

NEWSLETTER JANUARY and FEBRUARY 2026

NEW YEAR, NEW START

Happy New Year! I've never been much of one for New Year's resolutions. Committing to something that seems a noble intention on 1st January but will soon become a burden or a struggle feels like setting myself up for failure. But the Christian life continually invites us to new starts. In Advent and Lent we particularly focus on the changes we want and need to make in our relationship with God, but each Sunday, each time we come to the Eucharist, we recall our struggle to be faithful to God and rejoice in God's mercy as we confess our sins and receive absolution. The difficulty with resolutions can be that they are either too vague or they are too demanding and impossible to keep, so that the minute we fail once we give up. It's much harder to accept the inevitability of imperfection and to keep going anyway, but that's what any progress, in any aspect of life requires, and the spiritual life is no different. So perhaps our resolution should be to not expect perfection but to seek God's grace to try anyway - whether to reduce our waist size a little, or hopefully, to grow in our knowledge and practice of God's love. Fr David.

EPIPHANY GIFT DAY

The festive season is far from over in church and, as you will probably have heard me say before, it's perfectly acceptable to keep your Christmas Tree and other decorations up until Candlemas on 2nd February, as was once the common custom. That's because in January we move from Christmastide to Epiphanytide and continue to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus and the revealing of his glory right up to the celebration of his Presentation in the Temple 40 days after his birth.

That feast is known as Candlemas because of the words of Simeon, spoken on that occasion, that Jesus would be a light to the nations. It is therefore traditional for candles to be used in the coming year to be blessed at Candlemas and in many churches the opportunity is given for those who would like to, to donate the candles in advance. At St Saviour's, like many other churches, we do that with an Epiphany Gift Day, using the celebration of the gifts the Magi brought to Jesus as a prompt to consider giving a gift of our own to his church.

I am really grateful to all who have given Epiphany gifts, large and small, some in thanksgiving for something particular or in memory of a loved one. If

in this Epiphanytide, or at any other point, you would like to give a one-off gift to be used for a particular purpose, do speak to Kathryn about that.

Even more important though is our regular giving to support the life of the church. It is a core part of Christian living and essential if we want St Saviour's to flourish. Again, do talk to Kathryn if you would like to know how you can give regularly or enable us to claim gift aid - which can add 25% to a tax payer's donation at no cost to them. We will be thinking more about giving in the weeks after Candlemas, including leaving a legacy in a will. Fr David.

ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT

February will bring Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. The act of receiving the sign of the cross in ash upon one's forehead is a deeply moving reminder of our humanity and need of God. It's a great start to a meaningful Lent and if you've never experienced it, do give it a go. To make Ash Wednesday, 18th February accessible to as many people as possible, there will be Eucharists with the imposition of ashes at both 12 noon and 7pm.

Throughout the season of Lent there will be extra resources to help us pay a little extra attention to our relationship with God. Each Thursday at 7pm, beginning on 26th February, there will be guided Contemplative Prayer (no experience needed) and on Saturdays at 11:30am there will be a Eucharist with Bible Study (again no prior knowledge necessary). This will take place each Saturday in Lent except for the week of the Lent Quiet Day at St Philip's Church which you are encouraged to attend instead. At the time of printing the date of the Quiet Day has not been confirmed. Fr David is always very happy to spend time talking one-to-one with people about their spiritual life. Lent, in particular, can act as a prompt for those conversations. Please do speak to him, if you think that might be beneficial.

HELP WANTED

A gentle reminder that we are always in need of volunteers to help make the life of St Saviour's happen. Volunteering our time and talents is a key part of our giving back to God and commitment to the future of the Church.

If you would be willing to be a welcomer at Messy Church, please speak to Fr David.

If you would be willing to help with Church Cleaning, please come along on the advertised dates or speak to Kathleen if you could help but not at those times.

If you would be willing to help with flower arranging, please speak to Dee.

If you would be willing to help launder church linens, please speak to Kathryn.

If you are interested in finding out about being an alter server, a reader, a welcomer or someone who leads the prayers in our services, please speak to Fr David.

JOKE

Who do mice pray to?

Chesus!

DATES

Sunday 11th January

Pub Club from 7:30pm in The Blyth Hill Tavern: Come and have a pint with Fr David! All are most welcome.

Thursday 15th January

Finance and Giving Mission Working Group, 7pm in the "choir vestry".

Sunday 18th January

Messy Church, 3-4pm in the Church Hall: Craft, stories, games and refreshment for children and their parents and carers. All Welcome, do invite others to come.

Tuesday 20th January

Lunch Club, 12:30pm in the Scout Hut: Join us for a lovely home cooked lunch and great company! Please contact Andrew, Kathleen or Kathryn to reserve a place.

Sunday 1st February

Candlemas and blessing of gifts from Gift Day, 10am Parish Eucharist.

Tuesday 3rd February

PCC meeting, 7pm at the Vicarage.

Saturday 7th February

Church Cleaning, 10am.

Sunday 8th February

Pub Club from 7:30pm in the General Napier.

Sunday 15th February

Messy Church, 3-4pm in the Church Hall.

Tuesday 17th February—Shrove Tuesday

Lunch Club, 12:30pm in the Scout Hut.

Wednesday 18th February—Ash Wednesday

12 Noon Eucharist with the imposition of ashes.
7pm Eucharist with the imposition of ashes.

Saturday 21st February

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Thursday 26th February

Guided Contemplative Prayer, 7pm.

Saturday 28th February

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Thursday 5th March

Guided Contemplative Prayer, 7pm.

Saturday 7th March

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Sunday 8th March

Pub Club from 7:30pm in The Blyth Hill Tavern.

Thursday 12th March

Guided Contemplative Prayer, 7pm.

Saturday 14th March

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Sunday 15th March, Mothering Sunday

Messy Church, 3-4pm in the Church Hall.

Tuesday 17th March

Lunch Club, 12:30pm in the Scout Hut.

Thursday 19th March

Guided Contemplative Prayer, 7pm.

Saturday 21st March

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Thursday 26th March

Guided Contemplative Prayer, 7pm.

Saturday 28th March

Eucharist with Bible Study, 11:30am tbc.

Sunday 29th March, Palm Sunday

Stations of the Cross, 7pm

Thursday 2nd April, Maundy Thursday

7pm Parish Supper

8pm Eucharist followed by watch until midnight.

Friday 3rd April, Good Friday

12 noon The Liturgy of Good Friday

Saturday 4th April, Holy Saturday

Church Cleaning, 10am.

Sunday 5th April, Easter Day

Parish Eucharist & Easter Egg Hunt

BAPTISM/ADMISSION TO COMMUNION

On Mothering Sunday, 15th March, there will be a special opportunity for Children and Young People to be Baptised and/or Admitted to Communion at our 10am service. If you would like to have your child baptised (Christened) or if you have a child aged 7 or more who you would like to be able to receive communion, please do speak to Fr David. Preparation sessions for both will be organised once the level of interest is known.

160TH BIRTHDAY!

On 8th May St Saviour's Church will be 160 years old. We are planning a series of events to celebrate, please do make sure you have them in your diary.

Friday 8th May in the evening there will be a Eucharist with Bishop Christopher and other guests and a reception afterwards.

Saturday 9th May there will be a concert of music in the evening.

Sunday 10th May the Parish Eucharist will be followed by a Church Picnic.

Please do make it a priority to be around that weekend as we celebrate our church's life together, including our final visit from Bishop Christopher before his retirement in August.

NEXT EDITION

The next newsletter January. Any items for inclusion should be sent to Kathryn by Sunday 15th February