

# THE M Magazine

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ST BARNABAS with CHRIST CHURCH, WORCESTER

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FEBRUARY 2026

## ST BARNABAS WITH CHRIST CHURCH

### PARISH STAFF:

Priest in Charge:	Revd Sarah Northall	074838 07432
Associate Priest:	Revd Rosie Moss	07761 691984
Licensed Lay Minister:	Julie Berrow, Reader	07733 226061
Churchwarden (St Barnabas & Christ Church):		
	Mary James	01905 455214
Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO):		
	Rachel Chalmers	07787 128345

**WEBSITE:**      [www.stbarnabaschurchworcester.co.uk](http://www.stbarnabaschurchworcester.co.uk)

### SERVICES:

Sunday	10am	Eucharist
Wednesday	10am	Said Eucharist

### PARISH OFFICE:

To book a baptism or marriage (or to have banns read), send message through our website:

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

**MAGAZINE DEADLINE:** Penultimate Sunday of each month.  
Please e-mail contributions to [jackiecampbell@talktalk.net](mailto:jackiecampbell@talktalk.net)

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## LENT

We had barely taken the Christmas cards off the mantelpiece, dismantled the tree (sorry if this disappoints, but ours is a fake one that we re-use year after year) and put the decorations and the crib set away, when suddenly we are reminded that Easter is coming. Because this year it's this month, February, when the season of Lent, the lead-up to Easter, begins – as always with pancakes and ashes: Strove Tuesday on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and Ash Wednesday on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Do come to the Communion Service, with Ashing, at 10am at St Barnabas. As it's half term that week, the Ashing Eucharist at St Barnabas School will be the week following, on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

This reminds me of a story about ashes at St Andrew's School, Turi high up in the Kenyan Rift Valley. Margaret and I used to visit there years ago when we lived in Nairobi. The school was founded and run by a remarkable Christian couple, universally known as 'Pa' and 'Ma' Lavers. In February 1944 the school was destroyed by fire. But immediately the Lavers set about rebuilding, and



for obvious reasons the school's symbol became the phoenix, a mystical bird that called to mind both the fire that burnt the school down, and the faith that ashes are not the end.

After the fire 'Pa' Lavers established an annual 'Phoenix Night', when a bonfire was lit in the school grounds. Every child in the school was invited to write on a piece of paper everything and anything from the past year that made them sad or sorry or ashamed. Then all gathered round the fire, and as a sign of their intention by God's grace to make a fresh start, they scrunched up their pieces of paper and threw them into the flames. Does this resonate with what Ash Wednesday can mean for us?

When you or I come to be ashed, the minister says: **"Remember that you are but dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin, and remain faithful to Christ."** These words on Ash Wednesday confront me with two harsh truths: that I am a sinner, and that I will die.

But the difficult complex world in which we live reminds us that sin is not only what individuals commit, nor is dying only what happens to human beings. Sin is

often also corporate and collective.. the crowds at a football match, or shouting slogans in a street protest, the nation or security force or that launches brutal unjustified attacks or drops bombs on innocent defenceless people.. behave in ways that the men and women who form them individually hope they or we would never do.

“To dust you shall return”, these words help us see that sometimes it is institutions and organisations, yes political regimes too, philosophies also, and sometimes churches or parish structures .. that decline and die, which may not always be a bad thing. How many ex-CofE churches in Worcester have been sold to other denominations, or converted for other purposes over the years? For a few years after we came back to UK from Kenya, I found myself chairing the Kenya Church Association in the UK. But the time came when the KCA needed to disband. And that's what happened, with mixed feelings - of loss for the fellowship it gave its supporters, but also of thankfulness for the good things it had done over the years, to support projects and programmes in the Kenyan church.

**But if Ash Wednesday starts us off, how are we going to**



### **travel onwards through this Lent? What will we do?**

Traditionally it's a season of fasting and abstinence, giving things up - like chocolate, alcohol, or meat. Doing or consuming LESS, in order to be freer to do MORE of something that might help someone else, perhaps being MORE ALERT and available to someone who needs extra help or support; trying a MORE REGULAR routine of daily prayer, and pondering verses from the Bible, in order to become MORE ATTENTIVE to God. There are some excellent tools to help with this, like *Pray as you Go*, published by the Jesuits, *Everyday Faith* or *Daily Prayer* (both are Church of England resources), the Methodist Church's "A Prayer for the Day". Or look out for whatever material our brilliant vicar will offer us all for this Lenten season.

