



The Grapevine

April 2026

La Châtaigneraie – Église de Saint-Jean-Baptiste

Welcome to April's Grapevine!

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4-thought

Rev Hazel

There are two very important Saints commemorated in the month of April. Firstly there is the Patron Saint of England Saint George, on the 23rd, followed by Saint Mark, the Evangelist on the 25th.

According to English Heritage, St George became the patron saint of England, despite never visiting, due to his reputation for chivalry, popularised during the Crusades and formalised by King Edward III, who made him the patron of the Order of the Garter in 1350. His red cross symbol was adopted by English armies to evoke protection. Although a 3rd-century Roman soldier martyred for his faith, St George's popularity spread across Europe, and his feast day has been celebrated in England since the early 8th century.

The Evangelist Mark never met the historical Christ, but he was one of the most important figures to preach Christianity in first century. Mark was baptised by St Peter, whom he followed to Rome. His Gospel is thought to have been composed there and to contain the recollections of Peter himself. Mark was then appointed bishop of Aquileia, in northeast Italy. Travelling there by boat, he put in at the islands that were to become Venice. Here an angel appeared to him and spoke: *Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus. Hic requiescet corpus tuum.* ('Peace to you, Mark, my evangelist. Here will your body rest.') This prophecy became the motto of the Venetian state.

From Italy, Mark travelled to Egypt, where he became the first bishop of Alexandria. There, on Easter Day 68 CE, as he celebrated mass, he was arrested. Condemned to death, he was dragged through the streets of the city with a rope tied around his neck. A thunderstorm cut short the abuse, however, and Mark's followers were able to recover his corpse and bury him.

Centuries later two Venetian merchants stole the Evangelist's bones from Alexandria. Hiding the Evangelist's remains in a basket of pork to deflect the interest of the customs officials, they hurried on a ship back to Venice.

Eventually the Basilica of San Marco became one of the most spectacular and lavishly decorated churches in Christendom. I have been fortunate to have visited many times and commend it to you. In 1968, to mark 1900 years since Mark was martyred in Egypt, the Vatican returned some of his relics to the church at Alexandria.

Hazel

Important to note there will be two services on Easter day, both at 11.00, one in La Chapelle Palluau and the other in Puy de Serre.

Other commemorations in April include:

- 1 Frederick Denison Maurice, Priest, Teacher of the Faith, 1872
- 9 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Pastor, Martyr, 1945
- 10 William Law, Priest, Spiritual Writer, 1761
- 10 William of Ockham, Friar, Philosopher, Teacher of the Faith, 1347
- 11 George Augustus Selwyn, first Bishop of New Zealand, 1878
- 16 Isabella Gilmore, Deaconess, 1923
- 19 Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1012
- 21 Anselm, Abbot of Le Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1109

- 23 George, Martyr, Patron of England, c.304
- 24 Mellitus, Bishop of London, first Bishop at St Paul's, 624
- 24 The Seven Martyrs of the Melanesian Brotherhood, Solomon Islands, 2003
- 25 Mark the Evangelist
- 27 Christina Rossetti, Poet, 1894
- 28 Peter Chanel, Missionary in the South Pacific, Martyr, 1841
- 29 Catherine of Siena, Teacher of the Faith, 1380
- 30 Pandita Mary Ramabai, Translator of the Scriptures, 1922



Churchwardens' Notes - April 2026

At last Spring has arrived! Although still very changeable weather, it's so nice to have longer, lighter days - more time to get out into the garden and do what my daughter calls 'Exercising in the Green Gym'!

Hopefully, you will all remember to put your clocks forward on 29 March and enjoy our extra service of Holy Communion at Puy de Serre for Palm Sunday. Thanks to both Hazel and Tony, we have services, also of Holy Communion, at both our worship centres celebrating Our Lord's Resurrection at Easter on 5 April.

