



*Working from home during Covid  
Seems years ago!*



## **South Cotswold Team Ministry Sunday 10th May**

### **Clergy**

Vicar: Rev'd Caroline Symcox – 01285 712467

Curate: Rev'd Vicky Falvey – 07356 234248

Priest – Pastoral Care: Rev'd Canon Denise Hyde  
01285 713285

[carolinesymcox@googlemail.com](mailto:carolinesymcox@googlemail.com)

[revvickyfalvey@gmail.com](mailto:revvickyfalvey@gmail.com)

[denisehyde15@gmail.com](mailto:denisehyde15@gmail.com)

### **SERVICES**

#### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May - 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion

Sidespeople: Jilli Connell and Kim Sutton

Readings: Mike Godsall      Intercessions: Ruth Blackwell

Offertory: Michelle Harris      Prayer Rota: Rev'd Canon Denise Hyde and Val  
Trafford

*Coffee: Mary Mawle and Margaret Frazer*

12.00 pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting

#### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May – Ascension Day**

10.30 am Holy Communion

#### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Rogation Day**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Rogation Day Holy Communion Service – including outdoors

Sidespeople: Michelle Harris and Heather Gorton

Readings: Fiona Gilroy      Intercessions: TBA

Offertory: Jane Easton      Prayer Rota: Mary Mawle and Lucy Hodson

*Coffee: Sarah Bottomley and Carol Thompson*

**From Rev'd Caroline Symcox** – 01285 712467 – [carolinesymcox@googlemail.com](mailto:carolinesymcox@googlemail.com)

Readings for Sunday: Acts 17.22-31; 1 Peter 3.13-end; John 14.15-21

Do you know how our Bible readings are chosen every Sunday? Let me explain!

The answer is both simple and complicated, of course. The simple answer is that we get them from a book – our Lectionary – which gives us readings for every day of the week. The complicated answer is that these readings were chosen after a years' long collaborative process involving representatives from all the major Roman Catholic and Protestant (Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist etc.) denominations. We share our readings with many other Christian churches and across the whole world. It's a tremendous gift – readings were chosen for the Christian season, for their connections to each other, and also to allow systematic reading through a given book if we prefer that way of reading.

Why am I telling you this? Well, because following this wonderful product of reflection and ecumenical work means that every Sunday we are challenged to think about a part of the Bible, and it may not be a part we want to read! We don't get to cherry-pick our favourite bits and ignore the rest! We are forced to pay attention to the whole of God's Word.

Sometimes though, it drops favourites into our laps, and this Sunday for me is one of those. Every one of these readings is a joy to me, because they speak to a subject that is so dear to my heart – the willingness and ability of every Christian to be able to think about and explore their faith. Those words from 1 Peter 3.15 are words I try to live by, and I commend them to you:

“Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

The whole of our faith is massive. The concepts we think about are huge – the meaning of life, the way we should live, the reality of salvation, the belief in eternal life – and can often feel beyond our reach. The Church itself, and I mean the whole Church of God here, every Christian, every denomination, is ancient and complicated, and there are undoubtedly many parts of it that we don't know or understand. Being asked to articulate anything about this massive idea of faith might seem utterly impossible. Even full-time, professional theologians would hesitate to think they could know and communicate everything there might be to know or share.

But. But there is a reason we believe. There is a difference that our faith and worship has made in our lives. We, each of us, have some relationship and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't have to know and understand everything. But being able to put into words the heart of our faith is so important and good – for us, and for the people around us who may want to know more. Take the time to speak it out, just for yourself at first. Think about it. Explore it. And then, next time someone asks, be ready to offer it. Words aren't everything, but they are a vital start. Let's work on using our words, this week!

*Rev'd Caroline*

Join us for Morning Prayer via Zoom on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday at 9am every week. Click below for the week starting 11<sup>th</sup> May. Join us at the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89947692072?pwd=aWVaY5rEvJmAu015aGcquzfseEQrBM.1>

Meeting ID: 899 4769 2072, Passcode: 536306

**From Heather -**

My last newsletter. Thank you for all your support over the years.

