

ST PAUL'S NEWS

March 2024



ONE POUND

SERVICES

Sunday 3rd March Third Sunday in Lent

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President: The Vicar,
Preacher: Ruth Millard (CAP)
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre+ Zoom
Lead: Daphne Pilcher
Link: Jean Kerr
- 6.30 pm Compline
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 10th March Mothering Sunday

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Joint Parade Service
- 6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 17th March Fifth Sunday in Lent

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President: Rev. Nicholas Burton
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Wendy Anderson
Link: Karen Millar
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 24th March Palm Sunday

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President: Rev Nicholas Burton
- 10.00 am Family Service with Holy Communion at the
Church Centre + Zoom
President: The Vicar
Link: Rosemary Romano
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 25th March 8.00 pm Stations of the Cross

Tuesday 26th March 8.00 pm Compline

Wednesday 26th March 8.00 pm Compline

Thursday 27th March 8.00 pm Eucharist with Washing of Feet and Stripping of Altar President and Preacher: The Vicar

Friday 28th March GOOD FRIDAY

- 9.45 am Procession of Witness in the Village
- 12 noon–3pm Three Hours Devotion
Ministers: The Vicar, Rev. Nicholas Burton,
Daphne Pilcher

Sunday 31st March EASTER DAY

**Please note that the clocks go forward by one hour
at 1 am on Easter Day.**

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: To be confirmed
Link: Liz Goddard
- 6.30 pm Service of Readings and Music for
Passiontide and Easter
Minister: The Vicar

Sunday 7th April Second Sunday of Easter

- 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead:
Link:
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

DIARY

Saturday 2nd March

10.00 am Canterbury Pilgrimage

Monday 4th March

8.00 pm PCC meeting in the Lodge

Tuesday 5th March

10.00 am Lent Course at the Church Centre

1.00 pm Organ tuning

Wednesday 6th March

10.30 am Julian Meeting at 20 Chancellor House

Thursday 7th March

6.30 pm Youth Council in the Lodge

7.00 pm Lent Course at the Church Centre

Tuesday 12th March

10.00 am Lent Course at the Church Centre

Thursday 14th March

7.00 pm Lent Course at the Church Centre

Tuesday 19th March

10.00 am Lent Course at the Church Centre

Thursday 21st March

7.00 pm Lent Course at the Church Centre

Monday 25th March

9 am-3 pm Vintage Roadshow – Church Centre

Saturday 30th March

Flower Team decorating the
Parish Church all day

Wednesdays throughout the month

9.00 am Play Time at St Paul's - Church Centre

Thursdays throughout the month

12 for 12.30 Rusthall Lunch Club at the Church
Centre

Fridays throughout the month

12.30 pm Community Larder - Church Centre

Magazine Article Deadlines

Please submit articles for the 2024 magazines in
accordance with the following deadlines:

April by Sunday 17th March

May by Sunday 14th April

June by Sunday 12th May

July/August by Sunday 16th June

The time between the deadline and magazine issue is to allow for typing, formatting, proofreading, and compiling the magazine. These all take time and have to be fitted around the volunteer editorial team's other commitments. We would therefore be very grateful if you would keep to the deadlines set. Please send items for publication to magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk.

Magazines are posted on the Parish website by the 1st of the month. Photocopies of the magazine will also be made available in our churches for those who cannot access the magazine online. Please contact Ginette di Palma at the Church Office (TW 521447) if you are finding it difficult to access a copy.



From the Registers

**At rest – the sympathy of the Parish is extended
to the families and friends of:**

Rodney Bradbury
Margaret Irene Coulstock
James Iain Hamilton

ST. PAUL'S PILGRIMAGE
to
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL
SATURDAY 2nd MARCH 2024



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

- Accessible to all, both young and not-so-young alike
- Pilgrimage is 3.7km long (2.3 miles) with stops of interest along the way including:
 - St. Dunstan's Church from where Henry II set off barefoot after the murder of Thomas à Becket.
 - Eastbrook Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr which is now an Alms-house but has been welcoming visitors since the first pilgrims arrived there in 1190.
- There will be plenty of time for prayer and quiet meditation along the journey.
- Fellowship meal after the pilgrimage concludes.
- Our day will conclude by attending Choral Evensong in the Cathedral.

For more information, details of the itinerary, or to register your interest in participating in this pilgrimage please contact Tim Harrold on 07413 805814 or via email at pilgrimage@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk

From the Vicarage

March 2024

Dear Friends

Thank you very much for your continued support, encouragement and hard work.

In my last letter, I was unable to give the study/book detail for our Lent course as I was still waiting for the materials to arrive. I'm pleased to say that they arrived in time and we are using a course prepared by United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) entitled '*All Things are Possible*' – 'a study course exploring how faith in God can change the world.' Copies of this course are available at both churches free of charge. It is also available to read online at <https://d3hg1q6yacptf.cloudfront.net/uspg/content/pages/documents/1594211782.pdf>. There are also USPG Lent Boxes in both churches, should you wish to give towards the work of USPG. You should return the boxes on Easter Day and our Treasurer will send all donations to USPG.

During Lent, I usually read/study a book in the Bible apart from our Lent Course. This year I have decided to read through Genesis but I am also reading a book entitled '*A Quiet Mind*' – Buddhist ways to calm the noise in your head' by Shoukei Matsumoto. One thing he suggests is having periods, even moments of quiet to clear one's head – during which one can write or journal one's thoughts. By writing down the 'thoughts that float into our minds' we can organise them logically and 'discover new perspectives' (p.55). Interestingly, I used to keep a journal but gave it up or rather lost the discipline. Perhaps it is something I should take up again. This book is littered with what I describe as 'little nuggets of wisdom', including what might be described by some as unpopular assertions. One pearl that I am trying to continuously reflect on is this: 'No matter how hard we try, we cannot guarantee that things will turn out the way we want them to. Don't let your happiness depend on events you cannot control. Instead, accept whatever happens, learn from it and keep going in hope not in expectation' (p.115). Although they might seem to be the same, hope and expectation are different. The continual challenge, I suppose, is to keep living in hope – that itself being a Christian characteristic and value.

