

**CALNE METHODIST CHURCH
NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2026**



Items for future editions can be sent to:

Jan Sayers

The deadline for the April 2026 issue is

Sunday 29th March

Revelation 21:3-5

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

How often have you heard the phrase "the light at the end of the tunnel"? How often do we say it when we are in tough situations? We have all experienced tough times in our lives, long stretches of darkness interspaced with brief flashes of light which bring us hope. These are the times when we feel constricted by just living life and as we travel closer to the end of the tunnel, time seems to stretch out before us. It seems to slow down, and the waiting continues.

Elizabeth and I spent our honeymoon in Norway. We had a wonderful magical time embracing the glorious nature of the country we found ourselves in. The still beauty of the fjords, the majesty of the endless mountains, the magnificence of the waterfalls and also the endless tunnels.

For an exceptionally long time, the reality of Norway's intricate geography meant a life of isolation during the long winter months. Farmers and fisherman were cut off from the world by snow and ice. Neighbours who lived less than a mile from one another, but on opposite sides of the fjord or mountain, were a world apart from community. In some ways, before Norway's extensive network of roads, bridges, and tunnels, were completed, the west coast of Norway (namely Bergen), had closer ties with the outside world than the capital of Norway, Oslo.

This "isolation nation" is one major reason why Norway has so many distinct dialects. People living in different valleys and fjords were isolated long enough to develop their own way of speaking. It also contributed to Norway's tunnel-digging and nobody builds tunnels the way the Norwegians do.

When we travelled from the airport to where we were staying, a wonderful hotel at the edge of a very large fjord, the road journey took us through many tunnels.

There are over 1000 road tunnels in Norway, in fact I believe 1240 at the last count. In fact, next to waterfalls, tunnels, seemed to be the most evident feature on sight during any travel on the holiday. When you enter a tunnel in the UK it is for a noticeably short period of time, but over in Norway they can stretch for what seems like an age.

When we drive through a tunnel, we instinctively look for the first sign of reflected sunlight on the walls as we seek to emerge back into daylight.

The Laerdal tunnel in Norway, is one of the longest in the world and one which we have travelled through. In order to break the monotony of the 20-minute drive, the tunnel has been divided up into four sections by creating three large caverns, or mountain halls, 3.7 miles from each end, and one in the middle. Special attention has

been paid to the lighting. Whereas white light is used in the tunnel itself, the mountain halls are equipped with blue and yellow light. This gives the illusion of driving into daylight every 3.7 miles, and the golden light along the floor gives the illusion of sunrise! A reminder perhaps how much we need the presence of light in any dark place or journey. When we exit any tunnel there is the bright glare of the sunlight as we leave the darkness behind. It is a reminder perhaps of the seasons we live through.

It seems that we have been in a tunnel of dark times for such a long time. The first signs indicate that we are going to emerge into something new.

As we look forward to a new circuit, a new minister, our journey continues, but with the hope found in God creating something new! Our reading from Revelation echoes with words about emerging into a different and brighter world. The Lord promises to make everything new.

A putting right of all the injustices in the world, the healing of hatred between nations, an end to the inhumanity of communities one to another. No more disease or death to contend with. This is the hope of the Kingdom of God. It should be the hope which we all share, and it encourages us to endure what we need to endure. It is the hope that took Jesus to a cross for each one of us.

As we have travelled through our own “dark tunnels” we look to Christ see the signs of His coming Kingdom and the brightness that shines from it, *fresh and new*.

We know there is light at the end of the tunnel, that there is hope, and what a hope it is!

Stay safe, and well, **Craig**.



<https://www.bergen-guide.com/538.htm>



Pastoral News

Congratulations to Ellie Cameron who graduated this January in MSc Food Security. As many of you know she flew out to Australia mid February where she will be studying for the next four years towards her PhD. Ellie will be looking at incentives for farmers that promote the uptake of low-water-input agricultural techniques in the Murray-Darling river basin. How fabulous is that!