I am not leaving Fairford so you will still see me around!

I have worked with Michelle (who does Fridays in the office) for many years. It has been a real pleasure to work with her. She is also leaving when they have my replacement and I wish her many happy years in retirement.

o0o

**Please remember the following in your prayers:**

**Those who are ill:** Grace Slack, Hannah, Tabi Berry, Jean Griffiths, Christine Stephens.

**Those who have died:**

Martin Lee-Browne—Memorial Service 3.00 pm on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May in St. Mary's  
Ronald Thornton, John Peregrine Preece-Smith

**PRAYER AND WORSHIP****From Ann Nicholls**

As long as it draws you closer to him rather than pulling away, whatever you need, if you trust God, he will supply it.

Most loving God, may we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, always remember that even when we feel weak, you are with us. May we always put you first in our lives. We give you thanks that your plans are always greater than our fears. Help us to trust you, even when the road ahead seems impossible, transform tears of despair into songs of hope, help us to abide in you always. We pray in name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN

**Rev'd Vicky's Ordination as Priest**

All are warmly welcomed to a service at Gloucester cathedral on Saturday 27th June at 3pm to join Vicky as she celebrates her ordination as priest. We would love to fully support Vicky on this special day, so would be happy to organise lifts or even a coach or mini-bus if enough people are interested. Please speak to Meg Ralph to put your name down: email [meg7010@gmail.com](mailto:meg7010@gmail.com) or call 07709 671845.

The service will also be live-streamed if you would like to join in, but are unable to make it to the cathedral.

Vicky will preside at Communion for the first time on Sunday 28th June at 10am.

## **St Mary's APCM – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, 12pm**

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting, at which we elect our churchwardens, PCC members, and representatives to Deanery Synod and Fairford Area Churches Together, is due to be held at 12pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, immediately following our 10am service.

Do take some time in prayer to consider if God may be calling you to one of these roles! Forms will be available in the church to nominate anyone who wishes to stand for election.

## **NOTICES**

### **Bible Study – Fridays**

Rev'd Vicky Falvey is leading a new Bible study group starting this Friday, 10:30-11:30am in the church room, all welcome. We will be meeting fortnightly. Do let Rev'd Vicky know if you'd be interested in coming along.

### **Volunteers needed for 16th May – Town Council Event**

The Town Council is holding an event on the 16th May, 11:30-1:30pm, for local groups and organisations to advertise and promote options to get involved. St Mary's will have a stall at this event. We are looking for a couple of volunteers to oversee the stall and engage with those attending. Please contact Rev'd Vicky ([revivckyfalvey@gmail.com](mailto:revivckyfalvey@gmail.com)) if you feel you can help.

### **Parish Office Administrator Vacancy**

#### **St Mary's Church, Fairford**

St Mary's Church is seeking a Parish Office Administrator to provide efficient administrative support and help ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the church office, based at the Parish Office on the High Street.

Hours: 10 hours per week (flexible)

Hourly Rate: £12.71-£13.45

We are looking for someone organised, reliable and approachable, with good administrative and IT skills.

For more information and a copy of the job description, please email:

Carly Hicks

[treasurer.fairfordpcc@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.fairfordpcc@gmail.com)

## Eco Church update

Some dates for your diary - if you are interested in getting involved in any of the below, please contact Beth Bruce-Gardner 07791 841201.

