

CONNECT

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2026

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE PARISHES OF
THE TRUNCH GROUP**



This issue includes –

- **Services and reflections for Holy Week and Easter**
- **Focus on St Nicholas' church, Swafield**
- **A poem for Holy Saturday**
- **Forthcoming events**



BRADFIELD



GIMINGHAM



KNAPTON



MUNDESLEY



PASTON



SWAFIELD



TRUNCH



CAFÉ CHURCH

Rectors Letter

During our Lent Course this year we have looked at four days; Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, as well as 'so what difference has that made?' on the Monday following. The idea has been to try and more fully embrace the whole of Easter and prepare for it, rather than concentrate solely on Good Friday. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that new life on Easter Day is dependent on 'letting go' on Good Friday.

The things we need to let go of can take many forms; habits of mind or body, resentments or selfish thoughts or actions. We often call these things sins and traditionally they are separated into 'mortal' sins (grave violations) and 'venial' sins (lesser offences). They can be understood as transgressions of religiously endorsed moral codes or simply as things that by commission or omission get in the way of fullness of life and relationship with God. For most of us it will be a mixture!

However we understand it, it is well worth examining, letting go of and accepting forgiveness for our sins, or indeed memories of our past sins that we are still carrying around with us, ahead of Easter Day, so that we can more fully embrace our new life alongside the risen Jesus.

There are many ways this can happen. Prayerfully write them down on a piece of paper, pray for forgiveness and throw the list on the fire or in the bin. Simply pour everything out to God in prayer in whatever order it comes. Engage with our services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Or, more in the catholic tradition, make a formal confession. I am not advocating this for most people, but for a few, who really struggle to accept that they are forgiven, telling a priest and receiving formal absolution can be the key to freedom. Please talk to one of our clergy if you would like to explore this.

However you approach and pilgrim through the events of Holy Week, I pray you will know more of God's light, life and love on Easter Monday.

All blessings,

Sally

Editorial: why should we bother with ‘liturgy’?

Around the year 382 AD a Spanish nun called Egeria made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and wrote a long account of her experiences. She described in detail many observations she made during Holy Week in Jerusalem. These showed how the early Christian Church marked the last days of Jesus’ earthly ministry before his crucifixion and death. The great value of Egeria’s account is the way it pointed to the use of what we call ‘liturgy’ in worship – formal enactments which mark significant biblical events and therefore help to shape our understanding. Liturgy in worship is especially prominent in the last days of Lent when we try to grasp the significance of what happened to Jesus.

Egeria described how, on the day we now call Palm Sunday, pilgrims in Jerusalem would gather and carry palm branches to retrace Jesus’ journey from the Mount of Olives down into Jerusalem to the site of the Temple (see John 12:12-15). In those days the procession was led by the local bishop and lasted for much of the day, with great crowds of participants. Nowadays, most Palm Sunday processions are simple short walks from churchyard to nave, lasting just a few moments. A small horse or donkey is a slightly extravagant optional extra. Nonetheless, the tradition is full of symbolism and significance and our modern worship each Palm Sunday imitates a tradition that is well over 1600 years old.

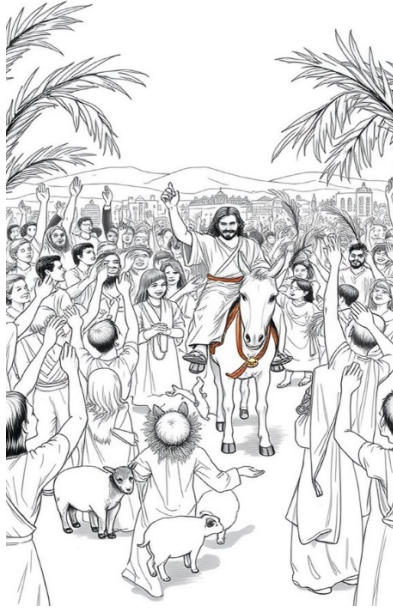
Other days of Holy Week may be marked with symbolic liturgy. On Maundy Thursday the evening communion service may include foot washing to mark Jesus’ actions during his supper with the disciples (John 13:1-15). More ambitiously, some churches organise a ‘Passover’ meal with roast lamb and flatbread to replicate the last supper. And on Good Friday, the memory of the terrible events of the crucifixion are

often enhanced by the presence of a large wooden cross within the church, which is otherwise stripped of all decorations and coverings.