We pray for:- individuals and families who find themselves in difficult situations; those who are lonely; those in the course of moving house; those who have long term health issues; those waiting on results of scans; those waiting to have important consultations and for all who care for and support people in these various situations.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all our church family and community. Throughout March we particularly pray for Freda Ackroyd's Pastoral Group: Miriam Crighton; Caroline Foster; Molly Green; Maisie Price; Jan Sayers; Rob Sayers; Graham Spyer and Doreen Watt.

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.
Pastoral Co-ordinator.

Prayer Circle

By request we are restarting the Prayer Circle. We are changing the way in which we do it. Whereas before it was done by telephone we will now use email. If you would like to join the Prayer Circle please contact Ursula. If you would like a prayer request to go to the Prayer Circle please let Ursula know either by email, phone call, text or speaking personally.

Forthcoming Services:

- 1st March** **Rev Craig Manley and will include Holy Communion**
- 8th March** **Worship Leaders**
- 15th March** **Derek and Michele Gard**
- 22nd March** **Michele Gard**
- 29th March** **Derek Gard**

Calne Food Bank

Calne Food Bank – Please visit their website for details of their opening times -
www.calnefoodbank.co.uk



Refugee Prayer Focus March 2026

God of compassion, we pray for all refugees and those who have been forced to flee their homes. May they find safety, comfort and hope in their time of need. Help us to be a welcoming community, offering support and love as they rebuild their lives.



March 2026

Dates for your diary

All are very welcome to come along and join in.

Tuesday 3rd 10th 17th 24th & 31st

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 March 5th

Lent Group Begins

Time: 2.30pm

Venue: Church Hall (See poster in the hall for more details)

Saturday March 14th

Coffee and Craft Event

Time: 11.00 am - 2.00pm

Venue: Calne Methodist Church

Sunday March 22nd

Spring Lunch

Time: 12.30 pm after Sunday Worship

Venue: Church Hall. (Please make sure you sign up)

Thursday April 9th & April 30th

CHAT - Ladies Group

Time: 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Venue: 9th The Manse; 30th 3 The Old Dairy SN11 0EB

Saturday April 11th

Poetry Afternoon

Time: 2.30pm - 4.30pm

Venue: Calne Methodist Church

Saturday April 18th

Calne Spring Sing

Time: 10.00am onwards. Venue: Town Hall and one other location (TBA)

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

Production of Jonah Man Jazz with Heddington School Choir

Venue: Calne Methodist Church. Tickets Adults £8: Children 4yrs and over £1.



**Sunday
8 March**

**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

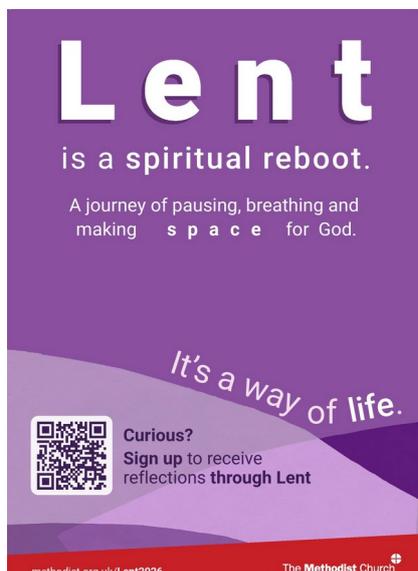


We now have a Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61587367784182>

I am happy to give permissions for people to post but you need to have a Facebook profile. Most of our events and activities are already posted. We just need to promote it and get people to follow us.

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.

