

St Nicholas, Marston and St Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfeld

MARSTON TIMES

February 2025 stnicholasmarston.org.uk Delivered quarterly Donations welcome

Have you ever felt as though you have been working really hard towards something, but that your efforts have been overlooked or underappreciated? Or have you ever set yourself a goal, pushed diligently towards its completion and fallen short of achieving it?



The efforts made by a single person in a great work are frequently taken for granted and many of us fall short of our

own, or other people's expectations. These are problems we face today, but they are problems that human beings have been facing for thousands of years. Chapter 49 of Isaiah, in the Old Testament, is a first-person narrative of a character, who, like many of us, knows what it feels like to labour in vain, or to be overlooked. However, this chapter is one, not of defeatism and despair at the futility of life, but one of hope.

The speaker in Isaiah begins by saying that 'The Lord called me before I was born: while I was in my mother's womb he named me.' On the one hand, this could be read as a very specific statement, but I think that it has a universal meaning and resonance. God is with us and calling us from the earliest moment of our lives; not just the people born to positions of power and influence, but all of us: you, me, everyone.



This calling is not the end of the story, though, as all who have

worked toward a goal know so well. There follows a period of hard work. The speaker in Isaiah describes themselves as a 'servant' and the work they have done is difficult. What is more, this work seems to them to have been futile. How many of us can identify with

their complaint: 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing'?

The complaint made by the Lord's servant in Isaiah is the complaint of a person who feels overlooked, or underappreciated; maybe it is the complaint of someone who believes they have failed to fulfil their potential. And we read this passage and we empathise with this sentiment; we know how it feels to labour in vain.

But the passage in Isaiah is not about wasted effort really. After the

verse in which the speaker describes their calling, they describe themselves in these terms: He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the



shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.

This is a picture of somebody who has a purpose, but which is not immediately visible, either to themselves, or to the people around them. It is a picture of somebody effective, a person who speaks incisively and intelligently, a person prepared and primed for something specific. The hope in this picture comes, ultimately, from the 'He', who made the speaker; this 'He' is, of course, God. It is saying to us that, even when we do not recognise our own value, or what it is we should be doing, God knows what we are capable of; God created us with the gifts that we possess.

Maybe we have worked all our lives and feel like polished arrows who have never really left the quiver. The hope given to us by Isaiah is that we are called and that God values what we have done, what we have worked towards. Maybe what we do is not meant to be a high-profile thing; maybe it is better for it to be done unnoticed. And, of course, the final piece of encouragement that Isaiah gives us is that, none of our efforts really do go unnoticed. 'I am honoured in the sight of the Lord', the speaker says. God sees what we do and so, if we are true to ourselves and true to the calling of God, then we never truly labour in vain.

Joel Denno

BENEFICE OF MARSTON & ELSFIELD



Welcome to St Nicholas & St Thomas.
Further details can be found on our
website - stnicholasmarston.org.uk
Or call the office on 01865 580354.

Every Wednesday at 9:30am we have Holy
Communion & Thursdays at 5pm Evening
Prayer at St Nicholas Church.

Sunday 2nd - CANDLEMAS

10am - **ALL TOGETHER Service with Holy Communion
with Worship band** at St Nicholas Church. **Live Streamed.**
LUNCH TO FOLLOW IN THE HALL - ALL WELCOME

6pm - BCP Evensong at St Nicholas Church.

Sunday 9th - 4th Sunday before Lent

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church.

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church *with Energy** (Sunday School).
Live Streamed.

Sunday 16th - 3rd Sunday before Lent

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church.

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church
10am Messy Church in the Hall.

12 noon Christening for Harry Buckett at St Nicholas Church

Sunday 23rd - 2nd Sunday before Lent

8am BCP Communion Service at St Nicholas Church

10am Holy Communion Service at St Nicholas Church *with Energy** (Sunday School).
Live Streamed.

10am Matins at St Thomas Church in Elsfeld

6pm Pause for Thought at in the Church Hall . *Dementia.* Katie Smok

* **Contact Helen for information about Energy - familyminister@stnicholasmarston.org.uk**



A Church For Everyone
**St Nicholas Church is part of the Inclusive
Church Network**

Vicar: Skye Denno 01865 202988
Administrator: Debbie Bailey 01865 580354
Churchwardens: Judith Piggott 01865 764693

Jan Lawrie 01865 250862
James Plunkett 07507 88516
Justine McCool 07426 463119

What to quote in February?

