

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025

The Benefice of St. James
with St. Michael and St. Augustine
Beckenham
(DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER)

Vicar: Fr. Russell Stagg

The Vicarage, 120 Birkbeck Road,
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SUNDAY SERVICES

9.15am Mass – St. James's Church
St. James's Avenue, BR3 4HF

11.00am Mass – St. Michael's Church
Ravenscroft Road, BR3 4TN

www.stjamesandstmichael.org.uk

Dear Friends,

A very warm welcome to the February edition of our parish newsletter! As this is my first letter of 2025, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a belated Happy New Year. I hope the first weeks of January have been kind to you and that this new year brings fresh opportunities, peace, and joy for us all.

This month, we find ourselves at a crossroads in the seasons. February might be the shortest month, but it has its own unique charm. The days are beginning to stretch out, and there's a hint of spring in the air, even if winter sometimes reminds us it hasn't quite finished with us yet.

Candlemas, which we celebrate on 2nd February, marks this transition beautifully. Traditionally, it's a time when we look both backwards and forwards – back to Christmas and the coming of Christ into the world, and forward to the light and hope of Easter. Folklore tells us that the weather on Candlemas Day predicts what's to come for the rest of winter.

*“If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
winter will have another flight.*

*If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,
winter is gone and won't come again.”*

So, I'll be keeping an eye on the skies and hoping for signs of an early spring!

Of course, regardless of what the weather holds, February gives us the chance to pause and reflect. It's a time for taking stock and perhaps rekindling those New Year resolutions that might already be faltering. It's also a season to notice the small changes happening around us – the first snowdrops, the lengthening evenings – gentle reminders of God's presence in the rhythms of creation.

May the month ahead bring light to your days and warmth to your hearts.

With every blessing,

Fr Russell

WORSHIP CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

2 nd	The Presentation of The Lord Sung Mass at St. James's Sung Mass at St. Michael's	9.15am 11.00am
9 th	5th Sunday in Ordinary Time Sung Mass at St. James's Sung Mass at St. Michael's	9.15am 11.00am
16 th	6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Sung Mass at St. James's Sung Mass at St. Michael's Evensong at St. Michael's	9.15am 11.00am 6.00pm
23 rd	7th Sunday in Ordinary Time Sung Mass at St. James's Sung Mass at St. Michael's	9.15am 11.00am

MIDWEEK SERVICES

Tuesday	7.00pm	St. James's
Wednesday	10.00am	St. Michael's
Thursday	10.30am	St. James's (followed by refreshments)*
Friday	7.00pm	St. Michael's
Saturday	9.30am	St. James's

*No service on 27 February

The Thursday morning mass at St. James's is followed by tea/coffee and a biscuit, and everyone is welcome to come and join us for a cuppa and a natter from about 11.00am.

WARM SPACES

St. Michael's Church will be opening up on Wednesday mornings from 10.30 – 12.30 for warm spaces. All are welcome to come along for a chat, some games and refreshments in a warm friendly atmosphere.

PEW SHEET NOTICES

If you wish to add a name to the prayer list or place a notice on the sheet please email Jo in the office by midday on Wednesday.

HYMNS FOR FEBRUARY

2nd February - Candlemas (*New English Hymnal*)

- 500 Thy Kingdom come on bended knees
- 285 For the beauty of the earth
- 44 Faithful vigil ended
- 338 At the name of Jesus

9th February – 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Celebration Hymnal*)

- 259 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty
- 812 Will you come and follow me
- 497 My God how wonderful thou art
- 248 He who would valiant be

16th February – 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Celebration Hymnal*)

- 602 Praise my soul the King of heaven
- 75 Be thou my vision
- 88 Blessed are the pure in heart
- 567 Oh Lord, all the world belongs to you

23rd February – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Celebration Hymnal*)

- 738 Thou whose almighty
- 813 Will you let me be your servant
- 339 Just as I am
- 233 Guide me O thou great

ST. JAMES'S DRAW WINNERS FOR DECEMBER

- 1. Pauline Luffingham
- 2. Andy Glason
- 3. Jane Brack

ST. JAMES'S DRAW WINNERS FOR JANUARY

- 1. Angela Glason
- 2. Julie Handley
- 3. Barbara Mills

FUTURE EVENTS AT ST. JAMES'S

Quiz – Saturday 22 March 2025

Our next quiz is on Saturday 22 March at 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Teams of up to 8. Tickets are £8.00. Please bring your own nibbles and drinks.

To book please call Jan on 07939 088820.

THANK YOU FROM CLAIRE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I would like to thank everyone who bought cards last year. Together we have raised £190.00 for the charity MIND. Also a big thank you to all those who donated cards to sell.

Please keep buying cards this year so we can raise more money for charity.