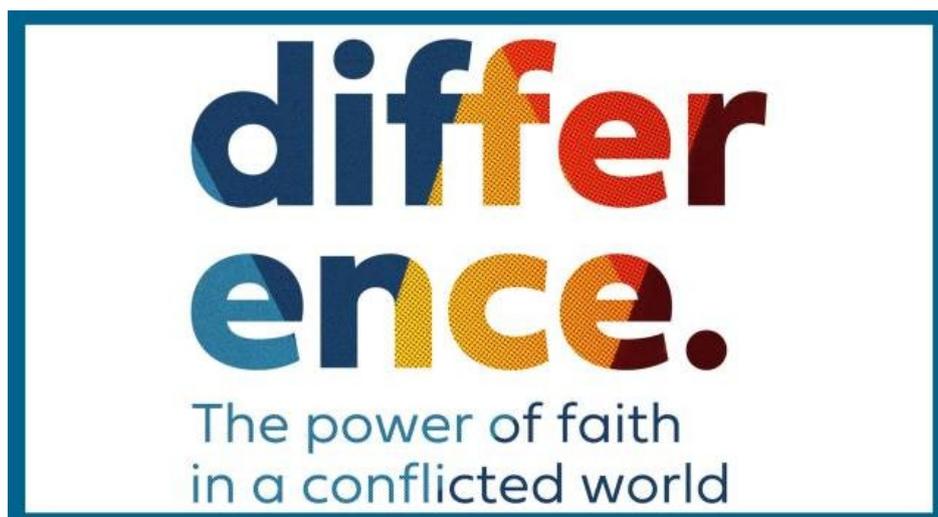
The 2026 Methodist Church Lent series calls us to loosen our grip on what holds us back – habits, assumptions, fears – and to open ourselves to the transforming presence of God.

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 Communion)
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 Communion)

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.



Calne Methodist Church

A Church for Calne, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

150th Anniversary – Programme of Events and Dates for the Diary - 2026

Saturday 14 March	Coffee and Craft Fair	11.00am – 2.00pm
Saturday 11 April	Poetry Afternoon	2.30pm – 4.30pm
Friday 24 April	Sea Shanties and Jonah Man Jazz – a musical performance with Heddington School, SupaNova and Calne Methodist Church.	6.00pm
Saturday 25 April	Sea Shanties and Jonah Man Jazz – a musical performance with Heddington School, SupaNova and Calne Methodist Church.	3.00pm
Saturday 16 May	Lions Club Duck Race We will be organising our usual plant stall. Plants welcome. Please speak to Jan Sayers.	10.00am – 1.00pm
Saturday 23 May	150th Anniversary Weekend Display of Church History, arts and crafts and refreshments available	Church open all day
<p>We would love to hear from you if you have photographs and/or memorabilia from past Church events and activities that you would be willing to share. Also, if you would like to display items of Christian art. Please speak to Derek Gard 07872 076059 or derekgard57@btinternet.com.</p>		
Sunday 24 May	150th Anniversary Celebration Service Followed by celebration buffet	10.30am RSVP required for buffet
Saturday 6 June	Coffee and Craft Fair	11.00am – 2.00pm
Saturday 20 June	Guitar Concert by Andrew Hearst	3.00pm
Saturday 27 June	Calne Carnival	All day

Saturday 25 July	Calne Bike Meet	All day
Sunday 26 July	Area Farewell Service for Rev Craig Manley at Calne Methodist Church	5.00 pm Tea 6.00pm Service
Sunday 6 September	Circuit Welcome Service for Rev Will Fletcher at Melksham United Church	4.00pm
Saturday 12 September	Coffee and Craft Fair	11.00am – 2.00pm
Thursday 17 September – Sunday 20 September	Flower Festival: The Harvest of Talents	
<p>If you would like to decorate a window or provide a floral arrangement, please speak to Derek Gard 07872 076059 or derekgard57@btinternet.com.</p>		
Saturday 19 September	Harvest Concert and Ploughman's	3.00pm
Sunday 20 September	Harvest Festival Followed by Harvest Lunch	10.30am RSVP required for lunch
Saturday 21 November	Christmas Coffee and Craft Fair	11.00am – 2.00pm
Saturday 28 November	Calne Town Council – Christmas Festival and lights switch-on	All day
Sunday 29 November	First Sunday in Advent Service Followed by Advent Meal	10.30am RSVP required for meal
Thursday 10 December – Sunday 13 December	Festival of Nativities	Church open to view nativities
<p>If you have a nativity, you would be willing to display, please speak to Michele Gard on 07841 020291 or michelegard@btinternet.com.</p>		
Thursday 10 December	Christmas Karaoke – come and sing your favourite Christmas songs and carols. Wear your Christmas Jumper or fancy dress.	3.30pm – 4.30pm 6.00pm – 7.00pm
Friday 11 December	Nativity Play	4.30pm – 5.30pm
Sunday 13 December	Carols by Candlelight	6.00pm

Full details of the above events including booking requirements, tickets and costs will be published in our newsletter, weekly notices, website and posters on our hall notice boards. Sign up if you would like to receive our weekly email or monthly newsletter.





