So the pancakes have been eaten, the ashes have been given, and it’s Lent now.

That means Mothering Sunday is on the horizon, and, after that, Holy Week and Easter. I have Pinterest boards of resources for both of those, so do take a look – and if you find a great resource or idea you’d like me to include, please pass it on:

Lent and Easter
Mothering Sunday

But you may also want to encourage parents to try things at home with their children to mark this time. The Church of England Christenings website has easy ideas for faith at home, organised by season – see their section for Spring.

You could also send home “Holy Week in a Box” with your families. With a few pieces of paper, a peg doll, a Sharpie, a piece of white cloth, and a small cardboard box (Baker Ross has them the right size), families can journey together through the most sacred time of year. If you don’t have time to assemble it all yourself, or a team of volunteers to help, you could lay out each item and have families assemble their own as they leave church on Palm Sunday. Find out more at GodVenture.

And, looking ahead a bit, we have our overnight conference on children and worship coming up in June – this year, we’ll be joined on Wednesday morning by the young worship leaders from Christ Church Primary School in Ware, who will lead worship and talk with us about worship and faith.

We also have Revd Simon Rundell doing a Nursery Rhyme Mass, a Parenting for Faith workshop, and more. Day tickets are available if you’re not able to stay over, and if you would like to come, but cost is a barrier, speak with me or Julie and we’ll see what we can do.

Peace,

Margaret
We have this tree, which is used for our Christmas pageant. It’s simply a few spray-painted branches stuck in some sand. It cost less than £20 to make, and we’ve used it for 7 years.

Our pageant is a dramatized Lessons and Carols service (People, Look East, from Gretchen Wolff Pritchard’s book, Go Tell It On The Mountain, available from the-Sunday-paper.com and Amazon). So the tree starts out as the tree of knowledge, then becomes the family tree of Jesse and the tree of life, with a small subtle nod at being a Christmas tree on the way. We decided to expand this through Lent and Holy Week.

On Mothering Sunday, our congregation writes the names of anybody who has played a mother’s role in their lives. These names are placed in the offertory plates, placed on the tree (out of sight, during the Eucharistic Prayer), and then the tree – and those whose names are on it – are blessed. (Those who can’t write can draw.)

Recently, we added a prayer station on the way back from communion, for people to write or draw names of children we have mothered who have died, or mother figures who have died, on a piece of fabric. This now goes with the tree.

On Palm Sunday, our Easter Garden goes up. The tree is present, with palm crosses.

During our All-Age Service on Maundy Thursday, we strip the altar, including the tree. On Good Friday, the tree symbolically connects with the cross, as the Easter Garden is transformed into Golgotha. On the white cloth are pictures of recent news – war, violence, etc.

During the Children’s Stations of the Cross, flowers – and a Jesus doll bound in white cloth – are brought into the Easter Garden. The Jesus doll is placed in the tomb, and a stone is rolled across it. Before the Easter Vigil, the tree is transformed one more time. We had a Youth Group sleepover the night of the Vigil, so they did the work of changing the garden. The tree is now hung with items the Sunday School makes specifically for that during Holy Week events, as well as the palm crosses again.

In this issue:

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- Children & Families Worker vacancy

- Page 4 ➔ The Easter Journey - Bridge Builders Christian Trust
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- Page 6 ➔ Resources
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**Messy Church**

**Messy Easter**
Complete sessions for Holy Week and Easter, together with a wealth of activities to extend the range of excitingly messy activities for your Messy Church - creative prayers, games, food crafts, and ideas for organising an Easter trail. Craft templates and a session planning grid are included. Price £6.99

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**The BRAVE Trust are seeking a new Chair**

The BRAVE Trust is an independent ecumenical Christian charity funding a schools worker within the middle and upper schools of Buntingford and Royston.

Our newly appointed schools worker is making a difference to the children and pupils through supporting Christian teaching with the support of the Headteachers.

But the management committee is praying for a new Chair!
- We need a chair who is able to source and apply for funding.
- We need a chair to provide a face to this amazing charity.
- We need a chair who will speak up for the work of The BRAVE Trust.

Please see our website and if you would like to be part of this exciting Christian charity, or know someone we could approach, please contact Simon Rice on simonqrice@gmail.com

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**Vacancy - Children & Families Leader, St Peter’s Church in St Albans**

St Peter’s is recruiting a qualified and experienced person to lead our work among children and families. The role can be fulfilled by a lay or ordained person.

This exciting post will enable us to build on our work among children and families within our church family, and to reach out to others within our community and networks. We are looking for a Christian who will share our vision that St Peter’s enables all to fulfil their potential as we grow in faith together.