I love February by Nicolette Golding

for she wears long swishing skirts and pioneer boots
for her hair is wayward, her eyes amethysts under
water

for she is slender and succinct

for her name embraces brrr

for she slides into my bed with icy feet

for her breath smells lemony and of pancakes

for she climbs to the top of the yew to sing up
snowdrops

for her voice is early morning tyres on wet roads

for she is snow moon, bone moon, hunger moon or
black moon

for she offers cake to the gods

for she purifies dingy two-faced skies

for she is brisk, young, afraid of no one

and will sometimes vault a galliard with Lord March

for she never clings, is always too soon flown.

Nature notes: What to see and hear in February?

February brings longer, brighter days. You might see queen bumblebees searching for early flowers and hibernating butterflies, tempted out by the late winter sun. Look out for grey herons; they often visit parks and gardens where there are ponds. Usually solitary



birds, in February they head to communal nesting sites, known as heronries. If you have a garden, do keep feeding the birds. With wild food supplies dwindling, they are more likely to visit gardens. You might be rewarded with a rare avian visitor, such as a siskin or redpoll, both of which have been known to visit gardens in Marston.

What to cook in February?

Nigella's American pancakes

Ingredients

2½ teaspoons baking powder

1 pinch of salt

1 teaspoon castor sugar

2 large eggs (beaten)

30 grams butter (melted and cooled)

300 millilitres milk

225 grams plain flour

butter for frying

Method

Put all the ingredients into a blender and blitz. If you do not have a blender, then put the dry ingredients into a good size bowl. Make a well in the middle and



slowly beat in the eggs, melted butter and milk. Once you have a smooth batter transfer to a jug: it's much easier to pour the batter into the pan than to spoon it. Heat your frying pan or griddle on the cooker. Pour

on small dollops of mixture. When the upper side of the pancake is blistering and bubbling it's time to turn them over. Each one needs only about 1 minute, if that. Serve with maple syrup, berries or crispy bacon.

WI

Marston Women's Institute meets every second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm in St Nicholas' Church Hall, Elsfield Road, Old Marston. Our next meeting will be on 11 February when our speaker will be Colin Wade, Oxford crime fiction writer. His talk is entitled *The Joys and Perils of being an Author*. Signed copies of Colin's latest book will be on sale and tea and cake will be served. New members are always welcome. Find out more about us on our website: www.marstonwi.org Your first visit is free and there will be a small charge for the following two if you attend as a visitor.

Coffee Pot

The next meeting of Coffee Pot will be in the Church Hall on Mon 17 February from 10.30am to 12 noon. We welcome all those who have been bereaved and anyone who would like to meet others. Please contact Eileen Palayiwa on 01865 725423 for more details.

Lunch Club

The next meeting of Lunch Club will be held on Fri 28 February when soup, rolls and cheese, followed by a hot pudding, tea and coffee. Pre-booking is required: contact Debbie on 01865 580354 to ensure your place.

Marston Community Gardening

Our usual Gardening Together sessions happen every month:

2nd Sunday of the month -
Marston Forest Garden
10.30 - 1pm - shared lunch
under the Oak tree.

Last Sunday of the month - Marston Community Allotments - 2pm - 4.30pm.



New Electoral Roll

By mid-March this year we have to re-do the Electoral Roll. Whether you are on the Roll already and would like to remain, or are not and would like to join, please take and complete a form from the back of the church. Alternatively, contact the administrator, Debbie, who can send you a form..

Please return your form either to the administrator, one of the churchwardens or to Skye. There is also a box at the back of the church for completed forms.

Support your local library!

It's now ten years since Oxfordshire County Council cut our libraries' budget: this led to the halving of the number of hours our librarian is paid to open Old Marston's branch and the need to find volunteers to fill the gap. We always need more willing hands: if you are prepared to give up 90 minutes a month to help run a session, I would be delighted to hear from you: janlawrie@btinternet.com Volunteers work in pairs and receive training before they start.



Repair Café

The next Repair Café will take place on Sat 1 March 2-5pm at St Nicholas Church Hall. Use the QR code or URL below or email repairmarston@gmail.com to book your repair. Dates for future sessions are 5 July and 11 October: there will be new posters, QR codes and booking forms for these appearing nearer the time.

Book your time:
use QR code ->
URL: <https://bit.ly/MarstonRepairCafe1March2025>
Email: repairmarston@gmail.com

Saturday 1st March 2025
14.00 - 17.00
St Nicholas Church Hall
Elsfield Road
MARSTON
Oxford OX3 0PR

Do you have items in need of repair? E.g. electrical, electronic or mechanical repairs. Sewing/darning. Also, knives, garden shears in need of sharpening. Volunteers will help & show you how to fix them & save them from ending up in landfill. FREE. Donations welcome! Tea & cake too!

