

COULSDON
PARISH
CHURCH
St. John



50p

July & August 2024

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A WARM JULY & AUGUST



July

2—Tuesday

9.45 a.m. MU Service, in the Old Church

3—Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

4—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

6—Saturday

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

12.00 noon Village Fair Day, Grange Park

2.00 p.m. Cream Teas in the Church

7—SIXTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed*

10—Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

11—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

14—SEVENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed
on Facebook/through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service

16—Tuesday

9.45 for 10.00 a.m. Pram Service for Babies & Toddlers, in Church

17—Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

18—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

20—Saturday

7.30 p.m. Downland Chorale Concert, at St. John's

21—EIGHTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church
- 9.30 a.m. Worship Together, in Church
- 11.00 a.m. Baptism Service

24—Wednesday

- 9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party
- 9.30 a.m. Coulsdon CE School End-of-Term Service, in the Church
- 2.00 p.m. Pray, Knit & Chat, in the Old Church

25—Thursday

- 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

28—NINTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

- 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*
- 11.15 a.m. Family Service, in Church

31—Wednesday

- 9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

August

1—Thursday

- 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in the Old Church

3—Saturday

- 10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

4—TENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church
- 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed*

7—Wednesday

- 9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

8—Thursday

- 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

11—ELEVENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

- 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*
- 11.15 a.m. Family Service

14—Wednesday

- 9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

15—Thursday

- 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

18—TWELFTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church
- 9.30 a.m. Worship Together, in Church

21—Wednesday

- 9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

22—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

25—THIRTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service, in Church

28—Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

2.00 p.m. Pray, Knit & Chat, in the Old Church

29—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

september

1—FOURTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed*

3—Tuesday

9.45 a.m. MU Service, in the Old Church followed by Wave of Prayer

4—Wednesday

9.30 a.m. Churchyard Working Party

5—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

7—Saturday

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

8—FIFTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service

Announcement

(as it was officially read out in Church)

We are pleased to announce today, Sunday June 9th 2024, that The Reverend Jonathan Simpson, presently Curate of Holy Trinity with St Paul's and St Augustine's, South Kensington, has been appointed Priest in Charge (Rector Designate) of St John The Evangelist, Old Coulsdon, subject to completion of the necessary procedures.

Further details, including the date of the Licensing service, will follow in due course. **Gill Thaxter, Ralph Goodwin Churchwardens**

WHEREVER YOU ARE ...

..you can join us for our 9.30 Sunday services online live or watch later on Facebook via our website at www.stjohns.coulsdon.net.

Sue writes...



Summer is here!

It's my favourite time of year... so exciting to see new buds. The first flush of roses are out, and the peonies have been in full bloom.

The four pergolas rotted. I pushed one over completely, really easily. So it meant all four needed replacing. And while the builder did so I asked him to use the old wood to make new perches in the coop for the hens. He also built a frame for our one grape vine. It always lived in corners of the garden, not really encouraged so always did poorly. Just look at what a great aspect and nurture, does. There's a parable in there somewhere!



We've also been refreshing borders. The front garden had all the grass dug up and every plant that had overgrown in the back garden was transplanted into the front. We've even had people stop to take photos! People always worry about slugs and hot poker flowers getting completely eaten, but

now there are so many the slugs can't get through them all, so a great display!

When we work out front we often bring one hen out with us, one that always keeps nearby looking for worms. It's amazing how many conversations that sparks off as people walk by, never having seen or felt a hen. Even small children coming for piano lessons (my son teaches), are mesmerised and love seeing them.

Because I've been writing for the 'front' page in the Vacancy, I've neglected to share something of the hens. A number of you have been asking how they're getting on. So since last year we sadly lost Peony. We'd taken her to the vet - a bird specialist - and gave her medication and lots of care. She was a gentle, delicate bird who is sadly missed. The four remaining ones are enjoying the freedom of outdoor living (carefully watched), having being kept literally cooped up over winter because of Avian flu. It happens every year as migrating birds can infect populations and so devastate poultry farms.

Very recently the hens have had a new friend join them. Carole and David Caddick's single hen, Nutmeg, came along. It took six long weeks before they integrated, but bit by bit we acclimatised them, letting them roam around the garden together, so that Nutmeg would be safe. Now they are the best of friends. Unfortunately, Olive, our oldest Rescue hen, is under vet care. She has become slow and unwell, but 'food' medicine has boosted her energy, and antibiotics are working too. We've become quite expert at tending sickly hens!



