

## Welcome to our services today

22 March 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passiontide)



Morning services presided by Revd Canon Jenny Gray.

**SAID EUCHARIST, 8am**

**PARISH COMMUNION, 9.15am**

Followed by refreshments and chat in the Hall.

For part of this service during term time, young people are invited to join our age-appropriate activities led by our parent volunteers:

Groups for ages up to Year 5 meets in the Hall

Years 5 to 7 in the Parish Room

Years 8+ in the Cellar (access is thru the Parish Room)

There are various resources and activity bags in the Children's Chapel available for younger children.

Hymns: 127 (*1<sup>st</sup> tune*), 700, 582, 376

Choir: Darke in F

Goss O Saviour of the World

Readings: Ezekiel 37: 1-14; Romans 8: 6-12; John 11: 1-45

This week we pray for all who live and work in Stonehills and Stonebank.

*Next Sunday's readings: Isaiah 50: 4-9a; Philipians 2: 5-11; Passion Narrative - Matthew 27: 11-54*

## **SERVICE OF PRAYERS & MUSIC FOR PASSIONTIDE, 5pm**

Includes Choirs from Applecroft Primary School and

St John's Lemsford C of E Primary School

Presided by Revd Dr Geoffrey Calvert

Parish Office (mornings Wed – Fri): 01707 694191

**This Church is currently in vacancy.**

[admin@stfranciswgc.org.uk](mailto:admin@stfranciswgc.org.uk)

Enquiries on Funerals or Burials, etc. to be directed to: Parish Administrator, c/o Parish Office

St Francis of Assisi, (CoE) Church Road, WGC, AL8 6QJ Reg. Charity No: 112984

## **Services & Diary Dates: this week**

Tue 24 Mar Said Eucharist, 7.30pm

Wed 25 Mar Said Eucharist, 10.30am  
Coffee for All, 10.30am

Thur 26 Mar Thursday Lunches, 12noon

Fri 27 Mar Choir Practice, 7pm

Sun 29 Mar Said Eucharist, 8am

Parish Communion, 9.15am

Thur 2 Apr Maundy Thursday-Sung Eucharist with the Washing of Feet, 8pm followed by 'The Watch' until midnight

Fri 3 Apr *Churches Together service in Howardsgate, 11am*

Liturgy of Good Friday, 8am

Service of Music and Readings, 12 noon

Sun 6 Apr Family Communion for Easter, 10am  
(ends with Easter egg hunt outside)

## **VACANCY Update:**

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm, you are invited to an open meeting in St Francis hosted by Bp Jane (Bishop of Hertford), Archdeacon Janet and Rural Dean Darren, as they seek to support St Francis going forward. They would like to bring a proposal for discussion and hear your views. Afterwards, Archdeacon Janet will provide a written summary of the proposal and discussion so those unable to attend will be aware of the proposals and decisions. The meeting should end no later than 9:15pm. Bp Jane's letter is displayed on the noticeboard.

## **News**

**APCM will be held on Sunday 26th April.**

**The Electoral Roll is being revised from 29 Mar to 9 Apr**

All worshippers are encouraged to be on the Roll. If you have any queries, please contact Electoral Roll Officer, Barbara Pavyer.

**We have the following vacancies for and ask that everyone consider if they would come forward and serve as:**

**PCC members, Deanery Synod and Churchwardens**

If you would like more information on any of these roles, please speak to a PCC member (list on the noticeboard) or Churchwarden Carol.

The Flower Team would be most grateful for your donations toward the Easter displays. Please speak to Julie Lowes/ Claire Meola or pass your cash donations via the Parish Office.

**22 March 2026**

**Fifth Sunday of Lent (*Passiontide begins*)**

**Collect**

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Ezekiel 37: 1-14**

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.

He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.

He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.'

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.'

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, *Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.*

Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

**Romans 8: 6-11**

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

**John 11: 1-45**

A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.'

But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.'

The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going

there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.

Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is

a stench because he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

*Next Sunday: Isaiah 50: 4-9a; Philippians 2: 5-11; Passion Narrative - Matthew 27: 11-54*

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**Do join us for our services during Holy Week and Easter:**

**1 April, Tuesday, Holy Week**

7.30pm Said Eucharist

**2 April, Wednesday, Holy Week**

10.30am Said Eucharist

**3 April Maundy Thursday**

8pm Sung Eucharist with the washing of feet followed by 'The Watch' until midnight

**4 April Good Friday**

11am Churches Together service in Howardsgate

8am Liturgy of Good Friday

12 noon Service of Music and Readings

**6 April Easter Sunday**

10am Family Communion *followed by Easter Egg Hunt*

**7 April Easter Monday**

**Pilgrimage to St Albans Abbey, led Rev'd Susan Marsh**

The Easter Monday 3pm informal service in the Cathedral features their worship band, with worship led by Russell Blackman, guest preacher Leah Bucko and ends with short communion led by Bp Jane, Bishop of Hertford. Detailed sign-up sheet on the noticeboard with different walking/meeting up options to suit all abilities.