

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH DONISTHORPE

GRAPEVINE

APRIL 2026



Dear Friends,

The clocks have gone forward, and we have celebrated Mother's Day.

The sun has begun to shine, and the daffodils are out.

With the sunshine comes a spring in the step of people around us.

Spring is here and Easter is on its way, and I wonder what your plans are for the Easter weekend.

Over the Easter weekend, Christians around the country and world, will be traveling through the last week of Jesus' life as told by the Bible.

In these readings there is so much to think about and reflect on;

The joy and the cheers of the crowd.

The betrayal of a close friend.

Standing up for what you believe in.

The mocking of people, death and endings.

And then, on Easter Day, we celebrate new life, hope and joy. We could get overwhelmed by all of the Holy Week and Easter readings and services, trying to cram everything in.

So maybe we just need to listen out for the aspect of the Easter story that we each need to hear, and be encouraged by it. Looking for the small signs of hope and small steps of change.

After Jesus' death on the Friday, his supporters, friends and followers thought it was all over. Their dreams were crushed, and there seemed to be no way forward or hope.

Then, on the third day, the women went to the tomb of Jesus and found the stone to the tomb had been rolled away and hope began again. Discovering that Jesus had another plan started small and quietly, but everything changed.

So this Easter, we might consider where in our lives we need a sign of hope and change when we can see no way forward.

It might be in your own life, your relationships or community.

The Easter story reminds us that there is a way forward – maybe not what we expect – but there is hope.

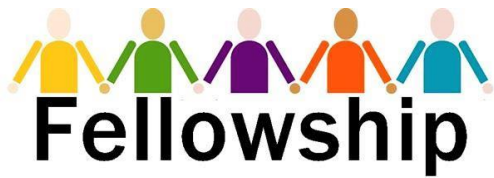
Maybe you need to make that appointment for help you have been putting off, or to ring a friend that you have been worried about.

Small steps that can change everything, just as on that first Easter day.

Here at St John's, we will be traveling through the Easter story with our Agape Supper on Maunday Thursday at 6.30pm. On Good Friday we will walk with Jesus in a short service of 'The Way of the Cross' at 3pm and on Easter Sunday we will celebrate Holy Eucharist at 10am..

Whatever you are looking forward to this Easter, come and celebrate it with us, or at a church near you.

You will be very welcome.



FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

LUNCH LIGHT our group that supports folk who are bereaved, plan to meet in church on **Friday 24th April between 12.30pm – 2.00pm**. So, if you have lost a loved one and would like some company, a chat and a bite to eat, why not drop in or Telephone Janet 01283 215000, if you want to know more and would like to join us, or if you wish to help out. There is a charge of £5

COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH will meet in church on **Tuesday 7th April between 9.30 and 11.00am**.

APRIL SERVICES ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM. (all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated).

Thursday April 2 nd MAUNDAY THURSDAY	Donisthorpe (Agape Supper 6.30pm), Swepstone (Agape Supper 7.00pm) Normanton (Maunday Service 7.00pm)
Friday April 3 rd GOOD FRIDAY	Appleby (Family Worship 10am) THE WAY OF THE CROSS Measham 10am, Donisthorpe 3pm , Norton 3pm, Packington 6.30pm
Saturday April 4 th	St John's Prayer Group meeting Winnie Meadows home at 10am
Sunday April 5 th EASTER SUNDAY	HOLY COMMUNION Donisthorpe , Measham, Packington, Appleby & Swepstone Snarestone (MP),
Tuesday April 7 th	Coffee & Chat at St. John's Donisthorpe at 9.30am
Sunday April 12 th	Donisthorpe (Baptism) , Norton (HC), Packington (MP) Measham (MP Lay Led)
Sunday April 19 th	Donisthorpe (Lay Led Worship) Measham (Breakfast Church), Appleby (Sunday People), Swepstone (HC),
Friday April 24 th	Lunch Light at St. John's Donisthorpe (12- 30 – 14.00)
Sunday April 26 th	Donisthorpe (HC) , Normanton & Packington , Appleby (Family Worship), Measham, (MP)

OPEN THE BOOK TEAM – VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The Open the Book team go into our schools' assemblies across the Woodfield Team area, to actively tell AND re-enact stories from the Bible. They need more volunteers. Are you a would-be actor? Would you like to help bring the bible alive to children? If so, for more information please contact Norma Morris-Chapman by email: rayandnormamorrischapman@gmail.com (this is a volunteer role, subject to a satisfactory DBS safeguarding check).

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



The annual meeting for St John's Donisthorpe will take place at 7.15pm on 14th April 2026.

It would be wonderful to see you at the meeting – it's a chance to hear what we've been up to in the last year, to encourage each other as well as do the business of accounts and elections.

PASSOVER, GOOD FRIDAY, AND COMMUNION

The death of their firstborn was the final judgement that persuaded Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt. God instructed the Israelites to paint the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. He said that when He saw the blood, He would pass over that household and not strike their first-born.

Passover gets its name from this 'passing over' the homes of the people of God.

It is a graphic foreshadowing of how Jesus, the Lamb of God, would shed His blood for the salvation of all who believe.

Every year thereafter, through to the time of Jesus, the people of God celebrated Passover with a special meal. On the Thursday evening that started what we now call Good Friday (the Jewish day starts at six pm the previous evening), Jesus met with His disciples to celebrate Passover with them.

From the details given in the Gospels, it seems they reclined at a low table arranged in a typical Roman format; a sort of square U shape with two short sides and a longer middle section. According to the custom of the day, the one responsible for the meal would sit at the extreme end of one of the short lengths, next to him would be the host, and next to him the guest of



honour. The other guests would then sit in order of importance, with the least important sitting at the end of the other short length, directly opposite the organizer. For the Last Supper, the organiser would have been John, the host Jesus, and the guest of honour Judas. Yes Judas! It was protocol for the host to have the guest of honour seated on his left, and to demonstrate favour by serving him with a piece of bread dipped in the stew. Jesus announced to his startled disciples that one of them was about to betray him. John 13:21-26 records how Peter signalled to John to catch his attention and then asked him to inquire of Jesus who His betrayer was. John leaned back against Jesus and asked him. Jesus replied, *"It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish."* Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon.'

What incredible grace! Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him yet he chose to make him the guest of honour.

He placed Judas, the least of all, in the highest position, and poor Peter, the leader elect, in the lowest position at the very end of the table. What a lesson for us. Before starting the meal, Jesus had washed his disciples' feet. He had made it clear that He was setting them an example of servant leadership ([John 13:15](#)). Peter must have been very ashamed because he was sitting in the least important seat, and custom demanded that the least at the table serve the others. Jesus had nominated Peter as His successor yet He afforded Peter the least privilege and expected of him the greatest service.

Jesus went from the Upper Room to the Cross. In the Upper Room He washed His disciples' feet with water, but at Golgotha He washed their souls with His blood. And not just them but all of us who accept His sacrifice.

In the Upper Room, Jesus gave up His dignity to serve, and at Golgotha He gave up His life to save.

When we take communion, we should remember its origins and ponder the depth of the message it conveys. Communion is a stylised recreation of the Last Supper, which was itself a commemoration of the Passover. The wine of Communion reminds us that Jesus gave his lifeblood for us, and the bread reminds us that we are part of the body that He birthed through His death.

In Communion, we honour Jesus and serve each other.

We, who are by nature rebels and betrayers, are given the highest honour, yet we are called to take the place of least honour and to serve each other.