ST PAUL'S NEWS

July and August 2026

ONE POUND

SERVICES FOR JULY

Sunday 5th July
Fifth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Baptism (CW)
President: The Vicar
Minister& Preacher: Tim Harrold

10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Wendy Anderson
Link: Karen Miller

6.30 pm Hymns and Pimms
Minister: The Vicar

Monday 6th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 8th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 9th July
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 12th July
Sixth Sunday after Trinity

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: Daphne Pilcher
Link: Susan Powley

6.30 pm Choral Evensong (BCP)
Minister: Tim Harrold

Monday 13th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 15th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 16th July
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 19th July
Seventh Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
Minister: Tim Harrold

10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Tim Harrold
Link: Rosemary Romano

6.30 pm Choral Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 20th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 22nd July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 23rd July
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 26th July
Eighth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Joint Eucharist at the Church Centre + Zoom
President: The Vicar
Preacher: Tim Harrold
Link: Viv Littlechild

4.00 pm Taize Service at the Church Centre
Minister: Tim Harrold

6.30 pm Compline
Minister: The Vicar

Monday 27th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 29th July
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 30th July
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

SERVICES FOR AUGUST

Sunday 2nd August
Ninth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President: The Vicar
Minister& Preacher: Daphne Pilcher

10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Liz Goddard
Link: Chris Bassett

6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 3rd August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 5th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 6th August
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 9th August
Tenth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Baptism (CW)
President: The Vicar
Minister & Preacher: Tim Harrold

10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Daphne Pollard
Link: Rosemary Romano

6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 10th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 12th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 13th August
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 16th August
Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

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: Tim Harrold
Link: Susan Powley

6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: Tim Harrold

Monday 17th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 19th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 20th August
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 23rd August
Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Matins
Minister & Preacher: Rev. Nicholas Burton

10.00 am Family Service with Communion
at the Church Centre + Zoom
President: The Vicar
Link: Jean Kerr

4.00 pm Taize Service at the Church Centre
Minister: Tim Harrold

6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Monday 24th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 26th August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 27th August
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

Sunday 30th August
Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

10.00 am Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

4.00 pm Taize Service at the Church Centre
Minister: Tim Harrold

6.30 pm Compline
Minister: Tim Harrold

Monday 31st August
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Parish Church
Minister: The Vicar

Wednesday 2nd September
9.00 am Morning Prayer at the Church Centre
Minister: The Vicar

Thursday 3rd September
11.30 am Said Holy Communion at the Church Centre
President: The Vicar

DIARY

Wednesday 8th July
3.00 pm Communion to Chamberlain Court
Lois Woodhouse

Monday 13th July
All day Parish Pilgrimage (The Martyr's Way Part 2)
London

Thursday 16th July
11.00 am Communion to Mt Ephraim House
Lois Woodhouse

Monday 20th July
8.00 pm PCC Meeting in the Lodge

Wednesday 29th July
Parish Church closed all day for Organ inspection

Monday 3rd – Friday 7th August
Choir Camp

Monday 3rd August
12.30 pm Wedding - Khloe Prosser & James Donovan
with choir

Wednesday 12th August
3.00 pm Communion to Chamberlain Court
Tim Harrold

Thursday 20th August
11.00 am Communion to Mt Ephraim House
Tim Harrold

Tuesday 1st September
7.30 pm Worship Committee in the Lodge

Wednesdays throughout the month
9.00 – 11.00 am Playtime at St Paul's at the Church Centre

Thursdays throughout the month
12 for 12.30 pm Rusthall Lunch Club
at the Church Centre

Fridays throughout the month
12.30 – 2.00 pm Community Larder
at the Church Centre

Saturdays & Sundays throughout the month
10 am – 4 pm Choristers Café in the Lodge

Dates for Your Diary

Future events taking place at St Paul's Church

Sunday 5th July	Hymns and Pimms
Saturday 11th July	Grenadillas Clarinet Concert
Saturday 18th July	"I am Mark" play
Saturday 8th August	End of Camp concert
Saturday 12th September	An Evening at the Musicals
Saturday 7th November	Concert for Remembrance
Sunday 29th November	Readings and Music for Advent
Saturday 5th December	Sponsored Sing-a-thon
Sunday 20th December	Nine Lessons and Carols

From the Registers

We welcome as newly baptised members of the church:

Thomas Woodham

Magazine Deadlines

Please submit articles for the 2026 magazines in accordance with the following deadlines.

Sept 2026 by 16th August
October 2026 by 13th September
November 2026 by 11th October
December 2026/January 2027 by 15 November

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 can be made available to those who cannot access the magazine online. Please contact Helen Reynolds at the Church Office (TW 521447) to arrange production and collection/delivery.

From the Vicarage

Dear Friends

Thank you very much for your continued support and hard work. Special thanks to all our volunteers in the Parish – for all that you do and for your continued involvement in the life and ministry of the parish. As a parish, we are involved in various aspects of community life, and we are still looking for more volunteers to join us as we endeavour to play our part in ensuring that Rusthall continues to be a welcoming and vibrant Community for residents, entrepreneurs and visitors. Please contact the parish office by telephone: 01892521357 or via email office@stpaulsrusthall.org if you would like to volunteer or get involved in any way, including the upkeep of the New Churchyard.

I trust that you have been able to watch some of the football World Cup matches, and that you are enjoying the sunshine. Although I don't mind the heat, I struggle with the high pollen, and have been having to use medication, nasal spray and eyedrops to keep the hay fever in check.

A lot has been going on in the parish as we continue our efforts to raise funds to repair the organ at the parish church. Please check the parish website for upcoming fundraising events. We recently had our Pet Service which was held on the church grounds and attracted pet owners from far and near. Below are photos of some of the pets that brought their owners to the service.

We will be having a joint confirmation service at King Charles the Martyr in October. Please let me know if you or someone in your family would like to get confirmed/confirm your faith in Jesus Christ.

As we continue to journey through life, I pray that we will become increasingly aware of God's divine presence within and around us.

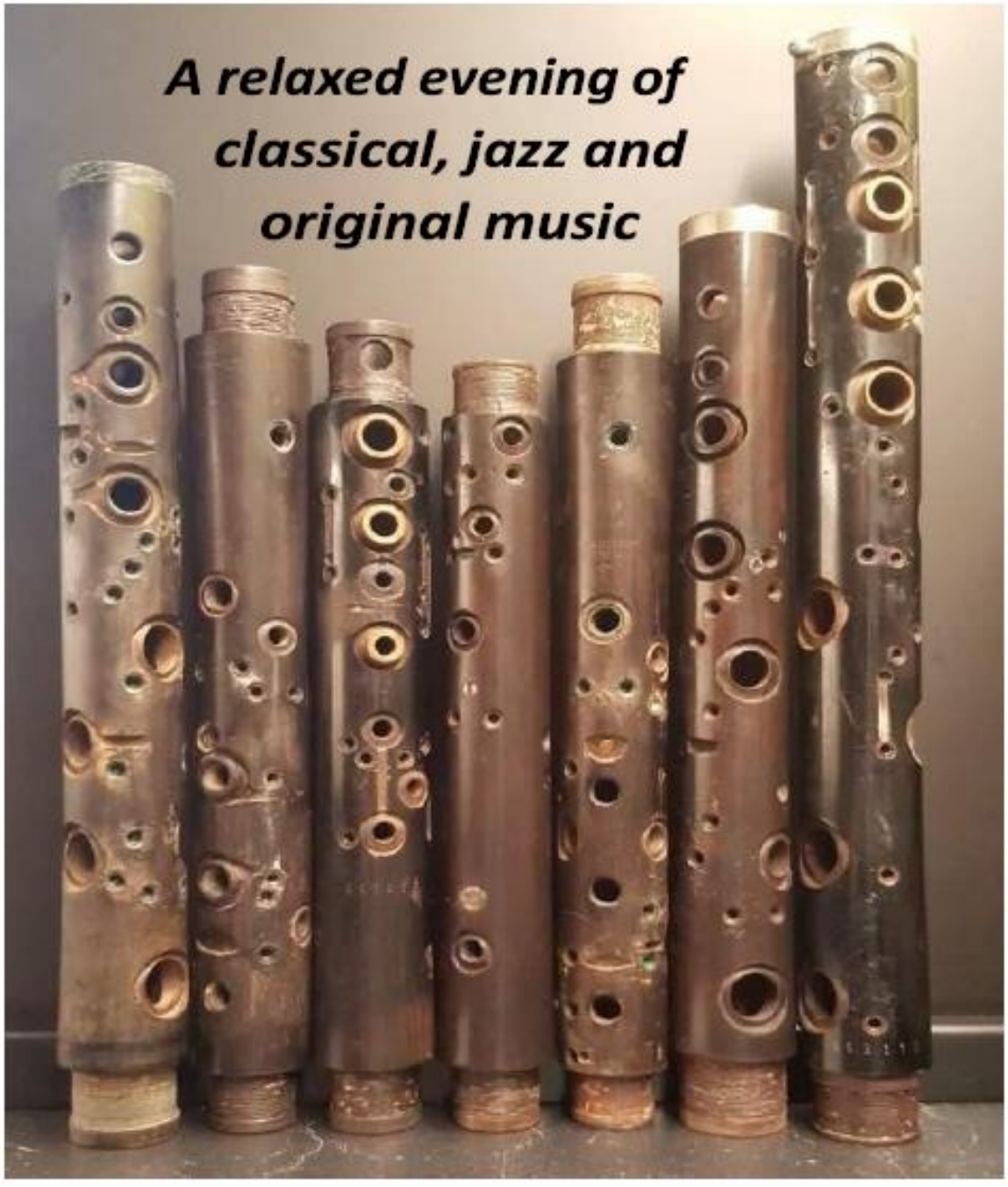
Ronnie

A Musical Soirée

In aid of the Organ Renovation Fund

Grenadillas
CLARINET CHOIR

St Paul's Church, Rusthall, TN4 8RE
Saturday 11th July, 7.30pm



FREE admission. Enjoy wine and other refreshments.
Donations welcomed and encouraged and shared between St Paul's organ fund and Porchlight, a homeless charity.