You may think taking hens to the vet and caring for them is a bit much, but it's good to share with everyone the care we give God's creation, to show how all animals, both wildlife and domesticated, need respect. Sentient creatures always respond to how we treat them. I also think that how we treat creation and

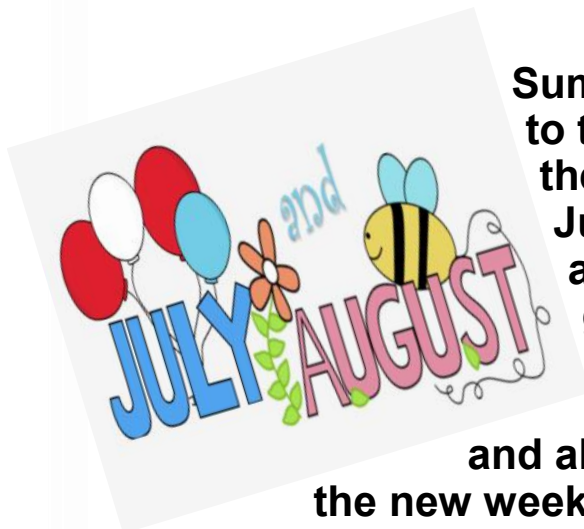
animals reflects something of ourselves.



Since getting the hens we now have not just one water bath, we have three. The wildlife love it and this morning a Chaffinch was near by.

Both bird boxes have Blue Tits in them, and the Robin is happy too. Perhaps get an upturned lid, fill it with water, and see who turns up to drink. And share a photo or two with Wendy for the magazine...we'd love to see them!

Sue



Summer really has arrived now as we go into the traditional 'holiday' months. After the Village Fair and Cream Teas early in July life starts to slow down at St. John's and in the parish as we head towards August—one of our quietest months! But there will still be our regular Thursday and Sunday services in both months and although some groups are taking a break,

the new weekly Churchyard Working Party on Wednesday mornings and the monthly Gardening Group will meet as usual and 'Pray, Knit & Chat' will have their regular get-together each month. All these groups would be delighted to welcome you. And don't forget that the church is open most weekday mornings 10.00-12.00 if you're in need of some friendly company!

BUT FIRST IT'S ALL HANDS ON DECK ...



URGENT CALL

WEDNESDAY MORNING - 3 JULY

**GRASSCUTTERS NEEDED
in the
CHURCHYARD**

In preparation for the VILLAGE FAIR

**PLEASE COME AND HELP
IF YOU CAN**

LOOKING AFTER THE CHURCH GROUNDS

Just a reminder that Gill would love to have your help any **Wednesday morning** from 9.30 onwards for an hour or two in the churchyard. There are always shrubs to be pruned, weeds pulled and edges trimmed. This will continue throughout the summer until September 25th. No obligation to come every week.

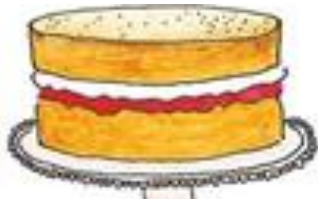
Just turn up if you fancy fresh air, good chat and the pleasure of seeing the churchyard looking good. Look forward to seeing you. The monthly Saturday gardening group will still meet.

P.S. And the dog came too to help on the Wednesday gardening morning!!!

Thank you to the 2 regulars but more help required please. **Gill** 01737 553596



COULD YOU HELP OUT ON VILLAGE FAIR DAY?



The St. John's tent will be right in the heart of the Fair in Grange Park as part of our outreach to the community - offering children's activities, prayer with and for those who need it, information about the progress of the church spire refurbishment project, etc. Could you offer some time to help here—perhaps with the children's activities or generally welcoming people?

In the Church Cream Teas, homemade cake, tea, coffee and squash will be served from 2.00-4.00. We understand a few more offers of homemade scones and cakes would be gratefully received. Could you help with this?

If you'd like to offer to help, we'd love to hear from you—just let the Parish Office know—01737 552461 or stjohns@coulsdon.net. Thank you.

OUR SUMMER BOOK STALL IS SO POPULAR!