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION & CONSECRATION OF THE BISHOP OF RICHBOROUGH

The service of the consecration of Ven. Luke Irvine-Capel as the next Bishop of Richborough will take place at Canterbury Cathedral on 27 February at 2.30 p.m. It would be really good to get a group from the Benefice to attend this service and show our prayers and support for our new Bishop. Please speak to Fr. Russell if you would like to attend so travel arrangements can be made. But most of all please keep Fr. Luke in your prayers.

FELLOWSHIP GROUP

First of all, Happy New Year to you all.

For our next meeting on 7 February we are having a lunch of soup & bread roll and a pudding. This will be at 1.00pm. If you would like to join us please let Fern or Jan know.

On 7th March we will be supporting the World Day of Prayer. This year it will be held at 3.00 p.m. in Beckenham Baptist Church, Elm Road. Please see Elizabeth's article for further details.

If you're at a loose end on the first Friday afternoon of each month please come along and join us for whatever is going on and tea and a natter.

TOP OF THE PEW

We have been invited to take part in this knockout competition again. You may recall we participated regularly a few years ago. Meanwhile the rules have been changed, and most rounds are now conferring and less 'intimidating'. Please let Gwen know if you would like to join a team for the benefice.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The Beckenham World Day of Prayer service for 2025 will be held at the Baptist Church in Elm Road on 7 March. It will start at 3pm and there will be tea and cakes in the hall afterwards.

The service this year has been written by the women of the Cook Islands in the Pacific. The islands lie to the east of Tonga and Samoa and are part of the Polynesian triangle.

The theme of the service is 'I made you wonderful' from Psalm 139 v14. Some of the service will be in the Māori language, which will be an interesting challenge!

Please come and bring your friends to enjoy this unusual and interesting service and to be part of the prayer wave that encircles the earth on that day.

Elizabeth Gibson

WDP Beckenham Committee.

LENT COURSE AT ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Fr. Russell will be leading a Lent Course at St. Michael's Church at 7.30 p.m. on the following Wednesdays:

12 March	Session One	The Nature of Faith
19 March	Session Two	The history of the church's creeds
26 March	Session Three	Why creeds matter
2 April	Session Four	The role of creeds in liturgy

CTiB LENT COURSE

Organisation is afoot for the Lent Course, which will be held at St. John's, Eden Park on the Mondays of Lent – 11 March to 8 April. More details to follow, but please make a note of these dates. It is hoped that there will be 4 – 5 study groups including music, art and a RESOLVE course (discussion for groups in 4 sessions – *Looking after your body, Strengthening your mind, Inspiring your soul and Deepening your relationships*).

THANK YOU

Advent and Christmas are now memories, but a lot of hard work was put into the events which took place across the benefice.

From the flyers you will have noticed that there were, among other things at both churches: carol services, Christingle services, Crib Services, First masses of Christmas and Christmas day services. Many of these involved catering, which

was ably carried out by our respective teams. The Christingle services attracted new faces, and by the end of the services these faces had big smiles on them as the children had beautifully decorated Christingles with sweets to take home. The Crib Services too were well attended, and children were able to dress up as nativity characters.

The churches also hosted local school nativity performances: Churchfields, Stewart Fleming, Marian Vian and Bellissimo preschool.

Special collections resulted in funds being raised for The Children's Society (from the Christingle services) and Living Well.

We'd like to thank Fr. Russell for underpinning all these services, and also those who helped with cleaning and decorating the churches, musical accompaniment, suppliers of mulled wine, mince pies and other Christmas refreshments, and the inevitable clearing up afterwards.

Entering into the Christmas spirit Fr. Russell showed off his impressive display of Christmas jumpers.

News from 9th Penge & Beckenham North Scout Group

The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts enjoyed some memorable activities towards the end of the year, with the St James' Christingle church service being a real highlight for them. Thank you to Fr Russell for making it such a fun and engaging service. The brave leaders also took 65 children and helpers to the pantomime in Bromley (oh yes we did...!) which was a fantastic end of term treat. The adults all sniggered at the dad jokes & innuendos, and the children all loved the songs, dancing and audience participation. A brilliant show!

Unfortunately, our much-loved Cubs leader Phil was very poorly in hospital over Christmas. The children were very worried about him and wished him well with some creative 'get better soon' cards and lots funny videos via WhatsApp. Phil is now home & feeling much better, so we hope to see him back at Cubs again very soon (...hurry up Phil, they are noisy kids without you!)

In other news, Jonas R was announced as the 2024 winner of the 'David Emerson Award' which is an annual trophy in memory of our old leader and is given to the Cub who best demonstrates scouting values. Jonas is an excellent role model and was the unanimous choice...so well done to Jonas!