Editorial for July and August 2026

Well! June certainly lived up to its 'flaming' moniker this month. After a decidedly chilly start, suddenly it blossomed and then we had too much of a good thing, with red warnings for heat as the daily temperature hit record highs for several days in a row and becoming the hottest June on record. I love it up to about 28°C but above that it gets quite tricky to manage. All that opening and closing of curtains and windows as the sun moves round the house gets really complicated, doesn't it? And as for lugging watering cans about – don't get me started. Thank goodness for my water butts as I have been trying to keep my tadpoles alive. They are perplexing me as they don't seem to want to develop into frogs.

This is our summer edition as Sue and I prepare for a summer break, so you have lots of details about upcoming events scheduled over two months, not just one. Make sure you transfer them to your diary so you don't miss out on anything. Hymns and Pimms kicks off July and is always a wonderful evening. Then there's the second part of the Pilgrimage along The Martyrs Way in London if you can get the day off on Monday 13th July.

There's a lot of sport to watch, with the World cup continuing until 19th July, and Wimbledon until 12th July. The Tour de France cycling is from 4-26th July, this year departing from Barcelona. The south of Spain is also home to many stages of La Vuelta a Espana, 22nd August – 13th September, with the final moved to Granada rather than Madrid, to make way for the Madrid Grand Prix. I'm really looking forward to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow from 23 July – 2 August for the variety of events.

Then there's all the special days, weeks and months. July is Plastic Free July, a global movement to reduce plastic waste through simple, everyday choices, following the instructions to Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. Can you reduce the single use plastic in your life? Pick up loose vegetables, remember your bag for life, take a re-useable cup to the cafe, carry a refillable water bottle rather than buying new plastic bottles and throwing them away. It all makes a difference and our children, grandchildren and their grandchildren will thank us for it.

July 7th is World Chocolate Day, over indulgence isn't recommended but a good quality dark chocolate contains polyphenols and minerals that are good for you, so treat yourself to a square or two. 15th July is St Swithun's Day, when according to legend a drop of rain on St Swithun's Bridge in Winchester foretells 40 days and nights of rain. Fortunately this has been disproven, although we might be desperate for some rain by then if this heatwave continues. July 16th is World Snake Day, dedicated to appreciating the diversity, beauty and ecological importance of snakes. Sadly, I think David Attenborough's filming of racer snakes chasing baby marine iguanas has set back this cause. A belated Happy 100th Birthday to Sir David, who became a centenarian on 8th May.

30th July is the International Day of Friendship, thinking about friendships between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals, so get together with your friends, after all, it is said that friends are the family you choose for yourself. 31st July is Harry Potter's birthday – his 46th, can you believe it! The first book was published in 1997, with six more books and 8 films to follow, plus prequels and sequels, stage shows and studio tours.

July seems to have had more than its fair share of rebellion. July 1st is Canada Day, celebrating the signing of their Constitution Act in 1867. Theirs was the most peaceful transition, a few quick skirmishes in 1837-8 but then consultation until an agreement was reached. They did, however, have to fight to remain independent of the USA, in the War of 1812, something which still seems on the table today if President Trump is to be believed. The USA has a celebration of its own as a distraction, on 4th July they celebrate the Semi-quincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, of which more later in the magazine. Finally, of course France celebrates Bastille Day on 14th July, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789, which signalled the start of the French Revolution.

We wish you a wonderful summer. Stay safe while enjoying the sunshine and perhaps ponder whether you have something to tell everyone about in the September edition of St Paul's News. We would like to hear from you by 16th August please but are happy for articles to arrive earlier! Please send them to magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.

Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare

Churchwardens' Report

The Summer is now well upon us. When you receive this magazine, if you're a family of teenagers, you'll be breathing a sigh of relief that the summer exam season is finally over but maybe wondering how you're now going to keep the children busy for the extended summer holiday. Thankfully, our local community provides plenty of activities to keep them occupied and some glorious countryside to ensure they get a good dose of fresh air for two months before school or college resumes. If you have some able-bodied older teenagers, then they may also like to join you at one of our new Churchyard maintenance sessions!

We are hoping to get some willing parishioners to help us tame both the Parish Church Churchyard and the New Churchyard at Nellington Road. In addition, Brad Collins and David will be tackling the West Doors at The Parish Church in July, stripping off their expired varnish and giving them a lovely, deep coat of oil instead. We would be happy to have some eager DIYers join us. The Lodge is also looking a little sorry, and the area around the back, the gutters, and the roof of the Lodge need a good tidy-up, so that is also on our agenda to tackle.

Our first get together for the above will be at the Parish Church on Saturday morning, 4th July at 9:00 am (ready in time for the Hymns and Pimms event at the Parish Church on the Sunday evening), with a follow-up session at The Nellington Road Churchyard on Saturday 11th July at 9:00 am. We hope to use these two Saturday mornings to break the back of both churchyards, so that some shorter evening sessions can then be added to the calendar throughout the summer to continue with ongoing maintenance tidies.

We were lucky last year to have a naturalist give our churchyard some of his time and expertise in accessing its wildlife potential, and we will be using his initial plans to guide us on how to manage the different areas of the churchyard to make it sustainable for the local flora and fauna. The Parish Church Churchyard has huge potential to be a very special wildlife area, especially being so near to The Common and surrounded by quiet and large gardens on three sides.

Whilst we plan to tackle the outdoors, Chris was busy in May/June ordering and receiving the new pew cushions for inside the Church. We hope you feel these are an improvement on the old ones and give you a little extra padding. At least they smell nice and new! As we enjoy these improvements inside the Parish Church, the Churchwardens would also like to give a special shout-out to our Church Cleaning Team, 'The Marthas'. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes on a weekly basis to ensure that not only the general work of the Church in the parish runs smoothly, but that the Church building itself is a nice environment to welcome you to prayer and praise. Our Parish Church is incredibly clean compared to many churches that we've attended, and this is all thanks to the weekly 'Marthas' that meet to clean the church on a Thursday morning. What a great job they do, and how incredibly blessed we are to have them. Thank you, Marthas.

Wishing you a very blessed summer ahead, and we look forward to seeing some of you at our Churchyard maintenance sessions.

Chris Dobson and David Goodwin

A Musical Note

A huge thank you to everyone who came along to our Summer Concert on 30th May. It was a lovely evening, full of fantastic music, impressive solo performances from our young choir members, and plenty of fun for everyone involved. One of the highlights was a new song from Paddington the Musical, 'Marmalade', performed by the children (and supported by the adults) and brilliantly led by Aidan as a wonderful Mr Curry. His performance was outstanding, and he was a very deserving recipient of the Celia Stone Chorister Award for his dedication and hard work in putting the performance together.

We were also delighted, on 18th June, to welcome the St Andrew's Madrigal Group, who treated us to a wonderful programme of madrigals, part songs and sacred music. The choir was conducted by Daniel, who first joined our choir when he was just six years old. It was a real pleasure to see him

directing with such enthusiasm and enjoyment, and the choir sang beautifully throughout. It was a really special evening and we are so grateful to them for coming to sing for us. Hopefully they will come again next year!

I was also privileged to attend a concert in London given by the Tenebrae Academy, of which Fergus, one of our young singers, has been a member this year. The Academy is a fantastic programme run by the internationally acclaimed choir Tenebrae, offering talented young singers the chance to work with professional singers, develop their musicianship and explore the possibilities of choral music at the highest level. Conducted by Nigel Short and joined by members of Tenebrae, the concert was absolutely outstanding and it was so special to see Fergus singing as part of such an exceptional group and benefiting from this wonderful opportunity.

There is plenty to look forward to at St Paul's over the summer. First up is our Hymns & Pimms service on Sunday 5th July at 6.30pm. This is your chance to choose the hymns and anthems, and we already have some excellent suggestions. As the title suggests, the evening will finish with a well-earned glass of Pimms.

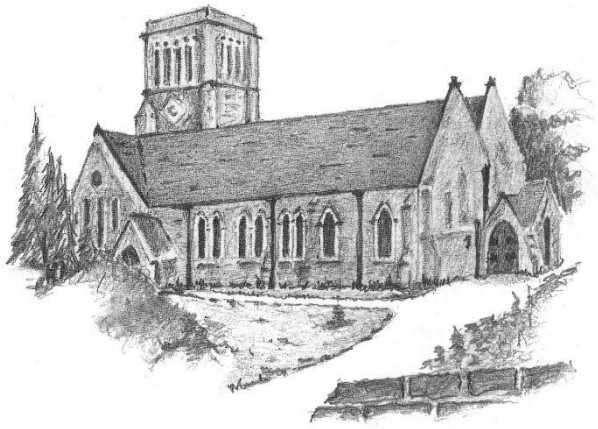
On Saturday 11th July at 7.30pm, the Grenadillas Clarinet Ensemble which is made up of members of the Bacchus Wind Orchestra, who played for us recently, will be giving a concert in support of the Organ Renovation Fund. It promises to be a wonderful evening of music and we would love to see you there.