Lent actually reminds us of the 'divine' hope that we have in Jesus Christ and reassures us of almighty God's commitment to humanity. Although we are reminded of our mortality on Ash Wednesday, we are assured of eternal life with God on Easter Day. I will end with a prayer that I wrote for Ash Wednesday which was also Valentine's Day.

Heavenly Father,

We are acutely aware that we are from dust but we are very grateful that through the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus Christ our final destination is now eternity with you. Thank you for your amazing love.

Ronnie





COMMUNITY LARDER

What is it?

A community larder receives surplus short date food from supermarkets to offer to people in our community.

When and where is it?

Our community larder will be in the St Paul's Church Centre every Friday between 12:30pm and 2:00pm

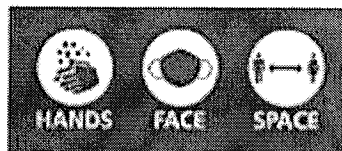
Who can use it?

Anyone can come and visit the community larder. There are no restrictions, no booking necessary, just turn up with a carrier bag to fill.

How much does it cost?

We suggest a small cash donation of £2, or as much as you can afford. For this, you can take away a bag full of quality food.

Please help us all stay safe by wearing a face mask, respecting social distancing and using the hand sanitiser provided.



WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU!

**For more information, please email contact@rusthallvillage.org
or telephone 07805 475397**

Editorial – March 2024

This year the final 30 days of Lent fall in March, with Easter Day on the final day of the month. At the Parish Church you will notice that the choir has, as usual, given up descants for Lent. However, many the anthems suitable for this season, while sometimes seeming rather mournful, have a haunting beauty that makes up for the lack of musical fireworks. If the young choristers look a little doleful it is because their sweet ration is also stopped during Lent!

March starts with the celebration of St David, patron saint of Wales, on 1st March. The daffodil or leek may be worn by proud Welsh and traditional bara brith (a fruited bread) or Welsh cakes may be eaten. Later in the month, on the 17th, we remember St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland. The wearing of the shamrock is thought to be because he used the trefoil leaf to explain the Trinity. It is thought that both saints may have been born in the settlement now known as St David's, previously Menevia, on the south coast of Wales, Patrick in about 386 AD and David in 520 AD. Both were consecrated as bishops in the early church, but led hard lives in their early years despite being well-bred young men, especially Patrick, who was captured by marauding celts who took him to Ireland as a slave. David founded a monastery at the place of his birth and this building has since been replaced by the cathedral which bears his name. Although St David's is the smallest city in the UK, the cathedral is not the miniature affair you might be expecting. It does, however, have a noticeable tilt from east to west which can be disconcerting for the choir, it feels as if one needs a higher heel on the side of the downward leg when standing and non-slippery clothing if you're sitting up the higher end to prevent gravity pulling you towards your neighbour when sitting!

If you fear that the pensiveness of Lent might lower your mood, there are a couple of good dressing-up opportunities in March. The first is on 7th March – World Book Day. Choose your favourite character from a book and dress up like them, joining thousands of school children who will be doing the same. The next is on Red Nose Day, or perhaps more correctly Comic Relief Day, on Friday 15th. Dress up and do something funny to raise money for charities at home or abroad.

The fourth Sunday of Lent is Mothering Sunday, which this year falls on the 10th. The 'Mother' referred to was originally the 'Mother Church' as from the early 16th century it was usual for people to attend a service in their nearest main church or cathedral on this day, which meant that the whole family would worship together. Later it became common for those working as servants or apprentices to be given a very rare whole day off and many used it as a day to spend with their own mother, whether or not a trip to the 'Mother' church was involved. Gradually this has changed into the celebration of our mothers and mother-figures as the more secular Mother's Day. In some churches where Mother's Day is no longer associated with the Sunday in Lent, the 4th Sunday is known as Refreshment Sunday or Laetare Sunday as this midpoint of Lent was a day when the fasting restrictions were relaxed. Simnel Cake would often be eaten on this day. In times when Lenten fasting included giving up meat, eggs and dairy and eating only one meal a day after 3 pm – the hour of Christ's death – this must have been a very welcome relief. Nowadays, of course, we think we are doing well if we give up chocolate or alcohol.

Sunday 17th March, the fifth Sunday of Lent, will also be the closing of voting in the Russian Presidential Elections. Betting sites seem to suggest that they are 99% certain that Putin will win. There are a few candidates standing 'against' him, but they are supporters of Putin's policies and it is supposed that they are standing to give the appearance of a genuine election. After the dreadful news of the death of Alexei Navalny, it is not surprising that opposition candidates are reluctant to put their heads above the parapet. The tolerance of opposition is vital to democracy, although I often wish less attention was given to winning or losing and more to coming to a consensus. I am naïve, I suppose, but to me Ghandi was right when he said that "An eye for an eye only results in making the whole world blind." It also distracts our thoughts, efforts and resources from the vital task of working out how we 8 billion souls can continue to live on this planet in harmony with nature rather than destroying it – and us.

Other important elections are coming up in the Parish and we are in need of someone brave enough to take on the role of Churchwarden. Could that be you? In the meantime, please get your articles for the April edition of St Paul's News to magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org by 17th March.

Deborah Bruce and (remotely from Portugal) Sue Hare

E. R. HICKMOTT & SON



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Churchwarden's Notes



We are leading up to a very busy time in the church with Easter celebrations.

We look forward to the various services that will be happening during this time. It would be good to see many of you at these forthcoming services.

We also have Mothering Sunday during March which will be a joint service at the Parish church.