Coming up this month, the Beavers will enjoy a visit from a local vet to learn more about animal care and what a vet does day-to-day. The Scouts will be trying out some cooking techniques, and eating the results no doubt. The Cubs

will be working towards their Entertainer badge by participating in a theatre workshop - let's see how many budding Annies and Billy Elliots we have!

Sue Guckian

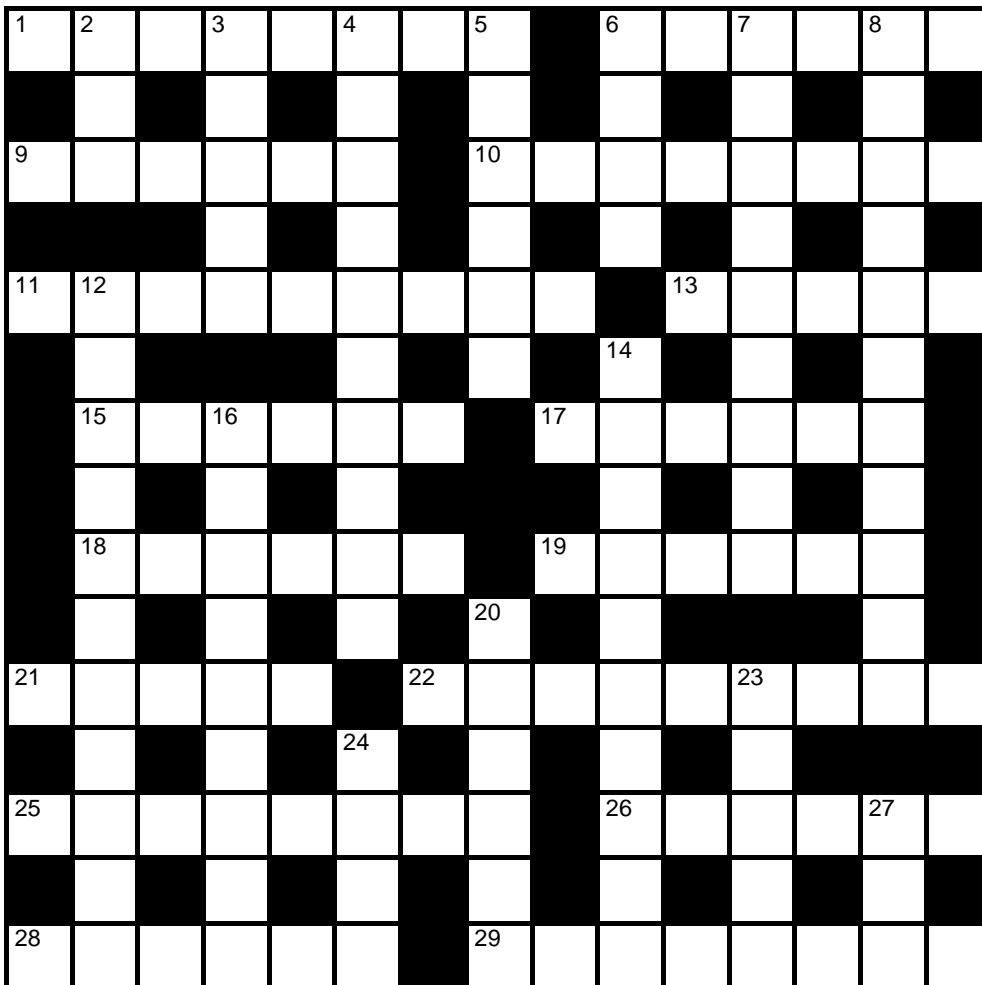
Acceptance by Robert Frost

When the spent sun throws up its rays on cloud
And goes down burning into the gulf below,
No voice in nature is heard to cry aloud
At what has happened. Birds, at least, must know
It is the change to darkness in the sky.
Murmuring something quiet in its breast,
One bird begins to close a faded eye;
Or overtaken too far from its nest,
Hurrying low above the grove, some waif
Swoops just in time to his remembered tree.
At most he thinks or twitters softly, "Safe!
Now let the night be dark for all of me.
Let the night be too dark for me to see
Into the future. Let what will be be."

WINTER WONDER by Mary Athron

The message of the snowdrop is a very splendid thing
It hides away, surprises us, and says it's nearly spring.
The snow lies melting on the ground, and the fields are quiet like mice
And tiny ballerinas dance with skirts as white as ice.
The beauty of this flower is that it's one of the first to bloom.
It gives us hope and heralds the end of winter's gloom.
As season follows season, and we get the sun and rain
We know the graceful snowdrop will make us smile again.