Liturgy is not therefore something fancy – a mysterious, almost secret ritual, meaningless to non-churchgoers. It helps the gospel story come alive. The word ‘liturgy’ itself is derived from the Greek and means something like ‘the people’s work’ – reflecting the idea that it is our vocation to work hard, to concentrate on the meaning, in our worship. Liturgy enhances worship by providing a memory of key biblical actions – actions which are central parts

of the Christian story. And, as the writings of Egeria show, it has been around for many hundreds of years, probably going back to the decades immediately after Jesus' resurrection.

Do attend our Holy Week and Easter services and see how enacted liturgy can help us appreciate these dramatic events – the climax of Jesus' life.



Feature: St Nicholas' Church, Swafield



Wall rue fern – a rare plant growing in the walls of St Nicholas' Church

Breathing new life into an ancient church

St Nicholas' Church, Swafield, stands in a rather lonely location, to the north of its eponymous village on the road to Trunch. A few years ago it seemed to reflect a general air of shabby neglect and decay, with few services and little sign of life. Not so, today! This beautiful building, with its rare, thatched nave, has seen a remarkable revival in its fortunes and is set to become centre of cultural significance in North Norfolk, while retaining its firm Christian heritage and traditions. The breath of life (or rather the Holy Spirit) is moving there; but in practical terms, the revival owes so much to the indefatigable work of churchwarden Tim Payne and Boris Konoshenko who have been the inspirations behind the recent transformation. This magazine feature considers the wonderful diversity of nature in the churchyard; the historic fabric of the church; the creation of a new arts centre; and the restoration of the bells. But fundamentally, and crucially, St Nicholas remains a haven of Christian worship for its local community.

A churchyard brimming with rare plants

Liz Carr writes –

At the very end of February 2026, a large group of volunteers gathered at St. Nicholas' church to prune, trim, mow and weed the churchyard ready for spring. Ivy was removed from church walls and headstones allowing the wall rue (see picture page 6) on the tower to flourish. This plant is very sensitive to changes in the environment and St. Nicholas has the largest colony of wall rue in the county.

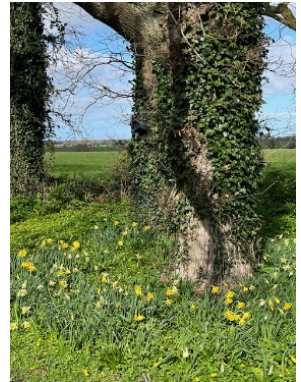
Whilst clearing the skirt around the base of the church I came across a frog who had been disturbed from his slumbers near the well – which was also discovered. There are primroses and cowslips flowering already and plenty of violets. The hedging has been pruned back to the boundary wall (yes, there is a wall in there too) giving more light in the churchyard for flowers to flourish. The daffodils are out and birds are now nesting, so nothing was disturbed there – just a general tidying and removing of 'thug' plants like alexanders and nettles, allowing the oxeye daisies to spread. Swafield churchyard is a haven for rare plants and grasses, with patches of pignut (which looks like very delicate, short, cow parsley) and ladies bedstraw (a very sweet smell). Keeping the pathways mown and grass short around the tended graves gives the churchyard a cared for appearance and it now looks very smart and ready for spring. Thank you to all the helpers and to Tim and Boris for refreshments.



Wood Anemone



Ladies Bedstraw



Daffodils in bloom

An ancient rood screen in need of loving care

The west tower of St Nicholas is dated from the early 14th century and therefore almost exactly 700 years old. The remainder of the church was rebuilt rather later, probably mid-15th century, but you can see the roof line of the former church against the wall of the tower inside the church.

However, the most exciting historical feature is the exceptionally preserved painted rood screen with eight painted saints along the dado (the screen's base panels). Unlike Trunch, where the faces of the saints were scratched out at the Reformation, these paintings apparently escaped the zeal of the 16th century puritans who wanted to destroy Catholic imagery. The eight painted saints are all Jesus' disciples. In order, from the north side, they are: Andrew, Peter, Jude, Simon, James the Great, John, Thomas and James the Less. (It is not clear whether there were originally twelve and the others have been lost). The saints of the eight existing paintings can be identified by their traditional emblems. For example, St James the Great is shown as a pilgrim; and St Thomas carries a spear, the sign of his reputed martyrdom.

