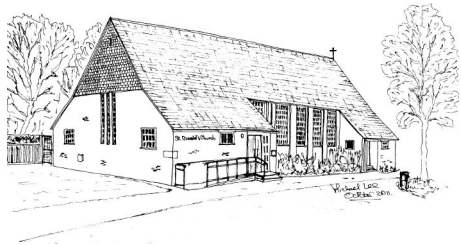


The Parish Magazine of St. Oswald's Church Croxley Green

February
and March
2025





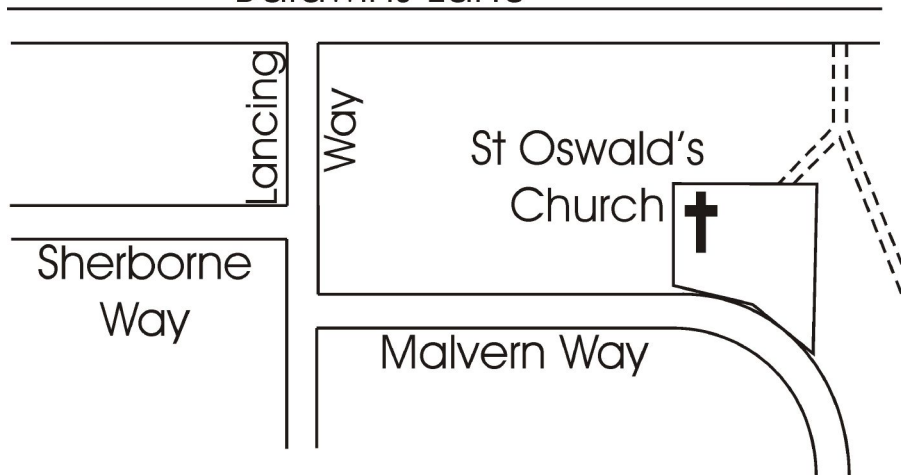
St Oswald's Church – who are we?

*We are part of the Church of
England in the St. Alban's
Diocese.*

website: stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Facebook: [StOswaldsCG](https://www.facebook.com/StOswaldsCG)

Baldwins Lane



You will find us at Malvern Way, Croxley Green, WD3 3QL,
just off Baldwins Lane.

There is a direct footpath link from Baldwins Lane into the
rear of the church grounds, and car park access from
Malvern Way.

The office entrance is at the back of the church hall.



By now most of you will be aware that I will be leaving St Oswald's and Croxley Green after Easter to take up the post of part-time Associate Minister, with house for duty, at Great St Mary's Church in Sawbridgeworth. In my final letter, I shall be reflecting a little more on this change of life. You may also be aware that Bishop Alan has announced his retiring as

Diocesan Bishop a month later, at the end of May. My seventeen years at St Oswald's just beats Bishop Alan's sixteen at St Albans! Seriously, I am grateful to Bishop Alan for the positive and supportive ethos he has worked hard to maintain within this diocese and his encouragement in "Living God's Love".

Spiritual Renewal

Bishop Alan's last major initiative within the diocese has been to designate 2025 as a Year of Spiritual Renewal and Wellbeing, a year-long journey designed to help us lift our hearts and minds, inspired by the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. This initiative is particularly appropriate in the wake of the challenges we have faced over recent years, as individuals, in society and in the Church of England. The intention is to guide us in reconnecting with our faith and seeking the renewing life of the Holy Spirit. To further that aim, a programme of quiet days, week-long "retreats in daily

What's On pp 20-21, From the Churchwardens p.25, Prayers p28, Puzzles p33, Contacts p 38

life”, day pilgrimages (including a John Bunyan Trail) and School of Theology talks and lectures has been planned. Details can be found, and will be regularly updated with new events, at the website <https://year.stalbansdiocese.org>. In addition to the diocesan programme (which, incidentally has been financed by various grant-making bodies, with no funding drawn from parish share), it is hoped that local events and opportunities will be initiated in parishes and deaneries.

Lent Course

Croxley Green is always ahead of the game (!) and so I’m pleased to announce that the Churches Together Lent Course this year is

very much directed towards spiritual renewal. At the suggestion of Steve Elmes from the Baptist Church, the course is to be based on Richard Foster’s book *Streams of Living Water*. In what has been described as a “landmark work”, Foster examines six dimensions of faith and practice which have

characterised the Christian tradition down through the centuries, each one as important and relevant today as in the past.

Starting on the day after Ash Wednesday and continuing on Thursdays throughout Lent at 2pm, with a 7.30pm repeat, each session will focus on one of these six “streams” with a snapshot summary and a practical exercise.

The programme is as follows:

6th March: The Contemplative Tradition: Discovering the Prayer-Filled Life (at All Saints’ Church)



13th March: The Holiness Tradition:
Discovering the Virtuous Life (at Croxley
Methodist Church)

20th March: The Charismatic Tradition:
Discovering the Spirit-Empowered Life (at
Croxley Baptist Church)

27th March: The Social Justice Tradition:
Discovering the Compassionate Life
(Venue tba)

3rd April: The Evangelical Tradition: Discovering the Word-
Centered Life (2pm at St Oswald's Church; 7.30pm venue tba)

10th April: The Incarnational Tradition: Discovering the
Sacramental Life (at St Bede's RC Church)



These meetings are open to anyone and everyone. The previous Lent courses have been much appreciated. Please put the dates in your diary.

Lent Reading

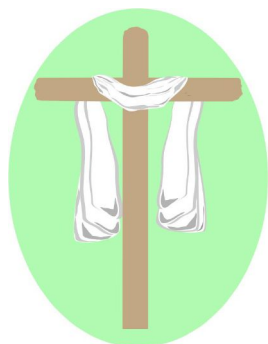
Deepening our faith is one of the objectives that will govern our new Mission Action Plan. Lent is traditionally a time to focus on that aim and spiritual reading is one way for us as individuals to do so. Each year, I customarily suggest some books for Lent reading which I hope that some will find profitable, so here are my recommendations for 2025. Of course, there are plenty of other possibilities which you may want to explore.