If you are reading this on Sunday 25th February, you are just in time to sign up for the St Paul's Pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral on Saturday 2nd March. The pilgrimage is accessible to everyone at under 3 miles and with stops on the way to look at St Dunstan's Church and Eastbrook Hospital of St Thomas the Martyr. The day will be followed by a fellowship meal and attendance at Choral Evensong. It is hoped that shared transport to Canterbury will be available. Please contact Tim Harrold for more details on 07413 805814 or email pilgrimage@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk.

There is very little to report on the works requiring a faculty, except that it is being processed.

Finally, I would like to say that by April I will have completed a year as a church warden and can say that it has been an eye opener, and I am still learning. I look forward to serving another year. However, I really do need someone to work with me and share the workload. Please speak to me or the Vicar if you are interested and want more information.

Rod Garcia-Fermer

Dodgy Decorators

A local painter won the contract to paint the rendered outside walls of a church. No-one knew he made his money by thinning the paint. He was not long into the contract when there was a sudden huge rainstorm which resulted in the paint running down the walls, together with an enormous clap of thunder. It knocked the painter off the scaffolding. As he lay on the ground, he heard a booming voice through the thunder saying "Repaint, repaint, and thin no more!"

Go tell - what?

The very end of March sees us, somewhat early in this Leap Year, celebrate Easter Day and I happen to know that the story of Easter will be told through words and music on Easter Evening. I won't be there to witness it as Pat and I will be in Cheltenham having celebrated a good friend's daughter's wedding the previous day. I shall be sad in some ways not to be in my spiritual home at Easter although, in some ways, there is nothing to tell.

What on earth do I mean? After all these days my Apple devices bombard me with news on a 24/7 basis. Not so more than 2,000 years ago when communication was by word of mouth but then was there anything to tell? Now before you think I'm losing it consider this. If the Preacher stood up on Easter Morning and said nothing the assumption would be oh dear he or she has been taken ill and eventually the congregation would wander off home or perhaps, at St Paul's, for coffee.

You see the Gospel set for Easter Day ends with the women saying nothing. The earliest copies of St Mark's Gospel end at that point and we are left with uncertainty, fear and silence. But that can't be the end of the story or there would be nothing to shout about.

Three women - Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, and Salome - were there when Jesus died, saw where he was buried and were the first to hear that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They heard from a complete stranger - and someone who looked mighty strange!

What they found and what they heard was not at all what they expected. Two major surprises before the day began. And they were alarmed, surely this is one of those biblical understatement, they must have been terrified. It is therefore unsurprising that they don't take in everything they are told and obey to the letter.

The news that Jesus has risen from a complete stranger, under 48 hours after he so publicly and horribly died, is not easy to take in. I think we could identify with being alarmed or even terrified.

Fortunately, we are sufficiently removed from that moment in that garden outside that tomb that we are not filled with the same alarm at the news that Jesus has risen. Fear possibly does creep in when we hear those words 'go tell'. Suddenly we can identify with those who went away after hearing that instruction and said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.



As I said we are a bit removed from the alarming situation of a garden in the half light of morning with a young man in white who shines brighter than the day in place of the body of their friend. So we stop and hear the rest of what they were told.

‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” So don’t be alarmed this is not something to be afraid of.’

If we are looking for Jesus - as people do who come to churches - we are in the right place. He was crucified, he was dead; but now he is risen, he is alive.

That strange looking young man, had he been around today, would have pulled out his iPhone, emailed or WhatsApped the ladies to give them the best evidence he had - an empty stone shelf in the tomb where Jesus’ body had been. They haven’t got to go with nothing to report. If it was today they would have forwarded to the disciples group and job done! Now of course we have other reports, the emptiness of the tomb and confirmation that it was empty - the body was missing but the grave clothes were left behind. And we have the evidence of his appearance to a few people.

They were told to go to Galilee but I wonder where your Galilee is? Theirs was home, familiar territory, where their work was based, where their family lived, where they knew everyone. Galilee was where people would hear the news from friends and relatives. Perhaps, for you, that is in Rusthall or Tunbridge Wells or more likely it is in St. Paul’s Church, whether it is in the Parish Church or the Church Centre. It’s where you are sent to tell and hear good news where you will find he has already

been, where he will meet you, and where you will see him already at work. A place where you will hear that a risen Jesus points to life and hope for all because even death could not hold him.

So come looking for him here or wherever your Galilee is. Don’t be alarmed nor afraid but when the day comes join with those women of ancient times, the angels, the apostles, and countless generations since **go tell what** in saying with conviction out aloud or through your 21st Century messaging system Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A very Happy and Peaceful Easter to you all.

Tim Cripps

Recommended readings:

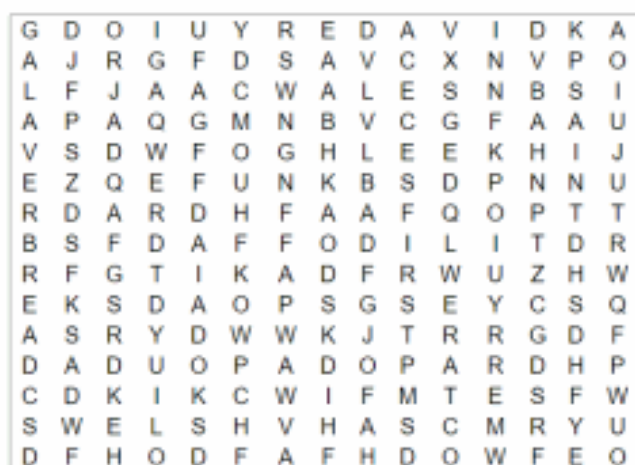
The Acts of the Apostles 10. 34-43.
Mark 16. 1-8.

You can access the recommended readings online by going to <https://bible.oremus.org>. Enter the passage details and select your preferred edition of the bible – New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised Edition) and King James Bible are both available. This website is free of charge.



St. David's Day Wordsearch

Can you find the Welsh-themed words hidden in this wordsearch?