Messy Church at St Nicholas, Marston
2025
Sunday 16th February
Sunday 16th March
10 - 11.30am, Church Hall, Elsfield Road
Crafts, Bible Stories, Singing,
Prayer, Breakfast
All ages welcome
(children need to bring an adult with them)
FREE!

Marston Community Larder is supported by Old Marston Charity Trust

MARSTON COMMUNITY LARDER

Along with a few essential items there will be fresh produce (bread & veg, fruit etc) from Oxford Food Hub. Any left will be moved into the SESI refill area

9-11am

THE GIVING GARAGE

Marston Eco Hub - OX3 0PR

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY

Pick up or drop off FREE plant pots, vases, mugs, wellies and other garden/ household items, and BORROW garden equipment (rakes & spades, ladders, strimmers, wheelbarrows, lawn mowers, leaf blowers, bike rack etc),
Further details email Skye: joko@yaho.co.uk or call 01865 202988

HOLY GROUND



DATES FOR 2024/25. Always starting at 6:30pm
Monday 23rd September 2024 - Autumn Equinox
Thursday 31st October 2024 - Winter Season
Sunday 22nd December 2024 - Winter Solstice
Saturday 1st February 2025 - Spring Season
Wednesday 19th March 2025 - Spring Equinox
Thursday 1st May 2025 - Summer Season
Thursday 19th June 2025 - Summer Solstice
Friday 1st August 2025 - Autumn Season

Meet around a fire pit outside Marston Eco Hub OX3 0PR
Bring something to share, a chair and a blanket if it's cold.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Contact Revd Skye for more info: joskso@yahoo.co.uk

Elsfield Wine Tasting Evening (and inter-village competition)



An evening of fine wines,
fun facts and quizzical
questions.
Light snacks and prizes
will be provided.

On: Sat 1st February 2025

At: Elsfield Village Room

Start: 6.30pm

Tickets: £18 per head
payable in advance.

Please contact:

James 07507 885169

Peter 01865 358578

PAUSE...



FOR THOUGHT

Programme for 2025

Sunday's Pause for Thought
at St Nicholas Church

Sunday Jan 26th at 6pm (in the hall)
Our place in the observable Universe
Prof Stephen Smartt (University of Oxford)

Sunday Feb 23rd at 6pm (in the hall)
Understanding Dementia
Katie Smok.

Sunday April 27th at 6pm
Farming in Oxford
Will & Clare Brown

Sunday May 25th at 6pm
*Penicillin and the story of Norman Heatley
and Old Marston*
Dr David Cranston

Sunday July 27th at 6pm or Sunday October 26th at 6pm

Starting at 6pm, 40 mins presentation, time for Q&A,
with refreshments to conclude. All Wel- come!

 **St. Nicholas**
Marston

UNDERNEATH THE STARS

SONGS OF LOVE

*A choral exploration of love in all its forms with music by
Whitacre, Brahms, Monteverdi and others.*



Holywell Music Room, Oxford
Saturday 8 February 2025 | 8.00 pm



OXFORD PRO MUSICA SINGERS

Conductor | **Mark Jordan**

Piano | **Alex Aitken**

£18

(£8 u25s)

Tickets via the QR code or
ticketsource.co.uk/oxfordpromusica



GROSSELFINGER

CELLO STORM

29 Mar | 6PM
**St. Nicholas
Church**
Marston Vicarage, Elsfield Rd,
Marston, Oxford OX3 0PR



**FREE
ENTRY**

Retiring collection proceeds to:
Christian Grossefinger & St Nicholas Music



Bellringers' report

Christmas seems such a long time ago but we can't always fit everything from our busiest period in to this column. On the Sunday before Christmas, we rang a quarter peal which included three methods we haven't used before – Aconbury, King's Cuple, and Fownhope. A slightly Dickensian sounding start to a wintry morning, some of the ringers then headed over to North Hinksey and Cowley towers to bolster their ringer numbers.

Due to the timing of Christmas Eve services locally, a number of ringers were able to ring at three towers - Kidlington, Wolvercote, and Old Marston, and while last year there were no quarter peals rung across the city on Christmas morning, most towers did ring for the morning service and what a sound it was. We rang 52 quarter peals at Marston in 2024, totalling about 2,050 minutes of continuous ringing if we had rung them back to back.