The Summer Holiday Book Stall is flourishing with an amazing selection of books—from 'who-dun-its', biographies, historical novels, lots of cookery books, various 'How to ...' manuals, some lovely children's books, as well as popular quite-recently published books! It's lovely to see people popping in during the week when the church is open (most



weekday mornings 10.00-12.00) - as well as on Sundays—to have a browse or to bring more books along. So now is your chance to declutter. If you have any books to spare that are good for a summer read, please bring them along to the church. No heavy reference books please. Fiction, biographies, children's books, etc – especially paperbacks – very welcome. This is a 'win/win' opportunity – more shelf space, new books to read for a small donation and the church funds benefit!

PRAISE with FUN at PRAM SERVICE!



If you're at home on a Tuesday morning with a little one—baby, toddler or pre-schooler—whether a mum, dad, granny, grandpa or other carer, then you really shouldn't miss our Pram Service on the third Tuesday of each month. This month we're meeting on **Tuesday, 16 July`** at 9.45 for 10.00 a.m. start in the Church.



We usually start with a hymn and a prayer for the adults and then the little ones take over—choosing their favourite rhymes and choruses! We have an interactive Bible story, birthday celebrations and then the instruments come out usually for the last song ... bells, shakers, tambourines, etc. We have a lot of fun with plenty of space to move around so why not bring your little one(s) along on the **16th** and give it a try? There are drinks and biscuits afterwards with time for play and chat. We'd love you to join us! If you want to know more first just email Wendy at stjohns@coulsdon.net

SPANNING THE YEARS ..

Two things of note concerning our regular services...

The Thursday morning Communion service at 11.00 a.m., which uses the old 1662 format, has been growing in numbers often with about 20 present. There's a lovely friendly inclusive atmosphere with refreshments served afterwards. This is perfect for those who don't like too early a start and enjoy the more formal, quiet service. During the interregnum there's also been the bonus of having a wide variety of visiting Ministers leading and preaching. If you like a lie-in on Sundays or have to work then, this could be just right for you.



Something special is available for children at the **Sunday 9.30 Parish Communion services**. Not so many children are brought to this service which is such a pity because we have some very talented people leading the children's group during the service. The children go to the old part of the church and follow the same theme of the service at their level. The art and craft work produced is wonderful. We have the Family Service for those with very young children, but this 9.30 group is very suitable for those at school. As your children grow older don't let them miss out.

VILLAGE FAIR DAY

6th JULY

03-50 30 3-07



7007 00707

CREAM TEAS

TEA & HOMEMADE CAKE

TEA, COFFEE, SQUASH

St. John's Church, Old Coulsdon

2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

The Summer Holiday Bookstall
will be there too!

MOTHERS' UNION

July focus: Transformation of Relationships

Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation that has been supporting families worldwide for over 140 years. Started by our founder Mary Sumner in 1876 in her local parish, we have grown into an international charity with over 4 million members in 84 countries. We demonstrate our faith in action. This happens as we work towards stopping poverty, stopping inequality, and stopping injustice. Our members work at grassroots level around the world. They bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes.



Our prayer is that we can:

- ◆ *Transform ourselves, personally and spiritually, to live out our faith*
- ◆ *Transform the churches and communities we work with, and of which we are a part, to reflect Christ's kingdom*
- ◆ *Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st century life.*

" For with God nothing shall be impossible" - Luke 1:37

Here at St. John's our next **Worship Service** is on **Tuesday, 2nd July**, at 9.45 am, and Christine's talk will be about the wife of Thomas (Didimus) or 'doubting' Thomas. Her talks are always very thought provoking. Please note that there will be NO service in August

I have only heard from a few members regarding the bring and share supper at my home on the **10th July** (7.00 for 7.30) so please do come and hope for good weather. I'd love to hear that you can make it.



Pray, Knit & Chat will be on its usual fourth **Wednesday on both 24th July and 28th August** at 2.00 p.m. in the Old Church. All knitters very welcome but this isn't just for knitters. It's for anyone who would like to join us for good company and tea, coffee and delicious cake!

Elaine

Reflection

Christ's parable of the houses built on sand and rock highlights the importance of strong foundations in withstanding adverse conditions. In the context of relationships, for these to be stable enough to withstand adverse conditions in life, they too need strong foundations. As the meaning of the parable highlights, the ultimate foundation is faith in Christ. Like all properties, relationships sometimes need repair work or shoring up. But whether in our own relationships, or as we seek to support others, let us check that the foundations are secure before attempting to fix or improve other features.