SAINT, DAVID, MARCH, FIRST, WELSH, WALES, LEEK, DAFFODIL, CARDIFF, CMRYU, DRAGON, LAVERBREAD

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A Musical Note



Very sadly Iain Hamilton who sang bass in the choir for many years died on 1st February. When he was in better health, Iain was one of the most dedicated members of the choir singing for both morning and evening services every week, singing for funerals and weddings and never missing a choir concert or outing. Iain was an experienced choral singer having sung with a number of choirs in the area including the Orpheus Male Voice choir with whom he sang for many decades and he was still singing regularly with us at Rusthall until a few months ago. Iain was a terrific second bass who could sing some remarkably low notes! He stood directly behind me in church and would try to make me laugh by singing entire sections of the communion setting or hymns down an octave and then at the end he would lean over and say 'hope you enjoyed that'.

Iain loved our visits to Cathedrals and he was so disappointed not to have been well enough to sing with us at Westminster Abbey in the summer, but he told me that he was determined to sing at all of our Cathedral visits in 2024. He would often phone me the day after a Cathedral trip to say how much he had enjoyed it and to talk through the logistics of our next trip.

I was fortunate to get to know Iain well when he and I, together with the Tunbridge Wells Twinning Association, planned our choir tour to Wiesbaden. All of the meetings were held at Iain's house and his hospitality was second to none. We would discuss the details of the trip and then once the planning was done for the evening we would chat about Durham where we had both been at University and where he went every summer to attend a reunion and about other interests which we shared. I loved chatting with him, he was so well travelled, so interested in other cultures and of course an incredible linguist. Our choir trip to Wiesbaden was a great success and this was down to Iain's meticulous planning and organisation and the very polite but assertive way in which he sorted out any problems that arose. Iain also organised for a German brass group to come and play for a Matins

service at St Paul's where all of the hymns were accompanied by brass which was amazing. He also helped with the arrangements for the Wiesbaden Boys Choir to come and give a concert jointly with us at Rusthall which was a wonderful evening.

During the pandemic when the choir was not able to meet, Iain would phone me every week for a chat and also to see when we might be able to get back to singing. No-one seemed more eager to get back to church and for us to be singing together again. He said he missed the community spirit, the coming together on a Friday evening, the chatting, the joint crossword solving that went on in the basses and of course the singing.

In October Iain phoned me one afternoon to say that he thought it was time for another choir tour and that he would like to start planning it and make some enquiries. I agreed and said it would be great fun and we left it at that. He was keen for us to go to France where he had contacts and where it was not too far to travel. The choir will go ahead with the tour to France in the summer of 2025 and I am just so sorry that Iain won't be there with us. He was truly a wonderfully generous and caring man who was passionate about choral music and we all miss him very much. I am so glad that we got to spend so much time together with him and that he was still able to be singing with us until so recently.

The children in the choir enjoyed an excellent Pancake Party in the Lodge on 9th February. Ginette and Caroline had been busy during the day making pancakes for the children to enjoy to which they added a variety of toppings. This year's most bizarre combination of flavours has to be Marmite and Lemon which I am told is delicious but I don't think I am brave enough to try it! The children were then able to make and toss their own pancakes with varying degrees of success. A number ended up on the floor but there was also some very stylish flipping and everyone had a great time.





Fiona Johnson

The Church for Today and Tomorrow

A Christian church is a gathering of people who are committed to following the life and teachings of Jesus. They are also people who have been inspired by his message, transformed by his example, and encouraged by his style of leadership. However difficult these ideals seem to be in practice, Christian people commit to following Jesus' example by having a go. After nearly 2000 years, they are still trying.

There are many ways in which these attempts to follow Jesus are shown in everyday life. For Christians, their lifestyle is a 24/7 commitment, so their attempts to practice their faith are shown by the way they try to live the whole of their lives. The Early Church, for the 300 or so years after Jesus died until the Emperor Constantine took it over (by adopting Christianity as the official Roman religion) was known as "The Way". Christians were known as people of The Way. The Christian life is seen as a way, journey of faith, living according to the life and example of the Jewish prophet, Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a life-time commitment of caring, trusting in the power of unselfish love and being faithful to the life and teachings of Jesus. Wherever two or three people are gathered in the name of Jesus, there is "a church". The regular gatherings of the people are celebrations of faith, the learning of new insights and a determination to keep right on to the end of the road.

As groups of people who are devoted to seeing the development of the church, Christians are seen as a caring body, a committed community and a faithful organisation. These groupings of Christian people in a local community are most often found in a building which is also called a "Church".

These Churches are composed of Christians who are dedicated to looking after others. Someone has suggested that the Christian Church is the only group that is designed for its non-members. Churches express their concern for other people and political situations by naming them during quiet times during their weekly Sunday gatherings, learning something about them and trying to do something helpful.

At a practical level, Christians are called to demonstrate their caring for others by visiting people at home or in hospitals, telephoning, writing cards/letters and sending text messages or e-mails to support those in need. These visits or calls may be occasional but always sensitive, with a mindfulness of when they are wanted or otherwise.

Christians may also demonstrate a commitment to caring, by learning about current political issues,

writing letters to the press or their MPs and attending or even organising demonstrations - usually with other groups - religious and secular. A strong example of this, was the massive demonstration in London in 2003 against the Iraq war, when many Christians joined people of other faiths or of none, to show Prime Minister Blair what they felt the government should be doing. And more recently, when an estimated 6 million people took to the streets to support a number of children who are challenging the world's leaders to respond to the scientists who have described the global climate as in crisis.

At the heart of a caring society is the call to compassion. Compassion being seen in practical demonstrations of an unselfish love for one's fellow humans and the whole evolving world. Karen Armstrong, the British Roman Catholic author, speaker and former nun, and others, have shown how compassion is at the heart of every major world-wide religion. It is also a central belief in much of secular society.