Richard Foster's Streams of Living Water, mentioned above, is quite a substantial volume and might take longer than Lent to read but that's not necessarily a bad thing! It would be a helpful way of supplementing the Churches Together course. Although its length

may appear forbidding, it's not a highly academic work and much of it is taken up with lively storytelling about the lives of some significant figures in the different traditions and practical lessons are drawn at the end of each section. The section at the back which gives potted biographies of many more individuals, is perhaps more for dipping into than reading straight through. I have enjoyed and benefitted from this book and can thoroughly recommend it to anyone up for a challenge.

The Bible Reading Fellowship Lent book for 2025 is **Jo Swinney's The Whole Easter Story**. This follows the traditional pattern of providing each day (with Sunday as a "rest day") a Bible passage (given in full), some thoughts on the passage, a suggestion for further reflection and a short prayer. This format is tried and tested and each day's offering is easily manageable and supplemented by a relevant line drawing. The Whole Easter Story should appeal especially to anyone with an interest in Eco-Church as Jo Swinney is Director of Communications for A Rocha International and the book seeks to explain "why the cross is good news for creation."

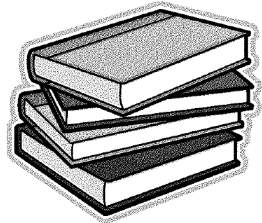
The BRF Lent books are usually very good and this one promises to be no exception. Who knows, but using The Whole Easter Story during Lent may inspire you to start using the regular BRF daily Bible notes available from Brita Blackwell!



For anyone for whom a daily reading is a little too much, **Paula Gooder's Women of Holy Week** might be the answer. There are nine sections, so you could read one each week during Lent and carry on into the Easter season. I have recommended Paula Gooder's books before. She is a lively, well-informed, grounded communicator, as anyone who attended her Deanery talk last year can attest. Over the course of nine stories, Paula Gooder imagines what it might have been like to

accompany Jesus in the final week of his life from the perspective of nine different women, some named in the Gospel accounts, others fictional but based on deep background knowledge. At the back of the book, each story is provided with the relevant Bible references, questions to ponder and some explanatory material and this short book is illustrated with attractive and thoughtful paintings by Ally Barrett.

The name **Richard Harries** will be familiar to listeners to the Radio 4 Today programme through his contributions to Thought for the Day. Previously Bishop of Oxford, he has written a number of books which sensitively explore the Christian faith for both believers and would-be believers, especially as it relates to contemporary questions and culture. His **Seeing God in Art** considers the different ways in which 30 works of art, some well known, others less so, illuminate vital facets of the faith. The sections are not too lengthy and, as one would expect, the book is splendidly illustrated. I used some of Bishop Richard's material in a recent sermon featuring Piero della Francesca's Baptism of Christ and look forward to reading more in due course.



Each year I like to include a choice for those who feel that “spiritual reading” is not for them but which nevertheless might provoke reflection on what it means to be a Christian in today's world. This year I am suggesting **Politics, Poverty and Belief**, written shortly before his death last year by **Frank Field**, former Labour MP for Birkenhead. Lest I be accused of political partisanship, I note that Field, who was always regarded as something of a maverick MP, was cold shouldered out of the Young Conservatives as a schoolboy and resigned the Labour whip before dismissal from the party, losing his seat in the 2019 General Election. Field was inspired by his Christian faith and by a desire to find practical solutions to serious problems such as poverty, hunger, modern

slavery and climate change. In this memoir he sets out what he aspired to achieve and the thinking behind it. Whether you agree or disagree with him, the book provides much food for thought – and maybe stimulus to action too.



Finally comes “something completely different”, **Psalms**, a stained glass colouring book from Dover publishing, created by **Jessica Mazurkiewicz**, comprising 16 translucent pages, each featuring a verse from one of the Psalms. Taking time to carefully colour in these designs could function as a meditative exercise, calming the soul whilst absorbing the scriptural quotation. This is an activity that could be shared with others, especially any children in your circle. And on completion you can display the resulting artwork in a window!

Samples of all these books will be on display in Church for inspection during the first couple of weeks in February and orders can be taken. Or you can order yourself from Eden, Aslan, Waterstones or, if you must, Amazon.

Many blessings,

Robert

Mothers' UNION  **Christian care for families** Janet Staerck writes

9th January 2025

First of all may I start by wishing everyone a very happy, healthy and peaceful new year.

For this meeting we had a small number of members attending. Unfortunately some are suffering with the cold, cough and chest infections and a number do not come out when it is so cold, even though

the sun was shining.

Amber Dalton from the charity Communities 1st came along to tell us about the Three Rivers Shopper Bus and the Watford and Three Rivers Day Trippers.



The Shopper Bus is an accessible door to door service that runs on weekdays to supermarkets. A return fare can be booked for £6 and that just covers the petrol. The rest of the expenses are covered by the Councils and charity funds. If you book four block bookings there is a 20% discount. The Drivers will help carry shopping into your home and help you with getting on and off the bus. Taster sessions are offered to see if the service works for you.

The Day Tripper Service is offered by Watford and Three Rivers Councils. Each month there is a day trip organised of about four to five hours and costs £6 for the trip, to a wide variety of destinations (entrance fees and refreshments are not included in the £6). As examples the January trips included Hertford Castle and Springtime Nursery Enfield.

