smartphone, the IBM Simon Personal Communicator, was released in 1994, combining phone calls with PDA features like email, fax, and a calendar on a touchscreen. It was so expensive it sold only about 50,000.

But by the late 90s, the BlackBerry had become a top favourite, with its popular email and messaging services beloved by Barak Obama, among many others. Then in 2007, Apple released the first iPhone, informally known as the iPhone 2G, with an advanced multi-touch interface and app ecosystem.

Fast forward nearly 20 years, and there are now about **7.5 billion** active smartphones in the world. The total number of all connections (SIMs/devices) now even exceeds the human population of about 8.3 billion.



*My sermon today comes from  
Apps Chapter 1 beginning at verse 2...*

## 19 March - St Joseph the Carpenter: gracious descendant of King David

Many people know that Joseph was the father of the most famous man who ever lived, but beyond that, we know very little about him. The Gospels name him as the 'father' of Jesus, while also asserting that the child was born of a virgin. Even if he wasn't what we call the 'biological' father, it was important to them that he was a distant descendant of the great King David - a necessary qualification for the Messiah.

It's obvious that Joseph (usually described as a 'carpenter') was not wealthy, because he was allowed to offer the poor man's sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle doves at the presentation of his infant son. No one expected eloquence or wisdom from this man's son. Jesus was born into an unremarkable family, with a doubtless hard-working artisan as His father. There would have been few luxuries in that little home at Nazareth.

Matthew begins his birth narrative with the bald statement that Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together she became pregnant 'with child from the Holy Spirit'. Joseph was not apparently privy to the divine intervention in her life, and drew the obvious conclusion: it was another man's child. However, he was not the sort of man who wished to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to 'dismiss her quietly' - end their engagement without fuss, we might say. However, at that point Joseph had a dream in which he was told by 'an angel of the Lord' not to hesitate to take Mary as his wife, because the child conceived in her was 'from the Holy Spirit', and that the baby was to be named 'Jesus' ('saviour') because He will 'save His people from their sins'. On waking, Joseph did as he had been instructed and took Mary as his wife.

So far as Joseph himself is concerned, we can be pretty sure of a few things. In human, legal terms he was the father of Jesus, he was a carpenter and he had probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. The little we are told suggests a devout, decent and sensitive man, one who shared Mary's anxiety when the 12 year-old Jesus went missing in Jerusalem, and who presumably taught his son the trade of a carpenter.

Joseph has become an icon of the working man - there are many churches nowadays dedicated to 'Joseph the Worker'. He can stand in the calendar of saints for the 'ordinary' person, a straight-forward craftsman who never expected or chose to be in the spotlight of history. He did what he could, and he was obedient to everything that he believed God required of him. To do the 'ordinary' thing well, to be kind, caring and open to guidance: these are great gifts, and Joseph seems to have had them in abundance.

# **Whittington Parish Council**

*From the Chairman: Adam Hooper*

When I left the house this week to go work, I caught myself saying out loud 'oh, it's not raining'. I am struggling to remember a day in recent weeks where there hasn't any rain. Pleasingly the improvements made across the parish in recent years and months have held up well. The improved drainage on Church Lane outside the Community Hall has held up well, no more road deep under water, and the improvements to drainage last year to the allotments are still doing a great job.

Another month of planning applications linked to the proposals for Worcestershire Parkway and the wider South Worcestershire Development Plan. The Parish Council has been asked to respond with comments to these applications. We thank Helena Bennett and Steve Brooker for all their time and efforts working with the Parish Council to ensure that we have as much knowledge as possible to be able to respond to these applications; to work towards the goal of whatever is being built, the residents of Whittington receive the best outcome possible.

We owe David Hunter-Miller, our Parish Council Clerk, a huge thank you for his efforts in supporting us to write our responses and guiding us through the processes of engaging with the huge number of documents related to these planning developments. The Parish Council has been engaging with planning officers at Wychavon District Council to ensure we have the most up to date information about the proposals to make sure we represent your views.

The Parish Council website has a page dedicated to the South Worcestershire Development Plan- take a look to find out more about what is happening. <https://whittingtonparish.gov.uk/swdp/>

We currently have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. If the idea of doing something that gives back to your local community and helps to make where you live a better place, please find out more about what we do and join us! Details can be found on the Parish Council website <https://whittingtonparish.gov.uk/>. The Parish Council meeting for March will be on Tuesday 24th March at 7.30pm

Until next time,  
Adam



## St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Diocese of Worcester



### News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

I don't know about your garden but our borders and the lawn (more like patchy grass in seas of mud) badly need sunshine and certainly no more rain. There will be much cutting down because I left Michaelmas Daisies, Golden Rod, Teasels, etc. to go to seed to help the many birds, that we are fortunate to enjoy in our garden, to survive some of the worst weather that we have had for many years.