The following day, Sunday 12th July, both of our services will celebrate the life and music of Charles Wood, marking the centenary of his death. The music throughout the day will either be by Wood himself or by composers who studied with him. The one exception will be the Responses at Evensong, by Ayleward (pronounced "Aylewood"), who is celebrating his 400th anniversary this year and seemed as good a fit as any with the theme!

The children are already looking forward to Choir Camp from 3rd–7th August. As always, there will be plenty of singing, activities and fun, finishing with a concert on Saturday 8th August where you can hear what they have been working on during the week. Proceeds from the concert will go towards the Organ Renovation Fund.

Looking a little further ahead, on Saturday 12th September we will be presenting An Evening at the Musicals. Expect plenty of singing, dancing and hilarity as we work our way through songs from some of our favourite shows. Nic has kindly agreed to provide the lighting so it should be a fantastic evening, and we very much hope you will come and join us.

ST PAUL'S 100 CLUB



NUMBERS £10 PER MONTH

PRIZES

£100 1ST
£ 60 2ND
£ 40 3RD

Numbers still available from Chris Dobson on 07757 680165

WINNING NUMBERS

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There's a way to help St Paul's

Please help us to preserve the church buildings and ministry by leaving a legacy to St Paul's Rusthall in your will.

Thank you

Tamarix Holiday Bungalow
Winchelsea Beach

Tamarix is a 2 bedroom bungalow situated in a no-through road, and set in a large fenced shingle and grassed garden. It is ideal for those looking for a quiet and comfortable self-catering accommodation to enjoy a tranquil break along the stunning Sussex coast. Sleeping four, the cottage can be used for a wonderful family holiday or just a cosy break for two. Pets are welcome by arrangement and Tamarix is perfectly situated for walking, bird watching, cycling, and the beach.

Holidays are on a weekly basis only in high season, but short breaks may be possible at other times.

Weeks for 2026 (April to October) are available from £700 - £910 per week depending on time of year

Please call 01892 528538 or email karen_miller_2@hotmail.co.uk for more information.

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Magazine Easy Payment Methods

Income from magazine sales is important to us at St Paul's. If everyone paid the £1 cover charge we would raise over £900 a year, which would not only cover the cost of producing the magazine but also contribute to other costs such as leasing the photocopier.

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

Alternatively you can use the card payment machines – just choose the £1 donation option.

Your contributions are much appreciated.

St. Paul's Parish, Rusthall

A Shirley Barter Memorial Production

I AM MARK

A Daring New Staging of the Gospel of Mark

Performed by Stefan Smart
Directed by Lisa Gilmour

Coming to St. Pauls
Saturday July 18th
6.30pm

Tickets Now On Sale

One Man
One Chair
One Incredible
True Story

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"Sometimes it takes a living voice, like this one, to make you hear the Bible for the first time"
Archbishop Rowan Williams

Tickets available from St. Paul's Church Office, or online at www.stpaulsrusthall.org.uk, via the QR code below or on Eventbrite.

St. Paul's Church Rusthall

All services take place at the Parish Church unless stated otherwise.

St Paul's Parish Church: Langton Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8XD.
Office and Church Centre: Rusthall Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8RE.
Telephone: 01892 521447

Please scan me to book your tickets

STONE NESS
WALLED GARDEN

We offer social and therapeutic horticulture to members of the local community with learning difficulties and/or mental health issues

OPEN DAY

Saturday 18th July 2026

11.00am to 3.30pm

- Meet the Walled Gardeners
- Competitions ~ Tombola ~ Games
- Sale of Produce
- Complementary BBQ

Sorry no dogs (except guide dogs) in the Walled Garden. We regret the lie of the land makes it impossible for wheelchair users

Find us on the A264 between Ashurst & Langton Green-Post Code TN3 9SU
Tel: Jean Burgess 01892 740305 (before 8.00 pm please) for information

Visit our website: thestonenesswalledgarden.org

Eulogy for Betty Maylam

14th May 1935 – 26th April 2026

The following eulogy was given by Guy Maylam, Betty's son, at her funeral on 29th May 2026.

My mum was born Betty Theobald, actually Betty Doreen but she never liked the name Doreen. She was christened Betty, not Elizabeth, a point lost on her school teacher who always called her that. Mum was too shy and polite to correct her.

Mum's mother was Agnes, a Londoner, and she had worked in the Ministry of Shipping and even met Queen Mary once. She came down to Sussex hop picking and decided she didn't want to leave.

Nan met Gilbert there, they were married and went on to have three boys, Dennis, Roy and Colin (with whom Betty was very close), then two girls, Betty and Rosemary, now the only one left.

Gilbert worked on Major Higgins' estate and a small property came with the position, although with no running water life was still pretty hard. During the early part of the war Ashdown Forest, where they lived, was on the flight path for German bombers returning home, and they often abandoned their undropped bombs on the way, so most nights were spent outside, as the house had no shelter.

Things unfortunately got even harder after the war, as in the winter of 1947 Betty's beloved father was involved in an accident and sadly died. This was devastating for Nan, who had to fight Major Higgins in court to get a short extension on their tenure, as he wanted the family out of his tied property immediately. For Betty, who was so very close to her father, it is hard to imagine the grief. She talked fondly of him all her life.

Betty left school aged 15 and worked at a china and glass shop, which she enjoyed and even reprised later, after she had married. Betty met Tony Maylam at a local dance, but the meeting was really chance as they had both swapped partners for one dance – but they never looked back. They were both very keen on dancing and were very accomplished.

Mum was also extremely good with her hands, knitting, sewing and even dress making, essential skills as first Marcus, then me and Alexia came along. Vanessa had been born after me but sadly lived only a couple of days, although Betty always remembered her birthday.

Betty was also a marvellous and adventurous cook and must have had every one of Mary Berry's cook books in her collection. She used to run the cake stall at the autumn fayre, but her cakes were always the first to sell. Betty's sticky toffee pudding is still talked about in Rusthall, so I'm told. [*How did this get missed from the 175th Anniversary Cook book? Ed*]

Talking of cakes, Betty always made a special one for our birthdays. Two I particularly remember was the one shaped like a teddy bear which slowly tried to fall over as the buttercream melted, producing shrieks of laughter. The other was a tank for Marcus, with finger biscuits for tracks. Later on Betty learned cake decorating and did elaborate run outs in icing, real works of art. I still have photos of cakes Mum did for me more than 40 years ago with pictures of my MGB and E-type. The cakes are long gone, but I still have the cars!

Although Betty was first and foremost a home maker, she did do child minding, was a dinner lady and ran the holiday club for small children. She was also very active in other ways, doing breakfasts in the lodge, she was a Martha, part of the flower team, in the Women's Fellowship and, of course, a long-term member of our wonderful church choir.

Betty also enjoyed attending art classes and was accomplished at painting and drawing, something Alexia has followed her in. Mum did paintings of several of my cars for me and the technical accuracy was really impressive. Betty also enjoyed working in the garden with Tony and the often visited RHS gardens and others, both here in the UK and on their holidays to various European countries, usually by coach as Betty wouldn't fly. Some of Betty's trips included a grandchild or two, which she always loved as they would always be very well behaved for Grandma!

Growing up with Mum for me meant a welcoming home to come back to; neat and tidy and always warm. Betty liked it warm! She always wanted to know how we had got on at school; she always had time for us, no matter how busy she was. She was an amazing Mum, thoughtful and caring and I had an idyllic childhood. Day trips to Greatstone and holidays, quite often to North Devon. Later on, as Dad was less keen on driving long distances, I would take them on mini breaks, where I got quite used to National Trust property visits, with coffee

in the café immediately on arrival, on Mum's insistence!

In earlier years all of us, I think, remember Betty's home-made ginger beer, which would dent the polystyrene ceiling tiles if you aimed the cork incorrectly – it tasted wonderful though.

Betty's handwriting was always so neat and beautiful, in marked contrast to mine and Dad's.

She always made time for and was concerned for everyone, and worried for everyone too. She was a loving Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother and was intensely proud of all her family. It is such a shame that she wasn't here to learn about Hugh's commendation. I am sure she is looking down though.

A few years ago, after problems from a knee operation, Betty seemed to lose her balance and was very reluctant to leave the house. Finally, about three months ago, Mum announced that she didn't want to attempt the stairs again and took to her bed, and never left it again on her own. As she lost all her strength and declined so quickly it was so sad to see this lovely, elegant lady, who had always cared for everyone else and done everything for them, become so helpless and completely dependent herself. At the end, Mum had simply had enough, and was getting no pleasure at all from life, and was also in considerable pain. She said many times that she wanted to go, and on 20th April she slipped away, just a couple of weeks before her 91st birthday.

Rest in Peace, Betty.

Choices and Decisions

Recently we travelled on the sleeper train to Fort William, a twelve hour journey there and back. It was my choice as it was on my bucket list, along with travelling on the Jacobite Steam train. Both were in part disappointing and particularly the latter which ignored any historical factor, giving more emphasis to the fact that it was the Harry Potter train and the Harry Potter viaduct rather than the famous Glenfinnan viaduct. I rather felt my age in both journeys but it was my choice and I have crossed it off the bucket list for better or worse. Never mind, there was plenty of Scottish liquid sunshine to enjoy when not on the train.

For all of us humans, life is a series of choices – do we go up or down or left or right? Do we follow the instructions we have been given or ignore them? It is part of the human psyche that we can think our own thoughts – even if we are in a controlling environment where there can be huge penalties for some actions. Decisions, decisions! Sometimes we have a clear idea of what we want to do and other times not. Sometimes we don't have a real choice or indeed care one way or another. Sometimes a decision, perhaps made without thinking or caring, can change the whole course of one's life. Sometimes the decision you find yourself making is not an easy one or one that you would normally choose to take, and yet deep in your heart – as difficult and as inherently painful as it may be – it is the one you know that your God would want you to take and the one that should you take. Our whole life is based on decision making sometimes the results are surprising perhaps for better or worse. At least we can make the choice and that freedom is to be greatly valued.