If any of you would like to contribute to the Bishop's Lent Appeal this year, there will be retiring collections at Puy de Serre services until Easter. This year donations are asked for the Vale Silves Community Centre in the Algarve, Portugal. Their work is almost solely funded by donations and the Centre serves vulnerable families, children and the elderly.

Our AGM this year will take place after the service at Puy de Serre on Sunday, 10 May, so we hope as many of you as possible will be there. We are always more than happy to receive nominations to join the Church Council. Most of our meetings are online, by ZOOM, so don't involve lots of driving. Please consider it in your prayers.

Have a Happy, Blessed and Joyous Easter!
Your Churchwardens,
Chris and Maggie

Revision of the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll of a church is completely updated every six years - this was last done last year, 2025. Once updated, the Electoral Roll Officer is required to revise the Roll each year shortly before the Annual Meeting (AGM). The Council have now fixed the date for the AGM and it will take place after the service on Sunday 10th May 2026. The revision has to be completed not later than 15 days before the AGM (i.e. April 25th.) and not earlier than 28 days before the AGM (i.e. April 12th). Once it has been revised, the Roll is "frozen" until after the AGM has taken place.

If anyone wishes to join the ASV Electoral Roll, please complete an Application form and return it to me as soon as possible. An application form can be obtained from me and I can email a copy if necessary. If anyone wishes to have their name removed from the Roll, again, please contact me. If you are on the Roll, you will have filled out a new form last year. If you wish to remain on the Roll then there is nothing you need to do this year unless you need to tell me of any changes in your contact details.

Only people on the Electoral Roll are allowed to nominate or stand for Churchwarden or a Council Member. Again only Roll members may vote in elections or for motions at the AGM. In other words, membership of the Electoral Roll is the way to be able to take an active part in the life of the church. If you need more information please contact me , greensinfrance@yahoo.co.uk, or 05 49 72 18 46.

Chris Green
Electoral Roll Officer



Mothering Sunday / Mothers' Day / La Fête des Mères)

Christine Hester writes :

As it is Mothers' Day today* in the UK, I had to remind myself of the history of this annual event especially because French Mothers' Day isn't until 31 May this year.

"Its origins in the UK are said to date back to the Middle Ages and the celebrations were less focused on mothers and more on their homes and "mother churches."

Centuries ago, it was tradition for people who had moved away to come back to visit their home and the churches where they were baptised or used to visit on the fourth Sunday of Lent. This was known to many as Mothering Sunday.

A later custom also saw domestic servants and live-in apprentices get the day off to visit their mothers, family and local churches. But many say Mother's Day evolved into the celebration we know today through the influence of American Mother's Day over a century ago."

(Information from BBC website)

In France it is celebrated on the 49th day after Easter which this year is on 24th May, But, as that date is Pentecost, the Mother's Day moves to the next Sunday being 31st May. In France the celebration only dates back to 1906, and is said to have been introduced by Maréchal Pétain, but it didn't become an official celebration (*La Fête des Mères*) until 1950 in France.

**Article written on 15th March 2026*

Lin Smit of La Chapelle-Palluau writes :

To explain myself a little, I'm a second-home ASV worshipper at La Chapelle Palluau when my visits coincide with a First Sunday. My 'English' Church decided as we came out of the pandemic that we should celebrate with a flower festival. Not something that filled my florally-challenged heart with joy, but hey-ho, I was cajoled into signing up and I thought I'd share my third 'arrangement' (yes three whole flower festivals, despite my valiant attempts to say NO each time).

This was my piece for the guide which was handed out to each visitor, and described, for want of a better word, how I justified my contribution. What actually went on show was a large seed tray full of a variety of small jars containing as many of my English weeds as I could remember also appearing in France – quite a collection. Amongst all this were no more than 6 flowers. At least it gave visitors a laugh!