- **Sunday 10 May** - as it's Fairtrade Saturday on 9 May, we will have Fairtrade information and biscuits at church coffee on Sunday 10 May.
- **Saturday 16 May** - Annual Town Meeting, 11.30 to 1.30 pm, Palmer Hall - Eco Church will be part of the St Mary's Church stall at the Palmer Hall at this event to showcase all the different activities going on in Fairford.
- **Saturday 6 June** - Fairford Festival 12.30 to 4 pm - Discover the Churchyard event on the Saturday of Fairford Festival (6 June), between 12.30 and 4 pm at St Mary's churchyard. Come and join us for an interactive discovery session about history, nature and wildlife in our church yard - with quizzes, activities for all ages, tea and cake, plant and seed swap stall in the beautiful setting of St Mary's churchyard. Picnics welcome.
- **Sunday 17 May at 10 am** - a communion service as normal but, as one of two services each year organised by the Eco Church, is has rogation and creation theme with a talk *by Rev Geoff Price*.
- **Tuesday 28 July 10 am to 12** – Bug Hunt in the churchyard. Back by popular demand! Free family fun morning for all ages discovering the micro-wildlife in St Mary's churchyard. Range of children's activities, information stalls and refreshments. No pre-booking required. Watch out for posters in the usual places!
- **Late July/early August** - we are planning the managed cutting of the wildflower area followed by the Big Rake (which may or may not be followed by the Big Cake....). Watch this space.
- **3rd Tuesdays, September 2026 to February 2027**. We are planning five Jane Kidd Eco Talks over the Autumn/Winter in September to Feb (not December), on the third Tuesday of each month in the community centre. Topics and speakers TBC.

## What is the Church of England saying about eco matters?

The Church of England, building on the landmark Land and Nature Motion in 2024, is rapidly developing a strong national voice on environmental sustainability and biodiversity including discussions about rewilding church land, its continued advocacy for church yards as amazing centres for biodiversity and the recently passed motion about sustainable church flowers.

Rewilding: There is growing pressure on the Church Commissioners to commit to protecting nature on 30 per cent of their estate by 2030. At the heart of the campaign is a private member's motion brought by Canon Val Plumb, who is the Area Dean for Rural Mission and Development in Buckingham Archdeaconry, in Oxford diocese. The motion calls on the Commissioners — who manage more than 100,000 acres of rural

land and a portfolio worth £11.1 billion — to protect nature “in line with the scale and urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises”.

Canon Plumb said: “If they can commit to protecting 30 per cent of their land by 2030, the Commissioners can resurrect nature and restore hope in our future. As Christians, we are collectively called to steward creation, and, at this time of crisis, we cannot expect others to act but not do more ourselves.” The motion has just recently received more than 100 signatures from Synod members, and so will be tabled for debate and a vote at General Synod in July 2026.

Sustainable church flowers: And as we recently heard, the General Synod in February 2026 passed a motion encouraging the use of sustainable church flowers - local and seasonal and not using plastics or floral foam. “The motion before the Church of England’s General Synod asked members to embrace the principles of the Sustainable Church Flowers movement as a tangible expression of the Fifth Mark of Mission: to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life of the earth.”

Caring for God’s acre: In addition, the Church of England has issued guidance about caring for churchyards in ways that promote biodiversity and wildlife - talking about areas of long grass, caring for trees and walls as they can all harbour wildlife of all shapes and sizes.

### **Discover the Churchyard event on Saturday 6 June**

The Eco Church Group would welcome help with any of the following:

- Offers of cakes for the refreshments table
- Potted up plants for the plant stall
- Empty tin cans, labels removed for a tin-can-posy stall
- Packets of seeds or saved seed that is surplus to requirements
- Help on the day with setting up from 11am
- Help with manning stalls or activities
- Help with clearing up from 4pm
- Talking to people so that everyone feels welcome

Please bring cakes, plants, and seeds on the day from 11am.

I will put a box in one of the back pews in the church for empty tin cans.