It was a lovely afternoon, with lots of questions for Amber. They are always open to suggestions for Day Trips. Both these services are useful if you do not drive or only drive short distances. The drivers are friendly and helpful and if the service is used regularly become friends and so do the customers on the bus.

I have put some of the leaflets at the back of the church if you are interested. To book a place for either or for more information visit www.communities1st.org.uk/daytrippers or phone 01727 649980.

[This service is not the same as the Tuesday and Friday Community Bus that goes from Croxley to Watford and back.]

Janet

Next Meeting 13th February with Rabbi Aaron Goldstein



A CROXLEY RAMBLER'S DIARY

Brian Thomson walks to Stocker's Lake -
21st January 2025

It was cold and Croxley Danes school playing field was shrouded in mist. Singly and in groups young people were making their way to the bottom of Baldwins Lane - some striding purposefully, some ambling and chatting. Traffic queued as parents drove their children into the school and then attempted to rejoin the flow. Under the railway bridge on the litter-strewn pavement I could only see across the road. The new West Watford skyscraper was hidden by the fog. It was good to leave the busy traffic as I made my way onto the canal towpath at Cassiobridge.

Through the mist I noted smart barges, including the 'Baltic Icebreaker', at the wharf beneath rusty old railway bridge. You encounter a wide variety of vessels along the towpath; from traditional barges to motor cruisers and even a converted life raft. Some are well cared for and some have seen better days. Hardly anyone was about. Sensible people were keeping warm inside.

But I noticed some signs of approaching spring including hazel catkins full of pollen and a group of mallards in fine breeding plumage. Beyond Mill lock young birches and sycamores have colonised the slope from the old London Transport dump but there is one splendid oak tree beside the towpath as a reminder of the landscape before the underground railway.



Cyclists approaching from behind can be a bit of a hazard for walkers

on the narrow towpath. Some seem to expect you to have a sixth sense and leap out of the way as they rush along without warning. So it was nice to meet a polite young woman who used her bell and then wished me good walking as she rode by. After Lot Mead lock I was startled by an aggressive greylag goose landing on the water close by. Fortunately, its noisy approach was aimed at a nearby Canada goose rather than me.

There are some fine floating homes moored on the approach to Batchworth. A number have created gardens on the banks. One home was under construction on a large pontoon. I particularly admired a Dutch sailing vessel and a colourful plot beside the towpath set out as if for tea on the lawn. Another remarkable boat incorporates a VW Touran into its DIY design and boasts large solar panels.



The Rickmansworth Waterways shop was open but I didn't stop, instead walking on beside Batchworth lake into the Aquadrome. For a cold gloomy day there were plenty of people about exercising themselves and, of course, their dogs. My goal was Stocker's lake so I continued on, hoping that the mist would lift as a weak sun tried to break through. I stopped at several of the hides and noted the usual birds - Canada geese, coots, grebes, ducks and noisy black-headed gulls.

But it was hard to see more than a hundred yards. One keen photographer had spotted a kingfisher but could not get a decent photo in the mist. However, mist does





create some remarkable visual effects - starkly black winter trees against a white background and reflections of the pale sun in still waters. I walked round on the narrow bank between the lake and the Colne, passing a small herd of brown cattle, back into the Aquadrome. It was time for coffee in the busy café.

I had planned my homeward route through Rickmansworth High Street so set off beside Batchworth Lake only to find that the pedestrian bridge over the Colne was closed. I had heard something about the Council replacing the bridge but hadn't put two and two

together. I toyed with the idea of climbing the barrier - a bit tricky and undignified - and I didn't fancy wading the river. So there was nothing for it but a lengthy detour back to the point where the Colne leaves the canal and where it is joined by the Chess. I took the little bridge over the Chess to Riverside Drive and found the footpath to St Mary's beside the arm of the canal leading to the Bury. Snowdrops were out in the churchyard as I made my way into town.

Someone had been busy decorating the wall of Boots with colourful heart stencils on Solomons Hill. It cheers up the place on a grey day. Climbing the slope

beside Waitrose I noticed that a street light had been installed, powered by its own wind turbine and solar panel. It would be a bit dim on days



The Bury, Rickmansworth



like this. Over the bridge in Ricky park I greeted an old friend, an ancient sweet chestnut. Someone had added graffiti here too - not so artistic. The day was looking up as I crossed the park and I was joined by my shadow.

There are a number of fine trees on the path around the cricket ground which leads to the Chess Valley footpath. The river banks are shored up with sandbags in a number of places and I noticed that there is a sizeable pond in the field between the river and Cophorne Road. Gulls were enjoying

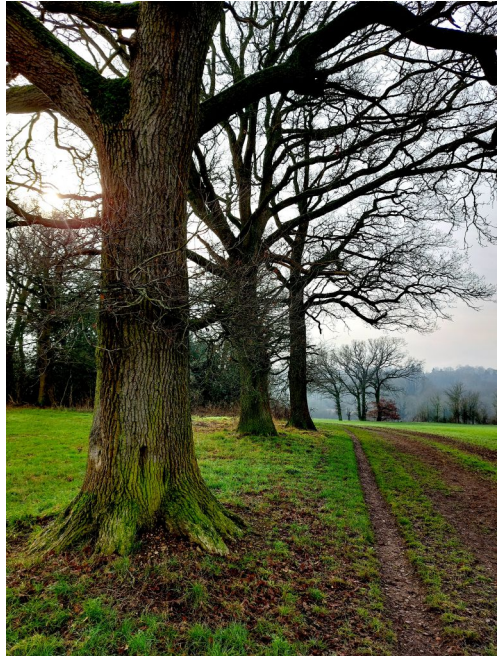
the sunshine and, at my approach, a little egret flew up from the stream into the trees. There was plenty of water moving swiftly in the Chess and, although the gravel bottom was clearly visible, it looked cloudy. I crossed the footbridge and ascended the hill on the Croxley Boundary footpath. The path skirts a spinney where I noticed new leaves on an elder tree - the first I have seen this year. From the top there is a pleasant view across the valley to trees beyond. I couldn't help thinking that we are fortunate to live in this pleasant place.



