

GRAPEvine

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From here to there in a month!

APRIL 2018

Mention of the permission to build and the backlog jam “We finally have permission....”

Where are we now?

We have been blessed by God with wonderful buildings – but as we look at our current needs we are left with some big issues.

We have no easily accessed toilets – midweek and Sunday mornings for people with mobility issues including elderly people. We need to address this if we are to continue to attract people of all ages and abilities.

We have NO nice meeting room – essential for midweek and Sunday meetings – and confidential prayer. This means we are often heating the whole church for 10 people, or almost worse shivering in a cold ‘barn’ for prayer. This has been a serious problem for the growth of our fellowship and prayer life.

We have an urgent need for storage so we can keep the church uncluttered.

We cannot welcome our community into the church during the week because of access issues. It would be fantastic to be open for visitors with a cup of tea and a friendly face. We need proper tea making facilities – which would also be useful on a Sunday – making remaining in church after the service more friendly.

The PCC has committed to the project – because where we are

is not good. Where we can be looks great!

A prayer and meeting room which is independently heated and confidential

An accessible toilet available whenever the church is open

A small kitchen – enabling refreshments in church whenever needed

An upstairs room with storage

I have a vision for a building that is open to the community and available for use by the church family. I am excited by this and look forward to seeing it in operation.

November 18: The problem? We were then about half way there with funds and needed to raise an additional £60,000 – which seemed a lot. I suggested 60 households giving or pledging an average of £1000, BUT we had a gift month, and the full amount was given, though we still have to find enough to pay the architect's fees. Thanks be to God.

Mark 12:41-44 (NIV) - The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. ⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Rev Adam Foot

St John's News: April-May 2018

June-July on back page

There's a lot going on in and around St John's this Spring including a new chapter just beginning, as following the APCM, new Church Wardens Jenny Cosser and Alison Read, never forgetting new Treasurer Ken Woodcock, took up their roles along with new PCC members Allison Caddock, Steve Read (returning after a 6 year break) and Dominic O'Leary. Our **Morning sermons and House Groups** helped us get to grips with Luke's Gospel.

Looking further back, the annual **Ugandan visit** enabled the seven strong team to escape the 'Beast from the East' returning just as the snow had finally melted away! They returned with many stories to share of experiences and people they had met

during their time at Rukungiri.

The Breakfast Alpha group loved their times together, getting to know more about the Christian Faith and the Jesus who loves them so much.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter provided a wonderful opportunity to spend time reflecting on those cosmic events which enable us to know and love Jesus today and it was so fitting that on Easter Sunday evening Victoria, Tyler, Mary and Hannah were baptised, **because** those truths have so impacted their lives. *(Pictures over)*.

Our Three Day **Holiday Club** followed in the week after Easter when about 30 children enjoyed three mornings of fun, games, worship and learning about Bible Adventurers.

Many of us were able to join with **John and Micah Gompers** as they celebrated their Betrothal with a wonderful day of celebrations, and they are now married too. *(Pictures over)*

It's not easy saying goodbye and the St John's Family is already missing Lena Robinson and Alfie who have moved to Rye, and **Steve and Barbara Rouse** who left us for a new life nearer their family.

A number of us are valuing prayer and practical support with illness, either personally or within our families. We have been praying for **Peter Ainsworth** who lost both his Mum and Dad very recently. So, until next time and, yes, Spark in the Park!!

Estelle Woodcock

Rukungiri 2018

A team of 7 (Sue, Steve, Estelle, Linzi, Alison Read, Laura, Lydia) set off in early February to spend 3 weeks with our Mission partners in Uganda. This year we had 3 'newbies' with us who were excited but nervous; not really knowing what to expect. For Sue and I, it was a milestone as it was our 10th consecutive year visiting the school.



We arrived in Rukungiri after a short safari all ready to carry out the Lord's work, but not knowing what that was to be. Sue and I are often asked by people who want to visit the school 'but we have no skills, what can we give?'. Trust in the Lord and you will be provided with all you need, just ask Laura, Alison or Lydia.

After the usual school band welcome and the speeches and tour of the school we sat with headmaster Geoffrey to talk over what was needed at the school. The next 2 weeks consisted of taking lessons,

shopping, craft making, baking, writing sponsor letters and lots of time spent with the children in the playground.



We were told just after we arrived that there was a surprise in store for us. We imagined all sorts and were then informed that they had delayed the sponsored children's Christmas Party so that we could help organise it. On the day there were over 200 children all who had to be kept amused for several hours. The children now know how to participate in a sack race and an egg and spoon race (although we used passion fruits for eggs!) plus numerous other games. They had their Christmas dinner and each received a present: a pair of sheets which is a lot for them.

Over 2500 bread rolls were baked with the help of P6 pupils and students from Gables Vocational Centre and shared out

at the school (twice), Gables and the local deaf school run by a wonderful Nun.