Somebody once said, "Christians are not called to be hermits, though possibly to be hermits in pairs". Christians meet in groups to express their faith, to learn how to develop it and to celebrate their joy in being alive. Some Christian groups now meet in secular buildings such as schools or community halls. But wherever they gather, the purpose is similar - to express a faithfulness to a shared commitment to a cause that can be developed to make the world a better place.

If we want to make the world a better place by our own efforts, and those of those we work with, we need to be in a frame of mind and body that is willing to make changes in our lifestyle. This can only be achieved by conscious effort, by using existing experience and by persevering. We don't change the world simply by wanting it to change. Further, change is a continuous process - the achievement of any goal is a spur and encouragement to tackle the next and then the next.

Deep inside the "being" of a Christian is a "faith" - meaning a trusting and committed following of Jesus, for the greater good of all. Some would say, the basic requirement of Christians is to accept a belief system, where belief means accepting as "true" agreed statements by the institutional church about God, Jesus and the Bible. Yet belief may not lead to changing anyone or anything. It doesn't imply trusting in the greater good, or being committed to the values of Jesus' teaching about what he called "The Kingdom (or realm) of God".

John Dominic Crossan, the Roman Catholic former monk, theologian, academic writer and speaker, describes the Kingdom of God as a world where God is in charge and the leaders of the world

are not. It's a world of fairness, social justice, peace-making, bridge-building, and inter-faith cooperation. A world where the challenges of climate change, refugees and poverty become political priorities.

The Kingdom of God is a system without hierarchy, power seeking and unfair competition. It's a world of compassion, cooperation, partnerships and selfless ambition.

All these features, factors and aims are what inspires and directs the Church. But they tend to get lost in an over-emphasis on procedures in worship, debates on theological niceties and selfish ambition.

Ideas for discussion

1. What are your earliest memories of a local church?
2. If you grew up in a church, how did your ideas of what a church is, change over time?
3. How can a church act as a body of Christians?
4. Is a church a part of a community or at the centre of it? How?
5. What support does a church need to be an active body?

Shalom,

Revd Tony Rutherford

Long Service Award

A couple in the church received a lovely vase to celebrate 50 years of being involved in a variety of church activities and holding a number of important positions. Unfortunately the wording on the card suffered from a lack of punctuation, and, on looking at it when they returned home, the couple discovered that it read, "*With our thanks to you both and may the Lord bless you and keep you from the Vicar and members of the Parochial Church Council.*"

From the St Clement and All Saints Parish News (courtesy of Paul Barter)

Golf - It's only a game

Lee Trevino was a very fine golfer but he was hit by lightning three times in his illustrious career. Lightning is very dangerous for golfers because you are out in the open with perhaps a few trees for cover and you are told never shelter under a tree. The standard practice is for a klaxon to blow and the course cleared as soon as possible. The bigger courses have radar which can enable the course to be cleared before the storm arrives.



Lee Trevino was playing golf in Florida when a huge storm broke suddenly. There was plenty of lightning as players, caddies and spectators hurried to safety. Lee was spotted walking down the eighteenth fairway holding a club high above his head. Officials rushed to his side pleading with him to put the club down but Lee Trevino calmly replied Son, not even God can hit a one iron!



Ted and George had arranged to play their usual round at 11 am on Friday morning. As they prepared to tee off on the first tee, adjacent to a road, a hearse came slowly into view. George took off his glove laid down his driver and stood religiously to attention until the hearse was out of view. Ted was impressed and said to George that he had never seen such reverence asking if he by chance knew the Deceased. Well, said George, I was married to her for 53 years.

Tim Cripps

Poems for March

After these wintry weeks of Lent, at last comes Easter, season of dying and rising, of new life and hope. The two poets here emphasise the mystery of the figure of Jesus, at once tender and challenging, fully present yet not quite graspable, loving and unsettling. A beautiful Paradox.

Susan Barber

Maybe

Sweet Jesus, talking
his melancholy madness,
stood up in the boat
and the sea lay down,

silky and sorry.
So everybody was saved
that night.
But you know how it is

when something
different crosses
the threshold – the uncles
mutter together,

the women walk away,
the younger brother begins
to sharpen his knife.
Nobody knows what the soul is.

It comes and goes
like the wind over the water –
sometimes, for days,
you don't think of it.

Maybe, after the sermon,
after the multitude was fed,
one or two of them felt
the soul slip forth

like a tremor of pure sunlight,
before exhaustion,
that wants to swallow everything,
gripped their bones and left them

miserable and sleepy,
as they are now, forgetting
how the wind tore at the sails
before he rose and talked to it –

tender and luminous and demanding
as he always was –
a thousand times more frightening
than the killer sea.

Mary Oliver

The Wound in the Earth

All day under the circling
The golden hugeness of the sun
Beat by beat the maddening, terrible day
The terrible madness, until, suddenly, at last
The sky went ugly with bruises, a thunder stuttered
In the red hills and the rain came hard as grapes
Heavy, hissing, huge, and lightning gouged the
dust.

His face, she saw his face, her son
The son she'd brought into a stable
Shining with bright rain and blood in rivers
And how his head slipped forwards, finished
His shoulders torn like wings, like angel wings
Broken now for ever by the weight
Of this last loss of God.

But even then they waited, the soldiers and the
priests
Watching him with gaping mouths as if they still
expected
He might speak or heal or teach.
They watched the rain shine his shoulders and his
broken head
Hour after hour after hour
As if they feared him still.

Kenneth Steven



Snake

And here is the serpent again,
dragging himself out from his nest of darkness,
his cave under the black rocks,
his winter-death.
He slides over the pine needles.
He loops around the bunches of rising grass,
looking for the sun.

Well, who doesn't want the sun after the long
winter?
I step aside,
he feels the air with his soft tongue,
around the bones of his body he moves like oil,

downhill he goes
toward the black mirrors of the pond.
Last night it was still so cold
I woke and went out to stand in the yard,
and there was no moon.