The Chess near Scotsbridge

The Parish Council balustrade

helped my climb up steps onto the Green. Building work continues on the new estate at Killingdown. Wherever did the developers get the moniker 'Millside Grange'? There has never been a mill at Killingdown! I walked through the completed part of the estate and was glad to note that they have found road names with local associations including a reference to the Woolrych family. The land beyond Little Green Lane has also been transformed by a large drainage pit and pools on the field beyond. As I walked along the lane I noticed more signs of approaching spring - new growth of cow parsley and wild arum - and lunchtime children's voices carried through the still air from Little Green school.



Croxley's Boundary Walk
looking across the Chess Valley



Woolrych Road,
Killingdown

Giving in Grace



our challenge

To cultivate what St Paul calls the **grace of giving (2 Cor 8:7)** we need to think carefully about all we receive from God and prayerfully review our giving.

Our church needs **£2,150** per week in 2025 (**£135** more than last year) to sustain our building and clergy, our **ministry and mission**. To enable our ministry to grow & flourish we need the **grace of giving**.

our vision

is to be a joyful, prayerful, caring and growing Church; alive to the Holy Spirit; welcoming and accessible to all; building relationships with God and the community we serve

In the coming year we need to raise **£15,000** more than last year to increase our outreach and to build up our reserves to fund essential works such as updating and improving the Hall kitchen. The total funds required each year to cover the Ministry and Church and Hall running costs are **£114,000**.

To fulfil this vision, each week we expect to spend:

£1,350 on our share of clergy costs: stipend, housing, training
£430 on our building: insurance, heat, light etc
£350 on worship and ministry: for our congregation and wider community, including our hall

Well over half of our income comes from congregational giving. About a quarter is from rentals of the hall. The balance comes from HMRC for Gift Aided giving (about 13%) and various fund-raising activities (about 6%).

Thank you for making this happen.

There will be more about Giving in Grace over coming weeks

christian

aid

Omnia



...an evening of song

Croxley Green welcomes back Omnia who present another evening of choral music in collaboration with Christian Aid. Sacred & secular songs in the church, with a break for drinks, followed by light and popular songs in the hall.

Saturday 8th February, 7.15 for 7.30pm
All Saints Church, The Green, Croxley Green

£15.00 each, includes glass of wine or soft drink & nibbles
Tickets available from Chris Gregory 07818 412869 cg@chrisgregory.uk
or from your church Christian Aid rep. All profits go to Christian Aid



We believe in life before death

P.S. Omnia includes our very own Ed Parks

Christian Aid Arts Café 2025

The third Croxley Arts Café will be held on Saturday 26th April,
11am to 4pm at St Oswald's church and hall.



There will be tea and cakes, live music, activities, displays of local artwork, illustrations, cards, handicraft and some items for sale. Proceeds will go to support the work of Christian Aid. Last year we raised £1,100 for the charity and encouraged many local people into the church for an enjoyable community event.

Please contact Chris Gregory on 07818 412869
cg@chrisgregory.uk if you would be happy to help serve, bake, set up or clear away.

CROXLEY PARISH NURSE

Contact Details
Cathy Scarborough
croxleyparishnursecathy@gmail.com
07562 515791





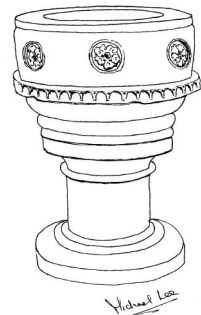
St Oswald's Parochial Church Council update January 2025

Over the past six months the PCC has overseen some important changes in the church. We are very grateful for a donation which has enabled the church to enjoy the sound of a new organ that has enhanced our musical life. The work on the church kitchen has been completed with thanks to Guy Parks for his careful oversight in bringing this to fruition. The result is a better facility for Cafe O's service to the community and it means that refreshments can be served more easily after church services.

There have been changes to St Oswald's 10% Giving Scheme. The charity ASCEND, formerly an outreach from All Saints' South Oxhey, has become a project of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust. The PCC agreed that the funds previously set aside for ASCEND in 2024 should be used to support the Croxley Green Parish Nurse. The Parish Nurse will be supported again in 2025 together with the Trinity Project for children's mental wellbeing once it gains charitable status. The full list of charities supported by the scheme in 2025 is USP, CMS, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Church Army Marylebone Project, Alternatives Trust East London, Watford Schools Trust, A Rocha, Croxley Parish Nurse and the Trinity Project.

At its December meeting the PCC considered St Oswald's reaction to the Prayers of Love and Faith from the Archbishops' Council concerning the blessing of same sex relationships. The PCC agreed as follows: "This PCC supports the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in appropriate circumstances within a regular church service as described in the pastoral guidance."

In December the PCC also decided that the Parish Project for 2025 should be fund-raising to improve the kitchen facilities in the church hall.



In January the PCC noted the progress made with safeguarding procedures, with gratitude to Val Edwards. The church has completed the level 2 action plan and will continue with the level 3 plan in the coming months.

On 27th November the PCC was pleased to welcome the Archdeacon of St Albans, Charles Hudson, for a 'get-to-know-you' session. St Oswald's can expect to see more of him during the vacancy after Rev. Robert's departure.

Brian Thomson

Copies of PCC minutes are available on request to those on the Electoral Roll from the secretary, Brian Thomson,



Croxley Green Trefoil group recently took part in the Methodist Church Christmas Tree festival. Thanks to Alison and Lynda who came up with the idea of cryptic clues of Christmas Carols. We had a very enjoyable afternoon making the decorations.



