

The Benefice of St. James
with St. Michael and St. Augustine
Beckenham



BENEFICE NEWS

May 2026

The Benefice of St James with
St Michael and St Augustine Beckenham
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
and a member of the Richborough Family



THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES

St James's Ave, Elmers End, Beckenham

 StJamesElmersEnd

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9.15am
Sung Parish Mass
followed by refreshments

Confessions by appointment or after Mass on Saturday

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Tuesday- 7.00pm
Thursday -10.30am
followed by refreshments
Saturday - 9.30am

THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST MICHAEL WITH ST AUGUSTINE
Ravenscroft Road, Beckenham

 stmichaelbeckenham



SUNDAY WORSHIP

11.00am
Sung Parish Mass
followed by refreshments

Confessions by appointment or after Mass on Friday

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Wednesday- 10.00am
followed by refreshments
Friday - 7.00pm

For Solemnities and Major Feast Day see The Benefice Diary on page 11

www.stjamesandstmichael.org.uk

From the Vicarage



Dear friends,

As we step into the month of May, the parish seems to breathe a little more easily. The days grow longer, gardens begin to flower, and there is a renewed sense of life and promise around us. May has long been a month associated with growth and hope, and it is fitting that in the life of the Church it is also the month in which we give special honour to Mary, the mother of our Lord.

In remembering Mary this month, we give thanks for her unique and irreplaceable role in God's saving work. When the angel greeted her with the words, "Hail, favoured one," Mary responded not with fear or pride, but with humility and trust: "Let it be to me according to your word." In that moment of faithful obedience, God took on our human flesh, and the mystery of the Incarnation began within her womb. Through Mary's willing "yes," heaven and earth were joined in Jesus Christ.

Honouring Mary does not distract us from Christ; rather, it draws us closer to him. Mary always points beyond herself to her Son. Her life encourages us to listen for God's call and to respond with courage and faith, even when we do not know where that call may lead. In giving thanks for Mary, we are reminded that God often works through the quiet faithfulness of ordinary lives offered wholeheartedly to him.

May is also a gentle invitation to us to pause, to reflect, and to pray. In the busyness of daily life, Mary's example teaches us the value of stillness and attentiveness to God. As she "pondered these things in her heart," may we too find time this month to reflect on God's presence with us—perhaps through prayer, reading Scripture, or simply noticing the beauty of creation unfolding around us.

With my prayers for you all this month,

R Russell

Christian Aid Week

10-16 May 2026

The External Affairs committee is asking people to take part in sponsored walks for Christian Aid this year.

John Rowe has created 4 walks around Beckenham churches. The shortest is one mile and covers 4 churches in central Beckenham. Then there is a 3.8 mile walk covering 10 churches and a 6.6 mile walk covering 12 churches, while the longest is 8.1 miles and covers 18 churches.

You can choose whatever length suits your walking ability

Instructions and sponsorship forms are be available from John Rowe.

You can walk alone or with friends and at any time that suits you, but you must have completed your chosen walk by the 16th May.

If you are not able to take part yourself, would you please sponsor one or more of the walkers.



Top of the Pew Knockout Competition

It's that time of year again, when the local churches meet up to fight it out in the knockout competition. Your team will be meeting Elmers End Free Church to do battle on 21 June at 7 p.m. in St. James's Church hall. Please come along and support us.

Apart from the fun we shall have at these competitions, as usual we shall be welcoming charity donations. This year's chosen charity is Bromley District Talking News for the Blind. This is a community initiative run by a team of volunteers to keep blind and partially sighted people in the loop with local news.

Music for May



3rd May – 5th Sunday of Easter (*Celebration Hymnal*)

- 59 At the name of Jesus
- 399 Love is his word
- 556 O Thou who at thy Eucharist
- 113 Christ Triumphant

10th May – 6th Sunday of Easter (*Celebration Hymnal*)

- 37 Alleluia, sing to Jesus
- 818 Ye choirs of new Jerusalem
- 20 All heavens declare
- 778 We have a gospel to proclaim

14th May – Ascension Day (*New English Hymnal*)

- 109 Hail thee festival day
- 134 The head that once was crowned with thrones
- 272 All for Jesus
- 130 Hail the day that sees him rise

17th May – 7th Sunday of Easter (*New English Hymnal*)

- 443 Rejoice, the Lord is King
- 476 Ye servants of God
- 131 O King most high on earth and sky
- 332 All hail the power of Jesus name

26th May – Pentecost Sunday (*New English Hymnal*)

- 431 O thou who camest from above
- 137 Come down, O love divine
- 138 Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
- 367 Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost (T:1)

31st May – Trinity Sunday (*New English Hymnal*)

- 146 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty
- 148 The God of Abraham Praise
- 295 Let all mortal flesh
- 373 How shall I sing the majesty (T:Cofen)

Easter

On behalf of all of us who took part in the Easter services a big vote of thanks to Fr. Russell for all his hard work in preparing them, Andrew, our organist and the choir for performing the music, and all who came along.