If you can help, please contact:

Beth B-G

07791 841201

[smileitsbethbg@gmail.com](mailto:smileitsbethbg@gmail.com)

# SUPPORT FAIRTRADE AND OUR LOCAL FOOD BANKS



 x 

**Hope**  
is everywhere

One simple act of hope:  
Donate 1 Fairtrade item to a local  
food bank



**13-20 May**

Join hope-makers across the UK

Ms Hassina, Tea plucker at Stanes Tea Farm in South India

MUSIC  
• AT ST MARY'S •

# CONCERT

## THE NORTH SWINDON BIG BAND



Church of St Mary the Virgin Fairford  
7:30pm Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Join us for an evening feast of jazz and swing classics  
Tickets £15. Available via [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) (fees apply)  
or cash at Fairford opticians from 1st June (01285 713313)



# COMMUNITY GARDEN

## PLANT & SEED

# DONATION EVENT

Sat 16<sup>th</sup> May

11:30am-1:30pm

W4W Needs You!

Help us bring our community garden to life by donating seeds and plant cuttings 🌱🌸

Please support us by dropping off your donations at:

📍 Fairford Town Council Annual Meeting at the Palmer Hall

or

📍 Fairford Community Centre

🕒 Wednesdays, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Every donation helps our garden grow and flourish for the whole community ❤️





# COMMUNITY GARDEN EVENT

30th  
May

10am-  
11am

Community  
Garden

🌿 W4W Needs You! 🌿

We need manpower, green fingers, and community spirit! 🙌🌱

We are looking for families, volunteers, and anyone who enjoys being outdoors—bring your children along to learn new skills and get involved in something positive for the community.

Let's come together on a Saturday morning and transform our community garden through weeding, planting, and growing together.

🌸 Kids can also "sponsor a flower" and watch it grow as part of the garden!

Come along, get stuck in, and help us make something beautiful for everyone to enjoy ❤️



**SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY 9 MAY, QUENINGTON VILLAGE HALL**

**A POTTED OPERA: Join Carmen in her boudoir as she tells her own story in words and music.**

**Concert, Theatre and Comedy**

CarmenCo is an ensemble comprising Emily Andrews, flautist/mezzo; David Massey & Francisco Correa, guitars. They are all Royal Academy of Music graduates, and perform entirely from memory, often incorporating storyline, acting, movement and humour into their shows and concerts.

Having toured their sell-out show A Pocket Opera (about Carmen) to more than 50 places over the last two years, from Orkney, Highlands, Cairngorms, Wales and Dorset to Kings Place in London, their reputation as innovators and stellar performers is well established all over the UK.

[www.carmencotrio.com](http://www.carmencotrio.com)

**SATURDAY  
MAY 9TH**  
7.30pm  
Doors 7pm

"A simply fantastic show: surprising, hilarious, and moving. Get a ticket at all costs - a great evening out."  
STEPHEN GOSS

**A Pocket Opera  
CarmenCo**  
Join Carmen in her boudoir as she tells  
her own story in words and music.  
Concert • Theatre • Comedy

"A playful and well-crafted performance with a depth of exceptional  
musical talent that audiences both respect and adore."  
ED O'DRISCOLL - (AIR IN G)

**TICKETS: £20**  
available from  
Coin Community Stores or  
[queningtonvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:queningtonvillagehall@gmail.com)

**QUENINGTON  
VILLAGE HALL  
GL7 5BS**  
01794 544400  
@carmencotrio

CARMENCOTRIO.COM

***Here Comes Summer!***



***Summer Events for your diary  
from the High Five Project Team***

***(See separate details in Church  
Newsletters & on Notice Boards nearer the time)***

***“Angels – True Stories and How They  
Affect Our Lives” talk by Hope Price -  
Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May***



***Jos & Ian’s Summer Barbecue – Saturday  
20<sup>th</sup> June***

***Songs & Music Concert in the church –  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July***



***Amanda & Mervyn’s Strawberry Tea &  
Prosecco Afternoon – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July***

***Katie & Jeremy’s Blackbirds & Pimms  
Afternoon Tea - Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August***



**High Five Project 2026**

**Raising Funds for Children’s Charities**

The Magic Breakfast Glos Young Carers The Rainbow Trust Smile Train Home Start Cotswolds



# Newsletter

## May

May has started with a wonderful burst of energy for Working 4 Wellbeing.

