

In our prayers this week...

Please pray for all who are unwell including Andrew Barker, Deborah Cosgriff, June Leek, Win Lockey, Margaret Metcalfe, Ruth Morris and Barbara Walsh.

Please pray for those grieving the loss of James Hazelden, Ivy McElroy, Vera Musson and James Widdowson.

Please pray for diplomacy and world peace.

Easter Eggs for the Foodbank

Many thanks to the 24 people who have sponsored a real Easter egg for Grantham Foodbank.

Thursday Prayers

An invitation to 15 minutes of peace and quiet at our prayer meeting every Thursday evening at 9.00pm on Zoom <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89035344573?pwd=MmpXYotzWUhmZlhrYkpHVTBVYlZBdzog>

Meeting ID: 890 3534 4573 Passcode: 870177

Bottesford Community Hub and Charity Shop

Come and join us on a Wednesday and Saturday morning 9.30-12 noon for tea and cake, plus pick up a bargain. A very popular venue to meet friends old and new. Can you spare us a few hours once or twice a month? Come and join our friendly team of Volunteers. Contact Linda - lspencer631@gmail.com

Monthly Services in the East Vale at 10.30am

2nd Sunday St Peter & St Paul Barkestone

3rd Sunday St John's Muston

Regular Events

- Tuesdays Little Angels 9.30-12pm (term time)
- Wednesdays Morning Prayer 9.00am
Community Hub 9.30-12.00
Bellringing 7.30pm
Sing for Joy 2.00 third Wednesday of the month
- Thursdays Choir Practice 7.30pm
- Fridays Coffee Morning Old School, Muston 10-12
- Saturdays Community Hub 9.30-12.0

Are you new to St Mary's Church? Would you like to receive a copy of In Church Today on a regular basis? If so, please write your details here and hand this to the Welcomer by the door.

Name..... Phone.....
 Address.....
 Email.....

I would like to receive a copy of In Church Today. Email Paper copy



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers



- ♦ St. Peter and St. Paul's Barkestone ♦ St. Mary the Virgin Bottesford
- ♦ St. John the Baptist's Muston ♦ St. Peter's Redmile ♦ St. Helen's Plungar

Church Contacts

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Website & Facebook for St. Mary's
www.stmarysbottesford.co.uk
 Facebook:
 St Mary the Virgin Bottesford
 Contact details for each church can be found at:
www.achurchnearyou.com
 (followed by the church name.)

in church today

Sunday 22nd February 2026- First Sunday

Readings: Ephesians 6:10-18, Matthew 4:1-11

Services this Sunday

Morning Worship 10.30 St Mary's led by Chris Judson

Dates for your Diary

Mon 23rd Feb- Lent Course 7.00pm St Mary's

Tues 24th Feb-Funeral of Ivy McElroy 2.00pm

Sun 1st March-Holy Communion 10.30 St Mary's

Tues 3rd Mar- Tea and Cakes 2.30pm

Wed 4th Mar- Holy Communion 9.15 St Marys

Fri 6th Mar- World Day of Prayer 11.30am

Sat 7th Mar- Barkestone Church Coffee Morning 10-12.30
 Radcliffe Male Voice Choir
 St Mary's 7.30pm



This week's Worship and Reflection

Ephesians 6:10-18 – The whole armour of God

Matthew 4:1-11 – Jesus tested and tempted in the wilderness

Today marks the first Sunday in Lent. The liturgical season of Lent took shape gradually in the days of the early church, but is clearly attested as a churchwide practice by the early 4th century. Originally, Lent was a six-week period before Easter, giving 42 calendar days but only 36 actual fasting days as Sundays were excluded from fasting. To reach a symbolic “forty days” of fasting in imitation of Christ’s forty days in the wilderness, four extra weekdays were added before the first Sunday in Lent, and this new starting point became what is now generally referred to as Ash Wednesday.