The services in Holy week included significant short addresses. Monday's compared the personalities of Mary, sister of Lazarus, who generously bathed Jesus' feet with expensive oils with Judas, the treasurer of the group (although it was recorded that he did dip into the funds himself), who criticised the waste of precious resources. 'Fig Tuesday' commemorates the day Jesus cursed a barren fig tree, with plenty of leaves but no fruit, as a symbolic lesson to the disciples emphasising the importance of genuine faith. 'Spy Wednesday' observes Judas Iscariot's secret agreement to betray Jesus – at a price of 30 pieces of silver.

On Tuesday of Holy week members of the two churches attended the Chrism Mass in Rochester. The new Archbishop of Canterbury was in attendance, and sat very close to us.

On Maundy Thursday the service was breathtakingly beautiful. The Lady Chapel had been cleaned and decorated with the most wonderful flower arrangements for the watch. More thanks here to our flower ladies.

On Saturday there was a spring clean at St. James's in preparation for the Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday services. Thanks to everyone for their efforts to make Easter, deservedly, so very special.



Please feel free to come and join us for refreshments and a natter after our mid-week masses. St. Michael's Church is open on Wednesday mornings 10.30 – 12.30, and St. James's on Thursdays 11 – 12.30. Everyone is welcome to come along.

St James's Fellowship



Thanks to Fern for organising an afternoon of bingo on 10 April. I don't think we're in danger of encouraging gambling addiction; top prizes included tinned fruit and soup. Our aim is to have a relaxing afternoon in good company. Mind you, Fern's cream cake is quite addictive.

On 1 May we shall be meeting in the Lecture Room at 2.00 pm for tea and a natter. Do come and join us.

Short-staffed

Two men were working for the town council. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without rest, one man digging a hole, the other filling it in again.

An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he finally approached the hole digger, "I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting in to your work, but I don't get it – why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?"



The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, "Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-person team. But today the guy who plants the trees called in sick."

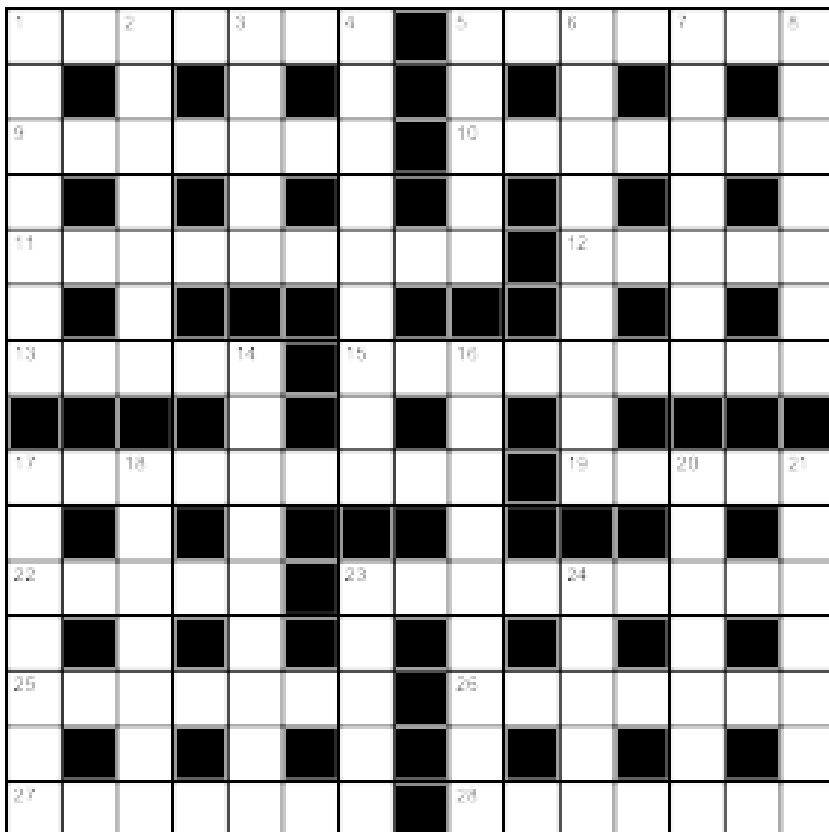
Monthly Draw results

1st - Derek Dalton,

2nd - Bill Pepper,

3rd - Fr Russell

Puzzles (Solutions next month)