This full time post will involve flexible working hours including Sundays.

Visit the parish website to download the full job description and application pack.

Deadline for applications: Friday 13 March.
Interviews: Thursday 26 March.

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**Lemon Lime Adventures - Blog Post on Behaviour**

Some of you may know the blog Lemon Lime Adventures. While the author writes from the perspective of a parent of children with additional needs, the thoughts and ideas are broader, and can easily spur conversation and thoughts about best practice at church, for neurotypical kids and for those with additional needs.

This post about behaviour, exploring “how can I tell if this kid is just pushing my buttons, or genuinely struggling, and what do I do?” is extremely useful.
THE EASTER JOURNEY 2020

(A Bridge Builders Christian Trust project)
The vision of Bridge Builders Christian Trust is that every child within our communities will have the opportunities to explore the values of the Christian faith, so that they may look forward with hope and confidence, as they experience Christian love in action. Bridge Builders Christian Trust works in partnership with primary school teachers, church leaders and many committed volunteers in Stevenage and the surrounding area to provide:

1) opportunities for children to EXPLORE the Christian faith through SCHOOLS’ PROJECTS such as assemblies and class work
2) opportunities for class visits to local churches for themed events such as THE EASTER JOURNEY and THE CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

Once again this year, Bridge Builders Christian Trust, in partnership with local Stevenage and churches in the surrounding areas, have great pleasure in running The Easter Journey project to Year 5/6 primary school pupils. The Easter Journey (part of the ExploRE Project) is a 90 min. church based interactive event for Yr5 or 6 children to hear about the events of Easter and the life of Jesus and how they are relevant to the lives of people today. The event has direct National Curriculum links to the new HERTS RE Syllabus for KS 2 – Understanding Christianity. It is a real ecumenical project. The volunteers who deliver and host the schools are so dedicated and passionate about being part of this, we couldn’t offer The Easter Journey and its partner, The Christmas Journey, without them. Around 100 volunteers from local churches take part. At the time of writing this, 900+ children have been booked in to 5 Stevenage and area churches (St Mary’s Shephall, St Martin’s Knebworth, St Hugh & St John Chells, St Peter’s Broadwater and Holy Trinity Old Town) and 1 Hertford church (All Saint’s). We also welcome special schools for who we adapt the event to make it a much more sensory experience.

Extra volunteers always welcome, please contact our office on 01438 314314 or email admin@bridgebuilderstrust.org.uk

A BIG CONVERSATION IS COMING TO YOUR PARISH

The Big Conversation invites all of us to imagine a church that is 'Growing Younger'. This is part of the Diocesan strategy of Living God’s Love, and the first parishes will soon be having their Big Conversation about becoming a church of all generations. This will be a conversation about how your parish can explore ways appropriate to your community and your church to do this.

Keep an ear out for when these conversations will be happening near you and ensure that children and young people's voices are central within these discussions.
**FREE MAGAZINES**

We are having an office clear-out and getting rid of any magazines over three years old (unless there’s a special reason to keep them). This means we have a bunch of copies of magazines from 2011 – 2017 which are FREE to a good home. You can come and collect them, or ask if Christian (our new Diocesan Youth Missioner) or I are driving anywhere near you in the next few weeks.

The magazines include:

- Childrenswork Magazine
- Youthwork Magazine
- Youth and Childrenswork Magazine (after the merger)
- Get Messy!
- Kids Alive!

They’ll go on a first come, first served basis. If we don’t get any takers by the end of March, we will recycle them. Contact Julie if you’d like them. E: jcirillo@stalbans.anglican.org  
T: 01727 818160.

**MORE #LIVELENT RESOURCES**

There are now Collective Worship and All Age Worship materials to accompany the #LiveLent resources.

Collective worship and classroom activities for schools based on the #LiveLent booklet for children.

All-age worship resources for schools (or churches) based on the weekly #LiveLent themes.

The #LiveLent app also contains both adult and children/family materials! (You can download the app for Android or Apple devices).

**TODDLER GROUP LEADERS MEET UP**

Our next Toddler Group Leaders Meet Up is taking place on Thursday 4 June, from 2pm - 4pm (venue to be confirmed).

The basic idea of the Toddler Group Leaders Meet Up is that we meet three or four times a year - the goal would be to make our toddler groups as good as they can be, for ministry and mission.

If you lead a Toddler Group and would like to be included in the mailing for this and future meetings please let Julie know.