The Church Flower Festival 2025

Happy Blooming Holidays – in floral arrangements, said the organisers! I protested. I don't take holidays, just visit my 'pile' (old stones and rough ground). But that's my happy place in France. That's fine, they said. (They haven't seen it!) Twenty five years after falling in love with a scruffy little building with electricity as the only connected service, I still love it. We've dragged ourselves into the twenty-first century with mains drainage and broadband, but the garden still needs serious work. Half a garden's worth of vines and a potager with mainly soft fruits degenerated to an area of special scientific interest. So much so that the vines were life-threatening trip hazards. The fruit and vegetable beds nurture every species of grass known to French man. The adjoining field generously donates surprise wheat plants. The garden can be arid from May to September (with serious downpours which the weeds love) to lush waist high grass for most of the rest of the year. And then we have brambles.... But I love it all – God's in his heaven (and here, I'm in mine!).



Lin Smit

Many thanks Lin, I'm sure many of us recognize your experiences !

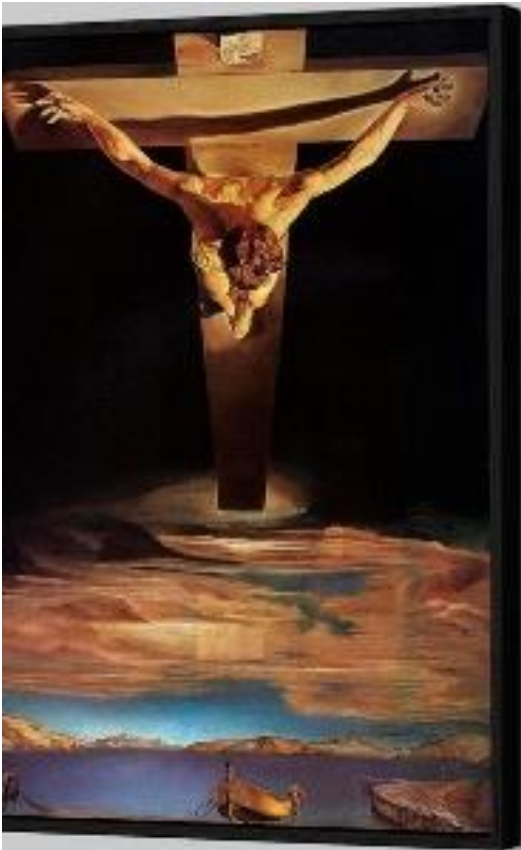


ELUCUBRATIONS



« Don't tell me what you believe. Show me how you treat others, and I'll tell you what you believe. » -Jesus gave us two commandments. Love God and love thy neighbour. And there was no exception to that second commandment. Love thy neighbour regardless of race or gender or sexual orientation or immigration status or religious affiliation. »

James Talarico, Texas State Representative



Salvador Dalí

« In the first place, in 1950, I had a 'cosmic dream' in which I saw this image in color and which in my dream represented the 'nucleus of the atom'. This nucleus later took on a metaphysical sense; I considered in 'the very unity of the universe', the Christ! In the second place, when, thanks to the instructions of Father Bruno, a Carmelite, I saw the Christ drawn by Saint John of the Cross, I worked out geometrically a triangle and a circle, which aesthetically summarized all my previous experiments, and I inscribed my Christ in this triangle. »

*« When you're finally up at the moon looking back on earth, all those differences and nationalistic traits are pretty well going to blend, and you're going to get a concept that maybe this really is one world and why the hell can't we learn to live together like decent people. » William Anders, astronaut aboard the Apollo
Newsweek magazine, 23 December 1968*

Announcement : « This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Lewis forward and lay an egg on the altar. » !



to come

Thanks to Trudy Coates for 'Elucubrations'



Prayer List

Please remember in your prayers :

Bob and Caroline

Gini and Martyn

Roy

Hazel and Martin

Jo and Brian

Maureen

Millie-Jean and her parents, Tim and Sharmila

Nell (Mair and John's daughter)

Carole and her sister **Linda**

Carole and Clive

Sally and David

(If you would like a name to be added to the Prayer List, please contact David Pearson.