FEBRUARY PUZZLES (Solutions next month)



Solon 50

Across

- 1 Sufficient for a time about European question (8)
- 6 Mad king wearing empty helmet could hop on board (6)
- 9 Choose a sort of committee? (6)
- 10 Do businesses make checks? (8)
- 11 Someone in charge struggling to make ends meet (9)
- 13 Revolutionary's obtained small game (5)
- 15 Sets back good man one metre initially in length (6)
- 17 Leaders of government address zoom users making proposal for higher offer (6)
- 18 Religious man who is part of the set (6)
- 19 Keep action on board (6)
- 21 Former pilot emptied double in pub (5)
- 22 Alternatively lose piano and dance (9)
- 25 Flyer texted, I see, a calcified lake in South America (8)
- 26 Popular saint receives record harmony (2,4)
- 28 Obtain agreement with safety first in marriage (6)
- 29 Darts away from poor melodramatics for tea (8)

Down

- 2 The German end (3)
- 3 Cat on board? (5)
- 4 Without personal control robot picks one up (10)
- 5 Cut tax! (6)
- 6 Head man on board (4)
- 7 Old money for European wager (5,4)
- 8 Home passion could become us (4,7)
- 12 Festivity occurs with cabinet role reshuffle (11)
- 14 Transport Austrian doctor to hospital (10)
- 16 Yes strange merits can be very strange (9)
- 20 Regarding a prophet's decoration (6)
- 23 Here inside pleads umpire (2,3)
- 24 Pledge for one of 16 men on board (4)
- 27 Lee returns to fish (3)

SUDOKU

4			8					
	8	7			6			1
5		3		2				
		1		3			5	
	6		9		5		8	
	5			7		1		
				6		5		7
6			2			3	1	
					9			2

SOLUTIONS TO DECEMBER/JANUARY PUZZLES

Across: 1 Splint, 4 Discover, 9 London, 10 Allotted, 11 Tasselled, 13 Spain, 14 Roast, 16 Alamo, 20 Retie, 21 Dwell, 24 Arena, 25 Retinitis, 27 Spaceman, 28 Oliver, 29 Nearside, 30 Ankles.

Down: 1 Solitary, 2 Landsman, 3 Noose, 5 Idled, 6 Crossword, 7 Vittae, 8 Riding, 12 Leant, 15 Threatens, 17 Agent, 18 Festival, 19 All sorts, 22 Parson, 23 Nevada, 25 Roald, 26 Nylon.

FUN FACTS ABOUT FEBRUARY

The word comes from the Latin word 'februa' which means to cleanse. It was named after Februlia, a month long Roman festival of purification and atonement which took place at this time of year

In old English February was called 'Solmonath' which translates to 'mud month' reflecting the wet weather conditions typical in England at this time

Folklore: Married in February's sleety weather
Life you will tread in tune together

2 February is Groundhog Day. According to folklore if the groundhog sees its shadow due to clear weather it will retreat back into its burrow, as this indicates another 6 weeks of winter. If it doesn't see its shadow because of cloudiness spring will arrive early

12 February – February's full moon reaches peak illumination, so look out to see the best views of this full moon. It is known as the Snow Moon due to the typical heavy snowfall that occurs in February

February is the only month which can pass without a full moon. This phenomenon occurs next in 2037. Make a diary note of this now!

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Please send items for the March issue of the Newsletter to Jan (janetgore@aol.com) by **Thursday 14 February**

DIRECTORY

Vicar:	Fr. Russell Stagg	020 8402 2712 07526 621232
	Email: vicar@stjamesandstmichael.org.uk	
<u>Churchwardens:</u>		
St. James's	Mrs. G. Binnie	020 8650 0342
St. Michael's	Mr. M. Philippault	07838 146467
	Email: office.stmichaelbeckenham@gmail.com	
Benefice Administrator	Mrs. J. Perry	07838 146467
	Email: office.stjamesbeckenham@gmail.com	
	Email: office.stmichaelbeckenham@gmail.com	
Hall bookings	Mrs. J. Perry	07838 146467
St. James's Fellowship	First Friday of each month 2.00pm-3.30pm Guild Room	
Rainbow Guides	6 th Beckenham – Suspended	
Brownie Guides	6 th Beckenham Tuesday in the Hall 6.15pm-7.45pm Miss A. Mansfield	020 8658 1680
Guides	6 th Beckenham Friday in the Hall 7pm-8.30pm Miss A. Mansfield	020 8658 1680
Beavers	Thursday in the Lecture Room 6.30pm-8.00pm Claudia Gotor-Pedrerros	claudiagotor@gmail.com
Cub Scouts	Thursday in the Hall 6.30pm-8.00pm Sue Guckian	sueguckian@gmail.com
Scouts	Thursday in the Hall 8.00pm-9.00pm Jaime Griffiths	jaimegriffiths@hotmail.co.uk
All Beaver/Cub/Scout enquiries to Group Scout Leader	9thpbnbeavers@gmail.com	
Pre-School	Jenny Strudwick	020 8249 8386