The screen itself is made of oak and is a combination of the original elements (the painted dado) and Victorian replacements. At one time there would have been a canopy and loft above the screen but these are now lost. A recent conservation report has praised the historical importance of the screen and its paintings, but has pointed out that there is a need for some restoration and repair. For example, there is a need for careful cleaning of the centuries of ingrained dust; there are old worm and beetle holes in the screen, most of which are thankfully non-active, although there is some recent woodworm damage on the southside in need of urgent treatment. Over the years there has been some paint loss, probably caused by damp.

We hope and pray that the PCC will be able to gain heritage grants for the preservation of this outstanding example of medieval piety.

A dynamic arts centre bringing culture to Norfolk



A wonderfully exciting development is the creation of the St Nicks Art Centre, the brainchild of Tim Payne, whose energy and enterprise have truly breathed new life into an historic church. His vision has benefitted from generous support and sponsorship, including the Norfolk Churches Trust, Norfolk Community Foundation, Sanders Coaches and other local sponsors and partners. The grand opening night on 20 March was a sell-out event.

The creation of the arts centre has been carried out with sensitivity to the Christian heritage of the building. Earlier in March, six of the pews were temporarily removed from the nave to make additional space available for concerts & plays and to allow more comfortable seating during events. The pews are safely stored in a local barn and the plan is to use their beautifully carved ends during the restoration.

You will find full details of an exceptional cultural programme at <https://st-nicks.co.uk>. This includes the screening of 'A passage to India' hosted by Nigel Havers on 10 April, with optional curry!

See also page 15

The bells of St Nicholas

Tim Payne writes –

St Nicholas' four medieval bells have been restored. They had no cracks and are in very good condition. The restorers are waiting for a replacement headstock to be manufactured and then the bells will start their return journey from Somerset, sometime in late March or early April. The village is eagerly awaiting their return as the full set hasn't been heard for over a hundred years!



‘You are here to kneel, where prayer has been valid’

This wonderful line comes from T S Eliot’s poem, *Little Gidding*, which draws spiritual lessons from a remote, historic Christian community. The phrase reflects the significance of prayer and connects past and present, emphasising that prayer is more than mere words. It is about time, memory and the intersection of history, spirituality and creation – our enduring human experiences. I believe that we see much of this in what has happened, and is about to happen, at St Nicholas’ Church, Swafield. Here we see God’s creation at work in the vibrant life of the churchyard and also, I believe, in the cultural revolution of the arts centre; and in the preservation a Christian building and its bells. But it is also present in the worship and prayer taking place in the church. Morning prayer and other services continue there on a regular basis. Do join us in a place ‘where prayer has been valid’ for many centuries.

Transforming St Nicholas, Swafield



Volunteers hard at work



Boris enjoys the challenge!



Temporary removal of Victorian pews

Poet's Corner: Easter Eve by Lionel Johnson (1867-1902)

Lionel Johnson was a highly talented late Victorian writer, an associate of Oscar Wilde and a friend of W B Yeats. He is rather neglected today, but his best poetry is a subtle testimony to a deep and sincere Christian faith.

Doubt and uncertainty, faith and trust

Awhile meet Doubt and Faith;

For either sigheth and saith,

That He is dead,

Today: the linen cloths cover His head.

That hath, at last, whereon to rest; a rock bed.

Come! For the pangs are done,

That overcast the sun,

So bright to-day!

And moved the Roman soldier: come away!

Hath sorrow more to weep? Hath pity more to say?

Why wilt thou linger yet?

Think on dark Olivet;

On Calvary stem:

Think, from the happy birth at Bethlehem,

To this last woe and passion at Jerusalem!

This only can be said:

He loved us all; is dead;

May rise again.

But if he rise not? Over the far main,

The sun of glory falls indeed: the stars are plain.

What did the disciples do on the day after the crucifixion? Did they dare to venture out from their hiding places? Did they gaze, in bright sunlight, on 'Calvary stem', the site of Jesus' death? And did they recall Jesus' words, often repeated on the road to Jerusalem, that he must suffer and die? Did they also recall the words they barely understood at the time, that the Son of Man would rise again? Surely, and not surprisingly, as they pondered these things they would have heard the inner voice of doubt – the inner voice within this subtle poem.

This is an excellent poem to use for reflection on Easter Eve, often called Holy Saturday, a day which is a kind of vacuum between the agony of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday. It brings us into the reality of the Gospel narratives when we notice the allusions to Jesus' ministry. Remember, for example, how Jesus said that, 'Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' On Holy Saturday, Jesus' head rested on a slab of rock. Remember, too, the awe-struck attitude of the Roman centurion when he witnessed Jesus' moment of death.