Tel: 02 51 61 05 04 or Email: davidpearson@orange.fr)

Grapevine Treasurer's Report



February 2026:

Income: 725.00 €

Expenditure: 291.49 €

We have a positive balance for the month: + 483.51 €

This has been a very quiet month! The only other thing of note is that last month's figures needed to be adjusted downwards by 189.23 €, as our Public Liability insurance was not taken correctly by the insurance company, but this has now been rectified!

I have now sent everyone on the Planned Giving list their tax rebate form. If, having checked that everything is correct, you want it stamped and signed, please bring it to the Puy de Serre service on 22 March 2026 (this coming Sunday). Thank you once again to all who help keep All Saints Vendée running!*

Iain McGregor
(Treasurer)

**Below is a reminder of how the scheme works :*

PLANNED GIVING THROUGH THE STANDING ORDER “VIREMENT” SCHEME.

Some people have been asking how to make a donation to ASV, or how to join the planned giving scheme.

Here are the details:

Account at the Crédit Mutuel, La Châtaigneraie:

Account Name: The Congregations of All Saints, Vendée

IBAN: FR76 1551 9390 5900 0216 6480 146

BIC: CMCI FR 2A

If you need any help, please do not hesitate to contact me:

mcgregor@lalogette.com, or by phone: 02.51.53.82.55

ADVANTAGES:

If you set up a standing order (virement) through your French bank, online, it is cost-free.

You stay in total control of what you give – the standing order (virement) can be changed at any time, but only by you!

Only the Treasurer knows how much you give per month. The details remain confidential.

You know what you are giving, and exactly when the money comes out of your account, and so your budgeting is much easier. You remain in total control.

If you complete a French tax form, then you will get a significant rebate (depending on your situation) at the end of each financial year (up to 65%).

If your French tax bill is small, then you will pay no tax at all!

ASV can plan ahead much more effectively, as it knows what contributions are coming in, rather than guessing who is going to be at church! We have recently lost some regular givers, through members returning to the UK, and so your donation at this time would be particularly appreciated.

DISADVANTAGES:

I can't think of any, so why not come and join the party!

British residents:

If you do *not* have a French bank account, but would like to support the work of ASV, then please contact me, and I can help you. Please note, you cannot use tax-efficient giving in both France *and* the UK.

Iain McGregor (Treasurer, All Saints, Vendée)

Forward Planning

If the information shown here is inaccurate, out-of-date or incomplete, please could I be told of any changes in time for the next issue of Grapevine.

Many thanks

Responsibility (Organiser)	Puy de Serre 11h Services
Refreshments after the service (Jenny Wilkinson at PdS)	Jenny W Trudy C
Flower Rota (Barbara Matthews)	Barbara M

ASV LADIES' CIRCLE

The Ladies' Circle Meeting and Sewing Group

Ladies meetings are normally held every 4th Thursday of the month. and at Debbie's Lench's house when possible.

Women's Fellowship – Ladies' Group

For details and directions, please contact Jenny – email below. **Anyone willing to host these meetings in the future, please contact Jenny !**

The times and places for future meetings will be announced as soon as they can be arranged.

New members very welcome!

Contact jennywilkinson213@gmail.com

ONE MORE THING...

Happy Easter !

Joyeuses fêtes de Pâques !



À bientôt

Nigel



Don't forget

All previous sermons and talks can be accessed at:
www.allsaintsvendee.fr

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Grapevine!

Please also consult the
website for any updates.

Thank you, if you managed to get your contribution to Grapevine in to me by this week. I know we all have busy lives, and it is much appreciated that I don't (usually!) have to chase people for copy.

Having said that, there's always room for more, and if anyone would like to (for example) put together a couple of hundred words about their year, their summer, a happy family event or any other blessing, don't hesitate !

If there is anything which you'd like to be published in the **May 2026** issue, do make sure you submit it to me,

at nip78@hotmail.com

before April 15th 2026

I look forward to all next month's offerings!