Alongside our personal responses, our shared worship at St Barnabas will help us reflect on the set readings for each Sunday, to learn what they show us about the shape and purpose of our Lenten journeys.

**22 Feb:** *Matthew 4:1–11 — wilderness, temptation, the Devil personified, Jesus testing and claiming his identity*

**1 March:** John 3:1–17 — Nicodemus, insider status, night-time seeking, new birth, risk of stepping into the light

**8 March:** John 4:5–42 — Samaritan woman, outsider, well and water, long conversation, boundaries crossed, truth spoken

**15 March:** Luke 2:33–35 & John 19:25–27 — family bonds, love and cost, precious moments held with pain

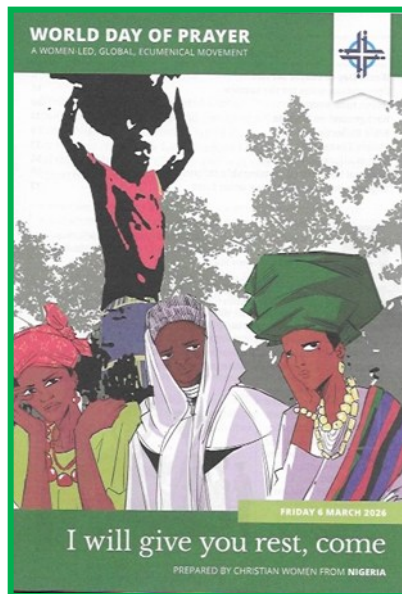
**22 March:** John 11:1–45 — Bethany, Martha and Mary, grief and delay, Jesus present, life restored, resurrection on the threshold of Passion

And it will have started on 18<sup>th</sup> February, Ash Wednesday, when we are made to face our own sinfulness and mortality, and we are invited to turn away (which of course means to repent), and draw near to Jesus. And like the children throwing their scrunched up paper into the bonfire at Turi, we want to grow, and be deepened, that all that is ill in us may be consumed in the inextinguishable fire of his love. Just fancy words... or realistic hope? In Lent, let's commit to finding out.

*Revd Andy Gandon, 20/1/2026*

**LENT**  
Pray + Fast + Give

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



**Friday March 6th**  
**10.30 St Barnabas Church**

Theme: “I will give you rest.”  
Short Service written by the  
Christian women of Nigeria

## HOPE EXHIBITION

*St Andrews Church, Pump Street*  
**31 January—5 February:**

Visionary Art Exhibition. Additional events: Poetry Workshop - 31 Jan at 11 am; *Chasing the Sun* film screening - Sat 31 Jan at 2.30; *She Walks the Line: Courage & Hope in Nepal* screening - Wed 4<sup>th</sup> Feb at 7pm. Organised by St Andrews Church ([www.sstandrews.worcester.org.uk](http://www.sstandrews.worcester.org.uk) for further info).  
*All events free.*

# ONCE UPON A FAIRYTALE

At my 'Life Writing' class at the Hive recently I noted that one way of composing a piece about someone else could be in the form of a fairytale, so hear goes...

Once upon a time there was a young man called Samuel, whose friends called him Sam, and now he was a long way from home, seeking his fortune, he needed more than friends. He needed somewhere to lodge, while he learnt his craft. He had been given an address, the home of a family, with a spare room and an open welcome, and Sam would see about that. He knocked on the green door and listened for footsteps. Someone was coming.

Elsie was younger still, living there with her brother and her parents and she had been dispatched to the door. Their eyes met when she opened it and although she didn't know it then, Sam's heart stirred at the sight of young Elsie, growing up, but ten years younger than his twenty six years.

Sat across from each other at the meal table, and over time, they fell in love, not imagining that once upon a time to come, a Big War would take Sam away and reduce their contact to letters.



Once upon a time Elsie waited patiently, and once upon an ending, marriage called and Mr and Mrs Smith were born (my Grandpa and Nana).

Sam and Elsie married in August 1920 and apparently she wore a blue dress, said, in those days, to represent 'purity' and 'calm water'. They were married for over fifty years.

*Margaret Gandon*

## CHURCHWARDEN CAKE (1860)

*Churchwarden Mary James recently came across this recipe. We're waiting for her to try making it!!*

6oz soft brown sugar  
1lb mixed fruit  
6oz butter  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda  
1 cup cold water  
Small tin condensed milk  
8oz chopped  
dates  
4oz cherries  
2oz chopped  
walnuts  
10oz SR flour  
2 eggs (beaten)



Bring all the ingredients *except for flour and eggs* to the boil in a large pan.