Money donated by St John's congregation and others helped to purchase mattresses for the nursery, metal framed bunk beds and new desks for the school.

We came back knowing that we need to help them raise £7k to build new toilets. The current pits are full and can't be pumped out. The only way out is to fill them in and dig and fit new ones. The smell is becoming overwhelming. The main thing we always come back with is knowing more of God's love for us from the people of Uganda who reflect it in the way they receive us. It is never about what we can give; no matter how much you try, you will always receive more.

God bless, Steve Read



All God's Creation is very good!

Women's World Day of Prayer (WWDP) always takes place on the first Friday of March – unless of course, that happens to be one of the coldest days of the year, with the heaviest snowfall recorded in 2018! So, we agreed to re-schedule for Friday 20th April – which turned out to be the hottest day of the year, at that point, thus confirming this year's service title: ALL God's Creation is very good...whether in freezing snow or sweltering sunshine.

As the title suggests, the service theme was all about conservation and in particular recycling, and the women of Suriname, a South American country, produced a great service with well-chosen Bible readings (beautifully read by Danielle) and an amazingly helpful series of prayers, challenging us about how we preserve our planet now and for future generations to come.

The WWDP team of women blew my mind with their advice and willingness to serve. Seven 'girls' dressed up

(with a little *too much* enthusiasm, I felt!) reflecting the various cultures represented in Suriname: Doreen Pride, Lesley South, Pat Wootton, Pat Thomas, Wendy Cole, Yvonne Kaul and Estelle Woodcock. Sheila Clarke provided the colourful flower arrangements reflecting the Suriname flag and filling the church with such beauty. Yvonne Kaul headed up the refreshments, even being inspired to place a single yellow gerbera on every tea table, representing the star in the centre of the Suriname flag.

The contribution of two very special men made the day for me! Pete Ainsworth manfully transformed the church (twice in fact, as he had already done so before the snow came!) into a place of worship at the front and a tea room at the back! Doug Snow (note the irony in his name!) accompanied our women's voices, taught a few of us the new songs so we could boost the singing, prepared the PowerPoint presentation and even worked the sound desk! Grateful thanks to both men.

There was a wonderful 'buzz' at the end of the service. The Mayoress was so impressed that she even dragged in her chauffeur from the car, to take photos because "recycling is one of the Mayor's priorities" apparently!

Each year, one of the churches in Welling takes a turn to host WWDP, and it was our great privilege to do so this year after a fairly long break. In 2019, we look forward to descending on St Stephen's – on the first Friday of March – weather permitting! See you there!

Miriam Giles



Suriname
National
Flower

Holiday Club: Should volunteering be such fun?

It all started for me when I was asked to put up green paper on the walls of the church, I never stopped smiling and laughing at the challenge of keep it up with the resources we had. Creating a cave and a jungle from material, coloured paper and card, the preparation day was already fun.

The **first** day of the holiday club began with registration. It was busy, we had a large number of children arrive with a look of anticipation on their faces not knowing what to expect, but as they were assigned their teams you could see the excitement brightening up their faces.

Then the church came alive, first with a count down, then an introduction, stories,

competition and songs. All the children and volunteers were getting involved and as I looked around realise there was no-one not involved. It was captivating.

The teams were set the tasks of creating a team jungle, animals were made for the wall, name tags were coloured and pictures were created. Then they made musical instruments from plastic bottles, paper cups and empty toilet rolls that the congregation and church family had provided and these were transformed into something they were proud to show their parents and carers as they were collected to go home.

Day two they arrived buzzing and eager to resume their team activities and crafts. In

the church hall there was an assault course which ended in building a boat, a game playing under and around a flying rainbow and then lastly learning to play the bongos.

Day three was a tied dyed t-shirt for all and I must say the art work and designs were amazing. We ended with a picnic and as I take a final look round at the happy children not wanting it to end and satisfied volunteers that all has gone well I concluded what a magical time I'd had and feel blessed to belong to a church family that brings such smiles to everyone who joins in.

Count me in next time.

Debbie Donaldson

Housegroups

Hi, I am the leader of what I believe is St John's newest housegroup. We meet every alternate Thursday at my house in Lancelot Road, Welling. The group came about following an Alpha course which Estelle and Ken ran at their house just over a year ago. A few of the group felt they would like to continue meeting as a group. I had also attended the course as a helper. Having been coming to St John's for a couple of years, and having got to know the members of the group, I felt it would be a good opportunity for me to be a bit more actively involved, and in some way be of service to God, so I volunteered to lead the group. Lesley South joined in helping me lead, and happily takes a turn to lead the sessions.



good discussions. We felt the 10 Commandments are relevant in today's world, and the course helped us to think about why they are such an important part of the Bible. Everyone enjoyed the format of watching a video then discussing it further with prompting questions, so we then moved onto The Prayer Course by Pete Greig.