Across

- 1 Ennobling is reportedly a softener (7)
- 5 Food at last? (7)
- 9 I leave ill-usage but get the bird (7)
- 10 Ranges that come before tangoes (7)
- 11 Old princess leaves unpolished (9)
- 12 Ned revealed by opener bagging a couple of fifties (5)
- 13 Guide in Tesco utterly (5)
- 15 Previously dancing with reels (9)
- 17 Arrive with broken lance I'll admit (4,5)
- 19 Tasty substitute has head removed and replaced with youth leader (5)
- 22 Lofty home that may sound strange (5)
- 23 One in a rush to find riches? (4,5)
- 25 Underground access for chap over a pickle (7)
- 26 Penned by number after legal document (7)

27 Overshadowed agent following deputy head's conflict (7)

28 Lives by upstart leaving remnants (7)

Down

1 Quantities of drugs and herb smuggled into parties (7)

2 Courageous supporter against fuss (7)

3 Harden cover without old Bob (5)

4 Hear score and refuse wildfowl (9)

5 Good man in island obtains expenses (5)

6 Have elevenses whilst on holiday to form a splinter group perhaps (9)

7 Legendary old rock singer from Germany? (7)

8 Alter design of remainder that almost call out (7)

14 Finished and rebuked? (6,3)

16 Mad wren fouls flora (9)

17 Beat the best with little Edward (7)

18 Deranged naval officer lost a pound but gained a penny for Tempest woman (7)

20 Recorded as a clock face may be? (7)

21 Upset Tyson Fury oddly maybe pants (1-6)

23 Checked without a sin (5)

24 Water and gas courses (5)

Sudoku

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

The Richborough Family News



Wednesday 6th May	St John's Higham (7.30pm) Preacher - Fr Jeremy Sheehy
Sunday 21st June	St John's Sevenoaks (4pm) Patronal Festival with Bishop Luke
Sunday 26th July	St James's Elmers End (5pm) Patronal Festival with Bishop Luke
Saturday 29th August	Aylesford Pilgrimage (12noon) Celebrant and Preacher Bishop Luke
Sunday 27th September	St Michael's Beckenham (5pm) Patronal Festival - Bishop Lindsey Urwin
Saturday 17th October	Richborough Festival - Canterbury

Confirmation on St James's Day

On St James's Day, we're delighted that the Bishop of Richborough will be coming to celebrate with us. During the service he will also confirm any candidates who are ready to take this important step in their faith.

Confirmation is a simple but beautiful way of saying "yes" to the Christian faith for yourself. It's also the moment after which you can receive Holy Communion, fully taking part in the sacramental life of the Church.

And just in case you're wondering — you are never too old to be confirmed. Many people come to it later in life, when the time feels right for them. If you'd like to know more, or if you're thinking about being confirmed this year, please speak to Fr Russell.

Poetry Corner

The Seven Churches in Asia

By Megan Carter



Christ moves amongst His churches
And sees straight into their hearts,
Encouraging with promises
As each one plays their part.

In Ephesus and Smyrna
There's love, suffering, and pain
Thyatira and Pergamum are holding on
Remaining true to His name.

In Sardis and Philadelphia,
Aware of all their deeds,
He knows their strengths and weaknesses
And highlights all their needs.

Laodicea is called lukewarm
Being neither cold nor hot,
How sad when purchased with His blood
Such grace is soon forgot.

So learning from these churches
Let us long to hear His call,
As He comes for His bride with trumpet sound
When the Lord will be all in all.

(He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.)

May

'Ne'er cast a clout till May is out'. This may refer to the 18th century warning not to remove your winter warm clothing until the month of May is over, but may refer to the hawthorn tree, which flowers in late April. In other words it means don't take off your warm clothes until the month of May has passed because the cold weather can return at any time.

May Day, celebrated on 1 May, is rich in traditions and celebrations honouring the arrival of spring and workers' rights. 1st May has historical roots in agricultural and labour movements. It marks the halfway point between the spring equinox and summer solstice, symbolising the fertility of the earth. Various customs vary by region and culture.

In Beckenham there have been several May Queen groups, each having her own colour. Crowning of the May Queen took place annually in Beckenham Recreation Ground, followed by a tea party in the Azelia Hall.

And did you know this about the month of May?