Does anyone know of nearby stables where I might be able obtain horse manure, please. The whole garden needs feeding and I would prefer to go back to organic ways rather than watering it with liquid food then worms do the work to break up the vegetable garden clay.

After several months' in the planning, in the middle of February, St Marks was delighted to welcome **The Myriad Centre**, a charitable organisation that was formed in 2007, their motto seems to be 'Your Community, Your Place to Belong'! Currently in between premises, they are using the church vestry for office staff and more staff and their clients make use of the church hall space wherever we were able to fit them in which was quite a challenge. Myriad looks forward to completing their purchase of WRC in Summer 2026

Since 2007, they have helped adults over 18 years with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) along with their families and carers. They believe in creating days that are fun, stimulating and meaningful – supporting each person as they transition from school into adulthood and beyond. They are supported for life, be it for a short or a long time, Myriad's goal is simple, to be a place where everyone feels they truly belong, their vision being that every person with PMLD together with families and carers receive the care and the support that they need to enrich their lives. In fact, their values are at the heart of everything that they do because they are essential in helping the charity to make the right decisions across all the services that they provide.

The activities offered are designed to offer PMLD adults ways to engage in enjoyable and meaningful experiences that support their physical, emotional and social well-being.

Physical management is essential including offering physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, and rebound therapy. The therapies are designed to support each person's mobility, strength and co-ordination, contributing to their overall health and well-being. Through creative arts, music therapy, physical exercise and social activities, Myriad create opportunities for clients to connect with others, explore new interests and thus enhance their overall quality of life.

Above all, activities are all about having LOTS OF FUN!!

The foregoing gave St Marks the opportunity to tidy the vestry and the church storage space to accommodate their equipment for the next few months until their new location is ready to welcome one and all. There have been some difficult situations to navigate namely, once again, car parking so please, please do not use the private church car park because you might find your vehicle blocked in particularly by very large mini buses designed to accommodate clients and their associated equipment as they travel between home and the centre and visa versa. Walking between the church and Orchard Centre, I have had first hand contact with both the clients and the staff who are helpful dedicated, happy souls so I can understand their positive outlook and vision to always be **CARING, WELCOMING, TRUSTED, ASPIRATIONAL, ETHICAL AND COLLABORATIVE.**

Please visit the Myriad website for more information, contact details and ways that you can volunteer for them – [www.myriadcentre.co.uk](http://www.myriadcentre.co.uk).

All the lights are finally showing the way in and around the property thanks to the **£200 grant received from St Peter's Parish Council** which was towards the cost of the light fittings and having them fitted. A friendly and efficient electrician, **Andy Lee** was recommended to me to replace three defunct light fittings, one for the church organist and two PIR ones in the church hall. Andy advertises in the church magazine and was wonderful, he arrived when he said he would and did a great job, even crawling around the loft area above the entrance to sort wiring out; he cleared up and vacuumed wherever he had been working which was very helpful. No job is too big or too small, his contact numbers are 01905 356945 or 07879 427571 plus he lives very locally and I have no hesitation in recommending him.

Following **the grant of £250 from the Co-op Community Fund** towards the cost of an involved boiler service to try and discover why it has 'hissy' fits. 31

Working when it seems to want to and not when as programmed, St Marks has a date with the engineer so at last, hopefully, the bills might finally fall owing to reduced gas usage.

## **The List of Dates for your Diary, Mobile and/or Calendar:**

**Chat & Cuppa Club** Everyone is really friendly so please consider adding this **FREE** event to your calendar **First Tuesday of EVERY month from 2 – 3pmish** and the next one is on **3 March** however, we will be up n the church for a few months. You will receive a warm welcome, a free cuppa and we rarely leave before 3.30pm! No transport, no problem, because you can reach us on the No 32 bus and there are stops both ways very nearby; just ask for St Marks Church.

**Mothering Sunday** is on 15 March and I have produced the annual ‘living’ gift that is handed out to members of the congregation during the church service.

**Opera Worcester** Bizet’s Spanish influenced opera, ‘Carmen’ at **The Norbury Theatre, Droitwich, from 25 – 28 March** contact [info@operaworcester.uk](mailto:info@operaworcester.uk) for more information; poster is on page 33.