We kicked off the month with our busiest toddler group yet, welcoming 17 little ones.. The room was full of giggles, chatter, and plenty of new faces. It was lovely to see so many families joining us, and we hope to welcome everyone back again. First Steps runs every Friday term time 9:30am-11am United Church Fairford.

We also had a very exciting surprise on Saturday 2nd May at the Dobbies Community Garden Grant event. Two months ago, we applied for funding to support our community garden, alongside 22 other charities—and we were absolutely delighted to hear that W4W won.

It was such an unexpected and wonderful moment. What really stood out to the judges was our vision of bringing the whole community together through the garden. That shared spirit of connection and belonging is exactly what this project is all about.

### Community Garden Dates

Please keep an eye out for the posters and come along if you can.

16th May – Seed and Plant Donation Event

Help us get the garden started by donating seeds or plants for the space.

30th May – First Planting Together Session

Everyone is welcome to join us for one hour of community planting. Dobbies have generously donated tools, compost or what ever we need to get this project up and running and we would love as many people as possible to join us.

We're also introducing Sponsor a Flower—a lovely way for children to get involved. Come along, sponsor a flower, make a decoration to mark your spot, and return to watch your sunflowers grow and your tulips blossom.

### Dates for the diary

7th May is a big one: Our final cooking class, 🍷 A Barn Theatre trip, thanks to the brilliant Barn to Bus pilot and ending the day with Craft & Chat in Lechlade, 7pm at the Baptist Church – painting, chatting, and a chance to recharge

### Coming Up This Month

12th May – Keeping in Touch meeting

13th May – Talking Café + bookable COVID spaces

There are still 10 job appointments available, so please book soon.

16th May – Fairford Town Council Annual Meeting. W4W will have a stall there so please pop in and see us. Also chance to donate seeds and plants for our community garden 🌱

### Contact

Mary Ann

Wellbeing Coordinator

07555 738138

Talking Cafes:

Every Wednesday Fairford  
Community Centre 10:30am-  
12pm

Every Thursday Lechlade Baptist  
Church 10:30am-12pm

25th May – Bank Holiday  
Closed

26th May –FREE Half-term  
Kids Activities, Fairford  
Community Centre Must  
book!

- 🕒 10am-12pm –  
Primary school age  
craft session
- 🍔 1pm-2pm – Older  
children (8+) – burgers,  
chips and table cricket

28th May – Fairford Craft &  
Chat

🌟 Janet will be showing  
us how to make dream  
catchers.

A quick note: I'll be on  
annual leave from 28th-  
29th May, so thank you for  
your patience while our  
small but mighty team  
keeps things ticking over

29th May – Witney  
shopping trip

👜 12pm pick-up for two  
hours of shopping. £4

30th May – Community  
Garden Party 🌸

Join us for our Community  
Garden Party. It's just one  
hour, but it will make a real  
difference. Come along,  
get your hands dirty, meet  
others in the community,  
and help us keep our  
garden blooming.

# RIDE + STRIDES for Churches

**12<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPT  
2026**

**Discover & Support  
Gloucestershire's &  
North Bristol's  
Historic Churches**

**Travel your way through  
the stunning churches and  
chapels of Gloucestershire  
and North Bristol.**



**Your sponsorship  
supports the  
Gloucestershire Historic  
Churches Trust and your  
chosen church or chapel.**



*Join Us!*

Any Questions? Email us at;  
[ride-and-stride@ghct.org.uk](mailto:ride-and-stride@ghct.org.uk)



**Gloucestershire  
Historic Churches Trust**

Your local church is:

St. Mary's Church  
Fairford  
Glos

Please Contact:

Parish Office  
01285 712611