In our first reading, we have Solomon, considered to be one of the wisest men of his time, asking God for advice on how he should rule his people. Later on we have Christ trying to guide his followers to the way God would like them to lead their lives. Many of his teachings were in the form of the Beatitudes but they too could throw up problems or confuse people when they were trying to make a choice of what to do. (Making choices is not always an easy thing.) Look at these Beatitudes in a modern context good or bad should we follow or not. And we have Jesus, sent by his Father to spread his message; loving his Father, he did spread God's message but he did it knowing what was in store for him later on the cross. The ultimate sacrifice.

The problem for many of us Christians today – particularly for those of us in the Western world – is that compared to many peoples, on the whole, we are comfortable and safe in our lives. We have choices and we can use them in any number of ways. We don't tend to ask God whether we should go on holiday to Greece or Scotland. (We shouldn't bother him with such trivial matters, so the thinking goes.) We just get on with what we fancy – or can afford! God doesn't seem to come into this at all.

We profess to believe in God and his son Jesus but how strong is that belief? What do we do with it? Many of us were born into Christian families and just assumed we were Christians even if not always understanding what was involved. Many profess to be Christians, but it can still be a hit or miss thing. If life is easy, one can be tempted to put God in the background. Do you really need to bother him when you have things under control? Do you really believe in what you are hearing or promising in church, or are you paying lip service to what you know is expected of you? If life becomes difficult, do you pray to him for guidance and comfort, or rail at him for making your life so difficult? Talking to God can be a hit or miss thing for many people. Do you only speak to him when you want something or need advice? None of us knows completely what God wants or expects of us, and if one's faith is

shaky, one could lose that faith or make decisions that are both harmful and not at all what God had planned for you. It is worthy of profound thought. For most of us life is so busy we rarely sit down and question what are we doing and what choices should we make?

For most of us Christians, God has given us multiple choices over the years and one suspects that there may have been neither only one right or only one wrong way to arrive where God wants us to be. God has a plan for all of us and we must hold tight to that belief and rise up to do what we perceive his will to be – even if it means pain and death. (Think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer returning to Nazi Germany and to certain death - see below.) When things seem particularly difficult, I often think of that phrase from the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' that suggests we listen for 'that still, small voice of calm' that will truly show us the decision that, out of all the choices we have, God would like us to make. He will be there with us always – hold tight to that thought. That will be the right choice.

Whatever choice you have made for the holiday season, home or away, may it be enjoyable and a time of true enjoyment and relaxation.

Recommended Readings:-

1 Kings 3:5-12;

Romans 8:26-39;

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

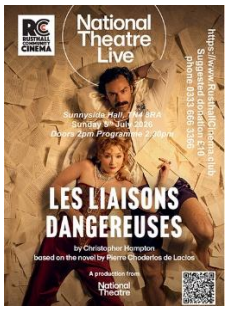
Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) is most famous for his courage, anti-Nazi resistance, his theological writings, and his execution as a political prisoner in 1945. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a controversial figure primarily because his life and writings demand that Christians confront the ultimate moral conflict and the choice of when to disobey the state to follow God. His legacy sparks fierce debate across political and theological lines but he made his choice and stuck to his decision in parallel with Christ.

Tim Cripps

Rusthall Community Cinema

The Choral (2025) Cert 12

Doors open:	6.30pm Saturday 4th July
Directed by:	Nicholas Hytner
Genre:	Drama, History, Music
Runtime:	1 hr 48 mins
Starring:	Ralph Fiennes, Emily Fairn Mark Addy



NT Live: Les Liaisons Dangereuses Cert 15

Doors open:	2 pm Sunday 5th July
Written by:	Pierre Choderlos de Laclos
Adapted by:	Christopher Hampton
Director:	Marianne Elliott
Genre:	Recorded live theatre
Runtime:	2 hr 30 min including interval
Starring:	Lesley Manville, Aidan Turner

Lee (2023) Cert 15

Doors open:	6.30pm Saturday 18th July
Director:	Ellen Kuras
Genre:	Biography, Drama, History
Runtime:	1h 57 mins
Starring:	Kate Winslet, Andy Samberg, Alexander Skarsgard

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Home Life in New Testament Times

Part 5

By the first century Romans were usually clean shaven. And from information we have they apparently used an iron or steel razor. Shaving soap was not available but one safely assume that people would soften the beard with hot water.

The dressing of women's hair was much more elaborate. For young women a very common way was to bind the hair back in a plain knot and to run a plait over the top of the head in front.

Both men and women dyed their hair. Men sometimes dyed it black and sometimes blond. Women would dye their hair black, but auburn was also much in favour. Pains were taken to hide grey hair and it was not unknown for wigs to have been worn by both sexes. In the early Christian church women were warned not to go in for some of the ore elaborate fashions.

Cosmetics were certainly used. Letting the hair grow excessively long was a way of showing to the outside world that a vow had been taken. Women wore ear-rings, nose ornaments. The commonest and most usual female head-gear seems to have been some kind of scarf or veil fastened to the fillet and strings of coins were used as ornaments. It was considered unlucky to lose any of these, so it is thought that the 'lost coin' of the parable may have been one of these ornaments.

In households of the better classes, meals would have been elaborately organised. However, Jew and Gentile would not approve of eating together and certainly the Jews – unless they were very low-class peasants would only eat kosher food. That is food prepared in a special way by draining the blood out of the meat. There were also certain classes of food designated as unclean in the Law of Moses so, although Christian, sharing a meal between Jew and non-Jew would pose a problem. The further the early church spread the bigger this sort of problem became.

The first meal of the day would take place around cockcrow. The second took place at noon - the sixth hour. The third meal was apparently a sort of 'tea-break' usually for workmen. The main meal would be eaten between the eighth and nineth hour and was a very long affair. If this main meal was a sort of dinner-party it was considered bad form to invite more than nine guests. It was the norm to change for this last meal. Tables would tend to be circular, semi-circular or horseshoe shaped. When everyone had taken up the reclining position, water was brought round so that hands could be washed. Everyone ate using their fingers except for soup, eggs and shell-fish when a type of spoon called either a cochlear or ligula was used. Therefore – of course – it was necessary to wash hands between courses.

After the main course had been eaten it was the custom to say the equivalent of 'grace' today. This was followed by dessert. So far as the Jews were concerned meat was usually only eaten on festival days. This would be boiled except for lamb at the Passover Meal which would be roasted. Sugar was unknown at this time, but honey was used. Milk was often kept in skins like wine. Fruit and nuts were always eaten on New Year's Eve for luck. Fish-curing was a regular industry on the shores of Lake Galilee. Certainly – by the time of Christ – food was much more varied than as often described in the Old Testament.

The most important tree cultivated in Palestine was the olive. Olives have been described as – meat and butter – for the peasants. One tree in full bearing formed a very large part of the food for a single family. Instead of butter it was the oil of the olives which was used as a relish. Wine was almost a universal drink. In September the fig harvest was a time of considerable social activity. The keeping of chicken was also common by New Testament times.

As the Church spread it would have been difficult to tell the difference in the home between a Christian and a non-Christian – although as we know today strict Jews did and do adhere to the rules and laws laid down in the Old Testament.

Daphne Pilcher

Poems for Summer

These poems celebrate the lushness and joy of summer.

