



A journey of learning in the light of God's love

"What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

The parable of the Mustard seed - Mark 4:30-32

Townlands Faith Newsletter

Welcome to our second newsletter! We hope you enjoyed the first issue and found it insightful.

In this edition, we are excited to celebrate the launch of our school prayer. You'll also discover what your child has been learning during collective worship and in their Religious Education (RE) lessons, along with an update from St. Simon and St. Jude Church.

Faith Ambassadors

This term our Faith Ambassadors have worked hard to compose a whole school prayer. The children have been invited to join in with the prayer during our Collective Worship.

**Father God,
Thank you for our school, our
teachers and our friends.
Help us to respect one
another, to believe in
ourselves and to do our best.
We pray that we shine the
light of your love today, and
everyday as we continue on
our learning journey.**

Amen



Community Links

The choir will be performing Easter songs to Bethel and Bethesda Retirement home in early April.

We welcomed Reverend Castle, from St Simon and St Jude Church, to lead our collective worship twice this term. He spoke to us about who Elijah was and discussed the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount.

Easter

Easter is the most significant holy day celebrated by Christians each year. This special day offers Christians the opportunity to reflect on God's fulfilment of His covenant through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Key Easter Dates for 2025

Lent - 5th March to 17th April 2025

Palm Sunday - 13th April 2025

Holy Week - 14th to 19th April 2025

Maundy Thursday - 17th April 2025

Good Friday - 18th April 2025

Holy Saturday - 19th April 2025

Easter Sunday - 20th April 2025

Suggestions for home activities

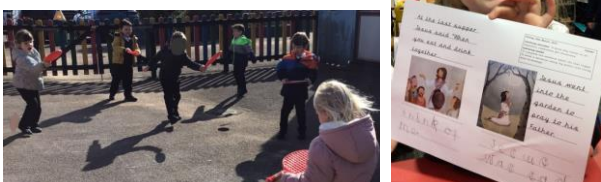
As a family talk about how you are going to practice self-giving for the rest of the season of Lent. You may decide to give up biscuits or cakes and/or donate money/food to a charity.

Get ready for Easter Day by making or baking some Easter treats, for example making nests of chocolate eggs, hot-cross buns, Simnel cake, or maybe create something new.

RE learning this term across the school

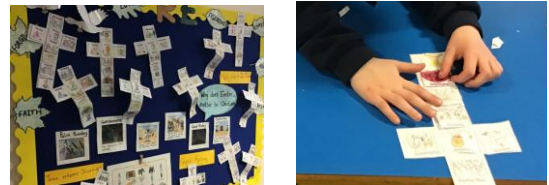
EYFS

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children have been exploring the significance of Easter and its importance to Christians. The learning journey began with Shrove Tuesday, where they participated in pancake races across the playground. Following this, the children delved into the concept of Lent, reflecting on what they might give up for the 40-day period.



Year One and Two

In our recent lessons, we have been exploring the significance of Christianity and learning about Easter. We have discussed symbols of new life, such as baby animals, as well as the key events of Holy Week. The children have enjoyed sequencing these events and creating a Holy Week cross to visually represent the order in which they occur. It's been a meaningful way for them to connect with the Easter story.



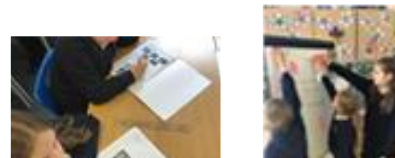
Year Three

In Year 3, the children have been learning about Holy Week to understand why the day of Jesus' crucifixion is called Good Friday. They have explored the events leading up to his crucifixion and reflected on Mary's thoughts and feelings during this period. Additionally, the children have created artwork depicting the Last Supper.



Year Four

Children in Year 4 have been exploring the vision Jesus had for the world, using parables such as the Good Samaritan, Jesus and the Leper, and the stories of his disciples to illustrate how he conveyed his message of love, acceptance, and kindness. Additionally, we discussed the role of church leaders and how today, Christians strive to emulate Jesus by supporting their communities and aiding those in need.



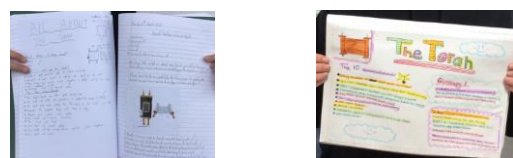
Year Five

The children have been considering the question, what do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people? Pupils have now developed an understanding of the events that led up to Jesus' sacrifice. They also discussed who was responsible for his death. The children have considered the difference Jesus has made to the lives of many Christians.



Year Six

This half-term, Year 6 children have been delving into the question, "Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?" Building on their previous learning from Years 2 and 4, they have identified and explained Jewish beliefs, examined the significance of Jewish traditions and sacred objects, and explored the content of the Torah. They have also drawn connections with the Christian faith through the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments, and compared various forms of worship within the Jewish faith.





