

CALNE METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026



Items for future editions can be sent to:

Jan Sayers

**The deadline for the March 2026 issue is
Sunday 22nd February**

Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.

James 3:4

We have been sharing life stories from the beginning of human civilization and for good reason. Stories captivate our attention and build communities by bringing ideas, emotions, and experiences to life in a memorable way.

I remember things from my childhood that really impacted on my life. One of these was reading books. The library was accessible and quite often I lost myself in the stories of others, entering new worlds and perceptions of life that enabled me to grow. Stories have always been written to pass on a message or understanding of life from the writer's perspective. Written by a former Greek slave, in the late to mid-6th century BCE, Aesop's Fables are the world's best-known collection of morality tales. The fables, numbering 725, were originally told from person-to-person as much for entertainment purposes but largely as a means for relaying or teaching a moral or lesson. One such example is the story below...

A man who lived a long time ago believed that he could read the future in the stars. He called himself an Astrologer and spent his time at night gazing at the sky. One evening he was walking along the open road outside the village. His eyes were fixed on the stars. He thought he saw there that the end of the world was at hand, when all at once, down he went into a hole full of mud and water.

There he stood up to his ears, in the muddy water, and madly clawing at the slippery sides of the hole in his effort to climb out. His cries for help soon brought the villagers running. As they pulled him out of the mud, one of them said: *"You pretend to read the future in the stars, and yet you fail to see what is at your feet! This may teach you to pay more attention to what is right in front of you and let the future take care of itself."* "What use is it," said another, "to read the stars, when you can't see what's right here on the earth?"

Take care of the little things and the big things will take care of themselves.

It might appear at present that we are living with the end of our comfortable world as we once knew it. We are looking to the heavens for signs, to see what is going to happen next. These days we all look to the future to see if we can second guess what will happen in the world. Holidays...where to go, when and if to go. Churches to remain open or

not. To eat out or in, to visit beaches or not. To go out, but some are too afraid to contemplate such an act in the dark nights. We become so preoccupied with everything in a chaotic world that we are in danger of missing out and living our life well. So much misinformation and conflicting opinions.

Even the weather has become remarkably unpredictable, so my retreats to find peace in my garden have not been as often as I would have liked. However, thinking about the small things in front of me, to live in the moment, I am pondering, you can still garden in the rain, for humanity has been doing it for centuries.

You do not have to travel to see great wonders. The world can be wonderfully positive in something, so small and simple as a garden. Many creatures are in mine living out their stories every day. The robins, the blackbirds, the wood pigeons, the squirrel, the cats, the frogs, a wealth of life being lived to the full. Creation living out life in what is before them and in the present moment, in the small things that matter. They have no care for what is beyond the reality of their daily existence and experience.

Jesus was '**the**' master storyteller. He always assessed the context of his listeners very well. His stories /parables have stood the test of time and are just as relevant and meaningful today as they were over two millennia ago. The little and simple things in the stories of Jesus mattered. The sparrow, the widow's mite, the mustard seed, the yeast, the small children. It seems '**small**' is particularly important to God. According to the verses found in Luke 16:10, "*Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.*"

Therefore, the little or small things you have already, are there to prepare you for bigger things. The key is to trust God while possessing the little things. ***Do not dismiss the small things in your life.***

Small things will develop into a harvest of blessings when you allow God to use them for loving purpose. I encourage you to take some time as you read this letter to think about the ways or places where you could do just a little bit and that it may have a profound impact. You may not have access to a garden, but I bet you could find someone you could reach out to with a phone call. Someone you could show love to by sending them a card or letter. Maybe there is a small task in your church that could use just *a little bit of your time*. There are so many ways your smallest act can impact those around you for the Kingdom of God.

God is looking for people just like you who are willing to make a difference in the places God has positioned you. The best part is, all it takes is *just a little*, but the joy and the rewards can be so much greater for someone else in need. God go with you....Craig



<https://www.grantnorsworthy.com/spiritual-health-re-set-the-rudder-that-steers-the-ship/>

Forthcoming Services:

1st February Rev Craig Manley and will include Holy Communion – in the church

8th February Mrs Jenny Colby – in the hall

15th February Local Arrangement – in the hall

22nd February Rev Roy Fowler – in the hall

Calne Food Bank

Calne Food Bank – Please visit their website for details of their opening times -

www.calnefoodbank.co.uk



Refugee Prayer Focus February 2026

God of the exiled. You understand the plight of the refugee, having fled with your family from persecution and sought refuge in a foreign land. We pray for all people far from home. Pour out your comfort and send your people to be active hope-bringers.