E: jcirillo@stalbans.anglican.org  
T: 01727 818160

If you’re looking for resources for your Toddler Group then have a look at the [1277 resources page](#). 1277 is the national network of Church-based Toddler Groups.
RESOURCES

The Link-It-Up Bible
by Bob Hartman
Highly visual and interactive, this is a Bob Hartman Bible like never before. Containing over 60 stories, this book highlights the links between stories and draws attention to the wider themes of the Bible. With arrows zipping across the page, pull-out text boxes asking the reader questions and illustration elements bringing each story to life, this book sees the whole Bible linked up and connected to show the bigger story at work - and the God behind it all. To be published 19 March. Price £9.99 ISBN: 9780281083022

The Big Book Of Faith Questions
by Gill Hollis - Illustrated by Gustavo Mazali and Marcin Piwowarski
What do Christians believe? This book answers questions about the faith that is now more than 2000 years old but is followed and lived out today in the lives of people all over the world. Price £8.99 ISBN: 9781838580742

Meeting with Jesus
A Daily Bible Reading Plan for Kids
by David Murray
Following up his popular book Exploring the Bible, David Murray has written a new reading plan for older children and tweens that focuses on Jesus Christ. This volume walks kids through the story of Jesus in the Gospels over the course of a year. Each of the 52 weekly "meetings with Jesus" teaches a new truth about Jesus through 6 days of Bible reading and includes interactive reflection questions, space for prayer and application, memory verses, and lines for sermon notes. In less than 5 minutes a day, tweens will get to know Jesus and his offer of abundant life. Price £14.99 ISBN: 9781433565953

Heroes Of The Bible Hardback
Noah, Daniel, Joseph, David
by Make Believe Ideas
Bible characters come to life as they introduce themselves and their stories to young children. Meet Noah, Daniel, Joseph and David in this collection of four heroic Bible stories, told by the heroes themselves! For children aged 4-7. Price £7.99 ISBN: 9781788931175

Sing With Me – Nursery Rhyme Bag
The ‘Sing with Me Nursery Rhyme Bag’ allows everyone to be involved in song time! Each object in the bag is relevant to a certain nursery rhyme, whether it is a bucket for “Jack & Jill” or a gorgeous spider finger puppet for “Incy Wincy Spider”. Included is a printout of the lyrics for each song, which doubles as a cue sheet so you know exactly what song each prop links too. Price £23.95 (expansion set available at additional cost).

It’s Your Move - early bird offer
This hugely successful book for children moving to secondary school is available at the reduced cost of £14 for a pack of ten books (the usual price is £22.50) if you order before 31 March. Use the discount code IYMEB at the checkout.

Diddy Disciples Good Friday Resource
This is a Good Friday storytelling resource is suitable for home use, schools, churches, nurseries, toddler groups. Well worth a look!
Left To Their Own Devices? – Confident Parenting in a World of Screens
Tuesday 17 March 7.30pm - 10pm
Milton Keynes
This evening is for parents, carers or anyone who is passionate about helping children navigate the digital world confidently. Much of modern society is dominated by the digital world, and our children are growing up with countless online possibilities at their fingertips. It’s an exciting world for them to explore, but there are potential dangers. As parents and carers, it’s natural to want to protect our children from any pitfalls. So what strategies can we adopt to ensure our children gain the benefits of being online, whilst developing a responsible relationship with technology? Cost £7

Inspiring Faith in Under 5s
Saturday 28 March
9.30am - 1.15pm
Ely College
A morning to celebrate and explore big faith in little children. This special event is open to anyone wanting to be inspired in their ministry and outreach to US’s and working with families of US’s. The morning will consist of a plenary session on ‘Inspiring faith in Under 5’s delivered by Mary Hawes the National Children and Youth Adviser for the Church of England followed by a choice of workshops.

Easter Monday Pilgrimage
Monday 13 April
St Albans Cathedral
Join pilgrims from across the Diocese to celebrate the risen Christ. Now in its eighth decade, the annual Pilgrimage and service is a family event which includes grandparents, parents, young people, children and babies. All are welcome... even with muddy boots and dogs! It’s the perfect end to 40 days of #LiveLent, reflecting on ‘Caring for God’s Earth.’ Meet on the Abbey Orchard from 1pm, with the procession into the Cathedral for the Easter Monday Service from 2.30pm. #StAlbansEMP

Exploring Holy Communion using Godly Play
Monday 11 May, 10am - 4pm
Yorkshire
This is a day designed to look at the ways in which Godly Play can help us to explore Holy Communion together, whether we are working with children who are to be admitted to Communion for the first time, or adults who may wish to explore Eucharistic faith anew. The day is aimed both at those new to Godly Play, and at those experienced in Godly Play who are interested in exploring how to use it within the particular context. Cost £30, to include refreshments and lunch.

