



April 2026

Services at a glance:

- Every Sunday 10am
Sung Eucharist
- Every Wednesday 10am
Said Communion
- Mon, Tues and Thurs
8.45am Morning Prayer
- 5th Sunday 6pm
United Service at one of
the Sleaford churches.

Directory:

Vicar of Sleaford and Rural Dean

The Rev'd Philip Johnson
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The Parish Office

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Mon, Weds, Fri 9-11am

Churchwardens

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Director of Music

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St Denys Bulletin

The church is open daily from 9am



Letter from the Vicar, Rev'd Philip Johnson

Much as I love the music of lent and Holy Week, the change in mood from Good Friday to Easter Day is palpable, and the power, confidence, and joy of the Easter hymns has a profound effect on me. St John of Damascus (8th Century) was a doctor and poet of the Orthodox Church. He wrote a sequence of eight odes, known as 'The Golden Canon' for the Easter Day office. The service started in a darkened church, but at midnight candles were lit, bells tolled and the congregation cried. 'Christ is risen'. The first of the eight odes followed, chanted by the priests. John Mason Neale (1818-66) translated these odes and included them in his *Hymns of the Eastern Church*. The first of these odes is the hymn *The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad*. Today we generally sing this hymn to the tune Ellacombe. The tune features in the 1968 film *If...*, a surrealist satire on English public school life. The film begins with the boys singing the school hymn to the tune Ellacombe. This is a little ironic as the tune has its origins with the German-speaking Roman Catholic Church. It first appeared in

the *Gesangbuch der Herzoglichen Württembergischen Katholischen Hofkapelle* of 1784, a book produced for the private chapel of the Duke of Württemberg. My other favourite Easter hymn has its origins in the German Lutheran Church. Christian Furchtegott Gellert (1715-69) was the son of a Lutheran minister. His middle name literally means God-fearer (I am sure my son is glad I did not give him that name!). He became an assistant to his father but had to read his sermons because he had a poor memory. This practice was frowned upon at the time so he became a lecturer in literature and later a professor of philosophy at the University of Leipzig. Gellert included a poem on the resurrection in his *Geistliche Oden und Leiden* (1757) of six stanzas of six lines. This poem was translated into English in a reduced format of five stanzas of four lines by Miss Frances Elizabeth Cox in 1851. Miss Cox was born in Oxford in 1812 and published two collections of German hymns in

English translation. In them we find, *Jesus lives! Thy terrors now / can, O Death, no more appal us; / Jesus lives! By this we know / thou, O grave, canst not enthral us. / Alleluia!* This hymn is generally sung to St Albinus which first appeared in the *Church Hymn and Tune Book* (1852). And was written by Henry John Gaunlett (1805-76). From the age of nine he was the organist at his father's church in Olney, Buckinghamshire. He read law and became an articled solicitor but gave it up in 1844 to devote his life to music. In 1842 he received the Archbishop of Canterbury's Doctor of Music degree, the first recipient of this award for over two hundred years. St Albinus was a 5th century abbot and bishop from Brittany. We may not sing these hymns on Easter Day, but we can still read the words and use them for prayerful meditation and reflection. The easter hymns unite us with the church across the centuries, countries, and languages in our praise of God.

From the Churchwardens

Easter Week

Holy Week followed by Easter falls during the end of March and beginning of April this year. It would be nice to see as many people as possible during one of the most important festivals of the Church's year. One particular service which has a predominant significance is the Sunrise Service on Easter Day, held outside the main West Doors at 6am.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the main High Street and Market Place there is an atmosphere of peace and calm, complete with the warming glow of an open fire blazing away. After the service the Vicar and Amanda prepare an Easter Breakfast in the Parish Centre with the Churchwardens providing Prosecco.

During Easter Saturday morning many ladies help organise the flowers in church for Easter Sunday. This occasion gives a good opportunity to give the church a bit of a Spring clean and, in addition, there is an event being held in the Market Place so the church gazebo will be in action providing teas and coffees for any passers by. So, clean a pew and support the flower arrangers.

All of the services planned for Holy Week and Easter are on St Denys's website and main noticeboard. They are also listed in this Bulletin.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

This meeting is being held on 10th May in the Parish Centre (11:30am). The meeting is split into two parts: the first part deals with the election of two Churchwardens and the second part considers the Church Annual Report, election of PCC members and other significant items concerning the church. As a general rule anyone who belongs to the parish can vote for a churchwarden, but during the remainder of the meeting only those who are on the Electoral Roll are permitted to vote. Following the meeting a hot lunch will be provided (£8 per head) and it is hoped as many people as possible can support both the APCM and the social bit, ie, hot lunch.

Lumos

Many of you may be aware that Lumos, an independent events company, have staged two separate concerts in the church building. These have been well attended and from many comments received

St Denys has proved to be an ideal venue. As a consequence Lumos have booked a further three concert events to be held during this year and early 2027. We are delighted that a company of Lumos's standing is using the church - which does create a delightful ambiance on these occasions.

Sound system

Recently the sound system has been given us a few anxious moments when conducting some services and events: sometimes the system didn't respond as expected when pressing the control buttons. Keystone Sounds, who maintain the system, suggested that the router which controls the remote control part of the system needed replacing and so new one has been installed. Well, that seems to have had the desired effect and everything appears to be in good working order. There is still some fine tuning to be sorted, especially with regard to the choir mics, but this is being addressed.