Amen

Taken from the All We Can Pray Handbook



Pastoral News

A huge thank you to Eleanor Bujalska who has been a Pastoral Leader for a great many years. Her years of service have been extraordinary not only in caring for and advising people but also in leading many bible studies for her pastoral group.

We are very pleased that Freda Ackroyd has agreed to become a Pastoral Leader. Because of these changes we will be reviewing the Pastoral Groups. If this affects you we will advise you accordingly.

We give thanks for all the pastoral work done at Warm Spaces and for the Prayer Lunch group.

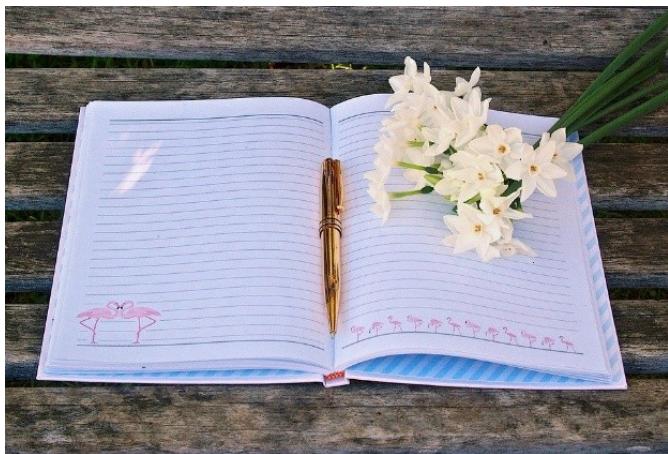
We pray: for members of our church community who have had to visit the hospital recently; for those who have recurring health issues; for those who have long term health issues and for those who are still waiting for results or action from consultants; for those concerned about family members but feel helpless to provide comfort or assist in resolutions to problems.

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Throughout February we particularly pray for all those people in our wider community who come to 'Messy Church'.

As part of our Christian commitment is to care for and support each other I ask that if you have any Joys or Sorrows that can be shared in our pastoral news please let me know.

Thank you. Ursula



February 2026
Dates for your diary
All are very welcome to come along and join in.

Tuesday 3rd 10th 17th & 24th
Coffee and Chat
Time: 10.00am - 11.30am
Venue: Church Hall

Wednesday 4th 11st 18th & 25th Warm Spaces

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm
Venue: Church Hall

Thursday February 19th & March 12th

CHAT - Ladies Group
Time: 2.00pm - 3.30pm
Venue: The Manse

Thursday March 5th

Lent Group Begins
Time: 2.30pm
Venue: Church Hall (see newsletter for further details)

Friday March 6th

World Day of Prayer Service
Time: 10.30am
Venue: St Mary's Parish Church

Saturday March 14th

Coffee and Craft Event
Time: 11.00 am - 2.00pm
Venue: Calne Methodist Church

Saturday April 11th

Poetry Afternoon
Time: 2.30pm - 4.30pm **Venue: Methodist Church Hall**

Friday April 24th 6pm and Saturday April 25th 3pm

Production of Jonah Man Jazz with Heddington School Choir
Venue: Calne Methodist Church



**Sunday
8 February**

**Calne Methodist Church
3.00pm - 6.00pm**

A relaxed and informal church with a warm welcome for everyone. Crafts, songs, games and a chance to make a mess and enjoy tea together.

No need to book - just come and join in!

Children must be accompanied by an adult please.

A Calne Partnership of Churches activity

School Visits

We are delighted that our relationship with Fynamore School continues to grow. On Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 January, we welcomed Elm and Willow classes to the church to make Christingles. The children were really well behaved and all engaged well with the activities. As well as making Christingles, we told the story of the first Christingle, explained the symbolism and learnt the Christingle song. After a break with squash and biscuits, the children, teachers and helpers made a circle around the church and we lit the Christingles. 30 brightly shining Christingles on each day and the children's faces were a wonderful sight. My thanks to Ursula, Jan, Bob, Freda, Vera, Carol, Tina, Craig, Miriam and Derek for all their help with these sessions.

Michele Gard



Our theme for Lent and Easter 2026

LET GO! Pause. Breathe. Make space for God.

The Gospel of Mark tells us that Simon and Andrew 'left everything' to follow Jesus. But this was only the beginning. The symbolic leaving behind of boats and nets is met again and again in their experience of travelling with Jesus. They have to leave places where they have been popular or had divine illumination, and exchange territories of relative safety for places of danger. Most of all they have to let go of established ideas that have formed their world view up to this

point. All views that would be challenged along the way, and the disciples would be invited over and over again to let go and follow.

