



April 2025

LINK-up

Keeping Churches in Touch

www.godalmingchurches.org

facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherinGodalmingandDistrict

Message from the Chair

Although some people favour the 'Garden Tomb' in Jerusalem, I've always taken the view that the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Jesus's tomb, was the one most likely to be genuine. In the 1990s, archaeologist Martin Biddle led a team which concluded that there was an undisturbed, ancient rock-cut structure between the inner and outer marble 'skins' of the Edicule, the little chapel that marks the site of the tomb, inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Just this month further excavations suggested that in the time of Christ the whole area was indeed a garden as the Gospel describes, with remains of vines and olive trees.

The Empty Tomb is a very strange symbol or idea to base a religion around, when the whole point of it is its emptiness, the fact that there is nothing in it. It's a place where something of profound importance happened, but which left no trace, and which the Scriptures never describe: all they tell us is the reaction of people after the event. As Rowan Williams wrote, 'however early we come to the Tomb, we find Jesus has already risen'. Over the night of Easter, the Patriarch of Jerusalem will pass the New Fire out of the Edicule to the worshippers in the church, and very curiously they will be celebrating something which isn't there, as those of us who have similar ceremonies in our own churches will: the lack of a body, the absence of an end that seemed certain, replaced by a mystery.

I find deep comfort in the idea that God has told us all we need to know about him, and yet his eternal nature is always beyond us. We proclaim 'Christ is risen!' but that short phrase contains a universe of meaning. We are perpetually being called beyond where we are now – including the divisions and organisations we establish between our Church communities – into an unknown country. He is alive; and he is not here.

Rev James Rattue, Chair of Churches Together in Godalming and District
jamesrattue@hotmail.com

Churches Together news and events

Easter Sunday sunrise service

Sunday 20 April at 6.45am at the Minster Field in Busbridge, led by Sr Jane and the Community at Ladywell

Witness in the Town, 11.30am on Good Friday outside Wetherspoons

Led by the Trinity Trust Team. Everyone welcome to hot cross buns at the Baptist Church afterwards, followed by a live stream of the Wintershall Passion Play from Trafalgar Square from about 12.10.

Forthcoming Prayer Breakfasts

26 April – Elstead Barn

24 May – Godalming Baptist Church

28 June – Cellar Café

26 July – Milford Baptist Church

27 September – Godalming United Church
25 October - St John's Parish Church, Farncombe
22 November – Busbridge Church

News of the Churches and organisations

Godalming Minster

We are continuing to pray for the Minster and everything good that is continuing as we are in vacancy, and for the appointment of a new Rector. Interviews will be taking place in May. We gather to pray on first Wednesdays of the month at 8.00pm, rotating venue around the Minster sites.

Updated website

The website has been updated to better reflect the identity of Godalming Minster and help people to find out who we are and engage with all areas. See godalmingminster.org.

Holy Week and Easter

Godalming Minster will be celebrating Holy Week and Easter across all locations and are joining the churches together acts of witness on Good Friday and at sunrise on Easter Day. You can find our events and services here: <https://godalmingminster.org/explore/easter>. On Palm Sunday there will be an all-in-one service at Church Street, starting with a procession from the Peppercot down to Godalming Minster Church Street. Gather at 9.50am to depart at 10.00am.

godalmingminster.org

St John's Parish Church, Farncombe

As St John's looks forward to the great festivities of Easter, we continue with the Lent Course aiming at encouraging and equipping laypeople to be more involved with the spiritual life of the church as a whole. We have some ideas about new worship patterns for later in the year and are awaiting permission to go ahead with the installation of emergency lights, the next stage in updating the safety arrangements at the church, which are of benefit to the community at large too. We've recently hosted two lunchtime concerts by Charterhouse students organised by the school's music department, and anticipate more in the future.

www.farncombe.org.uk

Godalming Baptist Church

Welcome Service for our new Pastor

This month we look forward to a Welcome Service for our Pastor, Jack Curtis, his wife Candice and their sons, and we wish them many blessings and happiness as they settle in Godalming.

