



St Denys Bulletin

The church is open daily from 9am

March 2025

Services at a glance:

- Every Sunday 10am
Sung Eucharist
- Every Wednesday 10am
Said Communion
- Mon, Tues and Thurs
8.45am Morning Prayer
- 1st Sunday 5pm Compline
- 2nd & 3rd Sunday
5pm Evening Prayer
- 4th Sunday 5pm Evensong
- 5th Sunday 6pm
United Service

Directory: Vicar of Sleaford and Rural Dean

The Rev'd Philip Johnson
01529 304348
revdphilip@aol.com

The Parish Office

Parish Administrator
Paula Ireland
Market Place, Sleaford,
NG34 7SH
admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk
01529 413607

Mon, Weds, Fri 9-11am

Churchwardens

Richard Clash
07714 565678
Sarah Stentiford
07707 513225

Safeguarding Officer

Angela Clash 01529
410065 or 0303 003 1111

Director of Music

Lee Mitton-Rooke
lee.rooke@googlemail.com

St Denys Bellringers

sylvia.bird860@gmail.com

PCC Treasurer

Brenda Hitchcock
01529 302775

Letter from the Vicar, Rev'd Philip Johnson

Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return: repent of your sins and turn to Christ. These are the words (slightly modified for modern language services) that are used on Ash Wednesday at the imposition of ashes. I prefer the old form of words as it is more direct and declamatory - Dust thou art – carrying much more force than the modern 'Remember that you are dust'. Whether we are encouraged to remember what we are or simply being told, the point is the same: we are creatures of the earth. Our origin is located in the Garden of Eden and the story of creation, of Adam (literally, the muddy creature, in Hebrew) made from mud. We are also reminded of the ultimate destination of the mortal remains of our human bodies in a condensed version of words from the burial service: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Nine words sum up the span of human existence: from the cradle to the grave. The following eight words describe how we should live or life from the cradle to the grave – repent of our sins and turn to Christ.

The story of our origin is also a story of the human condition – our general disobedience and our desire to always put oneself first. It is those common human traits that find Adam & Eve creating a life for themselves outside of the Garden and the beginning of the pilgrimage to find a way back to God. At our baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross on our forehead. We are told that 'Christ claims us for his own'; we become part of the family / church of God, we are washed and made clean, we are renewed in his image. On Ash Wednesday ashes are mixed into oil, and a cross is traced on our foreheads in the same place as the cross that was imposed at our baptism. Now the cross is a dirty smudge. It is a powerful symbol of how badly we have marred the image of God in us.

Every week before receiving communion we recite a general confession, reflecting on those things which we have done that we ought not to have done and those things that we have not done which we ought to have done. Lent is an opportunity for a deeper examination of ourselves. With our car, it is useful to regularly check the oil and water, tyre pressure etc, but that is no substitute for a full service by an experienced mechanic. Lent I, if you like, our annual full service, an MOT of our spiritual life, so that we can approach easter spiritually renewed and some of that which marred the image of God in us, dealt with and removed so that we are better able to reflect God's light into this dark world.
Fr Philip

Bible Reading

Joel 2. 12-13 (NRSV)

Return to me with all your heart, says the LORD, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment.

From the Churchwardens

Market Place

The new aspect of the Market Place is now in situ and, on the face of it, does look a lot better than the old market layout. There is still much comment and thoughts on the effectiveness of the new arrangement though time may be the greater judge. St Denys has been given permission to allow blue-badge holders to park during choir practice and Sunday am services and we are engaged in discussions with the local authority regarding other festival services. In collaboration with the Hub, the local authority have thus far organised two events within the Market Place and St Denys has provided refreshments during these occasions. Throughout the year other events are planned and it is hoped we can continue to provide refreshments. Watch this space!

Roof

Now that the churchyard fence and Lady Chapel repairs have been completed we can move onto the items marked "urgent" in the QI report. There are a few issues

with the nave and south transept roofs and these will be addressed during the next few months.

Pew kneelers

During February we were able to clear the pew kneelers of the fabric which was becoming very dirty and long past its sell by date. In fact most of the fabric simply peeled away with a single swipe. Historic patching and taping were becoming a trip hazard and we were made aware of the decrepit condition of the filler material. All kneelers have been given two coats of wood-preservative varnish.

Looking forward to Easter

Holy Week and Easter (13-20 April) will be slightly different this year. None of the usual services are affected but many of them will be led by the Bishop of Grantham, the Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain. The Bishop is no stranger to St Denys, though it has been a while since he last led any of our services. We welcome Nicholas to Sleaford and St Denys in particular and trust we are able to allow him typical St Denys hospitality. Also, on 6th April the Archdeacon of Lincoln, the Venerable Gavin Kirk, will be

leading our Sunday morning service.

... and finally

To mark their Patronal Festival a parish church invited a guest preacher, who came with a reputation of delivering long sermons. During the sermon the Churchwarden, who was sitting in the front pew, got up and walked out to reappear half an hour later just as the preacher concluded his sermon. The preacher was extremely vexed about the Churchwarden's attitude and challenged his behaviour after the service. "Why did you walk out during my sermon - which I consider your behaviour being very rude?", enquired the preacher. "I'm sorry," replied the Churchwarden, "I had to have a haircut." "What do you mean you had to have a haircut, couldn't you have arranged to have a haircut at some other time?" enquired the preacher. "Not really," rejoined the Churchwarden, "I didn't need one before you started your sermon!".

SLEAFORD KESWICK BIBLE MINISTRY 7.30pm

Friday, 14th March, 2025
Matt Rigden
URC Pioneer Minister, Bracebridge



The Collect for Ash Wednesday (Book of Common Prayer)

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Oldest Burial?

by Douglas Hoare

Margaret Catelyn of Quarrington made her will on 14th March, 1463, giving a bequest to St Denys's. One witness and executor was John Bowyer, our vicar 1432-1467. She also mentions her son, Thomas, 'chaplain of Sleaford church', who receives 'her tenement in Quarringtonbetween a tenement of Wm. Sleaford of Kirkby Laythorp gent, on the north, and a tenement of Thos. Scammilby on the south.

Was Thomas the assistant curate /

the chaplain of one of the chapels e.g. Holy Trinity, St Mary or St Christopher?

Margaret directed that she was 'to be buried in the Churchyard of St. Dionisius, New Lafford'.

Her will was 'proved at Sleaford Castle, 24 April 1464', probably by the Bishop of Lincoln, John Chadworth. As yet, the site is unknown, but it seems this evidence is perhaps the first indication of a named burial at St Denys's.

COMMUNICANTS' GUILD

The Guild's next meeting will be held **in church on Tuesday 18th March at 2pm**. We shall begin with a service of Holy Communion which will be followed by our AGM.



William Alvey School Bishop's Visitor Update

School returned from holiday this week . Now we begin the run-up towards Easter. As well as writing these monthly items for St Denys Bulletin to keep you, the church congregation, informed about what is happening in our church school, I also often write an item for the school newsletter called the Wasp, which goes online on the school website weekly in term time for parents and others with connections to the school. There is always a weekly contribution from the Headteacher and other news about what is going on in school and the children's activities. Here are some recent examples.

We heard that the Reception children (aged 4/5) – the youngest in school – had been learning about “people who help us” and had had visits from the police, a nurse and also about what happens to letters we post. They also went to visit Cogglesford Mill to see grain being turned into flour for baking bread which they had then had a try at making in the classroom!

Year 1(aged5/6) had visited Lincoln Castle as part of their learning about life in times past and the various jobs which people would have had to do to keep everything running smoothly for all who lived there – history to us!

together and the staff are there to help and guide them every moment of the school day.

In Y4(aged 8/9) they had been considering the problems we have with litter in the town and local area and they wrote letters to the Town Council with suggestions about how to tackle this. They also created posters encouraging all to take care and dispose of their litter correctly. The Town Council had been suitably impressed and you may well see some of the posters around town in future!

These examples give you a small taste of what happens in school day by day and week by week. The children learn and grow.

Beryl Risdell

Know your PCC Who am I?

1. I am a yellowbelly, born in Laundon House Maternity Hospital and brought up on a farm a few minutes outside of Sleaford.
2. As a child I went to church at Aswarby where my father was churchwarden for many years.
3. I became a Sleaford Town councillor in 2022.

Answer next month
February- Brenda Hitchcock

LENT LUNCHES 2025



Delicious soups will be served each Monday during Lent

Donations go to:

Christian Aid

or give online at www.caid.org.uk



Lunches served at 12pm

- 10th March** | OLGK Catholic Church
17th March | St Denys'
24th March | Riverside
31st March | Salvation Army
7th April | Methodist Church
14th April | St Botolph's (at New Life)

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)

Sunday, 2nd March

10am Quinquagesima, 5pm Compline

Wednesday, 5th March Ash Wednesday

10am Said Communion 7pm Sung Eucharist (The Archdeacon of Lincoln)

Sunday, 9th March

10am Lent I, No evening prayer

Wednesday, 12th March

10am Mid-Week Communion

Sunday, 16th March

10am Lent II, 5pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday, 19th March

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 23rd March

10am Lent III, 5pm Evensong

Wednesday, 26th March

10am Said Communion

Sunday, 30th March

10am Lent IV (Mothering) Rev'd David Woods
6pm CT either Quarrington or Riverside tbc

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY CHURCH APCM and ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

The APCM and Election of Churchwardens will be held on Sunday, 11th May at approx. 11.30am in the Church Hall, followed by a parish lunch.

Out there, watch the islands in silence...,
calm repose before man be woken.
Immobile.

Aye, let no word be spoken.

Yea, afore that spell be broken

I humbly pray, no rush to despoil
dawn's pink flush.

Exultant now, o'er artwork seas.

Oh Hebrides: utter joy 'midst my loneliness.

Enfolding God's mystery,

Surging contemplative wonderment for a soul!
kneel.

Jenny Whybrow

(published with permission of the author)

Submitted by David Birks

ELECTORAL ROLL

Every six years the Electoral Roll - the list of members able to have a say and vote in matters relating to the Parish Church - is renewed. The previous roll is deleted and a new list compiled. Everyone who wishes to be on the Electoral Roll needs to submit an application form. Our Roll will be compiled in early April. Forms are available from the back of church and should be returned to Angela Clash or the Parish Office. Digital copies available from the Parish Administrator.



Sleaford Choral
with special guests
Sleaford Concert Band
Lee Requiem
Composed & Conducted by
Rowland Lee, our Musical Director
7.30pm Sat. 12th April 2025
St Denys Church
Find us at: sleafordchoralsociety.co.uk
Registered Charity No: 518318

The poster features a pair of large, white, feathered angel wings spread wide against a dark background. In the center, between the wings, is a stylized treble clef symbol in orange and blue.

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.