By the time this is in print, we will have celebrated our 60th birthday, with invited guests. As is usual for us we had food and a birthday cake, cut by our oldest member together with the longest serving member. We welcome anyone to join us, in fact we are welcoming our first male member in January. We meet in the Scout Hut on Watford Road on the third Wednesday of the month 2.30pm-4.30 pm.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to join us.

Angela Rivett

angelarivett@virginmedia.com

WHAT'S ON?



Services

Holy Communion on Sundays 8 am and 10 am, except first Sunday in the month when there is a Family Service at 10 am.

Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 11 am.

Evening Prayer on the first Sunday at 4 pm

Morning Prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 am.

Sunday School meets each Sunday, except first Sunday in the month, at 10 am

Café O

Monday mornings in the church from 8.45 am to 11.45 am.



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Mother's Union meets on the second Thursday of each month at 2.30 pm in the church.

13th February - Modern Jewish Life, Rabbi Aaron Goldstein

13th March - Our Favourite Songs, Richard Griffiths

10th April - 'God moves in a mysterious way', William Cowper, John Newton and 250 years of Amazing Grace - Brian Thomson

Men's Breakfast meets in the hall monthly on Saturdays at 7.45 am.

15th February - Robert Riley-Brale

15th March - Michael Carpenter

12th April - John de Braux

Donut Club for Year 7s

3.30 to 5pm first Friday each month in term time

Hot Dog Club for Year 8s

5.15 to 6.30pm first Friday each month in term time



DATES FOR DIARIES

February

Saturday 8th 7.15 for 7.30 pm - Concert for Christian Aid by Omnia choral group at All Saints'

Sunday 16th 10 am - Spotlight service 'Christian Giving'

March

Wednesday 5th 11 am and 8 pm - ASH WEDNESDAY communion

Thursday 6th 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent Course at All Saints'

Thursday 13th 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent Course at Methodist Church

Sunday 16th 10 am - Spotlight service 'Prayer'

Thursday 20th 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent Course at Baptist Church

Saturday 22nd 9.30 am - Church Clear-Up morning

Thursday 27th March 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent course

Saturday 29th 9.30 am - Church Clear-Up morning

7 pm - St Oswald's Quiz Evening



April

Thursday 3rd 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent Course at St Oswald's

Thursday 10th 2 pm and 7.30 pm - Lent Course at St Bede's

Thursday 17th 7.30 pm - Maundy Thursday communion at All Saints'

Friday 9.30 am - GOOD FRIDAY walk of witness

2 pm - The Last Hour at St Oswald's

Saturday 19th 8 pm - Easter Eve Reflective Service

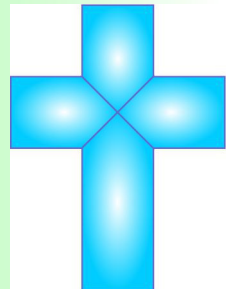


Sunday 20th - EASTER DAY

10 am - Rev Riley-Brale's farewell communion service

Sunday 27th 11.15 am - Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Saturday 26th 11 am to 4 pm - Christian Aid Arts Cafe



June

Thursday 5th 7.30 pm - Informal Vacancy meeting with Bishop of Hertford



Richard Doughty brings us the latest on the Trinity Project

We at St Oswald's and at other deanery churches are now more than a term into the project's second year, helping young people build up mental wellbeing, and particularly supporting new year 7 children coping with the huge change of moving up to big school.

Founded to help young people develop mental wellbeing and resilience to all that life throws at them, the project relies greatly on prayer and God's guidance to help young people live life to the full and navigate the all too regular and sometimes graphic ups and downs of growing up.

The response has continued to be amazing. When we started in September 2023, St Oswald's enthusiastic band of volunteer helpers hosted around 30 children for the first Friday of Donut Club. Currently average attendance is running at around 40. Donut Club has so far attracted around 100 individuals this academic year - and new faces keep appearing.



Donut Club has so far attracted around 100 individuals this academic year - and new faces keep appearing.

The young people are keen to meet up with their old friends from primary school, have a chat, eat doughnuts and play a variety of games: table tennis, snooker, pool, table football, 3D noughts and crosses, all laid out inside St Oswald's church. They also try their hand with kinetic modelling sand, card and puzzle games.

This is a youth club-style meet-up in the church which is designed

to support them as they get used to the challenges of secondary school including up to 2000 other students, new academic demands, confusing timetables, unknown teachers and classmates.

Last year's Donut club members were keen to continue meeting. So we've set up a monthly Hotdog club for year 8s , run on similar lines - yes, sausages replace doughnuts. Year 8s are into their music and the hope is to incorporate some line dancing and singing. We had an impromptu performance just last month!



Across the deanery, Trinity Project activities are being warmly welcomed by students, families and teachers – and increasing. We are now partnering with four secondary schools and six primary schools. Among the initiatives and events planned for 2025 are a weekly mental wellbeing course with Get Set 4 Tennis (a tennis coaching group) at Joan of Arc School; wellbeing ‘Wonderland break’ times at St Peter’s primary school, Croxley Danes and Reach Free School; Donut Clubs in two local churches, drop-in café sessions at St Peter’s church, Mill End, 1:1 support for students in two primary schools; and a Wednesday Lunchtime focus for Reach Free School’s year 7s.

The Trinity Project is close to gaining charitable status and will then be able to invest in new initiatives. We hold regular speaker and prayer meetings each term to publicise project activities and the urgent need for more prayer and other support for its work among young people. Any potential volunteers - and we do need you! - are asked to email: hello@trinityproject.uk.

