

# STAYING CONNECTED

## April: A Season of Renewal and Quiet Resurrection

April arrives like a soft breath after the long exhale of winter. The world around us begins to stir — not all at once, but slowly, faithfully, almost shyly. Buds appear on branches that looked lifeless only weeks ago. Light lingers a little longer in the evenings. The air carries the scent of rain and possibility. It is as though creation itself is whispering, “Begin again.”



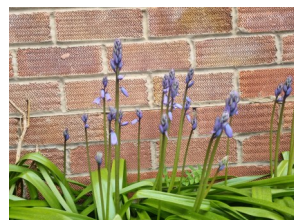
There is something profoundly spiritual about this month. April teaches us that renewal rarely happens in dramatic bursts. More often, it unfolds quietly — in small shifts of the heart, in gentle awakenings of hope, in the courage to take one more step forward. Just as the earth thaws layer by layer, so do we. God works in us with the same patient tenderness that brings blossoms to the trees.



Many of us carry into April the weight of what winter represented: seasons of waiting, uncertainty, or weariness. Yet the message of spring is not that those seasons were wasted, but that God has been working beneath the surface all along. The roots we could not see were strengthening. The soil of our lives was being prepared. Renewal is not an escape from what has been — it is God transforming it into something new.

This month invites us to pay attention to the subtle signs of growth within ourselves. Perhaps it's a renewed desire to pray. Perhaps it's a softening of a place that once felt hardened. Perhaps it's the first flicker of hope after a long stretch of heaviness. These are holy beginnings, even if they feel small. God delights in small beginnings.

April also reminds us that healing is a process, not a moment. The earth does not rush its restoration, and neither does God rush ours. Healing often comes like spring rain — steady, cleansing, and sometimes unexpected. It nourishes what is fragile and brings life to what we feared was lost. If you find yourself in need of healing this month, may you feel God's gentle presence tending to you with compassion and care.



And so, as we step into April, may we do so with open hearts. May we welcome the new beginnings God is offering. May we trust the slow, sacred work of growth. May we allow hope to take root again, even if it feels tender. And may we remember that the same God who renews the earth is renewing us — faithfully, lovingly, and in His perfect time.



This is the promise of April:  
Nothing is too broken to be restored. Nothing is too weary to be renewed. Nothing is too late for God to begin again.



Photos of new life in Kate's garden



**Church of the Ascension,  
Southam**

### **Services April 2026**

#### **Sunday 5 April**

9.30 am—Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension, led by Lucy Barbour

#### **Sunday 12 April**

9.30 am—Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension led by Carol Farrer

#### **Sunday 19 April**

9.30 am—Church on the Hill, led by Zoe Homes

#### **Sunday 26 April**

9.30 am—Breakfast Church at Southam Village Hall, led by Maggie Sharpe



**St Martin de Tours Church, Woolstone,  
St John the Baptist Church, Oxenton,  
and using 'The Old Chapel' in Gotherington**

**SERVICE INFORMATION FOR MARCH 2026**

**All services start at 10:00 am unless otherwise stated.**

Sunday 5 April:	Holy Communion	Oxenton
Sunday 12 April:	Morning Praise	Gotherington Village Hall
Sunday 19 April:	Holy Communion	Woolstone
Sunday 26 April:	Café Church	Gotherington Village Hall

Team Rector	Reverend Tim Garrett	tim@stmbc.uk
Team Vicar	Reverend Ben Williams	ben@stmbc.uk
CHURCH OFFICE	See Notice Boards	07354 874617
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PCC Treasurer	Michael Bower	01242 672900
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## **Experience Easter: A Joy-Filled Journey With Our Local Schools!**

Last week, over the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of March, our church was buzzing with energy, excitement, and 200 enthusiastic Year Three children as we welcomed them for **Experience Easter**. What a joy it was!

Across the three days, pupils from our local schools stepped into a hands-on adventure through the Easter story—moving from scene to scene as the narrative came to life around them.

### **Palm Sunday: A Royal Welcome**

We began with Palm Sunday, where the children discovered what it meant for Jesus to be welcomed like a king.



### **A Servant Heart: Jesus Washes Feet**

Next, we explored how Jesus showed true leadership—not with fancy titles or power, but through humility. The children were fascinated to learn why washing feet was such a big deal and what it tells us about loving and serving others. They also had the chance to clean their own then each other's shoes.

### **The Last Supper: Bread, Wine, and Remembrance**

At the Last Supper station, our young visitors reflected on the meaning behind the bread and wine. They learned why Jesus asked his friends (and us!) to remember him in such a simple but powerful way.

### **Gethsemane: Not Alone**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the tone shifted thoughtfully as we explored how Jesus felt alone—and how, when we feel the same, we can always reach out to him. It was a beautiful moment of quiet reflection.

### **The Cross: A Story of Love**

At the cross, we shared the story of the crucifixion in a gentle, age-appropriate way, helping the children understand the depth of Jesus' love and sacrifice.

### **Easter Sunday: Empty Tomb, Full Hearts**

We ended with the joy of Easter morning! The children loved discovering that an *empty* Easter egg can actually be a reminder of the empty tomb.

### **Empty egg, empty tomb—Jesus is alive!**

A simple message with a huge meaning.