Simmer for 20 minutes, remove from heat and leave to cool.

When cool fold in the flour and eggs

Bake in the middle of a pre-heated oven Gas mark 3, 325°F for 1¼ - 1½ hours or until a skewer comes out clean



## INSTALLATION OF HUGH EDMUND NELSON AS BISHOP OF WORCESTER

Hundreds of people from across Worcestershire and Dudley gathered in Worcester Cathedral on Saturday to welcome Hugh Nelson to the Diocese as the 114th Bishop of Worcester.

Bishop Hugh is married to Lizzie. They have four children and he loves hanging out with his family, gardening & playing & watching football, rugby & cricket.



## BREAKFAST IN THE NORTH POLE!

Sue Martyr is pictured when she helped the Friends of Tolladine Group with Breakfast in the North Pole!





*It was a very busy Christmas period at St Barnabas:*

*Top: Blessing & distribution of boxes/bags for the homeless*

*Middle: Worcester Concert Brass Band put on a wonderful programme*

*Bottom left: Mary James has help with the elements*

*Bottom right: The Music Group enriches our worship*

*Opposite top: Carols on the Green and round Tolly Centre*

*Opposite middle: The Crib Service was well attended*

*Opposite far right: Revd Nick chalks up the date on Epiphany Sunday*





2026, time to achieve our Gold Church Eco-award?!

Recap: we were ably led through our Silver award in Jan 2022 by Judy and Chris Ford, so it feels it's time to really step up to Gold. To achieve Gold it means a whole hearted commitment by us, the church, and all aspects of our church life will need to be explored.

A Roche have questions for us to ponder on all these aspects:

**'Worship and teaching:**

Embedding creation care in worship, prayer and learning.

As people are made in the image of God, we are called to respond, to care for the earth and to work to protect and restore it. Collective worship is an integral aspect of most churches, and many of the questions in this section relate to aspects of collective worship including special services, music, preaching and prayer. The format for teaching within our churches can take many forms, such as preaching during collective worship, small groups, preparation courses, and working with children and young people.

**Buildings and energy:**

Finding energy-efficient and

innovative ways to manage our places of worship

This draws on practical steps that help a church work toward 'net zero carbon'. Many of the questions in this category point toward good building maintenance for the long term, as our buildings endure a changing climate, with more extremes, and as we seek to maintain them as welcoming spaces, glorifying God.

**Land and Nature:**

Nurturing spaces for people and nature

The purpose of this category is to guide through practical actions to care for God's earth. Be it land owned by the church, even if only around the church building itself, or land in the local community, churches need to manage land for nature.

**Community and Global engagement:**

Transforming local and global communities and ecosystems.

This section is about what we are doing collectively as a body in terms of advocacy and action. Wherever you are on your journey with social and political engagement, this survey category is an invitation to take the next step, whether that looks

like starting a conversation in your church, joining local events engaging in social and environmental justice, or joining a campaign for nature.

### **Life Style:**

Living joyfully and sustainably as followers of Christ

This category is about our churches encouraging people to act as individuals and households - integrating creation care into daily lives out of integrity, as an act of worship and obedience to God and as we grow in discipleship. Within this category, we encourage the church to play a role in educating and informing individual church members, and wider communities, about the actions they can take and the influence they have.’\*

I think we do a lot of the above already, and by working through the A Roche self-assessments questions, maybe we will discover how good we really are and easily adjust what we are doing already. These self-assessment questions ‘surveys’ have been distributed to appropriate PCC groups/ members and, as this is not just about us as individuals but a body, we will meet to support one another.

If anyone is keen/passionate to help/join in anyway, please do email me, or talk to the Church warden, Mary, and I'll invite you

to one of our meetings. I hope they will be fun and engaging.

This Gold Award is not just about achieving an award but living and flourishing with God at our core.

So, pre-gold award, let's look for gold in the way of what birds are in our garden/park/balcony, by joining in the RSVP annual bird watch. You are invited to sit for an hour between Fri 23<sup>rd</sup>-Sun 25th January, and record what birds land in the area. For more information, and how to record etc and to get a bird ID chart visit <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch> .