Calne **Methodist** Church



Jonah Man Jazz and Sea Shanties

with Heddington School and SupaNova

Friday 24 April at 6.00pm

Saturday 25 April at 3.00pm



Tickets: £8 for adults £1 for children
*(includes performance, refreshments
and mini fish and chips)*

calnemethodist.ddns.net



OUR CHURCH LAUNCHES

A Competition to find a Commemorative Poem

Could you write a Poem of no more than 25 lines

to help celebrate

the rededication of the Church on its 150th Anniversary?

You can enter as many poems as you wish, in any style.

Deadline: Midnight on Wednesday, April 8th 2026

Get your entries by hand, email or text to Stephen Steadman by then.

Text him at 07410440469; or use Stephen.d.steadman@gmail.com

See **full rules** on the church website, or leaflets in church.

The Result will be announced on Sunday 24th May,

the Church's 150th Anniversary weekend.

At the Tomb of Christ by Stephanie Saldaña A poem for lent.

Lighting candles with Carmel,
Barely three years old,
Her fist clutching beeswax tapers.

Flame upon flame, we place them side by side.
Today I will teach her the names
Of those we come to remember.

A candle for my father, who died
Before her first, startled cries. For Paolo,
Disappeared into war. For another who survived,

Perhaps to carry the greater burden.
For the sick. A friend, longing for a child.
The displaced, and those who displaced them.

This lighting candles is dangerous.
Her hair could easily catch fire.
Or the corner of her jacket might singe.

Or even worse, she might become aware
Of the wounded world, that all of us
One day pass on. That I, too, will be a name,

Breathed out among names, on a Tuesday afternoon.
How to explain this to a child?
A child who still marvels at orange slices

And the moon,
For whom everything is always?
She has one candle left. *For me*, she insists,

Pointing to herself, as though I might mistake her for another.
We light it together. Hold watch as it burns.
Overcome, I pull her towards myself.

My love, you were right after all.
I had almost forgotten. Everything is always.
Otherwise I would not have brought you here.

I promise you, all of this is light.

Submitted by Derek Gard

MARCH PUNS

With the arrival of the month of March, we are truly into the new year. So, it is the perfect time to enjoy some silly and funny March jokes and puns to help us get through the months ahead.

What is a leg's favourite month?
March.

Why is everyone so tired on April 1?
Because they've just finished a long, 31 day March.

Why are oak trees so forgiving?
Every March they "turn over a new leaf".

What March flowers grow on faces?
Tulips

Why is March the most popular month to use a trampoline?
It's spring-time.

What falls during March but never gets hurt?
The rain.

What goes up when March rain comes down?
An umbrella.

Which crime-fighter likes March the most?
Robin

Can February March?
No, but April May.

I'm devastated that I won't be able to celebrate my birthday this March, I was born in November

What can be seen in the middle of 'April' and 'March', but can't be seen in the beginning or end of either one?
letter "r."

I asked my girlfriend when her birthday was.
She said "March 1st". So I walked round the room and asked her again...

What is a soldier's least favourite day?
March Fourth.

Why is it easy to prank someone born on 31 March on April's Fool's Day?
Because they were literally born yesterday.

What happened to Julius Caesar on the Ides of March?
He became the holey Roman emperor.



Spring Lunch

22nd March 2026

12:15 In Church Hall

**Chicken Casserole*
with
Jacket Potatoes**

+

Dessert

+

Tea/Coffee

(* Vegetarian Option Available)

Sign-up sheet available in Church Hall

**** Please advise Caroline of any food allergies**

The poster features a central text area on a light beige background, framed by a decorative border of green ferns, white daisies, and purple flowers. The text is in a blue, bold, sans-serif font.

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.