**Our next themed readings:**

**5 April**

New Life, New Hope -  
Luke 24 (1-12)

**12 April**

Joy & Amazement -  
Luke 24 (36-48)

**19 April**

New Heart—  
Philippians 1 (3-11)

**26 April**

New Purpose—  
Philippians 1 (12-21)



**Sunday Bible Readings from  
the Lectionary**

**Easter Day**

**- 5 April**

Acts 10.34-43 or  
Jeremiah 31.1-6  
Psalm 118.1-2,14-24\*  
Colossians 3.1-4 or  
Acts 10.34-43  
John 20.1-18 or  
Matthew 28.1-10

**Easter 2**

**- 12 April**

Acts 2.14a,22-32  
Psalm 16  
I Peter 1.3-9  
John 20.19-31

**Easter 3**

**- 19 April**

Acts 2.14a,36-41  
Psalm 116.1-3,10-17\*  
I Peter 1.17-23  
Luke 24.13-35

**Easter 4**

**- 26 April**

Acts 2.42-47  
Psalm 23  
I Peter 2.19-25

**A Huge Thank You!**

To everyone who helped make these sessions happen—your time, creativity, and teamwork made the experience truly special. It was wonderful to work together and to share the heart of Easter with so many young people. Here's to many more moments of community, joy, and shared faith!

Lucy Betts  
Children and Families Minister

## Our Pastoral Assistants are here

*to support the pastoral work in this benefice.*

- *If you would like to chat or need help - you or your family, friends or carers can contact us on your behalf.*
- *If you are going into hospital, moving or going into a care home - so we can keep in touch.*
- *If you can't get to church and would like Home Communion in the comfort of your own home.*

Contact: the Church Office 07354 874617

Email: [pastoral.stmichael@gmail.com](mailto:pastoral.stmichael@gmail.com)



### HOME COMMUNION

Our Pastoral Assistants' Team offer anyone who can't get to church a short Home Communion service in the comfort of their own home.

We are also available to pray with those who can't get to church, in their homes, if that is helpful.

Please call the Church Office  
07354 874617

### St Michael's Church Weekday Open for Visitors/Private Prayer

Monday 11am - 2pm

Wednesday 10am - 4pm

Thursday 12pm - 2pm

*(times may occasionally change due to  
Services or volunteer availability*

*- check with Church Office 07354 874617)*

### Thursday 10.45am Communion Service St Michael's Church

*1st & 3rd Thursdays*

*Apr 16th*

*May 7th 21st*

*If you do NOT wish to receive copies of  
Staying Connected, please phone the  
Church Office on  
07354 874617*

For more information about our services please see:

[www.stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk)

Email: [admin@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk](mailto:admin@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk)

Tel: 07354 874617

### **Prayer for Renewal**

“God of fresh beginnings,  
as April softens the world around us, renew our hearts within.  
Where we feel worn, breathe new strength.  
Where we feel discouraged, plant seeds of hope.  
May this month awaken in us a deeper trust in Your gentle, steady work.”

### **Prayer for Springtime Growth**

“Creator of every budding branch,  
help us grow in grace this April.  
Nurture the gifts You’ve placed in us,  
and give us courage to step into new opportunities.  
Teach us to welcome growth — even when it stretches us —  
knowing You guide every season of our lives.”

### **Prayer for New Beginnings**

“Lord, as the earth begins again,  
invite us into our own new beginnings.  
Clear away the heaviness of the past,  
and open doors that lead toward peace, purpose, and joy.  
Let this month be a reminder that nothing is beyond Your renewal.”

### **Prayer for Hope**

“God of rising light,  
shine hope into the places we’ve grown tired.  
Lift our eyes to see Your goodness in small, everyday moments.  
May April be a month where hope takes root again  
and grows stronger than our fears.”

### **Prayer for Healing**

“Gentle Healer,  
touch the wounds we carry — the visible and the hidden.  
Bring comfort where there is pain,  
clarity where there is confusion,  
and peace where there is unrest.  
Let this season of new life remind us  
that healing is always possible with You.”

## St Michael & All Angels, Bishops Cleeve

*Please join us for our*  
**SUNDAY SERVICES**

**All at 9.30 am**

1st Sunday – Morning Prayer

2nd Sunday – Holy Communion (with choir and organ)

3rd Sunday – Holy Communion

4th Sunday – Holy Communion (with choir and organ)

**All at 11.15 am**

1st Sunday – Café-style service (with children's activities)

2nd Sunday – Contemporary Worship (with children's groups)

3rd Sunday – Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion  
(with children's groups)

4th Sunday – Contemporary Worship (Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)

5th Sunday – Joint Service (Explorers Extra at St Michael's Centre)

## The Church of the Ascension, Southam

*Please join us for our*  
**SUNDAY SERVICES**

**all at 9.30 am unless otherwise stated.**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – Church on the Hill at 10.00 am

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Breakfast Church at Southam Village Hall

## The Parish of Woolstone with Gotherington and Oxenton

*Please join us for our*  
**SUNDAY SERVICES**

**all at 10.00 am unless otherwise stated**

**St Martin de Tours, Woolstone**

1st Sunday—Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Oxenton

2nd Sunday—Morning Praise at The Old Chapel, Gotherington

3rd Sunday—Holy Communion at St Martin de Tours, Woolstone

4th Sunday—Café Church at The Old Chapel, Gotherington

5th Sunday—BCP Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Oxenton