



THE FIVE CHURCHES

THE PARISHES OF STANSTED, BIRCHANGER AND FARNHAM

Weekly bulletin

18th February 2024

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

First Sunday of Lent

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE STAFF TEAM

Lent. It's not what it used to be.

In the Middle Ages, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday were designated as 'black fasts', which meant no food at all.

On all other days of Lent, no food was to be eaten before 3pm, the hour of our Lord's death. Water was allowed, along with watered-down beer and wine.

No animal meats or fats. Punishments for eating meat could include the removal of teeth, caning or whipping.

No dairy products – eggs, milk, cheese, cream, butter.

Sundays were a little more relaxed, but the prohibition on eating before 3pm was still enforced.

Passion week concluded with a whackingly long fast, which went from sundown on Maundy Thursday, to noon on Holy Saturday, when the Easter Vigil was observed.

I'm not suggesting we revive any of these practices – I will not be removing the teeth of anyone I catch having a biscuit on a Sunday morning. Lent is a great time to take on a spiritual discipline, however – I suggest a short prayer, said on a daily basis and at a regular time. The prayer you choose is up to you, but here's one I like:

Come, my Light,
and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life,
and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician,
and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart
with the flame of your love.

Wishing you all a disciplined and holy Lent.

Rev'd Colin

ST JOHN'S INTERCESSORS REQUIRED

We could do with some new people on the intercessors rota at St John's. Please contact Susan Bone if you think this is something you would be interested in. Training is available if you would like it.

Rev'd Colin

NEWS OF MARGARET CHASTNEY

Many of you know Margaret who for many years was a faithful member of St John's congregation. No-one could read the lesson quite like Margaret – she has the most wonderful speaking voice. After a serious fall, she spent some time in hospital but is now settled in a care home in Cambridge, which is close to where her son Nicholas lives. I went to see her on Saturday and am pleased to report that she was delighted to see me and, although a bit forgetful, she is still her smiling optimistic self. I took her a copy of the Link, and here is a photo of her enjoying reading all the latest Stansted news. If you would like to make contact with her she is at Cambridge Manor Care Home, 33 Milton Road, Cambridge, CB4 1UZ. Nicholas tells me she will be 90 on November 2nd. Please remember her in your prayers.



Kathy West

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Farnham Coffee morning – Wednesday 28th February, 10am-12pm

Farnham PCC – Tuesday 22nd February, 7pm

If you wish to place a notice in the bulletin for next week, please email details to Colin at revdrcolinfairweather@gmail.com

PLEASE PRAY

...for Margaret Chastney, Betty Kuczynski, Jeremy Wilson, Bob Stubbings and all those who suffer in mind, body or spirit.

Please pray also for the family of Allan Law, whose funeral will take place on at 2.30pm on 20th February at Birchanger Church.

Do let us know if you would like the anniversary of a loved one's death mentioned during the intercessions in St John's. Please contact Kathy West, Pastoral Assistant, so this can be arranged.

If you would like yourself or someone else on the prayer list, please email me at revdrcolinfairweather@gmail.com in the coming week.

SERVICES FOR THIS SUNDAY

St John's Church, Stansted

Holy Communion

9.30am

Rev'd Helen Flack

URL for live broadcast: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069100732358>

The service sheet can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/t110ajgzh3k42mj0c615b/18-2-24-Lent-1.pdf?rlkey=guwrvoatez8hdbexnewsvouxz&dl=0>

The words for the hymns are here, in case you want to sing along at home.

- https://hymnary.org/text/lead_us_heavenly_father_lead_us_oe
- <https://hymnsrepo.com/hymns/o-let-the-son-of-god-enfold-you/>
- https://hymnary.org/text/forty_days_and_forty_nights_thou_wast
- https://hymnary.org/text/lord_jesus_think_on_me
- https://hymnary.org/text/be_thou_my_guardian_and_my_guide

St Mary's Church, Birchanger

11.15 am

Mattins

Jo Pratt

St Mary's Church, Farnham

11.15am

Holy Communion

Rev'd Helen Flack

ONLINE MORNING PRAYER

This takes place at 9am every day apart from Friday and Sunday.

URL: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/459441774>

Meeting ID: **459 441 774**

Password: **Stansted**

Morning prayer (and evening and night prayer) can be found at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>.

The readings for the day are included within the text of the services. We normally use traditional language on Thursdays, and contemporary language for the rest of the week.

CONTACT DETAILS

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<https://www.thefivechurches.co.uk/>

St John's Stansted and St Mary's Birchanger also have a Facebook page.