The Alternative Collect for Easter (Common Worship)

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Luke 24.1-5 (NRSV)

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen".

ELECTORAL ROLL

A review of St Denys' Electoral Roll will take place between 5th and 20th April. If anyone would like to join the Roll this year, please complete an application form - available from the back of church - and return it to church or the parish office by 20th April. This is for new members only - anyone signed up last year will remain on the roll.

William Alvey School Bishop's Visitor Update

Since Half Term the theme of "Spiritual Flourishing" has continued in the Monday afternoon Assemblies led by the Headteacher when I make my regular visits. He began by telling us about the things which help him keep going in life and try to be the best person he can. Then a number of people were invited to submit short statements about what keeps them flourishing and the children had to guess who the statements applied to if they could! These included several of the school teachers, myself and a Governor, Alison Snookes, who also visits regularly, and also a number of the older children.. Some of the statements were similar for many of us – like needing family and friends close and enjoying being outdoors and in nature. Others were more specific to individuals, like sports, pets and church membership – a real variety of needs and interests.

New lockdown alarms have been installed in the school and the Headteacher explained why these are needed and what to do. A practice is to be held before the end of term. We listened to the sound of the alarm (a horrible noise!) and he explained that the procedures are the opposite of hearing the fire alarm when everyone goes out of the building. Any lockdown situations would mean everyone returns and stays inside the building until the resolution of the problem. Hopefully such a situation will never arise but better to be prepared.

I have also recently attended another training day for Bishop's Visitors where we meet to be updated by the Deputy Diocesan Director of Education and to share news and ideas together.

As Easter approaches I look forward to another whole school service in church as the term comes to a close next week and we share the Easter story together again.

Here is a prayer I shared with the school when they guessed who I was from my statements.

Loving Lord, give me the strength to face today with optimism and hope. Remind me I am not alone and that you are with me through whatever situations I come across. Amen.

Beryl Risdell

'Lost Vicar found?

by Douglas Hoare

The Register of Bishop Robert Rede of Chichester records the admission of William Penyman to the parish of Fokington, Sussex, on 28 January, 1414. He was presented by Stephen Bay of Lincoln's Diocese, and the patron was Thomas de la Warre.

Thomas was vicar here 1391-1416 (and, *Inter alia* rector of Manchester where he elevated the parish church to being collegiate and added SS. George and Denys to the dedication of St. Mary.)

He inherited the patronage through Olympia de Fokington, wife of his great-great-grandfather, Sr John la Warre. So William Penyman is now not 'lost'!



Saturday 18th April 2026, 7pm
St Denys, Sleaford



Easter Organ Recital



Peter Davis
Director of Music
St Mary's Nottingham

Music by a variety of composers with a focus on the celebration of Easter
Guilmant, Bach, Elgar, Tournemire and Ropek

Tickets available in advance by scanning QR code below or on the door



Full Price £12 Concession £10

Refreshments afterwards included



Church Services

(Morning prayer is usually said at 8.45am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)

Said Communion every

Wednesday at 10am

(1st Weds of the month is BCP)

APRIL

For Holy Week services please see the box opposite

Sunday, 29th March

10am Palm Sunday Service

Wednesday, 8th April

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 12th April

10am Easter II

Wednesday, 15th April

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 19th April

10am Easter III to include

Sleaford Town Council Civic Service

Wednesday, 22nd April

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 26th April

10am Easter IV

Wednesday, 29th April

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 3rd May

10am Easter V

Wednesday, 6th April

10am BCP



Funerals and Memorial Services

Please remember in your prayers

Mrs Audrey Mildred Louise Steggar 89 years

Miss Sonia Betty Sampson 90 years

Mrs Marion Elizabeth Wilson 90 years

Mrs Audrey Mary Tebb 81 years



EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday (29th March)

10am Sung Communion

Holy Week

Monday 30th and Tuesday 31st March

8.45am Morning Prayer, 7pm Compline

Wednesday, 1st April

10am Said Communion

7pm Stations of the Cross

Maundy Thursday (2nd April)

8.45am Morning Prayer

7pm Holy Communion with stripping of the altar followed by the vigil

Good Friday (3rd April)

11am Walk of Witness

12pm First hour

1pm Second hour

2pm Liturgy of Good Friday

Easter Day (5th April)

6am Sunrise service

10am Sung Communion

No evening service

MEMORIAL SERVICE for the late John Virden will be held in church on Thursday 30th April at 2pm.

Patrician's - Heed civic supportive wisdom
'Tis not enough to allot a single Denarius,
when your fortune boasts thousands.
'Tis not enough to proffer just one rose
when your spray is heavily burdened
by sheer weight of sweet scented blooms.
'Tis not enough to assign a shabby insulae
when your realm shows hospitable rooms,
aplenty.
'Tis not enough to donate only a few crumbs
unless all your donor larders, be deplete.
But remember - we are practising Eurergetes
not miserable, mean spirited barbarii!
Life's latter journey doesn't take us forwards.
It takes us back,
back to whom we once were.
Jenny Whybrow
(published with permission of the author)
Submitted by David Birks

COMMUNICANTS' GUILD

The next meeting of the Guild will be held in the Church Room on Tuesday 21st April at 2 pm. Our speaker will be Deborah Yarwood, Fundraising Officer for St. Barnabas Hospice. You are very welcome to join us.

Disclaimer: Please note that the opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of St Denys PCC.