As 2025 arrived, the ringing continued with as much energy as before with quarter peals beginning on 1 January! We were saddened to hear of the passing of long-time ringer and friend Douglas Wilks on 13 January. Having been elected to the local ringing guild in 1938, he had the longest unbroken membership record of anyone in the guild.

We have already travelled across the county to a variety of towers and had some interesting experiences, from imposing tower access ladders to finding one tower didn't have enough boxes to enable all ringers to reach the ropes, so improvising with some carpet and a vacuum cleaner was in order – it was safer than it sounds. All of this has been interspersed with much tea, cake, and laughter.

Roy

Donations to St Nicholas church

If you have enjoyed reading this magazine...if any information it gives proves useful to you...please consider making a financial donation. If you have an attachment to St Nicholas - the ancient centre of our parish - help towards its upkeep would be very much appreciated. We can claim Gift Aid of 25% on any donation up to £30 when you use this QR code.



Old Marston Parish Council report for January

At the January PC meeting there were planning applications from 65 Oxford Road, about which the council had concerns concerning the right of way, and 17 Salford Road, where the council had concerns about the number of houses of multiple occupancy in the area.

Oxford City Council has advised that the application for 4 Mortimer Drive has been approved and the application for 53 Arlington Drive has been withdrawn.

The PC reviewed and approved the budget for the coming year 2025/26. The council also reviewed the precept, which is part of the council tax collected by OCC enabling the PC to provide services for the community. There has been very little if any increase over the last few years. Due to increasing costs and expected future projects which include much needed improvement and maintenance work at Mill Lane allotments it was decided to increase the precept by 2.9%. This is an increase of approximately £1.41 on a Band D property.

Don't forget that OxClean takes place on Sat 8 March, meeting outside the Mortimer Hall at 10am. The inside of Mortimer Hall will be unavailable but Diana at the Red Lion has offered the use of the pub's facilities – a big thank you to the Red Lion team.

The next PC meetings will be on Mon 3 February at 7pm in the Mortimer Hall.

The clerk, Tim Cann, can be contacted by phone (203139) Mon to Wed from 9am until 1pm.

Otherwise a message can be left or emailed via: clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk

For information and agendas go to www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk, Facebook or Twitter. A complete record of minutes of all PC meetings can be found on its website: <https://www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk>



Marston Times deliverer required

We are looking for a deliverer of the printed Marston Times, which appears quarterly. The March issue will be the next one, printed in late February for distribution at the end of that month. The delivery round is for Cumberlege Close and Bradlands (55 copies in total). If anyone is willing and able to take on this role please contact Colin Harris colingharris31@gmail.com

Parish Organisations

Allotments Associations
 Court Place Farm, Boults Lane. Chair: Jane Wilson
 Sunday mornings 9-10.30am.....shed.cpf-allotments@gmail.com
 Mill Lane Chairman: Dr. M. Unkovskaya..... 07771 702548
 Treasurer Dana Vlad07919 493580
 Secretary Christine Mitchell 07789 991051

Baby and Toddler Club Weds 9.30-11.30 term time in Parish Hall
 Helen Norman.....07852 213974

Bellringers:
 Practice Friday 7.15pm Learners welcome
 Hugh Deam, Tower Captain 01865 247574
 Roy Peach, Secretary.....07788 746157

Choirs and Musicians at St Nicholas
 Junior Choir, SATB Choir, Music Group
 Practices at various times.
 Neil Barker.....musicdirector@stnicholasmarston.org.uk

Coffee Pot
 Coffee morning, monthly, Monday
 Eileen Palayiwa, 27 Ouseley Close 01865 725423

Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Ranger Units
 Evenings throughout the week. Adult volunteers as well as girls welcomed!
 District Commissioner, Lesley Dentry, 07765 418067

Leisure:
 OXSRAD Sports and Leisure Centre,
 Court Place Farm, Marsh Lane. 01865 741336

Library (next to Mortimer Hall) opening hours
 Tuesday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm
 Thursday 2-5pm; 5.30-7pm
 Friday 10-12noon; 2-5pm
 Saturday 9.30-12.30pm01865 726823

Hedena Health Medical Centre. 01865 597023

Marston Community Gardening
 Alistair Morris 01865 724081
 Kate Robinson 01865 766620

Marston Saints Football Club
 Andy Winchester (Treasurer) www.msfc.org.uk

Mortimer Hall (Village Hall)
 Chris Crane, 2 Raymund Road 01865 727995

Oxford City Council (Marston Representatives)
 Mary Clarkson, 8 Dunstan Road, Oxford OX3 9BY 01865 751493
 Kate Robinson07483 011488