*Martin's
Message*



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SAINTS *alive*

EASTER SUNDAY

It's been a long time coming! Easter Sunday will finally arrive on 20th April, one of the latest dates for Easter. The last possible date is 25th April which last occurred in 1943. It will occur again in 2038 – a gap of 95 years.

Easter, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, two days after his crucifixion, is the main celebration of the Christian faith. It is a celebration of hope amid a sinful and wrong-headed world. I was recently watching news footage from war-torn Eastern Congo. The cruelty and suffering being experienced there was almost too much to bear watching. My heart went out to those caught up in it.

When he was put to death on the cross, Jesus cried out 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me' (Matthew 27 v 46). This man, who was God himself, had done nothing wrong. He entered the worlds suffering, dying in one of the cruellest ways ever thought up by humans. Not even God was immune from the cruelty of humanity.

That might have been the end of it. But two days later, Jesus rose from death. He was alive again! Sin, cruelty and suffering did not have the final say. Its hold on humanity had been broken once and for all, and the life of God's Spirit poured out to bring new possibilities and hope. We read in the Bible that one day God will liberate the whole of creation from its present suffering. When, we do not know, but meanwhile we can begin to live the new life that Jesus brings. Forty years ago this year, attracted by Jesus' teachings and the Easter message, I made the decision to give my life to Jesus Christ. Put simply, the Christian faith seemed the best solution to the world's problems.

..... continued in next column

So, as I wait for Easter, with the turbulence of the world swirling around us, I hold on to the hope Jesus has given me and seek to live a life infused with the Spirit of God.

You are all welcome to join our events in the run-up to Easter, and our Easter Sunday celebrations.

God Bless.

Martin Castle – Priest-in-charge

Just a couple of events...

Good Friday – Walk of witness

We will again be walking down to the Methodist Church for our Good Friday service. Meet at 10.15am at either St Simon and St Jude's Church on Almeys Lane, or St Peter and St Paul's (RC) Church on Melton Street for the walk of witness. The service, weather permitting, will be outside and begin at 11.00am. There will be refreshments afterwards including hot cross buns in the Methodist Church Hall.



Good Friday – STOP at 3!

We read in the Bible that it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon on Good Friday that Jesus breathed his last and died.

This year we are inviting as many people as possible to join us on the St Simon and St Jude's Facebook page for 3pm so that we can stop for a few minutes together, wherever we are, to remember Jesus' death on the cross and the sacrifice he made for us.

We will have a short time (5 minutes) of reflection and prayer together. Whether you are at home, or on holiday, please join us on

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stsimonandstjude



Newsletter of St Simon and St Jude Earl Shilton and St Mary's Elme Thorpe

EASTER & APRIL SERVICES

Sunday 6th April – 5th Sunday of Lent

9.15am – All-age worship at St Mary's
10.45am – All-age worship at SS&SJ followed by a short service of Holy Communion
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 13th April – Palm Sunday

9.15am – Holy Communion service at St Mary's
10.45am – Holy Communion service at SS&SJ
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Thursday 17th April – Maundy Thursday

9.00am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ
7.00pm – Maundy Thursday service at Earl Shilton Methodist Church

Friday 18th April – Good Friday

10.15am – Walk of Witness from SS&SJ or RC Church to the Methodist Church for 11am service.
3.00pm – Stop at 3 on Facebook

Saturday 19th April – Holy Saturday

4.00pm – Prayers for a hurting world at St Mary's

Sunday 20th April – Easter Day

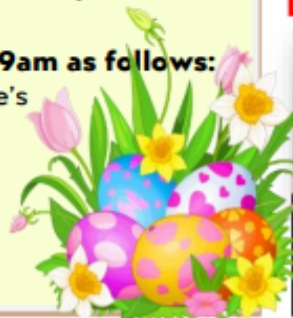
6.00am – Sunrise Service at St Mary's
9.15am – All-age Holy Communion at St Mary's
10.45am – All-age Holy Communion at SS&SJ
6.30pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 27th April – 2nd Sunday of Easter

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's
10.45am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ

Prayers to start the day at 9am as follows:

Monday – St Simon and St Jude's
Tuesday – St Mary's
Wednesday – Facebook
Thursday – St Mary's



St. Mary's Subscription Club

LUCKY NUMBERS

Those attending the next Elmesthorpe Friends, Food and Flowers Initiative coffee morning from 10am to 11.30am in the village hall on Saturday 29th March will need to play their cards right.



They are being asked to wear hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades for a Games Galore event which is sure to include all the usual features which make these gatherings so popular – themed treats and a quiz.

There will also be stalls, home-made cakes and other refreshments, a raffle, door prizes and the St Mary's Subscription Club draw.