from **The Garden**

What wondr'ous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnar'd with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Andrew Marvell

~~~~~~~~~~~~~

from **Sabbaths**

After the long weeks
when the heat curled the leaves
and the air thirsted, comes
a morning after rain, cool
and bright. The leaves uncurl,
the pastures begin again
to grow, the animals and the birds
rejoice. If tonight the world
ends, we'll have had this day.

Wendell Berry

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

From Blossoms

From blossoms comes
this brown paper bag of peaches
we bought from the boy
at the bend in the road where we turned toward
signs painted *Peaches.*

From laden boughs, from hands,
from sweet fellowship in the bins,
comes nectar at the roadside, succulent
peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,
comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.

O, to take what we love inside,
to carry within us an orchard, to eat
not only the skin, but the shade,
not only the sugar, but the days, to hold
the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into
the round jubilance of peach.

There are days we live
as if death were nowhere
in the background; from joy
to joy to joy, from wing to wing,
from blossom to blossom to
impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.

Li -Young Lee

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And here are **Summer Poems for Children**

Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing:
Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

Christina Rossetti

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

A Spike Of Green

When I went out
The sun was hot,
It shone upon
My flower pot.

And there I saw
A spike of green
That no one else
Had ever seen!

On other days
The things I see
Are mostly old
Except for me.

But this green spike
So new and small
Had never yet
Been seen at all.

Barbara Baker

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Bed In Summer

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light
In summer quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

Robert Louis Stevenson

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Lemon Moon

On a hot and thirsty summer night,
The moon's a wedge of lemon light
Sitting low among the trees,
Close enough for you to squeeze
And make a moonade, icy-sweet,
To cool your summer-dusty heat.

Beverly McLoughland

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The Prayer of Generosity

I wonder how many of you, when reading the following prayer, recognise its content from something that you may have said weekly, many years ago in your youth?

Teach us, good Lord,
To serve thee as thou deservest;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labour and not to ask for any reward
Save that of knowing that we do thy will.

Now known as the 'prayer of generosity', the above is thought to have been originally written by an anonymous Jesuit who then ascribed it to Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1566). Saint Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus, which later became known as the Jesuits.

Although we now believe that Ignatius didn't write the prayer himself, I am sure he would have heartily approved, since he was well-known for his generosity and selfless acts of service. Many scholars today tend to consider the prayer as rather overly unrealistic and romantic, feeling that some of the language slightly flies in the face of what Jesus actually teaches us. The point of prayer, after all, is hardly to totally ignore health, rest, and counting the cost.

Where we might, though, recognise the words of this Ignatian prayer, is if we were members of the scouting community in our youth, for at the turn of the 20th Century, Jacques Sevin first adopted the prayer as his organising principle when introducing scouting to the French people. Jacques Sevin was a French Jesuit born in 1882 in Lille, France, and is known for his role in the introduction of Scouting to France. Sevin's aim was to propose scouting to the young people of France in the hope of developing their faith and integrating them more deeply into the Catholic Church.

What we now know as the International Scouting Movement developed a few years later, initially arising from an outdoors programme for boys aged 11 to 18 set up by Robert Baden-Powell at Brownsea Island in Wiltshire in 1907. His first experimental camp involving 20 boys was a huge success, and the following year, Baden-Powell published 'Scouting for Boys'. This book was an immediate hit and has since sold over 100 million copies and helped spawn a global movement in scouting with millions of members in nearly every country around the world.

The International Scouting Movement also adopted the 'prayer of generosity' as its scouting prayer, and it has subsequently been said at the closure of scout meetings, or during campfires and special religious services. Today, because the scouting movement aims to reach young boys and girls of all faiths and ages, the prayer has been further adapted to specifically meet the culture, religion, language, and age of the boys and girls who say it. In all its forms, though, at its heart it still teaches scouts how to serve others without necessarily placing themselves always first. Saint Ignatius of Loyola would, I am sure, continue to heartily approve of the prayer's legacy.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola – Spain 1491-1566

David Goodwin

Life in 2026 - a short selection of letters to the Times Newspaper

Sir. My father was inclined to wear a tea cosy to keep his head warm during the winter. On one occasion when driving to Scotland he was stopped by the Constabulary for speeding. He wound down the window and the Officer smartly saluted and said "Sorry Bishop I had not realised it was you. Do watch your speed Sir."

Sir. While standing, perhaps looking a bit vacant, in a supermarket a helpful assistant asked what I was looking for. "Bovril" I said, and was shown to a display of lavatory paper.

Sir. I picked up some lychees in a supermarket. At the checkout the young lad said "What are these?" I told him: "Lychees." He said "what kind of cheese is that?" and before I could answer he said "don't bother I don't like cheese anyway."

Tim Cripps

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American Independence

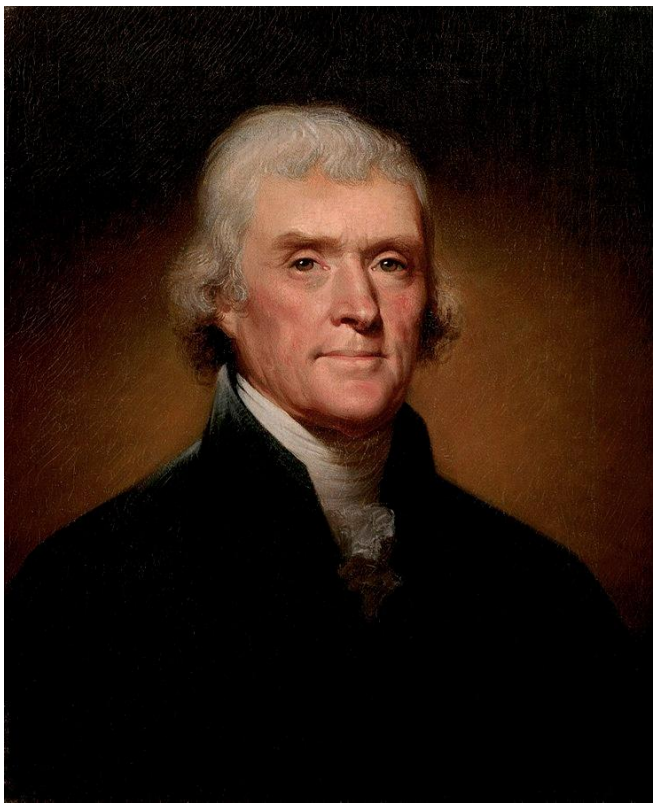
The second American Congress produced and signed a Declaration of Independence. Having declared independence from Britain, the 13 American colonies were able to secure an alliance with France to provide financial and military support for the Revolutionary War. The Declaration was signed at Pennsylvania State House, later renamed Independence Hall, in Philadelphia. It was a dangerous act as the delegates knew that those who signed would be considered guilty of an act of High Treason, a crime which could be punished by torture and death.

They had already been fighting for over a year, fighting because, after the Boston Tea Party, Parliament had implemented 5 laws designed to increase revenue from the colonies, together known as the Coercive Acts of 1774, but the colonies were not allowed to be represented in Parliament to disagree. They argued that Parliament was the legislature of Great Britain only and that colonies that had their own legislature were connected to the rest of the Empire only through their allegiance to the Crown.

George Washington

The American Revolutionary War was fought from April 1775 until a decisive victory for the American Continental Army led by George Washington at the Siege of Yorktown in 1781, after which George III started negotiating for peace. The Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, acknowledging American Independence.

The Declaration of Independence was largely written by Thomas Jefferson with the assistance of a committee of 4 others, including John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert R Livingstone. It is a document of international and historical significance, much as the Magna Carta was in England. It has had much influence as a statement of human rights, viewed by Abraham Lincoln as the moral standard to which the United States should strive to achieve. In 1863 Lincoln spoke of the Declaration during his Gettysburg Address, considered among the most important speeches in American History. He quoted "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness", words which remain powerful today.



Thomas Jefferson

Deborah Bruce

The Great Treasure Hunt

The CYC set the leaders a challenge - they requested a mammoth treasure hunt, one that was not easy! Knowing that CYC are hugely enthusiastic, intelligent teenagers who work very well together this certainly put us to the test! Luckily Harry really did not mind how many hours the planning and preparation took and the result was 17 clues hidden in both the Churchyard and Happy Valley. 'Can you fit into Cheesewring Rock?' and 'Who lies behind the Old School and died aged 20?' are but two examples. Once all 17 letters had been found and sorted into the correct answer - Chocolate Brownies - an absolute favourite of CYC and Jean's are legendary!

The laughter, fun, chat and comradeship was wonderful to watch and hear. Every inch of the valley was explored but I have to report that not one group completed the trail and the CYC trophy was therefore not awarded! Leaders 1, CYC 0!!

Today's teenagers lead extremely busy and stressful lives without much of the freedom our generation enjoyed at their age. Much is expected of them and many live and work under a constant spotlight including that of social media. CYC meetings give them the space to be themselves and the freedom to explore and discover new interests and friends within a safe, open and non judgmental space and they really revel in these times. It never ceases to amaze us how speedily they place their phones in the box when they arrive, almost as if it is a relief to be phone free for an hour and a half. The Treasure Hunt was a HUGE success, not

just because we won but because it enabled our teenagers to be free, in a beautiful place and to listen to their joy was the greatest of gifts and thanks.

We were all sorry that the inaugural 'Commons Fun Day' had to be cancelled due to the rain and wind. A huge amount of work and preparation had gone into this event and we were set to run the Coconut Shy, Hook a Duck and Splat the Rat! Hopefully a new date can be found.

Next months meeting will be a Summer BBQ and swim at Churchside.

Thursday July 2nd 6 - 7.30 pm. All welcome

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Faith and Social Action

It has been a privilege to engage with faith and secular organisations in the voluntary sector for over thirty years. Welcome to the world of financial pressures, regulation, personality clashes, difficult relationships with statutory bodies and funders but also the quiet satisfaction of helping individuals.