Mothers' Union Monthly Prayer

As we share our lives together, we pray to reflect the perfect relationship between Father, Son and Spirit; perfectly loving, perfectly equal, united in total harmony. For then we will see true transformation as we value each other above ourselves.
Amen



SUMMER SUNDAY TEAS at Chaldon Church

available every Sunday 3.00–4.30 to October. All welcome. Enjoy a selection of delicious homemade cakes.

D – Day: 6 June 1944.

On 24 January 2024 Chris Wright issued an invitation to numerous groups to see if Old Coulsdon was interested to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. Numerous meetings later our preparations were almost complete when Chris Wright was admitted into hospital. Help! But everyone rallied around

D-Day arrived, and this is how it unfurled in Old Coulsdon. We have a certificate of registration as a confirmed D-Day 80 Organiser, the only one within Croydon. So well done Chris Wright for getting this going'

We held the exhibitions in St John's on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The displays by Colin Mowl were sequential from the early history of the reason for the invasion and the need to build up a sufficient force to invade and destroy the tyranny of the Nazis. This was the largest build-up of an amphibious landing of troops and equipment that has ever been achieved. On D-Day the Allies used about 7,000 ships and landing craft to land 132,000 troops on the five Normandy beaches. Also, some 155,000 airborne troops were landed by parachute and in gliders which were towed by aircraft.



The second stage of the exhibition was a series of maps depicting the proposed landing areas on the beaches. Other maps showed the difficulties that were en-

countered. I obtained copies of two secret maps, one covering Juno (Canadian Troops), Sword (British Troops) and the airborne attack on the major bridges across the river and canal complex of the Orne River. This is now known as Pegasus Bridge, the first main bridge to be captured on D-Day before dawn. These were by paratroopers flown in Horsa gliders that had been towed by Halifax bombers. An aerial photograph showed the locations of the troops and equipment and even the location of three Horsa gliders next to Pegasus Bridge

The D-Day maps are covered by warning as “TOP SECRET until issued for briefing ground troops; there after SECRET’. Other maps contain instructions such as “This map will NOT be carried in operational aircraft’. However, I did not understand why the maps had BIGOT stamped on them. Not a nice word and I did not find out about it until I read the Saturday Times, 8 June in the evening of Sunday, 9 June. BIGOT is an anachronism conjured up by one Ian Fleming in GCHQ, British intelligence: -‘British Invasion of German Occupied Territories’ or BIGOT Of course, the maps were all produced by the British!

The third part of the exhibition was by Carol Skinner with two viewings of her in-depth information of the people and soldiers of Coulsdon and the effect on their lives. Carole’s display was shown at Bradmore Green Library on Tuesday 4th and Friday 7th before relocating to the Church on Saturday 8th June. The information shown was very interesting for many people. Children from Coulsdon CofE school saw Carole’s exhibition on Tuesday.



Friday was the busiest day of the exhibitions as we showed round 20 children from Oasis in the morning and 60 children in the afternoon from Keston School.



The poppies in the Church Porch were supplied by Gill Wallace for the Exhibition.

Throughout the three days of the exhibition in the Church Carole Caddick’s catering team kept up a constant supply of teas, coffees and biscuits.

The D-Day National Committee request was that the church bells were to be rung on 6th June, so St John’s bells were rung by Martin Burke and his team for a long period from 19:30.

Also, in the evening of 6th June an evening ‘Lamp Light of Peace’ procession around Grange Park was arranged. We had an extensive poster display throughout Coulsdon and when we started to set up the sound equipment at 19:00 there were not many people about, but it was dry, and all the bits of equipment mostly worked, and we had an electrical supply care of Pistachios Café.

Then we heard the piper warming up after the bells. Then slowly people started to turn up. As more and more people arrived the master of ceremonies, Pastor Malcolm Newman, entertained the growing congregation into some semblance of order. The Air Training Corp arrived and formed up in rank in front of the Café. Just before 21:00 the Piper (Jeff) set off with the ATC following clockwise around the footpath. The numbers following gradually increased and there was a bit of strag-



gling as some could not keep up the pace. However, everyone arrived back in time for 'The D-Day flag' to be raised by the Scouts. Pastor Malcolm closed the ceremony with a prayer. It was estimated up to 1,500 turned up to the walk. The Rotarians did a great job in controlling it and we hope that Pistachios Café had a good evening supplying all with teas and coffees.