So I just stood there, inside the jaw of nothing.
An owl cried in the distance,
I thought of Jesus, how he
crouched in the dark for two nights,
then floated back above the horizon.

There are so many stories,
more beautiful than answers.
I follow the snake down to the pond,

thick and musky he is
as circular as hope.

Mary Oliver





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If you often find yourself fumbling for the right change, perhaps you might like to pay in advance for a year's "subscription", 10 issues for the sum of £10, (you might even feel tempted to be more generous!)

Your contributions are much appreciated.

Please make cheques payable to St Paul's Church, Rusthall and send them to the Parish Office

The Church Year - Part 2

Christmas Day has finally arrived. The altar colours have changed to white and we can really sing - Yea Lord, we great Thee, born this happy morning. In the front of the Church will probably be a crib depicting the event. Although if we are honest we have probably been seeing Nativity plays and Crib services prior to the actual day with possibly more tradition involved than actual Biblical fact.

There will be a special service on Christmas morning possibly with the joyful singing of Christmas carols, before rushing home to a special lunch. Forgotten is the idea of Advent fasting if indeed it took place.

We don't know for certain when Jesus was actually born, but as I said last month it was convenient in early times to link it to the celebrations carried out during the winter solstice. Some people say it was more likely to have taken place in the spring since we are told that the shepherds were out in the fields and this would have occurred during lambing time. The wonder, the joy, the awe that surrounds Christmas unfortunately does not really last, even in the church.

The next day of note is the 6th of January when The Epiphany is remembered. This is the time when the wise men, or kings or magi visited the baby Jesus. It is the usual practice, in line with tradition, that on this Sunday the kings bearing their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh are added to the crib. Here tradition and fact are perhaps a little confused. We are told in the Bible that Wise men – no number is given – brought three gifts to the baby Jesus. They were following a star. It is also very unlikely that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were still living in the stable.

The festival of the Epiphany has been celebrated since the 4th century. Epiphany comes from the Greek word meaning to reveal. Here we come to the importance of this time. It is when the Baby Jesus was revealed to the whole world, and not just the Jews. The wise men were certainly not Jews and it is almost certain that they would have spread the news of this special baby in the lands from which they came - a baby who would matter to the whole world.

The meaning of the gifts is also important. Gold was a symbol of kingship here on earth. Frankincense (an incense) denoted someone who was a deity while myrrh – an embalming oil – was the symbol of death. These three gifts very neatly sum up the story of Christ.

At St. Paul's we should not forget the 25th January – the day which marks Paul becoming a follower of Jesus. We hold our patronal festival on the Sunday nearest to that date. Most churches named after a saint hold some form of service and celebration on their particular saints day. Often there is a Parish meal – a chance to get together. I have no idea how our church came to be named after St Paul. If anyone knows do please let me know.

And so 40 days after Christmas we come on the 2nd of February to Candlemas. On this day we remember how Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple and here He was blessed by an old man called Simeon with words which we now call the Nunc Dimittis. The Nunc Dimittis has come to play an important part in the calendar of the Church in that ever since the fourth century the words have been sung at all evening services such as Evensong and Compline. The reason for this being that the words imply a sense of fulfilment, peace and rest at the end of the day.

Candlemas is a festival marking the returning of light and is a symbol of protection and prosperity. On this day the Church remembers especially that Jesus is the Light of the World and it is for this reason that some Churches hold their Christingle Service on this day. It also reminds us of how closely the church festivals were linked to the world of nature. Spring is on the way. One of the nature rhymes linked with Candlemas reminds us of this - If Candlemas be fair and bright, winter will have another fight. If Candlemas brings cloud and rain, winter won't come again.

The reason for Candlemas being 40 days after Christmas was that according to Jewish Law, 40 days after the birth of a son the woman needed to be purified and it was the tradition for the firstborn son to be presented at the Temple 40 days after his birth.

Tradition today tells us that all Christmas decorations should come down by 12th night, but in olden times when Christmas decorations were usually various forms of evergreens they were not actually removed until Candlemas.

At the morning service on Candlemas the church candles, which will be used during the year, are often blessed. Candlemas is the last day of the period of the Epiphany and the altar colours which have been white up till after the morning service will change to green for the evening service and this will last for the few weeks until we enter the season of Lent.

Daphne Pilcher

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Rusth Community Cinema



Barbie (2023)

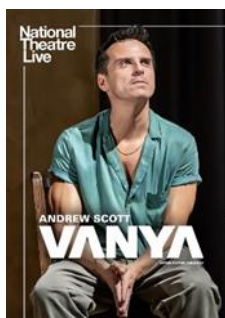
Doors open: 6:30pm Saturday 2nd March 2024

Director: Greta Gerwig

Genre: Adventure, Comedy, Fantasy

Runtime: 1h 54m

Starring: Margot Robbie, Ryan Gosling.



Vanya

Doors open: 2pm Sunday 3rd March 2024

Director: Sam Yates

Genre: Recorded live theatre

Runtime: 160 minutes including interval

Starring: Andrew Scott



Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret. (2023)

Doors open: 6:30pm Saturday 16th March 2024

Director: Kelly Fremon Craig

Genre: Comedy, Drama, Family

Runtime: 1h 46m

Starring: Abby Ryder Fortson, Rachel McAdams, Kathy Bates

Double bill: Mighty Penguins (2023) + The Nettle Dress (2023)

Doors open: 6:30pm Saturday 30th March 2024



Mighty Penguins (Short 2023)

Directors: Louis Myles, Ahmed Twajj

Genre: Documentary about a football team where the players have Downs Syndrome

Runtime: 33 minutes

Certificate:



The Nettle Dress

Director: Dylan Howitt

Genre: Documentary

Runtime: 1h 42m

Certificate: 12A

Starring: Allan Brown

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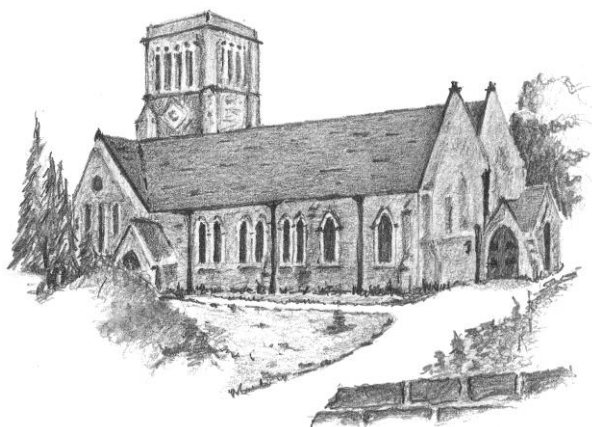
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Activity Pages

Holy Week and Easter Wordsearch

In this wordsearch you will find words connected with Holy Week or Easter mentioned in the Bible. The words may be slightly different in the various versions. At the end you will be left with nine unused letters which will give you the name given by one version to the two men who were crucified either side of Jesus.

E	N	A	M	E	S	H	T	E	G	P	E
H	T	A	B	B	A	S	E	U	I	L	S
S	A	L	O	M	E	B	R	L	I	T	L
A	W	R	A	N	O	D	A	J	W	I	M
E	C	E	E	R	H	T	A	O	C	P	E
H	U	T	J	V	E	H	L	R	M	U	L
T	R	E	U	I	O	I	O	L	E	R	A
A	T	P	D	S	V	S	M	L	A	P	S
M	A	R	A	E	S	U	S	E	J	L	U
I	I	N	S	K	U	L	L	A	C	E	R
R	N	O	M	I	S	T	E	M	P	L	E
A	H	T	O	G	L	O	G	N	I	K	J

ARIMATHEA	CROSS	CURTAIN
DRUG	ELIJAH	ELOI
GETHSEMANE	GOLGOTHA	HOSANNA
JERUSALEM	JESUS	JEWS
JUDAS	KING	OLIVES
PALMS	PASSOVER	PETER
PILATE	PURPLE	ROBE
SABBATH	SALOME	SIMON
SKULL	TEMPLE	THREE
TOMB	TWO	

Follow this nature trail

The last letter of each answer is the first of the next one.

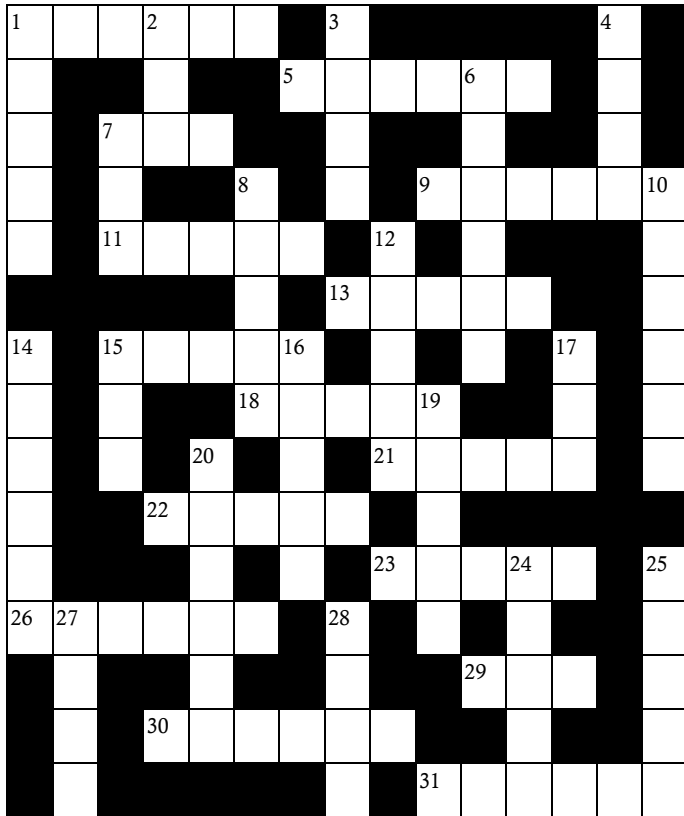
1		2						3	
		9						10	
		16							
			20					11	4
	15		22			21			
		19							5
							17	12	
			18						
	14				13				6
		8					7		

Twenty Questions to Test You

1. Who was the sister of Moses and Aaron?
2. What do coulrophobes fear?
3. What is the capital of Denmark?
4. What is the fourth book of the Bible?
5. What shape are UK traffic red STOP signs?
6. MA is the abbreviation of which US state?
7. Which Premiership football team plays its home matches at Stamford Bridge?
8. What was fed to the 5000?
9. What is another name for Whitsun?
10. Who is the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated?
11. What is the name given to the Jewish feast which was being celebrated at the Last Supper?
12. Which Norwegian painter was responsible for "The Scream"?
13. What is eaten on Shrove Tuesday?
14. What is the symbol of Judaism?
15. Which church festival follows Halloween?
16. To which English king was Elizabeth Woodville married?
17. What is the liturgical colour used at Christmas?
18. Who was the founder of the Methodist movement?
19. Which Saint's Day is celebrated on December 6th?
20. Which cathedral is connected with St Swithun?