Whether assisting people at point of need or campaigning to eradicate the causes of that need, it is important to remember we are engaging with individuals, not clients, customers or units. Engagement should look beyond the immediate issue for an individual to its causes and consequences: pastoral care and campaigning for systemic change to achieve social justice.

Poverty, homelessness, misogyny, racism, deprivation, discrimination, marginalisation, exclusion have causes to be addressed, people in need of immediate practical support. Often the effect on individuals is to engender apathy, lethargy, despair, depression. It is all too easy to be caught in a mindset that perceives no escape from the situation a person finds themselves in. Having experienced poverty, homelessness, unemployment and loneliness I understand how difficult life for some is: live through today and dread tomorrow. Faith and secular organisations are engaging more with holistic approaches and seeking to break down the us as provider and you as recipient approach. We need to listen, show empathy and dispel patronising attitudes. We are not simply for people; we are with them.

The authors of the synoptic gospels (Mark, Matthew and Luke) attribute to Jesus the profound principle of love your neighbour and the instruction to follow him in deeds. But do Christians engage in social action only because it is expected of them? No is the answer. Major religions and secular philosophies profess to follow the Golden Rule: do to others as you would have done to you. But I have a nagging doubt that the agenda of some faith groups is not only to assist individuals in need of support but to use the engagement as a means of evangelism, however softly that is done.

Ask the question: is this the approach attributed to Jesus in the synoptic gospels?

John Hopkinson

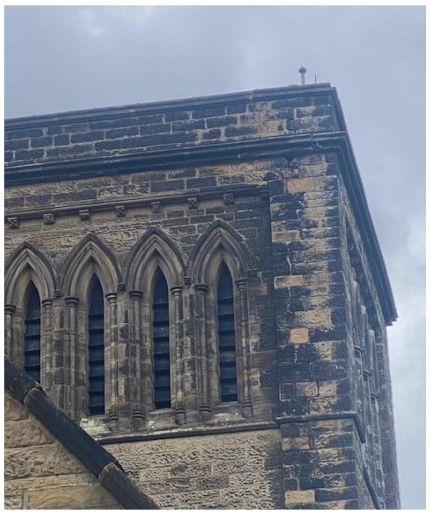
Tales from the Churchyard

Churchyards are often hidden havens for nature. Because they tend to be quiet, green spaces that have often never been ploughed, and have been protected from the use of chemicals or artificial fertilisers for decades, churchyards have frequently developed as shelters for rare and endangered species of both fauna and flora. St Paul's churchyard is a good example of the best that a churchyard has to offer our natural world. With our church tucked away at the edge of the large green expanse of The Common and protected by surrounding large gardens, it is of little surprise that it is nurturing some beautiful examples of British Wildlife and Plants.

As custodians of St Paul's, it is important that we are aware of our individual and collective responsibility to ensure the continuity of this important green space and the management of the flora and fauna that it contains. Let us start by sharing two species that are making particular use of our churchyard and its buildings this month:

The Jackdaw

You may well have heard our churchyard Jackdaws, if not seen them. We currently have a nest of them in our church tower. Standing from the end of the pathway that leads to The Lodge, look up to the top of Church Tower, and just under the cornice at the bottom of the wall on the south-west corner of the tower roof, you will see a large split/crack in the stonework (we've inspected it, and it's perfectly safe and looks like it's been like that for decades). If you're very patient, you may notice some members of our Jackdaw family flying in and out of this nook. Mr and Mrs Jackdaw have brought up a family of young this spring in a nest hidden deep within the wall behind this crack.



Jackdaws are easily distinguished from other corvids by their grey head and breast. They are clever birds and live easily alongside humans. They are omnivorous and eat almost anything, and as their diet particularly includes seeds and insects, the neighbouring Common makes an excellent larder for them, and for feeding their young.

The UK Jackdaw population is booming, with over 1.6 million breeding pairs, and they are currently the 17th most populous bird in the UK. So, whilst they may not be one of the UK's rarest birds, they have clearly given the thumbs up to St Paul's and show how our native wildlife can make the most of man-made environments. For more information on our Jackdaws, go to https://www.bto.org/learn/about-birds/birdfacts/jackdaw.

Common Spotted-Orchids

The term 'common' is slightly misleading, as all British native orchids are at varying levels of endangerment. In the grass border, along the north-facing wall of the church, we have a flourishing bed of a variant of the common spotted-orchid. This native orchid comes in many variants, but the general species is identified relatively easily by its fleshy, large spotted leaves, which arrive in early spring and stay with us all year round. In May/June, the orchid produces pyramid-shaped flower spikes, and our St Paul's variant has beautiful purple mottling on the petals of each flower that make up the flower spike, although these tend to fade as flower ages. They are currently in flower in our churchyard.

We are careful not to mow this part of the churchyard to ensure the plants build up their energy each year through photosynthesis, thereby guaranteeing annual flowering. Orchids are sometimes tricky to propagate, but maybe we can have a go and see if we can increase our orchid population within the Churchyard. The spotted orchid is probably best propagated by division in early autumn, as orchids are notoriously difficult to propagate by seed. It will also be useful for us to keep an eye on any competing and more common plants in the area and ensure these are kept under

restraint to give our orchids a better chance of flourishing.

For more information on British Orchids, go to https://britishorchids.co.uk/.

David Goodwin

The Dell between the Church and the Langton Road is also blessed with swathes of orchids at the moment. Do take a look from the footpath. [Ed]

A Clarion Call

Please donate to the Organ Renovation Fund today!

It would be GREAT if you would help our pipe organ to support the VOIX CELESTES of our lovely CHOIR, and SWELL our hearts with joy!

Around £350,000 is needed to renovate our beloved church organ, so we need to pull out all the STOPS!

Please donate using the QR code below, all contributions gratefully received, thank you.

Organ Renovation Fund Committee

Hendley

Removals & Storage

Tel: 01892 837207
Email: info@hendleyremovals.co.uk
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"Your local family run movers & storers"

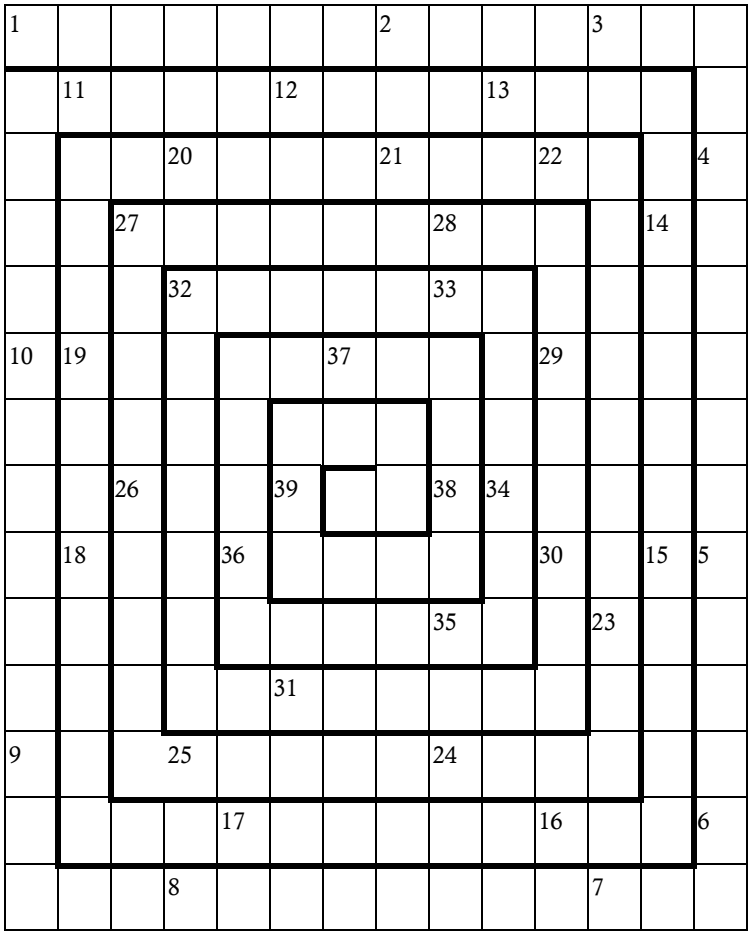
Activity Pages

Try your hand at this word search relating to Food Glorious Food. The answers are written forwards, backwards and diagonally. At the end you should be left with 10 unused letters which will give you the name of a type of cheese from Italy.

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

ASPARAGUS
AUBERGINE
BAPS
BEEFBURGER
BRIE
BRIOCHE
BROTH
CAKE
CHOP
COD
CRAB
EEL
EGGS
FLAN
FONDUE
GINGERBEER
GOUDA
HAGGIS
HAKE
HAM
LEEK
LIME
MADEIRA
MULLET
OKRA
PIE
RICE
ROE
SALAMI
SALMON
SANDWICH
SAUSAGE
SHELLFISH
SPAGHETTI
STEW
STRAWBERRIES
TART
TOFFEE
TRIPE
TUNA

This is a crossword with a difference where the last letter of each answer is the first letter of the next. All the answers are first names.



Clues

1. Queen of England from 1837 to 1902
2. French form of a girl's name relating to a month in the year
3. Pasteur – French scientist
4. 1st Christian martyr
5. Mansell – Former racing driver
6. Author of 3rd book in the New Testament
7. Taylor – British/American actress
8. Mother of Samuel
9. Also the name of a moorland plant
10. Name of a rat – Television puppet
11. Patron Saint of Wales
12. Derby – Wife of Bradley Walsh
13. Christie – author of 'Death on the Nile'
14. Composer – Lloyd Webber
15. Shakespeare
16. Sargent – former conductor of the BBC Symphony orchestra
17. Thatcher – former Prime Minister
18. Turner – previous singer and songwriter
19. Latin meaning 'she who must (or is fit to) be loved'
20. Character in books by Lewis Carroll
21. Morcombe – previous part of comedy double act
22. Princess of Wales

23. Old French and Scottish variant of the Greek name Helen
24. Known as the Black Prince
25. Duck
26. Jacobi – remembered for his role as a medieval monk in 'Cadfael'
27. Williams – starred in the 'Carry On' films
28. Title of a book about a little Swiss girl
29. Russian prince known as 'the Terrible'
30. 4th century bishop who is supposed to have inspired the modern Santa Claus
31. Phillips – Zara Tindall's half sister
32. Waugh – author
33. Campbell – model
34. Girl's name and also a plant often called Flag
35. Hogg – previous Scottish Rugby Union player
36. Known as the Doubting Disciple
37. Disciple known as 'the Zealot'
38. Wisdom – previous actor and comedian

Twenty Questions to Test You

1. What is the shortest book in the Old Testament
2. Of which of Henry VIII's wives did Hans Holbein paint a flattering portrait
3. In what occupation are people likely to use the phrase 'you should have seen the one that got away'.
4. Cu is the symbol for which chemical element
5. What is drinking from the far side of a glass supposed to cure
6. Which town in Great Britain has the longest pier
7. How many men were in the boat in the novel by Jerome K Jerome
8. What is the capital of Iceland
9. From which planet does Star Trek character 'Spock; hail from
10. What shape are level crossing signs
11. Old name for Christmas
12. Who cut off Captain Hook's hand
13. What colour denotes the easiest ski runs in Europe
14. What is the Americal term for a Nappy
15. For what does ASPO stand
16. What insect is the Common Brimstone
17. Jack and Jill were cats in which children's TV programme
18. Quickbeam is an old English name for what type of tree
19. In which decade were the Mods and Rockers predominantly active
20. People who are 'rolling in it' are said to be what.

Answer the questions in the Grid. All the references are taken from the Good News version of the Bible. Then sort out the letters in the third vertical column to find the name of a book in the Bible.

1							Eldest son of Jacob and Leah (Genesis Ch 29)
2	■						King of Tyre (2 Samuel Ch 5)
3							The Lord said 'All their evils began here' (Hosea Ch 9)
4							He was the father of Gilead (1 Chronicles Ch 7)
5						■	Companion of Paul (Galatians Ch 2)
6							He brought about the cure of Naarman (2 Kings Ch 5)
7							Commander of Jabin's army (Judges Ch 4)
8	■						Home of Amos (Amos Ch 1)
9						■	A month in the Hebrew calendar (Esther Ch 8)

This second grid is very much the same as the first one. Again the answer is a book of the Bible and this will be found in the third vertical column when you have answered all the questions. References are taken from the Good News version of the Bible.

1	■						To which town were things brought by sea (Ezra Ch 3)