On Friday 7th June in the evening two D-Day films were shown in the Cameron Hall, Old Coulsdon Congregational Church. The films showed just how many soldiers were killed over the period of one day, in fact 4,415 of Ally lives were lost over that day. That is why we must remember that dreadful price for the freedom from the tyranny of the Nazis.

A War Memorial Service was held on Sunday 9th June which started at 10:45 for a short dedication service by Reverend Sue Thomas and Pastor Malcom Newman. There were more people than we expected for that short service. A two-minute silence was observed. Three wreaths were laid including one by the French contingent of the Rotarians. A stone plaque was also unveiled at the War Memorial in memory of those that died in service on D-Day. We were pleased to see Chris

Wright out of hospital to attend the Memorial service. I wish to thank the Tech Team for moving all the sound equipment around the Café and then the War Memorial.

The whole Parish of Coulsdon was involved in this project and we are proud of what we achieved in commemorating those who lost their lives. **Ralph**





Calling any 'would be' artists!

Did you know there is a group of folk with mixed abilities and using different media (oils, water-colours, pencils or pastels) who meet on Thursday afternoons (2-4pm) in the Guide Hut behind the shops? We call ourselves *'Painting for Pleasure'*. At present there are spaces to join us when we re-start in September. For more information talk to Christine McCutcheon (01737 553681)

GREEN ALTAR FRONTAL

It had been apparent over the past year that the fabric of the green altar frontal was deteriorating due to “wear and tear” over many years of use. Jean Hammond from Tollers Design Centre kindly offered to repair it for us and has done so beautifully. Jean has carried out this repair as a gift to St John’s and has asked that the donation, given by a member of the congregation for the work, be given instead to the Spire Fund. We thank Jean for her generosity.

Jean has written:

STITCHING IN TIME

Readers of a certain age will be familiar with the saying “A stitch in time, saves nine”. If you haven’t come across it before it simply means if you see a small hole in your sock then it will not stay small for too long. The best action is to put in one or two stitches straight away to close the hole before many more stitches will be needed to close an even larger hole.



I have been involved in sewing from an early age and since then, for many decades. Sewing has played a large part in my career as an artist and teacher and like many other people over the ages the interest and discipline was passed onto me by my mother. She, bless her, would be the first to admit she was not very good at it in the decorative sense, she concentrated on mending and darning. Knitting was her textile passion and seemingly with speed and dexterity she kept the whole family supplied with all types of clothing in a variety of colours and tex-

tures; all created in amazing and complicated patterns.

Mending and darning do not now feature too much in contemporary life. Even at the end of my mother's life back in 1982 when someone said to her then that no-one darns socks these days. Her quick reply was "That's because they didn't knit the socks." Spending hours knitting a small item like a sock or larger jumpers and cardigans, the knitter's life is contained in the hours of creation. The same can be said of sewing – whether the humble patch on a small boy's trousers or a creative and stunning piece of embroidery, it is all the same in my view; both have their own life through the hands of the maker/repairer and therefore have their own value and beauty.



We do not have to look far these days to find reminders of how we all are wasting and exploiting our resources. The humble darn and patch will lengthen the life of most garments – one less item in landfill. It was therefore an easy decision to agree to meet up with Jo (Udell) in the 'New' Church to take a closer look at the Green All Seasons Altar Frontal. Her dedicated and skilled eye had seen some worn areas begin to appear and she wondered if anything could be done to repair and preserve the textile.

My work is usually designing and making new frontals and vestments and other textile artworks, but I have also had experience over the years of textile restoration and conservation. On close inspection worn areas could be seen. The silk background fabric was beginning to deteriorate in places – silk is a most beautiful fabric but prone to just simply disappearing with age and use. The fragile silk fibres begin to break up and little can be done in the form of darning. Even using the finest needles with almost invisible thread, it was so fine, it did not work. As the silk fibres were disintegrating, the gold threads in the pattern of the damask fabric were appearing. As the metal threads were losing the silk threads holding it all together in the weave of the fabric the gold threads were becoming very

loose. Equipped with a very high-powered magnifier for counting threads in a fabric weave I could also detect more potential areas which would come loose in time. These were at the side areas of the frontal and were easily rubbed by anyone standing close by.

A recognized textile conservation method in these cases adopted by the National Trust and leading Museums is to use very



Restored and conserved!

fine netting, barely visible when applied with stitching to the areas in question. This worked extremely well; not only holding together and supporting the worn areas but protecting parts not yet fully damaged to the same extent. This method also has the added advantage of being a process easily removed to be replaced, at any future time when new materials or methods may be invented for these purposes.