We started The Prayer Course in January and managed to finish it by Easter. It really helped us understand the importance of communicating with God through prayer. There was some homework involved, and I think it helped in making us more comfortable in sharing prayers together.

We are now on our 3rd study which is The Bible Jesus Read, by Philip Yancey. We're one session in and there has certainly been plenty of discussion so far.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to lead such a lovely group of ladies, and they all seem to be enjoying it, well they do keep coming back!

Allison Caddock



Along with Lesley and I, there are 5 other members in the group: Terry Golding, Wendy Perfect and Natasha Cook (all of whom were on the Alpha course), Dawn McBride and Lucy Reynolds. Unintentionally, it has turned out that the group is all female, but I guess that makes it easier to sympathise with each other on matters of the female kind. Strangely too, 5 of us are / were employed in schools. Our first meeting was on 4th May 2017, and we decided to start with the 10 Commandments course by J John (Just 10). It was a very good study and evoked some

Congratulations!

Micah
and
John
Gompers!



With Val and
Ray, John's
parents, and
Adam Foot



St John's News: June-August 2018

This has been a busy Summer at St John's with many special events, and yet the morning sermon series on Worship stands out as potentially most significant as we have been reminded and challenged that worship is not to satisfy us, but about giving Jesus what He is worth.

Two services have been particularly special: Confirmation when our candidates Jenny Cosser, Mike Cosser, Louise Moffatt, Lesley South, Tom Snow and Harriet Tyson were joined by candidates from St Peter's, including Hannah Charles, and Christ Church to confirm their Baptism promises, then on July 8th Phil Green came and spoke on behalf of the Charity Home for Good. Some of us were able to stay for the Bring and Share



Lunch that followed, allowing another chance to learn.

Members of the Spark Team are beginning to recover after a wonderful, exhausting week during which many of us saw God's Spirit wonderfully at work in many situations. As Church family we share joys and sadnesses including the death of Adam Foot's Dad in June and more recently Roy Penny. We have rejoiced with Bishop Ridley Church and Kim and Jeff Golding on the safe arrival of little Phoebe but have had to say goodbye to Fiona Kramb as her gap year with CRiBS has ended

and she returns to Germany to begin university.



Estelle Woodcock

So currently, the arrival of exam results is a sure reminder Autumn is just round the corner when we will begin the Jesus Shaped People adventure. We have much to look forward to!

Roy's funeral was on Fri 31 Aug at St John's.



Baptisms & Confirmations

BAPTISMS on EASTER SUNDAY 1st April 2018

Mary McBride, Tyler Gillam, Victoria Malcolm & Hannah Wood make promises to belong to Christ for the rest of their lives



CONFIRMATIONS on SUNDAY 10th June 2018 at St John's with other candidates from St Peter's and Christ Church, Bexleyheath
Jenny & Mike Cosser, Louise Moffatt, Lesley South, Tom Snow and Harriet Tyson with Bishop James

Alpha

Led by Sarah Coates with Sarah Willy, Kay Andrewartha (hosting), Claire Levent and Lena Robinson until she moved away.

After a false start last September, Breakfast Alpha started in earnest on the 11th January. Any nerves re leading or hosting had been banished due to our dry run, which was spent praying for a successful Alpha and for the people who needed to be there to find their way, and we weren't disappointed.

The ladies who joined us were an absolute pleasure to meet. Within no time at all it felt like we were meeting as old friends. We all enjoyed a catch up over a simple breakfast before we came together to watch weekly videos that covered so many relevant questions. We highly recommend the new Alpha format. The discussion sessions after were lively and thought provoking, with everyone's confidence to participate growing as the weeks went by. What a

joy it was to watch, leaving each week feeling uplifted and filled with a little more knowledge of Jesus and his love for us. We were lucky enough to attend the HTB Alpha away day in London and, considering the snow that day, we made it to the station. With an air of excitement



and nerves we boarded the train bound for the Holy Spirit part of the course. Safe to say the worship, talks and food were great. Through words, prayers, tears and personal experience, the day certainly marked a special moment in the course and our personal journeys.

We were sorry to see the course end, as it does become a positive focus to the week, but it was done in style with a celebration breakfast at Brewers Fayre which I'm sure made a welcome change to crumpets and toast. It was fantastic for our prayer warriors to meet up with our special guests and for relationships to continue to grow across our church family.

Our Alpha certainly came with batteries included and we'd like to thank everyone who has been praying.

It was a joy to meet new friends, to be part of their journey and them a part of ours, which is continuing. The lovely Tanisha, Lindsay and Mano have started to come along to Blue Star Housegroup and we hope that they will continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Sarah Willy, Kay Andrewartha and Sarah Coates