1. Tree liked by squirrels
2. Another name for Marsh Marigold
3. Cheerful flower of the cornfield
4. Churchyard tree
5. Small bird nicknamed Jenny
6. Change WENT into this creature
7. Bird with a speckled breast
8. Tree providing conkers
9. Emblem of Scotland
10. Tree that drops branches unexpectedly
11. I live underground and I rhyme with hole
12. Part of the body plus false hair is this insect
13. As green as _ _ _ _ _
14. A creature you associate with being slow
15. Birds that sound like a piece of fun
16. A bird that sounds royal with an interest in fish
17. An animal associated with Easter
18. Might be mistaken for a frog
19. These animals are common on Ashdown Forest
20. Christmas bird
21. A bird that reminds you of a fruit with a hard shell and how young birds come out of their shells
22. A girl's name and a tree with Christmas connections

Crossword – Food Glorious Food



Clues Across

1. Put an extra vowel in mouse to get this type of sweet
5. Type of fish often eaten with chips
7. Product from a hen
9. These stands hold salt, pepper and mustard
11. General name for apples, pears, plums etc.
13. A bedtime drink with the name of a clown
15. Iced teatime goodies
18. Type of beef to go with Yorkshire pudding
21. Fresh water fish, might be rainbow, usually grilled
22. These taste best out of newspaper
23. Eating utensil
26. Slice of bacon
29. Four and twenty blackbirds were baked in this
30. A sniff of this will make you sneeze
31. A fruit liked by monkeys

Complete the Grid

E _ _ _ _
 _ A _ _ _
 _ _ S _ _
 _ _ _ T _ _
 _ _ _ _ E _
 _ _ _ _ _ R

He told Naaman the cure for leprosy
 God called him three times in the night
 He had a younger brother Benjamin
 Her sister was Mary and her brother Lazarus
 7th book in the Bible
 A Jewish girl who became Queen

Clues Down

1. Lemon – anagram of a rather exotic fruit
2. A spoonful of this helps the medicine go down
3. Lump – anagram of a fruit
4. One of what the Queen of Hearts made
6. Vegetable supposed to make you see in the dark
8. Part of the body eaten with bacon
10. A tinned fish, pink or red, often eaten with salad
12. A slice of ‘cooked’ bread
14. Made from milk and spread on your bread
15. This fish sounds like Cash On Delivery
17. Put this on the table when the plate is hot.
19. North of England dish eaten with onions
20. Liked by mice as well as humans
24. People often cry when peeling this
25. Type of sauce used with peaches
27. A lemon has this sort of juice
28. Meat from an ox or cow

Down on the Farm Riddle-me-Rees

1. My first is in both bat and ball
 My second's in house but not in hall
 My third is in both valley and hill
 My last's not in beak but is in bill
2. My first is in bake but not in cake
 My second is in both sea and lake
 My third is in both green and red
 My last is in hand but not in head
3. My first is in both stop and start
 My second's in pie but not in tart
 My third is in both limb and leg
 My last is in bone but not in beg
4. My first is in both dig and weed
 My second's in bud but not in seed
 My third is in both saucer and cup
 My last is in kitten but not in pup.

ANSWERS

Wordsearch The nine letters make up the word Criminals

Twenty Questions to Test You

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Miriam | 2 Clowns | 3 Copenhagen | 4 Numbers |
| 5 Octagonal | 6 Massachusetts | 7 Chelsea FC | 8 Loaves and fishes |
| 9 Pentecost | 10 Spencer Perceval | 11 The Passover | 12 Edvard Munch |
| 13 Pancakes | 14 Six pointed star | 15 All Saints Day | 16 Edward 4 th |
| 17 White | 18 John Wesley | 19 St Nicholas | 20 Winchester |

Follow this Nature Trail

- | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 Oak | 2 Kingcup | 3 Poppy | 4 Yew | 5 Wren | 6 Newt |
| 7 Thrush | 8 Horse Chestnut | 9 Thistle | 10 Elm | 11 Mole | 12 Earwig |
| 13 Grass | 14 Snail | 15 Lark | 16 Kingfisher | 17 Rabbit | 18 Toad |
| 19 Deer | 20 Robin | 21 Nuthatch | 22 Holly | | |

Crossword Food Glorious Food

Across

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 Mousse | 5 Plaice | 7 Egg | 9 Cruets | 11 Fruit | 13 Cocoa | 15 Cakes |
| 18 Roast | 21 Trout | 22 Chips | 23 Spoon | 26 Rasher | 29 Pie | 30 Pepper |
| 31 Banana | | | | | | |

Down

- | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 Melon | 2 Sugar | 3 Plum | 4 Tart | 6 Carrot | 8 Liver | 10 Salmon |
| 12 Toast | 14 Butter | 15 Cod | 16 Soups | 17 Mat | 19 Tripe | 20 Cheese |
| 24 Onion | 25 Melba | 27 Acid | 28 Beef | | | |

Down on the Farm Riddle-me-Rees

- | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 Bull | 2 Barn | 3 Silo | 4 Duck |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|

Complete the Grid

E – Elisha A – Samuel S – Joseph T - Martha E – Judges R – Esther

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Please contact via email to Churchwardens@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk	
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Bible Reading Fellowship Secretary Vivienne Sharp	543263
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Rusthall St Paul's Primary School Executive Headteacher – Mrs Liz Mitchell Head of School – Mrs Lyndsay Smurthwaite	520582 520582

Organisations

Julian Group Mrs Pat Stevens	529187
Group Scout Leader Gavin Cons Email – rusthallscoutgroup@gmail.com	
Scout Membership Secretary Juliet Waller Email – rusthallscoutgroupwaitinglist@yahoo.co.uk	
Squirrels: rusthallsquirrels@gmail.com Beavers: beaversrusthall@gmail.com Cubs: rusthallcubs@hotmail.co.uk Scouts: rusthallscouts@gmail.com	
Guide Senior Section Helen Deller	07720 252481
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Brownie Guiders Karen Miller (Thurs) rustahallbrownies@btinternet.com Ms Tina Francis (Mon)	545877
Rainbows Mrs Mary Saunders Email – saundii@aol.com	319872
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Rusthall Community & Youth Project Barry Edwards	680296
Rusthall Village Association Alex Britcher	07967 011467
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Friends of TW and Rusthall Common Clive Evans	534040

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The Parish Office

Parish Administrator - Mrs Ginette di Palma

St Paul's Parish Office, Church Centre, Rusthall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8RE

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The Office is open on weekday mornings (except Tuesdays) between 10 am and 1 pm.