The top edge of the frontal was also quite damaged where it sits on the edge of the altar table and natural wear takes place. This offered some different problems. However, I found amongst all my collections of old textiles some Victorian green and gold woven braid. Just perfect and meant to be I feel sure, to apply to the edge to cover and protect the frayed areas. It matched beautifully and I suspect you would think it has always been there!..... If that is so and you haven't noticed anything else different then I am really pleased.

In closing this little report for the records may I suggest that before you throw away those socks, why not try darning? These days it is very acceptable not to try the 'invisible' kind of repair but to make it noticeable and into an art form!

Jean Hammond Tollers Design Centre June 2024



PORRIDGE POT GARDEN PARTY

Our garden will be open from 11am until 5 pm
on **Monday 26th August**,
(Bank Holiday Monday),
at 9 Placehouse Lane CR5 1LA.

Do come and enjoy refreshments, including cream teas, to help us to raise money to provide a daily bowl of porridge for the children in the Alpha Ministry School in the Acholi Quarters, Kasese, Uganda.

There will be crafts, cards, gifts, a raffle, a tombola and games for the children. It also

provides a great opportunity to socialise with friends. Do hope you can come and please bring family and friends. **Sandra and Trevor Meadowcroft**

SUMMER SUNDAY TEAS at St. Lawrence's Church Caterham

Every Sunday 3.00-5.00 until 15 September. All welcome. Enjoy a selection of delicious homemade cakes Inc. gluten-free & lactose-free. Musical entertainment some Sundays.





Surrey Churches Preservation Trust Ride and Stride - Saturday 14th September

Cyclists and walkers get sponsorship for visiting as many churches as possible on the day. Half the money raised is for their own church and half for the Trust which gives grants for restoration and repair to churches in Surrey. I will be taking part in order to raise money for St John's 'Spire Fund'. St John's has received 2 grants in the past. I will be asking for sponsorship nearer the day. **Angela Gillman (01737 552040)**

Do you go to church on holiday or do you have a holiday from church?!

What a question!! We love to explore new churches in different locations so usually seek out somewhere to go on a Sunday whilst we are away. Our favourite holiday location is Cornwall so it's quite easy to find a church locally.

Some years ago, Truro Cathedral was running an initiative to help pay for the roof to be re-slatted, much like our Spire Appeal. All you had to do was to 'purchase' a slate for £25, settle down at the workstation within the Cathedral, and write a message, prayer or blessing on your slate with a special marker pen, with the ink designed to last for one hundred years. Your slate would then be used, inscribed on the side facing inside, to redo the roof. Just think, the messages and prayers we wrote on our slates would be visible to view when next the roof needed repair, estimated at being in 100 years time!

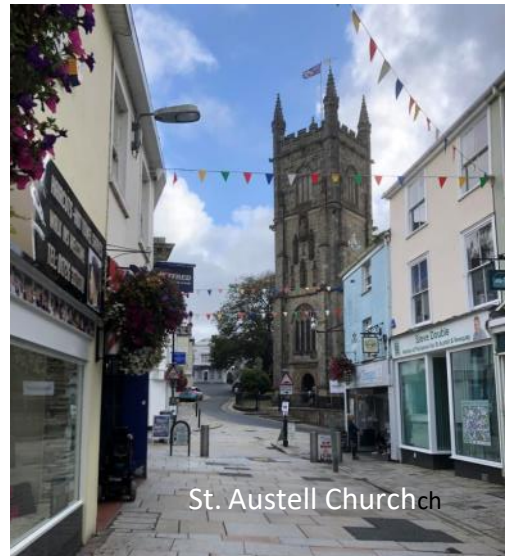


You might ask, where is all this leading? Well, the person volunteering on the stand when we turned up was named Kevin. We got into conversation as we shared the messages we were writing on our slates. He wanted to know our 'stories'. By that I don't mean where we lived, where we were staying on holiday etc., but more simply how we came to know Jesus. I say more simply, but for some people this is a really difficult question. They aren't used to sharing this information, are embarrassed or have indeed never thought about it as Jesus has always been a part of their lives from a child. But it's something we should all think about, and be prepared to share with others as it is a powerful tool in our spiritual toolbox. There are many useful publications and courses to help if you

are one of the more reticent Christians, e.g. Talking Jesus, which is promoted by Southwark. Could you tell your story if asked?