Oxfordshire County Council (Marston Representative)
 Mark Lygo 07765 665 726

Oxford Preservation Trust
 10 Turn Again Lane, Oxford OX1 1QL.....01865 242918

Parentline
 Confidential helpline for parents 01865 726600

Parish Council
 Parish Clerk: Tim Cann, 8 Nicholas Avenue 01865 203139
 (Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm)
 Chairman: Duncan Hatfield07706 998224

Pre-school at Mortimer Hall
 open 9 sessions a week 07818 236348

Royal British Legion Club Hall:
 Steward 01865 243991

Schools
 Friends of St Nicholas School 01865 242838

Scouts — 43rd Oxford (St. Nicholas) Scout Group, Boults Lane
 Group Scout Leader, Tim Greaves..... tim.greaves@keble.oxon.org
 Beaver Scout Leader, Sue Springett 01865 251515
 Cub Scout Leader, Matthew Kennedy.....matthew.kennedy500@gmail.com
 Scouts Leader, Linda Phillips 07804 925705

St. Nicholas Church Hall and Committee Room
 Debbie Bailey, Parish Office 01865 580354

Women's Institute
 Meetings at 7.30 second Tue of each month - new members welcome!
 President, Judy Young marstonwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

Trade Directory

Architectural services for Planning Permissions/ Building Regulations
 Digby Architectural: 4 Broughton Close07979 756918

Bakery: a weekly collection service. Contact baker@painedmain.co.uk

Bathroom installation, plumber, glazier, tiler
 Roger G Turner.....07914 925757

Building/Builders Services
 Colin Simpson: High Class painting, decorating and coving etc:
 10 Dent's Close OX3 ONP 01865 742842
 Trevor Dines: No job too small - plumbing, complete bathrooms
 from fitting a door to building an extension. Free estimates.
 8, Raymund Road01865 452851, 07889 263140
 Daniel Kelly: Painting and decorating services: 07917 607949

Cleaning Carpets & Upholstery
 Grimebusters: Quality carpet, rug & upholstery cleaning at competitive
 rates. Free estimates..... 01865 726983

Complementary Medicine
 Oxford Therapies: pain relief, stress, management & more
 www.oxford-therapies.com.....07913 503257
 Oxford Reflexology: relaxation, stress-relief and rebalance
 www.oxfordreflexology.co.uk.....07726 312719

Decorating
 Kerr-Brown painting/decorating hkbdecorating@gmail.com 07944605502

Electricians
 Brian Turner: Registered NICEIC domestic installer..... 01865 728729
 All work guaranteed 33, Salford Road07538 382683
 brian.r.turner@ntlworld.com

Craig Holloway Electrical Ltd: 07868 706392
enquiries@craigholloway.co.uk

Elderly wellbeing
 Foot Clinic
 Oxfordshire Foot Clinic: We provide fast & efficient foot treatments,
 including nail cutting and corn/callus removal. We visit you at home.
 Appointments 07742 964282

Funeral Directors
 C S Boswell Independent funeral services.....01865 553737
 Homewood Funerals (Family-owned and managed)
 14 Cherwell Drive, Marston OX3 4LY01865 570000
 Garden & small machinery service/repair.....taylordannyuk@yahoo.co.uk
 Danny Taylor, 5 Ouseley Close, Marston OX3 0JS.....07796 573319

Hair and Beauty
 Fiona's Hair Salon:
 Salford Road, Old Marston OX3 0RX 01865 241632
 Home decluttering & organising: Marie Kondo certified..... 07877 183281

Monumental Mason
 Reeves Memorials: New memorials, removal for burials, added
 inscriptions & renovations.
 147A Magdalen Rd, Oxford. OX4 1RL 01865 251231

Plumbing, Heating & Gas
 Lemarsh Building Services – plumbing and heating
 22 Marsh Lane.....07710 390980

S. J. Moore: Installation and servicing for all gas appliances.
 Gas Safe Reg. 146337.
 76, Arlington Drive.....01865 724037, 07970 470176

Tree Surgery, Fruit Tree Pruning
 R. Timms: 80 Oxford Road..... 01865 244608

Window Cleaning - MRF Window Cleaning Services
 Mick Fry: 37, Green Hill Oxford OX4 7UD. Fully insured member of the
 Federation of Master Window Cleaners.. 01865 777889, 07887 515168

**Copy deadline for March's (print) issue is
 Thursday 13 February**