The number 40 in the bible has not only a literal meaning but also seems to carry some spiritual significance. The number 40 represents divine testing or preparation, as seen in events like the 40 days of rain during Noah’s flood. It also marks transitional phases, such as the Israelites’ 40 years wandering in the wilderness due to their disobedience. Incidentally the journey by foot should have taken them 11 days but they kept going round the same mountain time after time until they got the message.

Our gospel reading from Matthew chapter 4 tells of the time immediately before Jesus starts his earthly ministry where He is led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. God may test us to build our character, but the devil may try to tempt us to do the easiest or most appealing thing rather than the right thing.

Our first reading from Ephesians 6 talks about the whole armour of God. Paul reminds us to

‘Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, ‘

Paul uses the armour of the occupying Roman soldiers, that the Christians in Ephesus would have been very familiar with, as a teaching aid. Paul is reminding them and us that our Father God has provided us with everything we need to protect ourselves from evil and that we are indeed in a spiritual battle.

*‘Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, and with your **feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God. And **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.’*

All of the items of armour listed are used to protect and defend the believer, but the sword can also be used to resist and repel. As James tells us, ‘Resist the devil and he will flee’ (James 4:7).

I perceive the interaction between Satan and Jesus described in our gospel reading as being like a sword fight. I will unpack this in my reflection.

Paul tells us that ‘the sword of the spirit is the word of God’. The word of God is scripture. Jesus uses scripture to resist the devil’s tempting words. The ‘Word of God’ is also Jesus himself. Through his death on the cross and resurrection, Jesus has won victory over sin and death. If faced with temptations in our own life we can not only be guided by scripture, but we can also ask ourselves, ‘What would Jesus Do?’

Chris Judson

To Pray

*Heavenly Father,
your son battled with the powers
of darkness, and grew closer
to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow
in wisdom and prayer that we may
witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Collect for the first Sunday of Lent

Barkestone Coffee Morning

St Peter and St Paul’s Church, Barkestone are hosting a coffee morning on Saturday 7th March 10am- 12.30 pm in the church. Croissants, cakes, sausage baps, healthy treats too! etc. All ages welcome.

World Day of Prayer

This year’s World Day of Prayer service will be held at St Mary’s on Friday 6th March at 11.30am. It has been prepared by the Christian women of Nigeria. The service will be followed by a light lunch. If you would like to stay for lunch, please contact Judith Wells or the church office for catering purposes.

Lent Course

Lisa will be running a Lent Course entitled Lent Wise: Five Spiritual Essentials for Real Life, on the following dates; Monday 23rd February, 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd March from 7.00-8.30pm. The course will take place at St Mary’s Church and refreshments and all resources will be provided. For more information and to book a place, please contact the church office on 01949842859 or stmbottesford@gmail.com

Mothering Sunday Flowers

This year’s Mothering Sunday service will be on Sunday 15th March. Every

year Pim Mabbit donates flowers and foliage but this year is unable to make the posies for the congregation. We are therefore looking for a few volunteers to help make the posies on Friday 13th March from 10.00am. Please speak to Kathie Lyndsell if you can help.

Easter Wreath-Making

Once again Lisa will be running her popular Easter wreath-making workshop this year on Saturday 21st March from 9.30am. Please contact Lisa for more details and to book a place.

Muston Quiz Night

The next Muston Quiz will be on Friday 13th March from 7.00pm at the Old School.

Radcliffe on Trent Male Voice Choir

Tickets are now available for the next Friends of St Mary’s concert on Saturday 7th March featuring the Radcliffe on Trent Male Voice Choir plus the acclaimed harpist Kyla Tsz Yam Pai. Doors open at 6.30 and the concert starts at 7.30. Tickets are £15 (£12 for members of Friends) from the church office, Linda Simmons 07958716765 or Eventbrite.

FOSM Quiz Night

The next Friends Quiz Night run by John Daybell will be held on Saturday 21st March at 7.00pm at the bowls club. Tickets cost £10 (£8 for members) and include a two course supper. Teams of up to 6 players. Please contact John Daybell for a booking form.

Easter Lilies

If you are able to make a donation towards Easter lilies, please speak to Pamela in the church office or Graham Lyndsell, the treasurer.