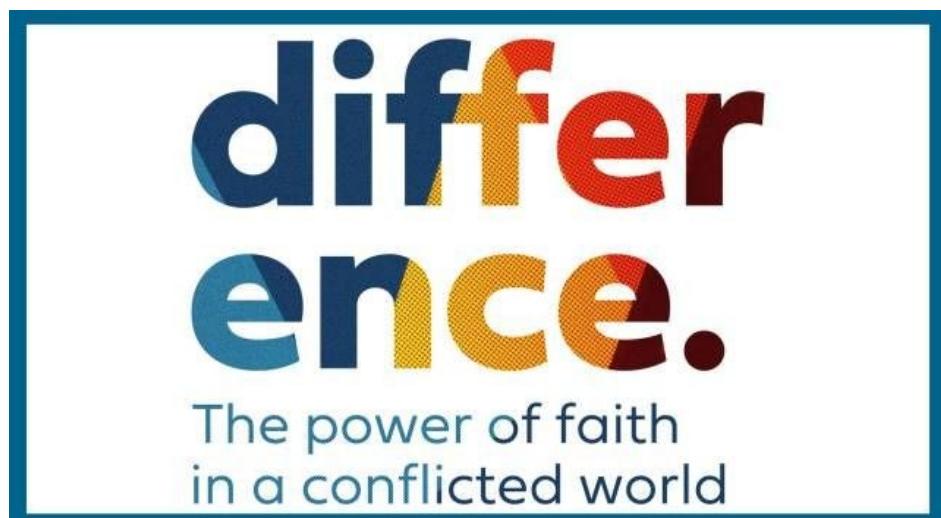
The 2026 Methodist Church Lent series calls us to loosen our grip on what holds us back – habits, assumptions, fears – and to open ourselves to the transforming presence of God.

Each week, we explore a different mindset shift: letting go of something that limits us and becoming open to something that brings life. This journey is not linear or easy. It echoes the experience of the disciples who again and again had to let go of what was familiar in order to follow Jesus more deeply.

Date	Weekly theme	Object	
Lent 1: 22 February	Let go of idols, make room for God		Rev Roy Fowler
Lent 2: 1 March	Let go of the form, embrace the spirit		Rev Craig Manley (Holy communio)
Lent 3: 8 March	Let go of scarcity, embrace abundance		Worship Team
Lent 4: 15 March	Let go of appearances, and embrace what's inside		Mother's Day To be confirmed
Lent 5: 22 March	Let go of despair, embrace 'respair'		Michele Gard
Palm Sunday: 29 March	Let go of violence, embrace gentleness		Derek Gard
Easter Sunday: 5 April	Let go of fear, embrace joy		Rev Ward Jones (Holy communio)

Lent is bigger than giving up chocolate. It's about letting go of what weighs us down and being open to what lifts us up. The benefits last longer than 40 days – it's a way of life, and we do it together.

Michele Gard



Difference is a five-session course for Lent that equips you to see transformation through everyday encounters in a complex and divided world.

We will be holding 5 sessions this Lent led by the Rev Craig Manley and Derek Gard.

Thursday 5th March – 2.30pm at Calne Methodist Church

Thursday 12th March – 2.30pm at Calne Methodist Church

Thursday 19th March – 2.30pm at Calne Methodist Church

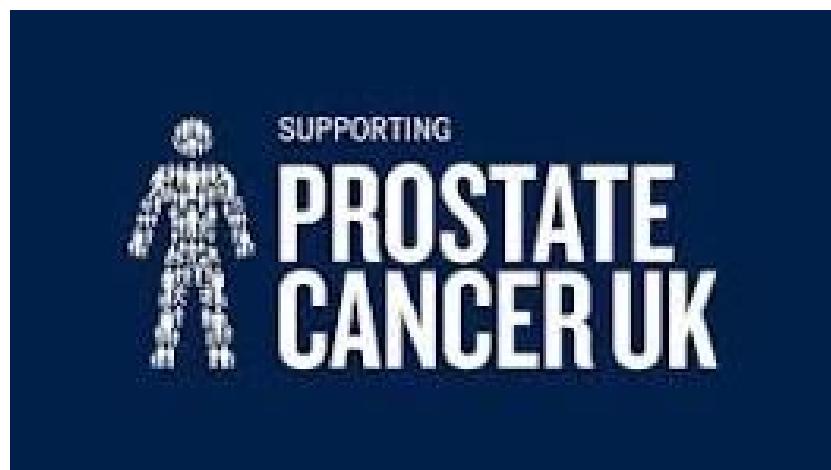
Thursday 26th March – 2.30pm at Calne Methodist Church