HOMOEOPATHY



Lynn Williamson
Homoeopath
L.C.P.H., M.C.P.H., A.R.H.

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FROM THE CHURCH WARDENS

The Church Wardens met with the Archdeacon and the Rural Dean on 21 January to find out more about what is expected to happen after Robert leaves and how a new Vicar will be recruited.

This was very informative; and it was good to hear that there will be quite a bit of support for the church during this time.

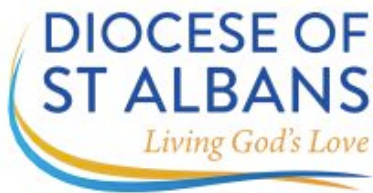
As part of the process for recruiting a new Vicar, an **Informal Vacancy meeting will take place on 5 June at 7.30pm in the church**. Please save this date now, as this will be an opportunity for our whole church community to meet Bishop Jane and consider and discuss together what type of Vicar we might be looking for. We hope that as many people as possible will be able to come along. Further information will be available nearer the time.

Robert will be sorely missed and we are very grateful to those who have offered to help during the time when we are without our own Vicar. Please pray for Robert and for our whole church as we head into the future; and that the right person will hear God's call to serve at St Oswald's.

Helen McAlpine and Anne-Georgina Barnes



Helen McAlpine and Anne-Georgina
Barnes



Retirement letter from Bishop Alan

7th January 2025

It has been the privilege of my life to serve as the Bishop of St Albans. However, next month I will be 68 and the time has come for me to lay down my responsibilities and to hand the baton of leadership on to whomever the Lord calls to succeed me. I am writing, therefore, to tell you that, with the support and permission of His Majesty the King, I will be retiring as Diocesan Bishop on 31 May 2025.

The past sixteen years have been full of challenges, opportunities and surprises. With God's help, I have encouraged us to 'Live God's Love' among the people of Herts, Beds and Luton and parts of Barnet, and to do so with generosity and joy, with imagination and courage. In that endeavour, I have been grateful for my colleagues on the senior staff and for the support of so many clergy and lay people across the Diocese. I never cease to give thanks to God for the warmth of your friendship. You have enriched my life and ministry in countless ways.

I plan to retire to Wiltshire, the county in which I was born and brought up, and where most of my extended family continue to live.

There will be plenty of opportunities to say our farewells in the Spring. In the meantime, I have many things I still want to do in my remaining months in office as I seek to serve God and prepare for the next phase of my life and ministry.

Please pray for me as I pray for you,

Bishop Alan

+ Alan St Albans

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01923 286102**

Intercessions for each week

The following suggestions for prayer week by week are by no means exhaustive. They are intended as prompts to encourage our prayers for: the life of our church; the charities with which we are connected; the roads of our parish; the village and the wider community. Other suggestions for prayer may be found on the weekly pew sheet.

Please remember in your prayers the sick, those who care for them, and those who mourn; our 10% mission giving recipients: USPG, CMS, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Church Army Marylebone Project, Alternatives Trust East London, Watford Schools Trust, A Rocha, Croxley Parish Nurses and the Trinity Project.

Sunday 26 January to Saturday 1 February

The Vicar and readers

Trinity Project and The Children's Society

Beechcroft Ave, Oakleigh Drive, Sycamore App, Sycamore Road, Valley Walk

Parliament and our MP Gagan Mohindra

Sunday 2 to Saturday 8 February

Mothers' Union and Men's Breakfast

USPG

Byewaters, Evensyde, Basildon Close, Gill Close, Heckford Close, Longmans Cl

Shaftesbury Court

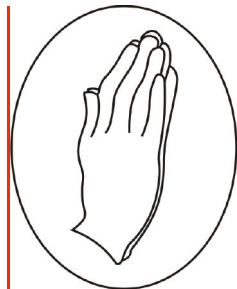
Sunday 9 to Saturday 15 February

Safeguarding Team and Pastoral Contact Group

Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership

Girton Way, Malvern Way, Sherborne Way, Winchester Way

Churches Together in Croxley Green



Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 February

Uniformed organisations – Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

A Rocha

Claremont Crescent, Lancing Way, Winton Crescent, Winton Drive

Our Parish Nurses

Sunday 23 February to Sunday 8 March

Parish Magazine

Alternatives

Dulwich Way, Lincoln Drive, Lincoln Way, Little Green Lane

The King and Royal Family

Sunday 9 to Saturday 15 March

Churchwardens, Treasurer and PCC

Bible Reading Fellowship

Baldwins Lane, Kenilworth Drive, Manor Way, Rochester Way

Archbishop Justin, the Church of England and the Anglican

Communion

Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 March

Baptism preparation and follow-up

Church Mission Society

Durrants Drive, Hastings Way, Lewes Way, Norwich Way

Parish, District and County Councillors

Sunday 23 to Saturday 29 March

Café O

The Marylebone Project (Church Army Women's Hostel)

Merchant Taylors Place, Appleby Drive, Gloucester Court, Hertford

Close, Pevensey Way, St Mawes Close, Scarborough Drive, Scotney Close

Our Diocesan Bishops, Alan, Richard and Jane

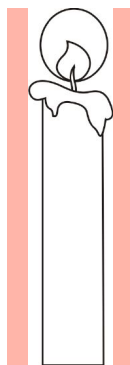
Sunday 30 March to Saturday 5 April

Study Courses and Prayer Fellowship

Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Dover Way, Ludlow Way, Richmond Way, Warwick Way

