

Vol.66 No 2 February 2026 Online Edition

ST PETER'S CHURCH BRACKLEY



ST PETER'S

**“LOVING GOD,
LOVING EACH OTHER,
LOVING BRACKLEY”**



Rev'd Sylvia writes



It always seems strange to be preparing for a February edition of our magazine soon after Christmas and the New Year and when you are reading this, we are already at the beginning February.

Might you still be wondering what 2026 holds for you? Do you look forward to the year ahead, or maybe for some of you, there are feelings of uncertainty maybe even fear. For all of us there will be change of some sort.

Rich and family will be experiencing a change in their lives as Rich takes time away from church duties, (Sabbatical) for three months.

This of course, will also affect Rob as he manages this time, but also reflects on the future year and what that holds for him.

May they both be in our thoughts and prayers during this time of change.

February also brings a time of change in the Church's liturgical year. At the beginning of this month we have the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, (Candlemas) and then we start our journey to turn from the crib to the cross. Ash Wednesday on the 18th begins the season of Lent. This can be a time of change in our spiritual lives, when we take time to reflect on where we are in our faith and prepare for Easter.

As for the rest of the year, it may be filled with planned events, a wedding, a new birth and perhaps already, a special holiday booked, but what about the things that occur that come out of the blue?

Some will be joyful of course, but others may be distressful. What helps us get through those times which brings anxiety or sadness? What gives us the strength needed to cope them? We have a wonderful book which gives all we need. It contains passages which we can turn to in whatever situation we find ourselves. Verses of praise and thanksgiving in times of joy, (Psalm 100 among others), verses which give strength, courage and comfort when we face difficulties and sadness, (Isaiah 12 verse 2) 'Truly God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear. For the Lord is my strength, my song, he is my saviour'.

It's often in these unexpected moments that we find opportunities for growth, resilience, and deepened faith. Sometimes, the challenges that arise unannounced can bring about the greatest blessings, encouraging us to trust more in God's guiding hand.

It is our guide for all our experiences. It isn't any wonder that the Bible is the best selling and most widely distributed book of all time.

Being part of the family of St Peters, caring for one another, taking part in worship, fellowship and learning, is also an integral part of sharing the highs and lows of life. Through them we have a physical support network backing up all that our faith in God gives us. When we love and care for one another, we show our love for God, and so share His love with each other. This also changes us as we grow in faith.



As part of the change whilst Rich is away, it's planned that I will be taking a few more of the Sunday services at Halse during this year. You may have noticed from the magazine and bulletins these are once a month and take place in what looks like a very ordinary tin building, but inside it's quite amazing. Wood panelling, with doors that can be pulled across in front of the altar so that the space can be used for community events. There is more about it on our website. The photo taken at Harvest last year will give you an idea of the inside. A change and definitely a joy and privilege for me.

We know that conflicts have been a big part of 2025 and that seems likely to continue. We hear and read of such devastating events, but amidst all that horror, we must remember there is so much good happening which often gets little coverage. It is not the world that is a terrible place, for it is God's world, created by him. Terrible events happen, because those who have free will have lost their way, can do terrible things. We need to pray for them too.

So despite the troubles we may encounter, we shouldn't forget that, as people of faith there is so much to be thankful for, God gives us so much, through him we can experience peace and joy deep in our hearts, when we welcome him into our lives.

Whatever this year holds for us, may we all continue to grow in faith and hope and trust and know the joy that comes from that, and reach for our bibles and the word which will guide us through.

May the God of hope fill you with all peace as you believe in him. With every blessing and love,
Sylvia

The funeral of Queen Victoria

Exactly 125 years ago, on 2nd February 1901, the funeral of Queen Victoria took place.

She had died at the age of 81 on 22 January, having ruled for nearly 64 years, and her death took her family, courtiers and subjects by surprise in difficult times. The Boer war was still in progress, and the previous year the Prince of Wales had been shot at in Belgium, by a boy who was protesting against the war.

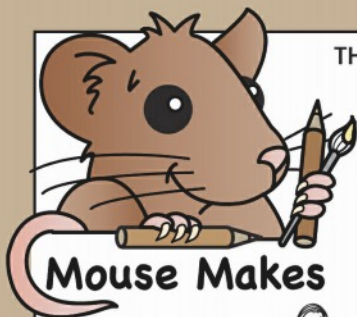


Her third adult child – Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh – had just died, another was near death, and she herself had been confined to a wheelchair, almost blind and often confused. She died at the remote Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, and when it happened there was no-one alive who could remember how to bury a monarch.