Poems such as *Easter Eve* are not just illustrations of the Gospel story – they evoke greater meaning and understanding for contemporary Christians. The best modern Christian writing therefore creates a continuity with the message of New Testament writers.



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Church Services in Holy Week and Easter Season

Sunday 29 March – Palm Sunday 10.00 am Holy Communion, All Saints’ Church, Gimingham

Monday 30 March Chrism Eucharist, 11.00 am Norwich Cathedral

Thursday 2 April – Maundy Thursday 7.00 pm Eucharist @ St Peter and St Pauls, Knapton

Friday 3 April – Good Friday 12.00-2.00 pm silent Prayer followed by Good Friday service @ St Botolphs, Trunch

Sunday 5 April – Easter Sunday

6.00 am Dawn service, Mundesley churchyard

10.00 am Holy Communion, All Saints’ Church, Mundesley

11.00 am Café Church

Sunday 12 April – Second Sunday of Easter 10.00 am Holy Communion, St Botolph’s Church, Trunch

Sunday 19 April – Third Sunday of Easter 10.00 am Holy Communion, St Peter’s and St Paul’s, Knapton

Sunday 26 April – Fourth Sunday of Easter 10.00 am Holy Communion, St Margaret’s Church, Paston

10.00 am Morning Prayer, St Botolph’s Church, Trunch

On the 1st of every month, **St. Giles, Bradfield**, hosts a silent prayer service beginning at 12 noon and lasting about 30 minutes

Café Church meets at 11:00 in the Mundesley Community Rooms on Sunday Mornings: 5, 12, 19, 26 April

The 10:00 Wednesday morning Holy Communion will be in the Mundesley Community Hub on 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 April.

Other events during late March and April

A tremendous programme of Trunch concerts, National Theatre live performances, classical concerts, other live music, Royal Opera and cinema has been scheduled for 2026. The 'St Nicks Art Centre' had its grand opening at St Nicholas' Church, Swafield on 20 March with a sold-out performance of reggae and soul music.



ST NICKS ARTS CENTRE

Among the forthcoming events are:

Friday 10 April – Nigel Havers introduces **A Passage to India**, the award winning 1984 film based on E M Forster's classic novel.

Saturday 18 April – **DixieMix Jazz Band**: 'From Blues to Swing'

Friday 24 April – **The Magic Flute** screened live from the Royal Opera

Friday 1 May – **National Theatre Live**: All My Sons – filmed live from London's West End

Further details are available at <https://st-nicks.co.uk>

For bookings please visit the website, or email info@st-nicks.co.uk or phone **01692 402624**

During the week @ Mundesley Community Hub:

Tuesday	15:00 – 17:30 Warm Hub
Wednesday	10:00 – 11:00 Holy Communion 13:30 – 16:00 Memory Lane Café
Thursday	12:00 – 14:00 Lunch Club (<i>every third Thursday of the month</i>)
Friday	09:00 Community Café 10:00 – 12:00 Community Larder

Tuesday Warm Hub

You are *warmly* invited to join us at the Mundesley Community Hub to share a two course meal, enjoy the heating and use the space for whatever you would like. Be that card games, a catch up with friends (or meet new ones!), reading a book, pop along and see what Mundesley Warm Hub can do for you. Every Tuesday 15:30 til 17:00.

Wednesdays Memory Lane Café

We meet every Wednesday between 1:30 and 4:00pm. Memory Lane Café is a warm, friendly, safe environment for people with dementia, their carers and anyone who would like to come along for a chat over tea, coffee and refreshments. We have music, activities and entertainment for all to enjoy. Memory Lane dementia Café is free for all to attend and you will be welcomed and looked after by our trained dementia friendly team of volunteers who would love to get to know you. For further information or if you would like to volunteer with us, please contact our team at MemoryLaneCafeMundesley@gmail.com

Thursday Lunch Club

Come and join us at our Lunch club, all are welcome to partake in a 2 course meal, every third Thursday of the month. We open at 12 and lunch will be served at 12:30. We ask for a suggested donation of £5 a head.

Friday Community Cafe and Larder

Open every Friday morning with a Community Cafe from 9.00am and Community Larder from 10.00am, both until 12 noon. The community larder is open to all, and all food is donated via from Waitrose, Morrisons and Tesco. Anyone can add to the larder from their allotment/vegetable patch and anyone can take away food regardless of their circumstances. Our Community Cafe offers free tea or coffee, and a choice of wholesome food as well as good company. All welcome – pop in and be part of the community

Some Parish Contacts

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