It is the only month when a US president has not died

It is celebrated on 4th May by the Star Wars fans movie franchise –
May the force be with you

29 May 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak

6 May 1954 Roger Bannister was the first to run a mile in under 4 minutes (3 min 59.4 secs)

6 May 1996 the Channel Tunnel, linking England and France under the English Channel, was opened

8 May 1945 Victory in Europe Day, ending WWII in Europe

19 May 1962 Marilyn Munroe sang happy birthday to JFK

4 May 1819 birth of Queen Victoria, who reigned for 63 years

The Benefice Diary

Please make a note of these dates and fund-raising events which the Social Affairs Committee will be organising over the next couple of months. Further details in next month's newsletter.

16 May Bumper English Evening

27 June Barbecue 12.30pm for 1.00pm (Details to follow)

26th July St James's Elmers End (5pm)
Patronal Festival with Bishop Luke

1st August Afternoon Cream Tea (details to follow)

27th Sept St Michael's Beckenham (5pm)
Patronal Festival - Bishop Lindsey Urwin



**A BUMPER
ENGLISH
EVENING**

**Saturday 16 May
6.00pm for 6.30 pm
St. James's Hall**

Lancashire hotpot,
treacle sponge pudding
Tea and coffee

Bring your own drinks

Please book with Jan

**Tickets
£10**

19th May – St Dunstan, the abbot who restored monastic life in England

Dunstan (909-988 AD) stands out as an example of what just one person can achieve when they follow the call of God on their life.

Dunstan was born near Glastonbury, of a noble family with royal connections and church connections; his uncle was Archbishop of Canterbury. But in 935, at the age of 26, he was accused of ‘studying the vain poems of the pagans’ – and expelled from court. He nearly married, but instead made private monastic vows and was ordained a priest by Elphege, bishop of Winchester. Dunstan felt God’s call on his life and responded. That decision was to shape English history.

Not at first, however. For Dunstan began his priestly life by simply returning to Glastonbury and living as a hermit. He painted, embroidered and did metalwork. But when in 939 Edmund became king of Wessex, he recalled Dunstan and made him abbot of Glastonbury. The monastic life of the country was all but dead; the Danish invasions and the hostility of local magnates had seen to that. Dunstan set out to change all this, and went on to restore monastic life in England, under the Rule of St Benedict.

Down the years, Dunstan saw kings come and go: Edmund, Edred, Edgar, Edward. Under King Edgar Dunstan was made bishop of Worcester in 957, bishop of London in 959, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 960. Thus was born a fruitful collaboration between King and Archbishop which was to reform the Church in England. Monastic orders began to thrive once more. After the Conquest, the days of Dunstan would be looked back on as the ‘golden age’.

Dunstan was zealous for the faith. He taught, prayed, fasted, repaired churches, acted as judge, inspired national laws of the land, made sure taxes were paid, and encouraged his monks in their manuscripts and prayers. He remained active right to the end of his life: he preached three times on Ascension Day 988, and died two days later, on 19 May, aged nearly 80.



Terry made a note to fix the bolt

Solutions to April Puzzles

Across: 9 Hedge fund, 10 Imago,
11 Atrophy, 12 Outflow, 13 Test paper,
15 Facet, 17 Epigram, 19 Muffler,
20 Doggy, 21 Spray guns, 24 Archive,
26 Pharaoh, 28 Elide, 29 Life peers.

Down: 1 Thwart, 2 Addressing, 3 Neap,
4 Buoy up, 5 Ideogram, 6 Fifty-fifty,
7 Rail, 8 Low water, 14 Party lines,
16 Calculated, 17 Endgames,
18 Masterly, 22 Rip-off, 23 Schism,
25 Coin, 27 Amps.

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

DIRECTORY

Vicar:	Fr. Russell Stagg ssc	020 8402 2712 07526 621232
	Email: vicar@stjamesandstmichael.org.uk	
Churchwardens:		
St. James's	Gwen Binnie	020 8650 0342
St. Michael's	Matthieu Philippault	07838 146467
	Email: office.stmichaelbeckenham@gmail.com	
Benefice Administrator	Jo Perry	07838 146467
	Email: office.stjamesbeckenham@gmail.com	
	Email: office.stmichaelbeckenham@gmail.com	
Hall bookings	Jo Perry	07838 146467
St. James's Fellowship	First Friday of each month Guild Room 2.00pm-3.30pm	
Brownie Guides	6th Beckenham Tuesday in the Hall 6.15pm-7.45pm Alison Mansfield	020 8658 1680
Guides	6th Beckenham Friday in the Hall 7pm-8.30pm Alison Mansfield	020 8658 1680
Beavers	Thursday in the Lecture Room 6.30pm-7.45pm Claudia Gotor-Pedrerros	claudiagotor@gmail.com
Cub Scouts	Thursday in the Hall 6.30pm-7.45pm Sue Guckian	sueguckian@gmail.com
Scouts	Thursday in the Hall 7.45pm-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