Winning numbers and prize monies in the February draw were:

1st **56** (£40), 2nd **44** (£25), 3rd **148** (£15), 4th **3** (£10) and 5th **46** (£10).

If you wish to get in touch please contact the church office:

Parish Church Office at St Simon & St Jude Church Hall High Street. Earl Shilton Leicestershire. LE9 7DH
01455 843961 parishchurch@gmx.co.uk

If you would like to contact our church minister his contact details are as follows:

Rev'd Martin Castle (Priest-in-charge)
07759 002660 revdmartincastle@gmx.com



Anyone who types in the following domain names will be redirected to our church and benefice sites

on AChurchNearYou.com:
www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Mary-Elmesthorpe
www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Simon-St-Jude-Earl-Shilton
www.achurchnearyou.com/Earl-Shilton-with-Elmesthorpe



ST SIMON & ST JUDE CHURCH
CHURCH ST/ALMEY'S LANE
EARL SHILTON
LEICESTER LE9 7DA



ST MARY'S CHURCH
STATION ROAD
ELMESTHORPE
LEICESTER LE9 7SG

PUZZLES

WHAT A PUZZLE!

WHO DOES IT?

The puzzle this month is simple
– who is devising it?

In the March issue we said that the clues given to Bible characters and places plus aspects of church would be the last due to the answers getting more obscure if a similar pattern was continued. We invited you to submit ideas for a replacement but, sadly, there was no response!

If you have an idea for a puzzle or something else to engage the minds of readers please **have a word with Mitch Irving or call him on 07546 351905.**

In the meantime here are the March solutions:

- 1. Candlemas, 2. Nazareth, 3. Bishop, 4. Minster, 5. Malachi, 6. Titus, 7. Churchwarden, 8. Philemon. 9. Lady Chapel and 10. Revelation.**



A pre Holy Week afternoon tea and fellowship is being held in St Simon & St Jude Parish Hall on Saturday April 12.

Anyone interested is asked to sign up on the sheet in church and choose an item of food from the accompanying list to take along for the bring and share faith tea.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE OF ST SIMON & ST JUDE'S CHURCH

Exciting things are happening at St Simon & St Jude's claims Catherine Leach from the church's Building Development Team.

She says: "We are embarking on an important project to repair, restore and develop our church building to better serve worship, mission and our community.

"As we look to the future, we want to ensure that we preserve what makes our church special while also making it a welcoming and accessible space for generations to come. To do this we need your input! We've created a short survey to gather thoughts and ideas from everyone connected to the church. Whether your suggestions are big or small, practical or ambitious, we welcome them all."

Catherine adds: "You can complete the survey online through the QR code or pick up a printed copy at church. We value everyone's input, your voice matters – let's shape the future of our church together!"



 **Happy Easter** 

EMPATHY IN LENT PRAYERS

If you are on your own you often look for someone to come and see you.

Some neighbours, family or friends you can discount as they have said they are doing something else but you know lots of other people who have the opportunity to call.

When the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, and the Bishop of Loughborough, the Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly, decided to invite people from the diocese to sign up to hold an event of prayer and fasting for Lent they wanted at least one person each day to do something and allocated themes for each day of the week.

The one for Tuesdays included praying for all who are lonely and Mitch Irving who hosted an event in St Simon & St Jude Church was made to feel like one of the many who are in that position.

He says: "I found myself just like those I was praying for and had great empathy. Five people had given me apologies as they had other commitments or were on holiday and I thank them for that but where was everyone else from the usual congregation?"

"We all know someone who we should pop in and see or call but don't always do it and this experience has made me determined to rectify that situation."

Minster Communities Update

The Church of England Churches in this area are currently exploring how we can form 'minster communities' which are groups of existing parishes overseen by a wider ministry team. It is hoped that minster communities will enable us to work together to be more effective in our mission and ministry of sharing God's love revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

- We have completed our 'storyboards' for each church. They can be found on the church websites and on display in both churches.
- Two 'conversation' meetings have been held which have been attended by two representatives from each church.
- We have also been given a series of questions to answer to gain a picture of the churches in relation to discipleship and mission, church buildings, growing faith and schools, as well as other areas of church life. The PCCs will answer these questions and share them with the congregations prior to submission on 11th April.

HOPE AND GLORY WHAT'S YOUR STORY

Do you remember reading Christine Brown's tale of being married by a vicar she had not met, the "railway rector" the Revd Teddy Boston, who declined an invitation to attend the tea party reception saying he could not stop as he had "an engine on the boil"?

What's your story? Is there an aspect to your own wedding that did not conform to the usual pattern? Perhaps there was a humorous side to a service you were at – no names no pack drill!

Or have you read a good book you could recommend to others? This is your newsletter and we want to hear from you, whatever you want to say. Jot down a few details, **see Mitch Irving, email him at mirving2734@gmail.com or call 07546 351905.**