Easter services

17 April, Maundy Thursday, 6.30pm with meal (suggested donation of £5)

18 April, Good Friday, 11.30am Churches Together outside Wetherspoon followed by refreshments and hot cross buns at GBC.

18 April, Good Friday, 12.00pm Live screening of Wintershall Passion play in Trafalgar Square on a projected screen at the church. Easter colouring sheets for the children.

20 April, Easter Sunday, 10.00am Sunday Easter Service with Easter egg hunt

The challenge of ageing – the Saga years, 26 April

On 26 April, our Pastor Peter will be leading a life issue session on *The challenge of ageing - the Saga years* from 10.00am to 12.30pm (coffee from 9.30am). This promises to be such a

worthwhile morning. Peter will focus on questions such as: is there a difference between ageing and maturity? How can we live well as we live longer? Is ageism a factor in our society? There is no charge, but donations are much appreciated towards the vital work of Age UK. To book a place please contact Sally Pollard on 01483 428646 or pollard3@hotmail.co.uk.

The Baker's Wife

GBC is hosting *The Baker's Wife* in April, performed by the wonderful Godalming Theatre Group. Do come! Information is on their website. Last year's performance of 'Joseph' was amazing! <https://www.gtguk.com>

Reception closed

Reception is closed at GBC for the school holidays from Monday 7 April and re-opens on Monday 14 April. Do call in from 9.00am to 12.00pm in term time to browse and borrow a library book from our great selection or to pick up leaflets on our Games Afternoon, Art Space, Life Issue events, Senior Moments and more!

Advance Date for your diaries

We have a wonderful day for women to look forward to at Ladywell on Saturday 20 September *Oasis in the desert*. Please see the attached poster.

www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk

Godalming United Church

Online services: <https://guc.online.church>.

Service recordings: www.guc.org.uk, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>.

Spring Bible Studies with Adam "Women of the Bible"

Final session - Mary Magdalene, Tuesday 1 April, 10.00am, repeated Wednesday 2 April 7.30pm

Maundy Service with Holy Communion

Thursday 17 April, 7.00pm

<http://www.guc.org.uk>

Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund, King & Martyr, Godalming with St Joseph's Milford

Pope Francis' prayer intention for April

Pope Francis' prayer intention for April is for technologies. Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

Easter Services

Easter Services are at St Joseph's Milford as follows: Maundy Thursday at 8.00pm; Good Friday at 3.00pm; Holy Saturday Vigil at 8.30pm/9.00pm (time tbc); Easter Sunday at 8.45am (St John's Farncombe) and 10.30am.

Stations of the Cross

During Lent at 6.30pm on Fridays at St Joseph's, Milford. Wintershall Stations of the Cross are on Friday 4 April at 8.00am; all welcome. www.wintershall.org.uk/stations-cross

Lent Small Groups – 'We Dare to Hope'

You are still very welcome if you have missed earlier sessions – and you will be warmly welcomed even if you can only come along to occasional sessions. Elstead group meets on Tuesdays at 2.00pm and Friday group meets at Ladywell at 1.30pm. See website/newsletter for details. The booklets are available at church in case anyone would like to use them but can't make a group.

Holy Year Penitential Service on Friday 11 April

With Bishop Richard, 7.00pm at St Joseph's, Guildford. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available, with members of clergy from across the deanery.

Gardeners and green fingered folks - please get growing!

Our annual 'Pete's Plant Sale' is in May and needs your support. Now is the time to sow seeds, plant cuttings and pot up plants (NB no houseplants). This fundraiser helps to change the lives of children and families living in the FMDM Mission in Kasanka, Zambia.

Summer Alpha

We are delighted to announce we will be running the Alpha programme this summer, with weekly sessions on Sunday evenings from 27 April from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. This course is for everyone and is the ideal tonic to renew and to inspire you. For more information: Nicki and Alan 01483 420859 E: alio@btinternet.com

SVP Afternoon Tea

This month the tea is on Wednesday 9 April at 2.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Elstead (phone 07379 108009).