Don’t forget that Easter comes early this year. Maundy Thursday is on 2 April, Good Friday, 3 April and Easter Day will be celebrated on Sunday, 5 April.

The next **Quiz Night** will be on **Saturday, 11 April, 7pm for 7.30 start**. Please save the date and spread the word because it is lots of fun with banter to and from the teams. I don’t think that I have ever known a quiz night without someone raising a point but, as always, the question master’s decision is final; U16s free, £3 pp donations, please, plus BYO drink and nibbles, raffle prizes gratefully accepted.

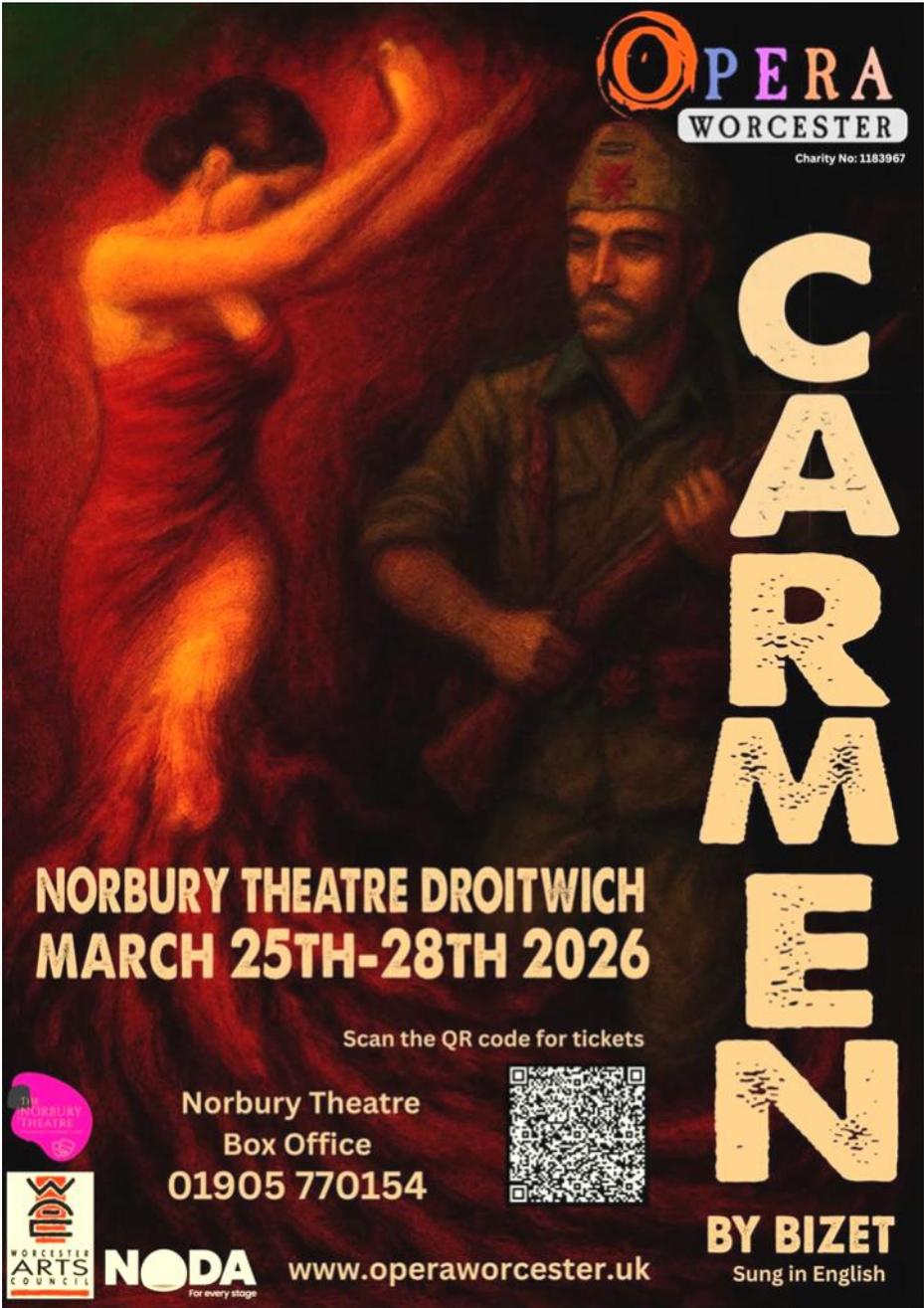
If you look at the list of hall hirers on the back page of this magazine and see a group that you might like to attend, **please contact the organiser** for further details.