Our local shops and businesses



Deaths Remembered at St Oswald's



Jan Cunningham

Pam Clubb

Brenda O'Malley

ST OSWALD'S REMEMBRANCE BOOK

FEBRUARY

Dorothy Mildred JEFFERY ~ 21st May 1905 to 4th Feb 1996

Catherine Annie CHILD - 2nd Nov 1913 to 4th Feb 2015

Jean Constance POPE - 19th Jan 1932 to 8th Feb 2014

Derek Geoffrey "Geoff" WILLIAMSON ~ 14th Oct 1955 to 10th Feb 2011

Ivy Winifred PERCEVAL ~ 14th April 1905 to 14th Feb 1995

Doris May HUGHES ~ 8th Jan 1903 to 15th Feb 1990

Violet Maude MADGWICK ~ 23rd Sept 1903 to 22nd Feb 1979

James (Jim) HUGHES - 15th Sept 1930 to 25th Feb 2022

Basil William Harvey BODEN - 2nd July 1924 to 28th Feb 2013

MARCH

Robert George BALDWIN ~ 6th May 1900 to 1st March 1991

John Michael MANNING ~ 16th Aug 1937 to 7th March 2000

Cecil CASTLE ~ 20th June 1903 to 8th March 1997

Bryan Guy HINDELL ~ 16th July 1937 to 8th March 2003

Jean Margaret CARPENTER ~ 27th Dec 1937 to 10th March 2012

Richard David DUNDERDALE ~ 16th April 1930 to 11th March 2006

Jack Percy BISHOP - 6th May 1924 to 12th March 2013

John James DAVIES ~ 10th May 1925 to 23rd March 2009

Raymond CRONEY ~ 6th April 1921 to 24th March 2007

Evelyn Winifred WARMAN ~ 12th Jan 1910 to 26th March 2010

George Charles WILKINS ~ 14th Nov 1903 to 26th March 1961

Kathleen Grace HUGGINS ~ 16th March 1915 to 27th March 2009

Käthe E. M. G. TILLEY ~ 28th Aug 1933 to 28th March 2010

Fiona MacDONALD ~ 3rd Jan 1929 to 31st March 2012

2025

Year of Spiritual Renewal & Wellbeing

Diocesan prayer

God of life and love,
pour out your blessing on our diocese
as we journey to your kingdom on the Emmaus Road:
where there is uncertainty, build us up in faith;
where there is fear, establish us in love;
where there is discord, bring reconciliation and healing;
that together we may be renewed in hope by your Spirit
and be ambassadors of your risen Son, Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love.
Come, Holy Spirit, pour your love into our hearts,
and make us ready to receive the gifts you give.
Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit
and change us into the likeness of Christ.
Come, Holy Spirit and dwell with us,
that we may reveal your presence in your world.

ST. OSWALD'S QUIZ EVENING

SAT 29th MARCH

7.00 for 7.30

TICKETS

£10.00 per person

Bring & Share Meal

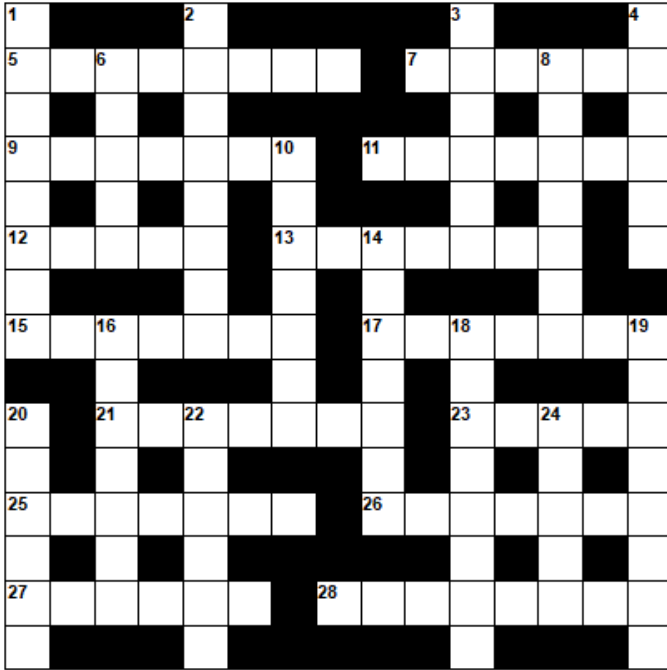
(bring your own drinks & glasses)

RAFFLE

(donations welcome)

**All profits will go to
St. Oswald's church funds**

At St. Oswald's Hall WD3 3QL



**Cryptic
Crossword
by Richard
Lee**

disorderly (7)
27 Interfere in a decoration we hear (6)
28 Most hostile secret if spread around (8)

Clues Down

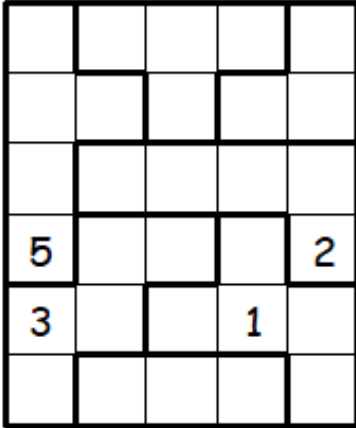
1 Persistent short part brought into life (8)
2 Approximate evaluation of different tea-times (8)
3 Behind on the water

Clues Across

5 Party set to produce heavy woven fabric (8)
7 Dances around to move upward (6) (5)
9 Barge in, in a way that's supporting (7)
11 Mean street with anger (7)
12 Welcome gambit to produce a Greek character (5)
13 Snorted unpleasantly seeing vermin (7)
15 Not any place to move around here and now (7)
17 Dishing out a rowdy celebration (7)
21 A tinier change showing lack of motion (7)
23 Regularly seen as part of a loft enlargement (5)
25 Make bigger for a general re assessment (7)
26 Worried about being more

like a sea bird (6)
4 Stick he read about (6)
6 Change shape for a distinct period
8 Pleased about having passed by (7)
10 A ragged beggar mentioned displayed an item of clothing (7)
14 Aspired to change a feeling of hopelessness (7)
16 The earth sounded as if it spun around (7)
18 Press with a job for ornamental metal (8)
19 Bring forth a green tea blend (8)
20 Feeling hypnotic, my dear, in a strange way (6)
22 Registers with troubled loners (6)
24 Yarn beginning to weave its novel ending (5)