Weekend Masses

Weekend Masses are celebrated at St Edmund's Godalming (6.00pm Vigil Mass) on Saturday evenings; and on Sundays at St John's Farncombe at 8.45am, with Children's Liturgy, (and with coffee after Mass on 6 and 20 April); and at St Joseph's Milford at 10.30am.

Weekday Masses

The dates, times and venues of these vary so please check the calendar on the home page of our website: www.stedsgod.com. St Edmund's church remains open every day usually between 10.00am and 5.00pm. (19 Croft Road, Godalming GU7 1DB).

Parish gatherings

We offer a warm welcome to newcomers at our regular parish gatherings.

- *Bumps & Babes* on Monday mornings at St John's Farncombe from 10.30am to 12.00pm, term time only. The group welcomes all mums to be, as well as mums (and grandparents!) with newborns, toddlers and pre-school children.
- *Prayer Group on Monday evenings* (phone Richard for details on 01252 702230), 5.00pm in winter and 7.30pm in summer.
- *Live Simply group* Our parish eco-group meets monthly online; the next meeting is on Thursday 3 April, 8.00pm. Joining details: jolewry@aol.com
- *SVP group* Our parish SVP group meets in person monthly; the next meeting is on Thursday 23 April at 7.30pm. Joining details: 07379 108009.
- *Bereavement group* This group offers support and meets monthly, usually on Fridays at 10.30am. More information: bereavementatsteds@gmail.com
- *EdsKnitters* This group knits for charities. If you can knit hats, gloves, scarves or blankets for adults and/or baby clothes please get in touch via the parish office: Godalming@abdiocese.org.uk

www.stedsgod.com

The Franciscan Centre Ladywell

Any enquiries or to book your place please email us at franciscancentre@ladywell.org.uk

Our website is: <https://franciscancentre.org.uk> and our phone number is 01483 675575.

Days of Reflection

We have two days of Reflection monthly. They will be held on the 2nd Saturday and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9.30am to 4.00pm. The next dates are Saturday 12 April and

Tuesday 22 April, 9.30am to 4.00pm.

These retreat days welcome all who seek renewal, inspiration and fellowship in a warm and inviting atmosphere. You can look forward to a comforting mix of input, prayer, conversation, and personal space for reflection.

A delicious, homemade lunch, lovingly prepared with Franciscan hospitality, will be provided. The cost for each retreat is £25.

We warmly welcome everyone to join us in this journey of reflection and discovery. For more information, please feel free to reach out to us at franciscancentre@ladywell.org.uk or telephone 01483 675575.

We offer a place that allows for a deepening of your relationship with God, a place of welcome and safety as you navigate closer to your Creator. Take quiet time away from the haste of everyday life, either on a retreat or by engaging in the programmes and workshops we offer. The Franciscan Centre Ladywell is open for anyone seeking some space and quiet time.

Easter Triduum Retreat

17 April, 3.00pm to 20 April, 2.00pm (Residential offering £270)

Come join us at the Franciscan Centre Ladywell for our Easter Triduum: Holy Thursday Evening to East Sunday.

Join our community as we celebrate the Easter Triduum, as we recall and journey with Jesus in his last days, from his final meal with His disciples to His resurrection from the tomb.

Experience the liturgies as part of a community and take time and space in our beautiful centre to reflect more deeply on these profound events.

Be alongside the Franciscan family, as we celebrate Easter in our unique way with daily prayer, reflections, liturgies and celebration.

<https://franciscancentre.org.uk>

Godalming Quakers

Sunday Meetings for Worship

The regular weekly worship session continues to be held on Sunday mornings, starting at 10.30am at the Quaker Meeting House in Mill Lane, and all are welcome.

www.quaker.org.uk/meetings/godalming

Items for next month's *Link-up*

Please send items for the May 2025 edition of *Link-up* to Matt Farrow: farrow.matt@gmail.com by **Friday 18 April**, for publication on Friday 25 April.