**Jan** 07565585726 / [janvale810@gmail.com](mailto:janvale810@gmail.com)



**OPERA**  
**WORCESTER**

Charity No: 1183967



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**NORBURY THEATRE DROITWICH**  
**MARCH 25TH-28TH 2026**

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**BY BIZET**  
Sung in English

## **24<sup>th</sup> March: Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, martyr 1980**

Oscar Romero was a bit of a modern Thomas Becket – loyal to the authorities until he was given great responsibility for the Church. Then, like Becket, there was trouble. In Romero's case, it all began when he was born Ciudad Barrios in El Salvador back in 1917. Devout from a young age, he was ordained in 1942, and became a parish priest in the diocese of San Miguel.

For 25 years Romero worked hard in his parish, where he was a traditional priest, very conservative, ascetic, and devoted to the Virgin Mary. In 1967 he was appointed Secretary to the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador. He was elevated to be Bishop of San Salvador and then Bishop of Santiago de Maria. An admirer of the conservative Opus Dei movement, Romero firmly opposed any liberation theology.

Then in 1977 Oscar Romero was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador. The Salvadorian government saw him as a safe pair of hands for the job. But they were in for a shock. For Romero's new responsibilities made him look afresh at the relationship between Church and State in El Salvador. He did not like what he saw. Romero saw that social unrest and poverty were the direct result of government repression, and even worse, that the Church played its part in the on-going violence of Salvadorian society. After the murder of several outspoken priests and then the expulsion of several allegedly Marxist Jesuits, Romero felt compelled to speak out.

The right-wing Latin American governments were well used to priests who worked with the poor speaking out against them. But this was the first time that an Archbishop had raised his voice, and they were furious.

But Romero became a champion of liberation theology. He condemned government violence and championed the right of the poor to economic and social justice. He even wrote a pastoral letter from the Salvadorian bishops, supporting proportionate counter-violence towards the oppressive right-wing regime. When, nonetheless, he also still tried to act as a mediator between the rival groups, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. For several years Romero received death threats from both left- and right-wing paramilitary groups. Finally, while celebrating Mass, he was shot through the heart by a government assassin. It was 24<sup>th</sup> March 1980, and 40 more people died in the gunfire and explosions at his funeral. The Church worldwide mourned for him.

## Crufts 2026 – bigger than ever

The nation's favourite dog show returns to the NEC this month, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March. Organised by The Kennel Club, Crufts attracts more than 20,000 dogs from 49 different countries. They will be watched by 150,000 people, and over eight million TV viewers via Channel 4, More4 and All4 broadcasts.

This year Crufts is extending into Hall 8 for the Young Kennel Club, and it is also staging brand-new dog grooming competitions among the top dog groomers. Altogether, there will be over 200 breeds on show, including the newly recognised Hungarian Mudi, Icelandic Sheepdog and Pyrenean Mastiff.

The 2026 group schedule is:

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> - Working & Pastoral Groups

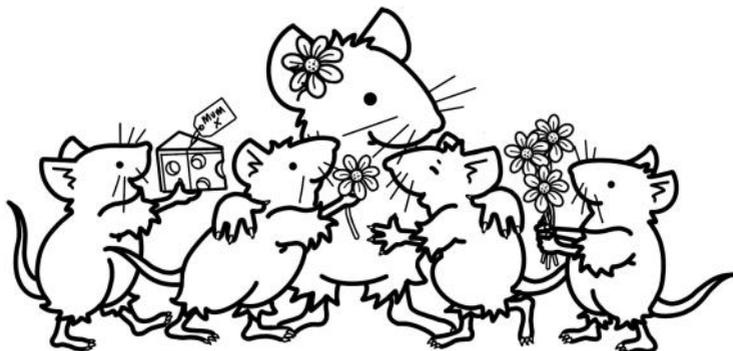
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> - Terrier & Hound Groups

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> - Utility & Toy Groups

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> - Gundog Group and Best in Show Final

The Stand Up to Cancer Crufts Walkies Challenge also returns, encouraging dog owners to walk 60 miles in April 2026, and raise funds for cancer research.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church has long had a patron saint of dogs: Saint Roch. He lived in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century in France and caught the plague while doing charitable work. He went into the forest to die, but instead he met a hunting dog. The dog licked his sores clean, and brought him food, until he recovered. That dog was obviously a '**Good Boy!**'



# Whittington Parish Magazine

## March 26 Edition