Thursday 2nd April – 2.30pm at Calne Methodist Church

The sessions

1. **God's call:** God can transform relationships in a conflicted world. God's call and equipping make that possible.
2. **Crossing divides:** God invites us to see where difference or prejudice divide us from others and offers us opportunities to see them as he does.
3. **Navigating disagreement:** God is with us as we face the challenge of disagreement, which can become an opportunity for stronger relationships if handled well.
4. **Practising forgiveness:** God is with us in the mess complexity of trying to put forgiveness into practice in our relationships.
5. **Risking hope:** Doing relationships God's way will sometimes be risky and resisted, but the hope it brings is transformative.

We look forward to seeing you.



A big thank you to Stephanie and Molly for the £100 that was raised by recycling old greetings cards and making new cards which as been donated to Prostate Cancer UK.

Doorway

The Nasio Trust

A big thankyou to everyone who gave money to the Christmas Card Tree, together with the donations from our Christmas Carol Service we raised £350, which we have split between our two nominated charities giving each £175.

HELP

We are looking for help in the various roles within the church. If you can help please speak to Derek or the person indicated after each role,

Worship Team

We are extremely fortunate to be blessed with Local Preachers, Worship Leaders and Readers who prepare and help with our worship.

We would like to involve more people in our worship. Please let Derek or Ursula know if you are happy to help or if you need more information. In

particular we need help with the Prayers, Drama and dramatic readings. No experience or training required just a desire to worship God together.

Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces meet on a Wednesday from 9.30am until 4.00pm. Volunteers are needed to help with setting up, packing up, befriending, listening, helping with Kitchen duties.

Any training will be provided. You do not need to volunteer all day, you can do a morning, lunchtime or afternoon. For more information, please speak to Derek.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a Calne partnership of Church's initiative, every second Sunday of the month from 3.00pm until 6.00pm. Help is needed with setting up, activities and preparing tea . If you are interested, please contact Michele.

Steward

We currently have a Stewarding team of five. They are responsible for the overall running of the church, but in particular preparing the church for worship. We are looking for an individual to join the team. For more information, if you are interested, please speak to Jan.

Giving Up

Give up the fags and the chocolate and booze,
the coke and the crack, the Reds and the blues,
the overslept mornings and wideawake nights,
the picking of noses, knee scabs and fights,
the Candy Crush Saga, gee-gees and poker,
the evenings of Netflix on ready-meal sofas,
the scrolling and swiping, the not reading books,
the lottery tickets, the reliance on luck,
the breaking of wind and the breaking of hearts,
the falling in love and the falling apart,
the sugar and carbs, the fat and the gluten.

All things, in fact, that might make us human;
our flaws and our foibles, our unfit selections,
our glorious failures, our sublime imperfections.
Yes, give them all up at the drop of a pin
until, that is, it's time to give in.

Brian Bilston

Submitted by Derek Gard

Short winter jokes

- **How do snowmen read their texts?**
With an icy stare.
- **What kind of ball doesn't bounce?**
A snowball.
- **What bites but doesn't have teeth?**
Frost.
- **What do you get when you mix a snowman with a vampire?**
Frostbite.
- **What do you call a penguin in the Sahara Desert?**
Lost.
- **What do you call a snowman in August?**
A puddle.
- **Where do snowmen love to dance?**
At a snowball.
- **What do snowmen eat for lunch?**
Ice burgers.
- **What do snowmen win at the Olympics?**
Cold medals!
- **Which one is faster: hot or cold?**
Hot. You can catch a cold.
- **Where do snowmen put their money?**
In snowbanks.
- **How do snowmen buy birthday presents?**
With cold, hard cash.
- **What did the tree say after a long winter?**
What a re-leaf!
- **What does Frosty's mom put on her face at night?**
Cold cream.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A service for everyone!

Friday 6 March

I will give you rest, come

Nigeria 2026

ST MARY'S CHURCH

10.30 AM



INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION

24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led

wwdp.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 233242



SPRING CRAFTS CAKES & COFFEE EVENT

**SATURDAY 14th March 2026
METHODIST CHURCH HALL
SILVER STREET, CALNE
11AM - 2PM**

**CRAFT STALLS,
HOMEMADE CAKES & MORE.
FAIRLY TRADED TEA &
COFFEE
REFRESHMENTS**

PLEASE SIGN UP IN THE HALL IF YOU CAN PROVIDE CAKES OR HELP ON THE DAY.

A BOX FOR THINGS FOR THE TOMBOLA WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON.