

*Services at St Margaret's Underriver  
during February 2015*



**In the Church, every Thursday at 08:30, Morning Prayer (said) - CW**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>1 Feb</b>	11:15	All Age Family Service	
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8 Feb</b>	08:00	Holy Communion	BCP
		11:15	Matins	BCP
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>15 Feb</b>	10:30	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall	
		11:15	Family Holy Communion (short)	CW
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>22 Feb</b>	11:15	Parish Communion	CW
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>1 Mar</b>	11:15	All Age Family Service	

**ST LAWRENCE CHURCH AND VILLAGE CONTACTS**

**Vicar - Revd Carol Kitchener - 01732 761766**

**Reader - St Lawrence Church - Mrs Gretel Wakeham - 01732 761534**

**Admin Assistant - Tim Pearce - 01732 832408 admin@stlawrencealchart.com**

**Parish Website - www.sealstlawrence.org.uk**

Churchwardens	Ron Drury Rob Otto	810214 457442	1 <sup>st</sup> St Lawrence Brownies	Janet Boswell	01959 523953
PCC Hon Secretary	John Morris	810227	S'oaks District Councillors	Julia Thornton	07831 234449
PCC Hon Treasurer	Andy Rowell	884950		Roderick Hogarth	760325
Electoral Roll	Clive McLintock	452964	Seal Parish Council		
Covenant & Envelopes	John Morris	810227	Chairman	Robin Watson	833930
Organist	Lizzie Veglio	01634 244700	Vice-Chairman	Edward Oatley	465905
Choir Director	John Morris	810227	Clerk	Lorna Talbot	763488
Bellringers Hon Secretary	Peter Wharton	810388	Ward Councillors	Peter Granville	763832
Sevenoaks Deanery Synod	Ron Drury Peter Wharton	810214 810388		Tony Bulleid	
Sunday School	Hilary Darque	453929	St Lawrence Village Hall Management Committee		
Child Protection Rep	Kate Clark	810829	Chairman	Peter Wharton	810388
Church Flowers	Sheila Jackson	811422	Secretary	Janice Brooker	760843
			Treasurer	Andy Smaggasgale	760552
St Lawrence CE Primary School			Bookings Secretary	Andy Smaggasgale	760552
Headteacher	Alison Saunders	761393	Cricknet Club Secretary	Robin Webster	01892 862017
Chairman of Governors	Paul Martin	761393	Badm'ton Club Contact	Peter Wharton	810388
Clerk to the Governors	Sarah Brew	761393	Archery Club Secretary	Mike Davies	762266
St Lawrence Pre-School	Becky Stammers	763289	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators		
			Stone Street Contact	Janice Brooker	760843
			Seal Chart Contact	Nicola Mitchell	764202

Copy for the next issue should be sent, preferably by e-mail, to the editor,  
Brian Sutton (01732 450873) at manofkent99@yahoo.com

**to arrive by 08:00 on Wednesday 11 February 2015**

The next issue of the Parish Magazine will be in Church on **Sunday 22 February 2015**

Edited and Typeset by Brian Sutton, 50 The Crescent, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3QY (01732 450873)  
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*St Lawrence, Seal Chart Parish Magazine  
February 2015*



*Vicar*

**The Revd Carol Kitchener**  
St Lawrence Vicarage  
Stone Street  
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0LQ  
01732 761766

*Reader*

**Mrs Gretel Wakeham**  
The White House  
Bitchet Green  
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0NA  
01732 761534

*Church Wardens*

**Ron Drury**  
Garden Cottage, Rasput Hill  
Ivy Hatch  
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0PE  
01732 810214

**Rob Otto**  
23 Hillingdon Avenue  
Sevenoaks  
Kent TN13 3RB  
01732 457442

## Our Vicar's Page

At the beginning of the month of February the Church celebrates the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the occasion on which Mary and Joseph took their baby son Jesus to the Temple, their place of worship, to ask for God's blessings on him and to introduce him to the community. On that day they were greeted by two elderly people each with a message of joy and hope.

One was a man called Simeon. God had promised Simeon that he would not die until he had seen God's Son, the Messiah, with his own eyes. When Simeon saw Mary and Joseph with their baby, he took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He rejoiced because he knew that Jesus would bring salvation of the people of Israel and that he would also be a light to reveal God to the Gentiles, the non-Jews.

The other person was an elderly woman called Anna. Anna was a prophet she had been a widow for most of her adult life and she remained in the Temple night and day praying and praising God. As soon as she saw Jesus with his parents she praised God and then she told everyone she saw all about this special child.

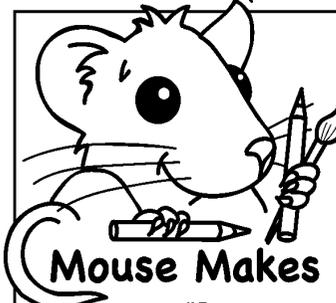
Two devout people saw a small baby with his parents and recognised God at work in them. Simeon and Anna knew that they were standing at the brink of something entirely new, something that had not happened before. God had intervened in the world and things would never be the same again. They were both content to die now that they had seen all that God had promised come to pass. Simeon said "Master you are now dismissing your servant in peace" (Luke 2:29a).

Life can take us all by surprise, we think that we can predict events, or influence events, but we cannot always do that. Maybe something entirely new will happen to you this year, or to your family. Maybe it will be something that you have longed for, or that you have looked forward to – a bit like Simeon and Anna. Maybe it will be something you could not have imagined happening. Perhaps it will bring joy, or maybe it will make you feel sad, or maybe puzzled. Whatever happens be assured that you will not be on your own, God will be with you though that experience. He is always with us even if we forget about him, He does not forget us. God was with Simeon and Anna through all of the years as they waited to see the promised Messiah and God accompanies us through all of the ups and downs of our lives, from the very beginning to the very end.

Thanks be to God.

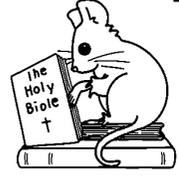
*Yours in the love of Christ*

## For the Children (and adults too)



**Mouse Makes**

"Draw near to God"  
James 4:8



The first day of Lent is  
**ASH WEDNESDAY**

It is a day of **repentance**, saying **sorry** to God for any wrong things you have said or thought or done.




During Lent **pray** for someone, **encourage** someone and **tell** someone about Jesus

The 40 days before Easter are called **LENT**. Lent is a time for Christians to pray, read the bible and turn to God.

	1	2							
	ASH WEDNESDAY								
	5	4	3						
20	19	6	7	8	9	10			
21	18	17	16	15	14	11			
22	23	24	25	26	13	12			
		29	28	27					
		30	31	32					
		35	34	33					
		36	37	38					
Tuesday	Monday	40	39						
	Wednesday								
	Thursday	GOOD FRIDAY	Saturday						

The Lord is here,  
His spirit is with us



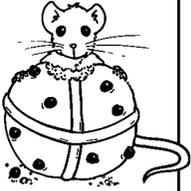
**GOOD FRIDAY**



**EASTER SUNDAY**



During Lent read *Matthew's Gospel*



**LENT CALENDAR**  
Colour in a square each day to Easter



**JESUS IS RISEN**  
" **ALLELUIA!**

## ***Prayer for February***

Dear Lord,

February can seem such a bleak, mid-winter month, often flavoured with ‘flu and bad weather. But actually, the days are lengthening. There are snowdrops and other signs of new life, if we look expectantly. Spring is beckoning. Open our eyes, Lord, to see the wonders of your creation, even in February. May we appreciate the rhythms of the seasons you designed for us, and rejoice in the hope you have given us in Jesus, who came to wonderfully re-create, to make all things new, by his death and resurrection. Thank you Father for life-signs in February - and thank you especially for the new life-sign of Jesus, Amen. *Daphne Kitching*

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## ***One million of us go to C of E churches***

Recently published Church of England statistics for 2013 show that an average of one million people attend services each week, down about 1% on the previous year.

The one million figure relates to regular weekly parish and cathedral services and does not include other core services carried out by the Church of England on a regular basis. With some 2,000 baptisms, 1,000 weddings and 3,000 funerals conducted every week it is estimated that a further half a million people attend a service conducted by a Church of England minister every week.

In addition the count (which takes place in October) does not include the many carol and nativity services during Advent and many other regular services responding to community need. The services carried out by the Church of England's chaplains in hospitals, prisons, schools, universities and military bases are also excluded from the attendance totals.

Figures for Christmas attendance show a stable trend, with 2.4 million people attending services on Christmas Eve and Day - where figures have hovered around the 2.5 million mark over the past decade.

A new part of the 2013 research reveal that nearly half of the 67,000 new joiners to churches are coming for the first time rather than from another church. This was the first time a split was introduced in the joiners and leavers section to measure those moving to or from other local churches.

A change in baptism trends shows that adult baptisms are on the increase over the past decade - from 8,000 per year to 11,000 per year, an increase of 32% over the last 10 years.

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## ***A Lovely Evening***

Around six o'clock on a chilly evening a bit more than a week before Christmas, around fifty would be choristers and would be choristers from the local community and further afield gathered in one of the old apple barns at Foxbury to sample Jenny Wharton's mulled wine and a warm mince pie before anticipating the coming Christmas with traditional carol singing. Led by choirmaster John Morris and accompanied with some electronic wizardry provided by Rob Otto, we sang nearly all the eleven carols on the sheet. The several children sang the first verse of 'Away in a Manger' alone and were quietly accompanied for the remaining verses by the mums, dads and others. The youngsters received a richly deserved round of applause and the end.

After almost an hour we said a big thank you to Ian Mitchell for the use of his premises it was back on the road, some heading for home and some for Chart Farm.

In the depths of Seal Chart, we were welcomed by the Peterson family at Chart Farm with more mulled wine and mince pies whilst setting up of the equipment took place. This did not take too long and then it was singing as before, but this time in the open air outside the shop. There were about forty participants here, some who had been at Stone Street and others who had joined us just for this session.

It was indeed a lovely evening and, although cold, it was a pleasure to enjoy the time without a drop of rain!

*Ed*

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## ***Churches dedicated to St Lawrence (or St Laurence)***

In my researches, I have found thirty churches in the United Kingdom and twelve elsewhere in the world that are dedicated to St Lawrence, or to the alternative spelling. Surprisingly, the church of St Lawrence, Seal Chart was not included in a list provided by one of the authorities that I usually trust. That, I hope, has now been corrected.

The church of St Lawrence, near Ventnor Isle of Wight, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is believed to be the smallest church in the country to have been built as a parish church. It was 'modernised' in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century – the chancel was added - and at about the same time a larger church, also dedicated to St Lawrence, was built adjacent to the coast road and adopted as the parish church. It was based on the layout of the older church that Horace Wilkinson had our church built in the 1860s.

Hopefully, I shall be able to find a few bits and pieces relating to other St Lawrence churches during the next few months. Watch out for cover pictures. *Ed*

## ***The Bad and the Good***

The following is the theme of a talk that was given by the Rev Canon Michael Smith, Canon Pastor of York Minster, to the adults and many children who filled York Minster for the Crib Service and Nativity Tableau on Christmas Eve

“It was the Sunday before Christmas and the congregation in the little village church had just finished the Crib Service before hurrying home for a quick cup of tea and back for the evening Christmas Carol Service.

Two brothers, Jack and Richard, thought it a good idea to play a joke on their ageing vicar and while one engaged the vicar in conversation at the church door the other went to the crib and removed the small doll which represented the baby Jesus from the manger and slid Him into his pocket. Soon they met outside and had a good laugh over what they had done.

The two churchwardens and the vicar did their patrol around the church to pick up service sheets, gloves, and the occasional umbrella left by worshipers and to make sure that everything was ready for the Carol Service that evening. It was then that they realised that Jesus was no longer in His crib.

A couple of hours later the vicar stood on the chancel steps preparing to open the Carol Service. But first he had to tell his congregation what had happened some time after the Crib Service. As he did so, he cast his eyes over the people in front of him, spotted the two boys who were blushing with embarrassment, put two and two together and made four.

“You two,” he said, looking straight at them, “have done two things about which I must comment. The first was very naughty and the second very good. You took the baby Jesus from the crib; that was stealing and a very bad thing to do and I hope that you will return Him to the crib at the end of this service. The second thing you did was very commendable. You took Jesus into your home and that was truly a very good thing to do. I do hope that all who are here this evening will follow your example at this Christmastide and do likewise” *Ed*

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## ***For your 2015 Diary***

Suggested dates for our special Church Cleans are as follows:-

Spring Clean: Wednesday, 18th March 9.30-11.30a.m.

Christmas Clean: Wednesday, 2nd December 9.30-11.30 a.m.

My heartfelt thanks again, to the 10 people who kindly turned up for our Christmas Clean, making it our speediest yet!

*Carol McL*

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## ***Notes from recent PCC meetings***

These notes give a brief summary of some of the main discussions at recent meetings of the Parochial Church Council:

- Rochester diocese has decided to change the way in which parishes contribute to the diocese. The core of the change is to move from a basis where each parish is charged with stipend and related expenses plus an annual ‘parish share’ to one based on an ‘offering’ by the parish based on what it feels able to afford. The diocese is looking for an uplift of at least 2% over the total paid by parishes in 2014 and, after some discussion, it was agreed to increase the St Lawrence contribution by 3% for 2015.
- The adequacy of the sound system remains under review. There are several ‘flat spots’ for sound in the church and the current system lacks flexibility, especially when supporting the increasing number of children’s activities in the church. The PCC has received two estimates for a replacement system and the review team will visit churches with similar installations before making a recommendation to a PCC meeting.
- The PCC has been advised that the stone plinth required to complete the moving of the altar should be installed during January.
- The church is subject to a five-yearly review (the Quinquennial Review) by the diocesan architect who details any work required to maintain the fabric of the church. The review was carried out at the beginning of 2014 and his recommendations have been reviewed by the PCC. Repairs to stonework and guttering in the sum of £5000 have been authorised; the architect has suggested that further stonework repairs will be required in the next 5 to 10 years and the PCC will consider how to programme this work.
- The PCC was advised that the discussions on forming a Joint Benefice with St Margaret’s Underriver will continue with a joint Standing Committee meeting following which a decision will be taken to move the project to the next stage.
- Rochester diocese has proposed a number of activities to encourage parishes to focus on the theme of Challenging Poverty in 2015. In particular it will be the theme of a Lent Course and a special liturgy for Pentecost Sunday (May 24). The PCC has decided to run a specific fund-raising event to support a charity focussed on poverty relief. The committee has chosen to support Emmaus, a charity for the homeless which provides meaningful work with a stable home environment for as long as is needed. *John M*

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### ***Who said ‘thank you’ this Christmas?***

Remember those presents you bought and wrapped and then posted with some degree of hassle, just before Christmas? What happened to them? Have you heard back yet from the people that you sent them to? It seems that the thank you card has become a thing of the past... so feel grateful if you even get an email or text in acknowledgement!

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### ***Rain, rain go away....***

The Church of England has welcomed a recent dedicated £15 million fund announced by the Government for the repair of roofs and rainwater goods on listed church buildings.

The Chancellor announced the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in his Autumn Statement. Grants between £10,000 and £100,000 have been made available to listed places of worship of all faiths and denominations across the UK, where roof and rainwater goods repairs are deemed to be urgent and necessary. The scheme is being administered by the National Heritage Memorial Fund on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and ChurchCare will be providing support for dioceses and parishes.

The Bishop of Worcester, Rt Revd Dr John Inge, lead bishop for cathedrals and church buildings, explains: “We are delighted that this generous fund has been announced so soon after the addition of 805 parish churches to English Heritage’s Heritage at Risk Register.”

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### ***Church of England Primary Schools Lead 2014 League Tables***

Church of England primary schools have recently secured some of the best results in the country, according to league tables released by the Department for Education. Six of the top ten performing schools and over half of the top 100 performing schools were Church of England primary schools.\*

Chief Education Officer, the Revd Nigel Genders said: “I’m delighted that Church of England primary schools are leading some of the outstanding practice going on in schools across the country, and congratulate the pupils, teachers, support staff, parents and communities who have worked together to secure success.”

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We are, because God is. - *Emmanuel Swedenborg*

### ***Achieving your Resolution in 2015***

Every year millions of people do it - make New Year Resolutions. The most common resolves are to give up smoking or to achieve some planned weight loss. They embark on the enterprise on 1<sup>st</sup> January, but we all suspect that by the end of the month they’ll be back on the fags or have resumed tucking into the burgers.

The problem is little to do with a failure of will-power, but simply that in both cases they are tilting at windmills: a serious chemical addiction, and a very natural human desire for rich food - ‘marrow and fatness’, as the Psalmist called it. Those who do succeed have usually had recourse to vital support, either (where smoking is concerned) medical help from a clinic or surgery, and where dieting is concerned a group like Weight-watchers or the constant vigilance of friends or family. Once achieved, the goal is often then maintained, certainly where smoking is concerned.

So are ‘resolutions’ useless? Do they simply expect too much of us - indeed, more than unaided human will-power can achieve? I suspect that in the case of smoking and weight loss ‘unaided’ is the key word. Both resolutions require that external help (though I do have friends who have managed it without). For many people that ‘external help’ can be prayer - their own, and that of their supporters.

The trouble with failed resolutions is that we may then feel that the cause is lost forever. We’ve done our best, and it wasn’t good enough. We label ourselves hopeless cases, and order the next packet of cigarettes or a box of doughnuts. In truth, taking on smoking or slimming in the context of an individual new year resolution is a bit like swimming the channel - not impossible, but jolly difficult. (And if at this moment you’re trying to do it, I salute you and hope and pray that you succeed.)

But what about other resolutions? Experience tells us that there is a better chance of success if we set ourselves, initially at least, more modest but important goals. How about a resolution not to complain about the weather? Or to go to bed at a sensible time? Or to smile at the neighbour who keeps putting his bin where mine should go? Or to say ‘thanks’ to the bus driver as I get off?

On a slightly more exalted level, why not a resolution to make time every day for reflection, prayer and perhaps a short Bible reading? Or to go back to church (if we’ve stopped going) or be a bit more positive about it if we haven’t?

‘Resolution’ has two meanings: a ‘resolve’ to do something, and the result of doing it (the ‘resolution’ of the problem). Perhaps it might help all of us if we concentrated on the latter rather than the former this New Year, keeping our eyes on that desirable goal rather than the difficulties of getting there. As the RAF motto says, *Per Ardua ad Astra* - through challenge to the heights!

*David Winter*

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## *Services and Events at The Church of St Lawrence Seal Chart during February 2015*

Every Tuesday at 08:30, in the Church  
Morning Prayer (said) (CW)

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>1 February</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Presentation of Christ in the Temple</b>	
	08:00	Holy Communion	BCP
		Hebrews 2: 14-end	Luke 2: 22-40
	09:45	All Age Family Service	
		Luke 2: 22-40	
<b>Monday</b>	<b>2 February</b>	<b>Prayer Time - (last about an hour - all are welcome)</b>	
	14:00	At The White House, Bitchet Green	
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8 February</b>	<b>Second Sunday before Lent</b>	
	09:45	Family Communion (with Sunday School)	CW
		Colossians 1: 15-20	John 1: 1-14
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>15 February</b>	<b>Sunday next before Lent</b>	
	09:45	Family Communion	CW
		2 Corinthians 4: 3-6	Mark 9: 2-9
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>18 February</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	
	10:00	Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes	CW
		2 Corinthians 5: 20b-6:10	John 8: 1-11
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>22 February</b>	<b>First Sunday of Lent</b>	
	09:45	Matins	BCP
		Genesis 9: 8-17	Mark 1: 9-15
<b>Monday</b>	<b>23 February</b>	<b>Prayer Time - (last about an hour - all are welcome)</b>	
	14:00	At The Grenadier, Riding Lane, Hildenborough	
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>1 March</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	
	08:00	Holy Communion	BCP
		Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16	Mark 8: 31-end
	09:45	All Age Family Service	
		Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16	

BCP = Book of Common Prayer - a service using traditional (17th C) language and form  
CW = Common Worship - a service using contemporary (21st C) language and form



### *Church Flowers*



Sunday	1 Feb	Kate Clark
Sunday	8 Feb	Kate Clark
Sunday	15 Feb	Sheila Jackson
Sunday	22 Feb	Sheila Jackson
Sunday	1 Mar	Kate Clark



*Your Prayers are asked for . . .  
the aged and infirm;  
the sick in hospital and at home;  
the recently bereaved;*



*doctors, nurses and carers;  
all God's children wherever they may be;  
For all Your Blessings, we thank Thee, O Lord*

*Children meet promptly at 09:45*

*in St Lawrence School Hall on the dates  
shown below*

*They will rejoin their parents in the church  
towards the end of the service.*



*St Lawrence  
Seal Chart  
Sunday School*

*All children aged 3 and upwards are welcome*

15 February	Lent	Hilary and Lesley
15 March	The Story of Hanna	Sam and Lyn
19 April	The Resurrection	Sam and Lesley
17 May	Ascension Day	Hilary and Lesley
21 June	Father's Day, The Prodigal Son	Sam and Lyn
19 July	Diocesan & Parish Picnic - Details to follow later	

*For further information contact Hilary Darque [01732 453929]*