2						■	King of Moab (Micah Ch 6)
3							Where Barnabas was born (Acts Ch 4)
4							Which town did David save (1 Samuel Ch 23)
5						■	Where did they make a golden bull (Psalm 106)
6						■	Who plotted to kill Mordecai (Esther Ch 5)
7							King of Ammon (1 Samuel Ch 11)

ANSWERS

Wordsearch

Cheese from Italy – Gorgonzola

Crossword with a Difference

1	Victoria	2	Avril	3	Louis	4	Stephen	5	Nigel	6	Luke
7	Elizabeth	8	Hannah	9	Heather	10	Roland	11	David	12	Donna
13	Agatha	14	Andrew	15	William	16	Matthew	17	Margaret	18	Tina
19	Amanda	20	Alice	21	Eric	22	Catherine	23	Elaine	24	Edward
25	Donald	26	Derek	27	Kenneth	28	Heidi	29	Ivan	30	Nicholas
31	Stephanie	32	Evelyn	33	Naomi	34	Iris	35	Stuart	36	Thomas
37	Simon	38	Norman	39	Nellie						

Twenty Questions to Test You

1	Obadiah	2	Anne of Cleves	3	Fishing	4	Copper
5	Hiccups	6	Southend on Sea	7	Three	8	Reykjavik
9	Vulcan	10	Triangular	11	Yule	12	Peter Pan
13	Green	14	Diaper	15	Anti Social Behaviour Order	16	Butterfly
17	Blue Peter	18	Rowan/Mountain Ash	19	The Sixties	20	Very rich

First Grid

1	Reuben	2	Hiram	3	Gilgal	4	Machir	5	Titus	6	Elisha
7	Sisera	8	Tekoa	9	Sivan						

The book of the Bible is Leviticus

Second Grid

1 Joppa 2 Balak 3 Cyprus 4 Keilah 5 Sinai 6 Haman 7 Nahash

The book of the Bible is Philmon

Rethinking Church Social Action

These reflections come after spending a day with Hope into Action at their annual conference, ***Rooted: Homelessness Ends in Community***. In particular, they were stirred afresh while listening to the seminar *Rethinking Poverty and Our Response* with Jon Kuhrt and Rachel Arnold, both shaped by the wider imagination of Together for the Common Good and the work of Jenny Sinclair. For those familiar with these voices, there will be little here that is entirely new. I am simply trying to put words around questions some of us working around poverty, homelessness, church, and community have been carrying for a number of years.

What follows paints with broad strokes at times. Reality is always more complex than this, and many churches embody deep forms of shared life and hospitality. But I still think the tension being described here is real and worth naming.

There is a kind of Christianity that excels at projects.

The foodbank is organised, the referrals are done, the safeguarding structures are in place, and the church becomes increasingly competent at delivering social action — sometimes directly, sometimes by hosting charities, offering buildings and resources, and functioning as a volunteer base for wider community initiatives.

Much of this work is deeply good and necessary. In the middle of austerity, rising poverty, broken housing systems, addiction, loneliness, and overwhelmed public services, churches have often stepped into the gap with real compassion and sacrifice.

But I sometimes wonder whether parts of the church have quietly drifted into a very different imagination of what Christian community is meant to be.

I sometimes describe this shift as *counter Christianity*.

And I mean counter in two senses.

A counter is the place where things are handed over — food parcels, vouchers, forms, advice, a pair of trainers. A transaction takes place. Need is met, help is given, and then the interaction ends.

But I also mean counter as metaphor. The counter is the thing standing between the Christian and the person receiving help. It creates distance and establishes roles. One person becomes the helper. The other becomes the helper. One remains named and capable; the other slowly risks becoming reduced to need.

Client.

Service user.

The vulnerable.

The homeless.

The addict.

Now those terms are not always malicious. Institutions need categories and systems. But language shapes imagination. Unless we are careful, the church can slowly begin to mirror the logic of institutions more than the logic of the kingdom of God.

The poor are welcomed, but often mainly as recipients.

Present, but still somehow peripheral.

In the room, but rarely shaping the room.

And often this happens unconsciously. A church may genuinely want diversity while still expecting everybody to quietly adapt to middle-class norms around behaviour, communication, emotional expression, and respectability.

These questions have perhaps become even more urgent in recent years because of the enormous rise in church-based social action during and after the Covid pandemic. Across the country, churches stepped into crisis with extraordinary generosity — food provision, debt support, warm spaces, wellbeing projects, community hubs, emergency response.

Much of that work was beautiful and necessary.

But as churches increasingly organise around social action, deeper questions around relationship, power, belonging, and dependency become more important, not less.

Who controls the space?

Who decides what help looks like?

Who gets listened to?

Who remains comfortable?

Because dependency can quietly form inside church projects in ways nobody intended. Not simply material dependency, though that can happen too, but relational dependency.

The church can unconsciously create a permanent divide between "those who help" and "those who are helped."

People may receive support for years without ever fully becoming participants in the life of the community — contributors, friends, decision-makers, or family within the church itself.

And yet the gospel keeps disrupting those categories.

In the kingdom of God, the poor are not merely objects of compassion or recipients of ministry.

They are bearers of the image of God. Friends. And for those who name the name of Christ, brothers and sisters. People with gifts, wisdom, humour, resilience, and prophetic voices the wider church desperately needs.

I do not write this as somebody hostile towards larger churches, structures, or organised ministry. Alongside leading Lighthouse — a church and Christian community for those battered and bruised by the storms of life, gathering on Sundays in a café-style space inside a homeless shelter in Leeds and throughout the week across six locations — I also served for twelve years within a city-centre resource church context.

In fact, Lighthouse itself was initially planted by that church and remained embedded within it for several years before later becoming an independent charity and church community in its own right. I remain deeply grateful for much of that experience and for many people within those churches.

But working closely among people on the margins has made me think more deeply about what Christian community actually is, and what happens when social action becomes separated from shared life.

At Lighthouse we try intentionally not to call people clients or service users. Not because language magically fixes everything, but because words reveal what kind of community we think we are building. A client receives a service. A brother or sister belongs.

None of this means projects are bad.

Projects matter.

Structures matter.

Safeguarding matters.

Foodbanks matter.

Support services matter.

And sometimes the counter is necessary.

And many churches embody deep and beautiful forms of *koinonia*. Across the country there are churches quietly sharing meals, carrying burdens, fostering, housing people, praying together, grieving together, and building genuine communities of belonging across difference.

The point is not that projects or structures are wrong, but that social action on its own is not yet the fullness of the church's calling.

The church is not simply called to run compassionate initiatives for people, but to become a people among whom strangers slowly become family, a community of covenant and kinship.

Because people are not projects.

They are image bearers.

Friends.

Brothers and sisters.

The danger is when the project keeps running, but people stop really knowing one another.

And perhaps this is part of what the New Testament means by *koinonia*.

At the end of Lighthouse Sundays, somewhere between washing the pots and cleaning the toilets, we often say the grace together after a quick debrief and prayer. We say it standing in a circle with our eyes open — what we jokingly call "holy eyeballing."

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all."

That word "fellowship" is *koinonia*.

Koinonia is more than friendliness or hospitality. It is participation in the life of God through the Holy Spirit — a shared communion rooted in Christ himself. The church is not simply a collection of individuals who happen to worship in the same room. It is a people being drawn into the life, love, and self-giving communion of the Triune God.

Not just friendliness after church.

Not networking.

Not simply turning up to meetings.

Shared participation in the life of God through the Holy Spirit.

But also the Holy Spirit knitting people together into a new kind of community. Lives woven together through mercy, prayer, burden-bearing, forgiveness, and love.

Often when Lighthouse gathers for worship, the service leader says these words:

"In a world which seems to love to drop bombs and build walls, Jesus is doing something different. He is building a family where people like me and people like you, from different experiences and different backgrounds, can look at each other and with honesty and integrity and say: you are my brother, and you are my sister.

The peace of the Lord be with you."

And everybody responds:

"And also with you."

Then hugs, fist bumps, handshakes, and friendly nods move around this motley crew.

At times it feels almost sacramental — a thin space where grace hangs quietly in the air.

A strange and beautiful thing: brothers and sisters dwelling together in unity.

To me, that is part of what the kingdom of God looks like.

I have a photograph from a few years ago when Lighthouse was more embedded within the larger resource church from which it first emerged. A group of lads are standing at the top of the church steps dressed as shepherds before the main nativity service of the year.

Some had experienced homelessness.

Some were ex-offenders.

Some had struggled deeply with mental health.

And there they were, laughing together, welcoming families as they climbed the church steps for the Christmas service.

I love that photograph because it captures something true about the kingdom of God.

In the world of the first century, shepherds sat low in the social imagination. They were associated with roughness, unpredictability, and the edges of respectable society. Yet in Luke's Gospel it is shepherds — not emperors, not religious elites, not the powerful — who first receive the good news of Christ's birth.

In the story of Jesus, the outcasts are not pushed to the edge of the story. They are invited close.

And sometimes the people society expects to remain recipients of welcome become the very people through whom welcome is given.

Some of the most important ministry at Lighthouse looks deeply ordinary. Sometimes it involves the leaders, paid staff or volunteers. Sometimes it doesn't.