Kevin told us he was a member of Holy Trinity Church in St. Austell, a warm, friendly, Anglican, New Wine style church. Since we were staying in that exact area we thought we'd go along on the Sunday. We were welcomed straight away with coffee and chat and invited to sit anywhere we liked. What a difference a warm welcome makes. Kevin was not in church that week but we sat amongst other very friendly people who engaged us in conversation before the service began. There was a band leading worship, and the service was very interactive, we were invited to join in everything, even though those around us knew we were just on holiday. That particular week, everyone was invited if they wished, to go to the altar to be anointed and blessed for anything in particular. The Holy Spirit was definitely present that day as young and old went forward.

Since then, every time we've been near St Austell on a Sunday, we've joined in with Holy Trinity. We are welcomed through the door with cries of "oh you're back, how lovely to see you!" We've just returned from Cornwall, where we enjoyed worship there once again. However in a bit of a contrast, looking for a church to go to in or around Exeter where we stopped for a few days on the way back, it was a bit different. We arrived to a, "lovely to see you", but then we were not engaged at all, although we did try. Worship was lovely and we felt the presence of God, but didn't feel welcomed into the church community, everyone was in their little friendship groups. That day, we felt we were indeed 'just holidaymakers'.



'Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it'
Hebrews 13:1-2

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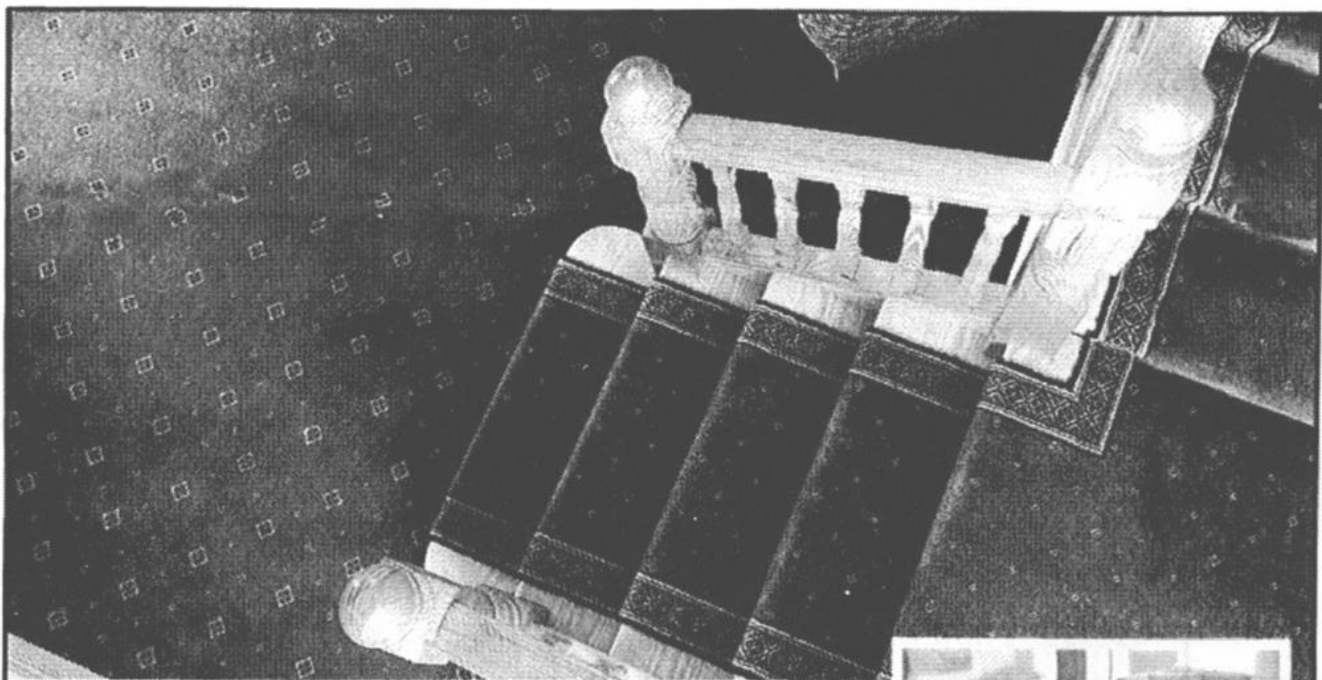
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