Victoria had asked for a full military state funeral, and there were secret instructions concerning mementoes of her personal servant, John Brown. The official service in St George's Chapel was chaotic because of timing errors, but it was followed by an emotional ceremony for the family on 4th February, in the mausoleum the queen had built for her husband at Frogmore, adjoining Windsor Castle, where the Queen was laid to rest beside her much-loved Prince Albert.

The total cost was £35,500 (£4.5 million). Victoria had outlived all the members of her Privy Council alive in 1837; all the members who had sat in the House of Commons at that time; and all nine of her bridesmaids.

What has been described as the godly domesticity of the Victorian era appealed to a mainly Protestant public, centring more on morals than on radical evangelicalism and effective prayer. One historian noted the transformation in the general British attitude from "aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty" to "inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical".



Mouse Makes

Read the story in
Luke 4:1-13



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan where did the Holy Spirit lead him to? v1

How many days was Jesus being tempted by the devil? v2

What did Jesus eat? v2

What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into?

What did Jesus say? v3-4

What did the devil offer Jesus if He worshipped him?

What did Jesus say? v7-8

What did the devil ask Jesus to do?

What did Jesus say? v9

FIRST TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son order this stone to turn into bread."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Man shall not live on bread alone."

Read Deuteronomy 8:3

WE LEARN:

Read the Bible

Learn God's word.



SECOND TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"I will give you power and wealth if you worship me."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him."

Read Deuteronomy 6:13

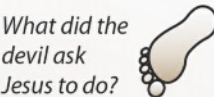
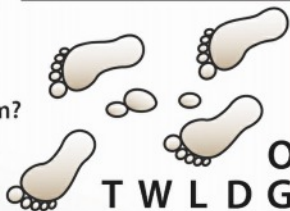
WE LEARN:

Put God first
Worship only Him.



What did the devil ask Jesus to do?

What did Jesus say? v9



T W L D G
R O G L O R Y L O
I B A P T I S E D
V O F O O T H D
S E R V E B T I
J O R D A N J E G
F O R T Y D A Y S S O N K L O R D N H



F O R T Y D A Y S S O N K L O R D N H
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T H O L Y S P I R I T Y M D
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TEMPTATION • STONE • BREAD • WRITTEN • SON • WORLD
KINGDOMS • GLORY • WORSHIP • SERVE • GOD • HIGH
JERUSALEM • TEMPLE • SON • JUMP • DOWN • LIFT • FOOT • LORD • TEST • LENT

THIRD TEMPTATION

THE DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son throw yourself down, the scriptures say God will take care of you."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Read Deuteronomy 6:16

WE LEARN:

God cares, trust
Him do not test Him.



Christmas flowers December 2025



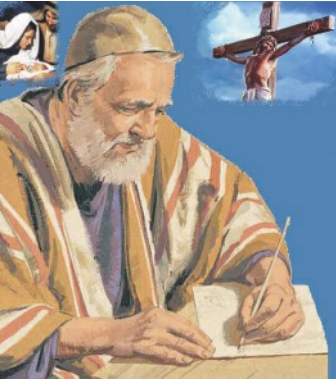
Sally Hughes –
St Peters flower team co - ordinator

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What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Old Testament: Isaiah



Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of the prophets. His name means *'The Lord saves'* and he began his 50-year ministry in 740 BC when King Uzziah died (6:1). Many scholars challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book, however there are striking verbal parallels between chapters 1–39 and 40–66.

Isaiah spoke during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom in 721. Judah was left to decide whether they would make alliances with other kingdoms or rely on God to protect them. Isaiah warns Judah that her sin would bring captivity in Babylon, which eventually took place in 586.

Isaiah sees the Messiah coming from the line of David. He speaks of a new temple being established (ch2); a child born with a new kingdom (ch9) and judging differently to other kings (ch11) as well as the nature of His suffering (ch53). The *'suffering servant'* (chapters 42–53) also applies to Israel as a nation, who are called to be a *'light for the Gentiles'* (42:6). Not surprisingly Jesus applies Isaiah's words to His own life and ministry. eg Is 61:1 quoted in Luke 4:18. Throughout his book Isaiah presents the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation as *'the Holy One of Israel'* (6:1), as well as the *'Sovereign Lord'* far above all nations (40:15–24).

Isaiah looks forward to the promise of a new city of Zion (chs 60–66), in which the people offer praise to the Holy One of Israel. *'Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.'* (65:17).

February's Easy Eco Tip (From A Rocha UK)

This Lent, take part in Climate Steward's Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God.

The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation. **Find out more and sign up at**

climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/

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