Come and Worship
Tuesday 16 June (12pm) - Wednesday 17 June (2pm)
High Leigh
Join us as we explore, through demonstrations and experiences, a variety of creative ways to worship with children – not just on Sunday mornings, but at other times and in other formats. Cost is £95 which includes en-suite accommodation. There are also a limited number of day passes.

Parenting for Faith seminars
Wednesday 17 June
Bedford, Christ Church
On the evening of 17 June Parenting for Faith are running two workshops which you might be interested in:

• Parenting for Faith with children.
• Parenting for Faith for teens.

More details to follow, but save the date!
**The Alban Pilgrimage**  
**Saturday 20 June  St Albans**  
Giant carnival puppets re-enact the story of Alban, Britain’s first saint, the man after whom St Albans is named. Roman chariots, centurions, lions and roses all take their place alongside Alban and Amphibalus in a dramatic procession. After the Pilgrimage has taken place, a series of special services are held at the Cathedral.

**Leading Creative Conversations in Children’s & Youth Ministry using Lego® Serious Play®**  
**Saturday 10 October, 9.30am - 2.30pm**  
**Holywell Lodge, St Albans**  
LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is an innovative way to develop your children’s ministry team, as well as your work with children and young people. You will enter a ‘hands-on’ world where everyone participates and contributes to discussions and key conversations. Using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method and materials, this day will empower you to bring a powerful and practical dimension to your work. The cost of the day is £15 (£25 for those outside the Diocese) and a sandwich lunch will be provided.

**Makaton Training Day with Christian faith signs**  
**Saturday 17 October  9.30am - 4pm**  
**Hemel Hempstead**  
At last! A Makaton course covering Christian faith signs, songs and activities for using in churches and activity groups. The day will cover:  
- What is Makaton  
- Why do we use Makaton  
- Learn stages 1  
- Importance of interpretation  
- Signs we use for faith  
- Practical singing & signing activities.  
Cost is £35 (Clergy & Readers may use their training allowance). Bring a packed lunch. Booking essential as numbers are limited.

**Puppet & Creative Ministry Festival**  
**Friday 30 October—Saturday 31 October**  
**Rugby College**  
The Puppet and Creative Ministry Festival is for everyone, adults and children, who wants to learn how to share the Gospel of Christ using their creative skills. Be equipped to kick start or develop your ministries through an extensive range of hands-on workshops including a wide variety of basic and advanced puppetry techniques along with many more covering: Gospel illusions, drama, comedy, amazing science object lessons, storytelling, ventriloquism, script writing, working with children and adults with learning difficulties and SEN, leadership skills, toddler groups, schools work, outreach, worship, all-age services, props, staging, sound, lighting and more!

All for both the absolute beginner and plenty of classes for those who are more experienced and keen to develop their skills further. Return home inspired and equipped with skills and resources to use in your services, Messy Church, Open the Book sessions, outreach and work in the schools and community! Weekend pass costs £49 (you will need to book your own accommodation).

**Come Follow Me**  
**Saturday 21 November**  
**The Rufus Centre, Flitwick**  
A day led by the Diocesan Mission department looking at discipleship and how we can make disciples in new ways. Workshops will be run by the Youth & Children’s Missioners, Flourishing Churches and the Reaching New People team, as well as Messy Church so there will be something for everyone. More details to follow!
**PRAYERS**

This month we pray for:

➢ all children and teachers who are nervous about exams this year.
➢ children in poverty – and for your church’s anti-poverty work or fundraising.
➢ all who are planning and leading Mothering Sunday and Holy Week/Easter services with children and families.

**KEY CONTACTS**

Margaret Pritchard Houston
Diocesan Children’s Mission Enabler
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Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (DSA)
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T: 01727 818107 (Jez - DSA)
T: 01727 818106 (Martyn - Assistant DSA)
T: 01727 818103 (Mandy - Assistant DSA)

Julie Cirillo
Administrator - Youth & Children
E: yac@stalbans.anglican.org
T: 01727 818160

Ruth Garman
Administrator - Resources Centre & Schools
E: rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org
T: 01727 818168

**DIOCESAN WEBSITE PAGES**

Youth & Children’s pages:  [https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/yac](https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/yac)
Safeguarding:  [https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding](https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding)
Privacy policy:  [https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/privacy-policy](https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/privacy-policy)

*For the Children’s Ministry Social Media accounts click on the links below.*