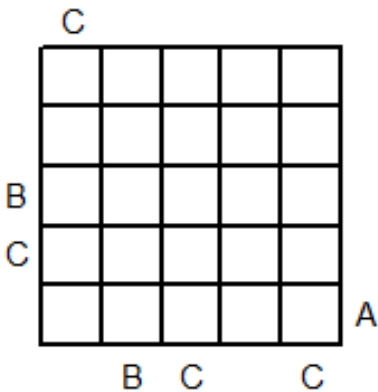
More Puzzles by Richard Lee



Suguru Puzzle

The grid is filled with smaller tiles of between 1 and 5 cells each and the cells of each of these tiles contain digits from 1 up to the number of cells in that tile with no digits being repeated. Thus a tile made up of 5 cells would contain one each of the digits 1 to 5. In addition, within the whole grid no two similar digits are adjacent horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Using the numbers already shown as clues the puzzle is to fill in all the cells of the box.

ABCxx



ABCx Puzzle

This puzzle has the letters ABC placed randomly in each row and column with the remaining squares left empty ('x' represents a space). The clues down each side and across the top or bottom show you the first (or, if in brackets, the second) letter which would be encountered in that particular row or column. All you have to do is to work out where the original letters and spaces were placed.

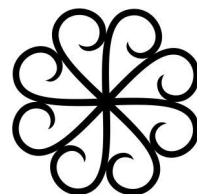
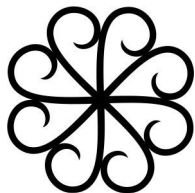
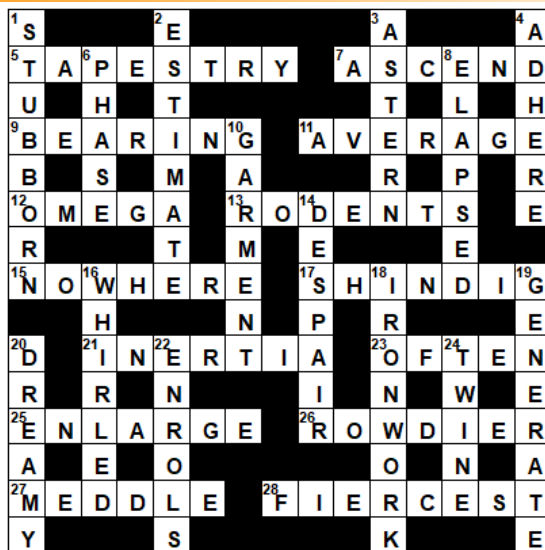
Quiz of 2024

What can you remember from last year?

- 1 In which month did the UK general election take place?
- 2 Who was named as the first billionaire British musician?
- 3 Which country became the 32nd to join NATO?
- 4 Which British confectionary brand celebrated its 200th anniversary?
- 5 Who won The Great British Bake Off on 26th November?
- 6 What was the name of the super full moon that occurred in October?
- 7 Which country won the Olympics?
- 8 Which European government collapsed in December of 2024 as the PM was ousted with a no-confidence vote?
- 9 Which particular US town did Donald Trump say were eating their pets?
- 10 Geoffrey Hinton has won a Nobel prize this year. He is known as the “Godfather of ...” what?
- 11 After 58 years as a broadcaster, which BBC DJ has officially signed off on his final Sounds Of The 70s show?
- 12 Which Starsky & Hutch actor sadly passed away in 2024?
- 13 Who was confirmed as Scotland’s new First Minister in May 2024?
- 14 What was the Collins Dictionary word of the year?
- 15 Which country won the Euros in July?



PUZZLE ANSWERS



3	2	3	4	1
1	4	1	2	3
2	3	5	4	1
5	1	2	3	2
3	4	5	1	4
5	1	2	3	2

ABCxx

C						
	C	x	B	x	A	
	A	x	x	C	B	
B	B	A	x	x	C	
C	x	C	A	B	x	
	x	B	C	A	x	A
		B	C		C	

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 July. 2 Paul McCartney. 3 Sweden. 4 Cadbury.
 5 Georgie Grasso. 6 Hunter Supermoon. 7 USA. 8 France.
 9 Springfield. 10 A.I. 11 Jonnie Walker. 12 David Soul.
 13 John Swinney. 14 Brat. 15 Spain.

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**St Oswald's Church, 17 Malvern Way, Croxley Green,
Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 3QL**

Contacts

Vicar: Revd. Robert Riley-Braley tel:01923 332244
email: vicar@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Lay-Reader: Tony Barton
email: tony.barton@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Lay-Reader: Magdalena Pletsch
email: magdalena.pletsch@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Church Wardens: Helen McAlpine
warden1@stoswaldschurch.org.uk
Anne-Georgina Barnes
warden2@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Treasurer: Karen Pryse
email: treasurer@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

PCC Secretary: Brian Thomson
email: secretary@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

Hall Bookings: email hall-bookings@stoswaldschurch.org.uk
General Enquiries email: info@stoswaldschurch.org.uk

EDITOR'S NOTE

Updated information on services and activities at St Oswald's will be posted on the church website www.stoswaldschurch.org.uk, the church's Facebook page and the weekly email Vicar's letter.

The next edition of the magazine will be published at the end of March 2025. Please send items for the next edition by Sunday 16 March 2024 to magazine@stoswaldschurch.org.uk