Not only will you be contributing to the world's biggest bird survey, but you will have an hour of meditation, relaxation, and prayer for yourself and for the world.

*Thank you*

*Sue Martyr*

[martyrboots@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:martyrboots@yahoo.co.uk)

<http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/The-Eco-Church-survey-at-a-glance.pdf>



## MISSION FUND NEWS

During 2025 the mission fund made donations to twelve local, national and international charities. Details of the donations are listed below. Each year the mission fund receives 10% of the previous year's Planned Giving scheme and the Sunday morning service plate collection. Our sincere thanks to everyone for their continued support.

### LOCAL:

#### **Maggs Day Centre:**

Situated in Deansway, Worcester. Maggs provides a warm, welcoming place where daily breakfasts are provided for the local homeless people. There is a clothing project where donations are received to help with clothing and sleeping bags required, especially during the cold weather.



**New Hope, Worcester:** This local charity, based in Ronkswood, Worcester, provides excellent support and care for children and young adults who all have profound learning difficulties. The centre is open Saturdays and during term time holidays and offers many activities with a sensory room and outside facilities. This also enables the parents/guardians to have some respite time.



### **Onside Independent**

**Advocacy:** This charity, established in 1993, is based in Charles Street, Worcester and provides a range of services to help people of all ages, with disadvantages, mental health and inequality, to overcome barriers and help them to get the correct support, services, information and advice.

#### **St. Paul's Hostel and Day Centre, Worcester:**

Provides living accommodation and day support for people at the beginning of their journey to rebuild their lives. New skills are taught, together with help, advice and support.

**St Richard's Hospice:** The Hospice is in Wildwood Way, Worcester. The in-patient unit is excellent and cares for patients with terminal illnesses, providing 24-hours care tailored to each patient's needs and providing support to their family. There is also Hospice at Home care, together with Family Support and bereavement services.

**Sight Concern:** The Bradbury Centre, 2 Sansome Walk, Worcester. This local charity is dedicated to supporting blind and partially sighted people of all ages to lead independent lives. Sight Concern is changing its name to Sensory Matters

towards the end of this year, when a new website will be available.

### **Worcester Foodbank:**

The charity is based in Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester



and is part of a national network of foodbanks, supported by the Trussell Trust. They work with local agencies, helping those in urgent need for essential food. Money donations help the foodbank to purchase items that have not been donated, but are urgently needed.

### **NATIONAL:**

**Church Urban Fund:** providing



help and support to local communities dedicated to tackling poverty and exclusion by mobilising people, churches and entire communities by reducing loneliness and boosting confidence, together with the value of faith-based social action.

**The Farming Community Network:** 2025 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFC 'walking with' farming families through difficult times and periods of change. The NFC is there every day of the year to listen, offering hope, support and guidance,

helping them to find a positive way forward. A chaplain is always on hand.

### **INTERNATIONAL:**

**Christian Aid Myanmar Earthquake Appeal:** Christian Aid is a member of the DEC and has been supporting partner organisations in Myanmar for decades. Two earthquakes devastated Myanmar on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Thousands of people lost their lives, many thousands more are missing or injured. In soaring temperatures and monsoon rains, DEC charities are working with locally-led relief workers to provide humanitarian relief and emergency aid to hundreds of thousands of families impacted by this disaster.

**Lent 2025 Appeal for the Diocese of Morogoro, Tanzania:** Supporting the newly created Morogoro Bible College Scholarship Fund. This is to help support the costs of tuition and board for catechists, evangelists and pastors from the mission parishes across the Diocese of Morogoro. Many of the students are from poor, rural areas and unable to afford a sufficient amount for their education.

**USPG (Partners in Global Mission) – Harvest Appeal 2025:** Working together with the Episcopal Anglican Church of



Brazil. The aim is to support indigenous and traditional communities who are courageously choosing to stay with the Amazon rainforest where over 10% of the area has already been destroyed. Together they are supporting grassroots led by local people, grounded in faith, who are restoring the land, healing their communities and learning new ways to produce native seedlings to reforest degrading areas and

## CAN YOU HELP?

Ann Bryant has headed the Mission Giving Committee for many years but must now retire from the role. If this is something you could help with please speak to Ann, Marian Bailey or Jackie Campbell for more details.

*Thank you!!*

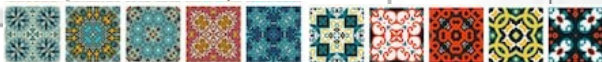


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