People playing dominoes.

Banter.

Singing "Happy Birthday" and eating cake.

Making brews.

Washing pots.

Singing Together, sometimes dancing.

Arts and crafts.

Telling jokes and stories.

Smoking outside together.

A trip to the art gallery or the local park.

A game of rounders or charades.

Praying quietly with somebody carrying grief in their bones.

Remembering somebody's court date.

Noticing when somebody disappears.

Laughing together.

Mourning together.

Small things.

But holy things.

I remember one afternoon when a man who had first come to Lighthouse needing support ended up sitting quietly praying with somebody else who was falling apart. Nobody had organised it. No programme had produced it. It simply emerged from life together.

Last year Sr Margaret, my first theology tutor from nearly thirty years ago, visited Lighthouse. She was welcomed by those on the margins, and one member of our community — who had previously been living in a car park — prayed for her. He also prayed for the Catholic priest accompanying her, asking that he might know healing from his chronic pain.

There was something deeply beautiful about it all.

The one once dismissed as broken becoming the one who ministers.

The vulnerable becoming the vessel of grace.

Blessed to be a blessing.

And I have seen this kind of thing again and again among people the wider world often only describes through deficits.

Sometimes people on the margins carry a kind of honesty more comfortable churches can lose. There is less room for performance. Less ability to maintain the illusion of self-sufficiency.

And alongside immense pain, you often encounter extraordinary generosity.

I have seen people with almost nothing open their homes to somebody else in crisis. I have watched people share their last bit of baccy, their last few pounds, their last food. I have seen people sit in hospital for hours with somebody everybody else had forgotten.

Not romanticised. Not idealised.

But sometimes communities on the margins expose how individualistic and emotionally defended the wider culture — and sometimes the church — has become.

Humans are not islands, cut off from one another. We are relational creatures made in the image of a relational God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist eternally in communion, love, and self-giving relationship. To be made in the image of God is therefore to be made for communion rather than isolation. Yet much of late modern culture trains us towards autonomy, self-protection, and radical individualism. Every person for themselves. Freedom increasingly imagined as independence rather than interdependence.

But the kingdom of God moves in another direction.

Jesus did not remain at a safe professional distance from suffering. Again and again in the Gospels, Jesus eats with people — tax collectors, sinners, the poor, outcasts, and those that respectable religion preferred at a distance.

Meals become places where social boundaries begin to collapse.

Perhaps this is why meals matter so much in the ministry of Jesus. Around tables, status begins to loosen.

The Eucharist itself is not a private religious act but a shared meal of dependence and grace. We come empty-handed. We receive mercy together. The ground is level there.

The early church understood something many modern churches have forgotten. Acts describes believers as those devoted to *"the fellowship (koinonia), to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* Resources were shared. Burdens were carried together. Economic life, worship, meals, and belonging became intertwined.

That is not simply charity.

It is common life.

The church was never meant to become merely an extension of the state or a servant filling gaps left by political failure. It is something stranger and more beautiful than that: a Christ-centred *koinonia*, a fellowship of differents.

This is why the words of Jesus remain so searching:

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

Love is a relational word. It cannot be reduced to programmes or institutional efficiency. It requires presence. Patience. Staying around long enough for people to become known.

You cannot love people while permanently keeping them on the other side of the counter.

And perhaps that matters even more in the years ahead.

Loneliness, inequality, housing pressures, ecological crisis, and political instability are already straining the fabric of society. I do not know exactly what the future holds. But I do think the church will need deeper roots than programmes alone.

Which means the church cannot simply become a more efficient provider of religious services within a fragmenting culture.

We are being called to become communities of deep belonging.

As the Psalmist writes:

"God sets the lonely in families." (Psalm 68:6)

Places where people know one another.

Carry one another.

Share resources.

Pray together.

Eat together.

Mourn together.

Pope Francis has often warned about the danger of what he calls a "throwaway culture," where people become disposable once they are no longer useful, productive, or easy to accommodate. In contrast, he speaks about the need for a "culture of encounter."

He writes*:"A culture of encounter demands that we be ready not only to give, but also to receive."*

That is a profound challenge to forms of charity which only move in one direction.

The poor are not simply people to whom the church brings Christ.

They are also people through whom Christ comes to meet the church.

And there is a prophetic dimension to this.

Jon Kuhrt has warned that the church can become little more than a handmaiden to the state, plugging gaps left by austerity, welfare cuts, collapsing social care, housing failures, and economic violence. There is truth in that warning.

The church can end up endlessly managing social pain without ever asking why so many people are bleeding in the first place.

We feed people, but rarely ask why people are hungry.

Or as Rachel Arnold observed, we collect donations from supermarkets for our foodbanks while often saying very little about the economic systems underneath them — systems where enormous profits flow upwards to shareholders even as jobs quietly disappear from local communities through self-checkouts and automation.

But relational Christianity pushes us beyond this. Because once the poor are no longer "them" but part of "us," suffering can no longer remain abstract.

Once you know people, eat with people, love people, pray with people, visit them in hospital, and bury people, the pain stops being theoretical. The church is no longer advocating for outsiders from a safe moral distance.

We are speaking about our friends.

Our brothers.

Our sisters.

The biblical prophets were not detached commentators speaking about suffering from afar. They lamented from within the anguish of the people. The cry for justice in Scripture emerges from shared pain.

It is harder to speak in abstractions once suffering has a face and a voice and you know the person's name.

The kingdom of God seems to move against isolation.

Towards communion.

Towards common life.

Towards tables rather than counters.

Of course, the church must feed people. Of course we provide support. Love requires that.

But we are also called to become communities where suffering is shared deeply enough that we begin to cry out together.

Not *their* struggle, but ours.

Maybe the kingdom of God does not always look impressive.

Sometimes it looks like wounded people refusing to leave one another alone.

Sometimes it looks like somebody making tea while another person cries quietly at the table.

Sometimes it looks like prayer offered through cigarette smoke outside a church door.

Sometimes it looks like bread broken among people who know they need mercy.

Sometimes it looks like the person who first arrived needing help becoming the one carrying somebody else's pain.

And perhaps that is why the title of the conference stayed with me all day:

Rooted: Homelessness Ends in Community.

Not simply in services.

Not simply in projects.

Not simply in systems, important though those are.

But in people becoming family.

In a fragmented world, perhaps one of the most prophetic things the church can become is a people who refuse isolation, refuse disposability, and refuse to leave one another alone.

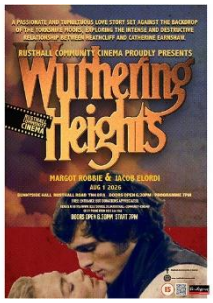
Not on the safe side of the counter, but around tables where lives are slowly being knitted together in love.

Rev'd Jon Swales

22nd May 2026

Rev'd Jon Swales MBE is an Anglican priest, prophetic theologian, and poet. He is lead tutor at Lighthouse School of Missional Theology and a course tutor for *Mission, Theology and Ministry for the Margins*. He is the author of three books: *Let Me Be the Kind Who Weeps*, *East of Eden*, and *Lament and Hope*.

Rusthall Community Cinema



Wuthering Heights (2026) Cert 15

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 1st August
Directed by: Emeral Fennell
Genre: Drama, Romance
Runtime: 2 hr 16 min plus interval
Starring: Jacob Elordi, Shazad Latif, Martin Clunes, Ewan Mitchell, Owen Cooper, Margot Robbie

Hamnet (2026) Cert 12

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 15th August
Directed by: Chloé Zhao
Genre: Biography, Drama, History
Runtime: 2 hr 6 min
Starring: Jessie Buckley, Paul Mescal, Zac Wishart

The English Patient (1996) Cert 15

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 29th August
Directed by: Anthony Minghella
Genre: Drama, Romance, War
Runtime: 2 hr 35 min plus interval
Starring: Ralph Fiennes, Juliette Binoche Willem Dafoe

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Pat Stevens 529187

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Churchyards
Enquiries to Parish Office 521447

Rusthall St Paul's Primary School
Executive Headteacher – Mrs Liz Mitchell 520582
Head of School – Mrs Lyndsay Smurthwaite 520582

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

All worshippers who are baptised members of the Church of England, and aged over 16, should have their names entered on the Electoral Roll. This entitles them to attend and vote at the Annual Parochial Meeting. Forms for enrolment will be found in the Parish Church or the Parish Office and should be sent to the Vicar.

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Email – rusthallscoutgroupwaitinglist@yahoo.co.uk

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Guides
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Richard Brook 01892 862677

Rusthall Community Larder
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Rusthall Community & Youth Project
Barry Edwards 680296

Rusthall Village Association
Alex Britcher 07967 011467

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The Office is open on weekday mornings (except Tuesdays) between 9 am and 2 pm.