

GRAPEVINE

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Live as Easter People

Dear friends,
We have just celebrated Easter 2024 and I have had the privilege of preaching at all of the Easter services from Maundy Thursday through to Easter Sunday morning. It has made me go more slowly through the greatest event in history – from Jesus' love shown at the Last Supper (*"Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."* John 13^{1b}) to the betrayal by Judas, the adoration of the crowd then stirred up hatred to the agony in the garden (*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."* Luke 22⁴²). In my quiet time the devotional asks the question *"What do you think Jesus saw in the cup? – the author's reply 'I think He saw Hell itself..all the sin of humani-*

ty". We have to take the cost of our sin



seriously (the Cross) before we can benefit from the resurrection. The crucifixion and the amazing words *"it is finished"* as Jesus declared his task and the effects of our sin to be finished.

Then 25 of us gathered at 6am in the dark to celebrate the confusion of the first Easter morning and the awesome meeting of Jesus and Mary (*"Jesus said to her, 'Mary'.*

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher')." John 20¹⁶). At 10.30am with a full church, we celebrated the resurrection – the empty tomb. Spending longer thinking about the pain of Friday makes us more thankful for the truth of Easter morning: *"He is not here, He is risen."* Matt 28⁶

If you missed them it would be worth listening to Linzi, Sue and Danny's 3 excellent Life service Easter talks on our YouTube channel Welling StJohns 17th, 24th and 31st March.

Live as Easter People – aware of the price he paid and the gift he gives us: *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* John 10¹⁰

God's Blessings,
Adam

Vicar, St John's Welling

St John's News

Winter has begun to give way to Spring with barely a snowflake falling in Welling and there is even the occasional sound of a lawn mower battling with winter grass growth!

Once again food has played a significant role in lives at St John's!

- There have been two lovely **welcome lunches** which are precisely what they say on the tin. They have provided a relaxed and easy time for those new to St John's to get to know us better.
- Both the men and the women have enjoyed SEPERATE! **breakfasts** at the Toby Carvery and the men have had a curry night as well!
- If all this were not enough **the Life Service Mothering Sunday service** began with a delicious finger buffet afternoon tea.

As well as their own regular Sunday and Thursday sessions, **3dub and Dubsters** have been able to join two larger events, one at BCLC and another at St Johns.

There was a successful **Work Morning** when rain attempted, but failed to stop play. The sheds behind the church have new roofs, weedy borders have been cleared, the crèche, upper room and other areas inside church sorted and organised.

The Welling Churches have organised a rich variety of **Lent activities** which people have been attending and enjoying. Morning sermons and House Groups have now completed the **Frontline Sunday series** and we are so appreciating the clear challenge and encouragement they have been helping us realise the implication of being Jesus people, **red dots**, wherever we go, whoever we are and whatever we do.

We have been delighted to welcome two little people into our Church family, **Alora**

Rose D'Souza and Noah James Lucas.

We so look forward to encouraging and helping their parents to help their babies grow in knowing and loving Jesus.

As I write, we are continuing to pray for **Doreen Jones** and **Haydn Moyle** as they cope with ongoing health issues.

Lionel King was, and it's hard to have to use the past tense, a gracious, quiet and lovely man, and a regular member of our daily online zoom prayer times. Selfishly we really miss him but we are so happy to know, with confidence that totally restored in mind, body and spirit, he has been welcomed into Heaven by the Lord Jesus whom he served so faithfully. So, Easter Day will just be over when you read this BUT the wonderful Easter truth, that, **we serve the living Jesus**, continues to empower us as we worship together and then live most of our time on our frontlines

'Til June,

Estelle Woodcock

International Justice Mission (IJM)

for the convergence of climate change and modern slavery policies in the UK.

November 2023 we thanked the lovely Rachel Griffiths who came to St John's and gave a great talk on behalf of IJM for Freedom Sunday.

January 2024 we held a quiz night to raise awareness about IJM and raised much needed funds for them. Thank you to quizmasters Paul and Ewin and everyone who helped raise a brilliant £618 for which IJM are very grateful and will put to great use.

HAPPY NEWS - IJM are gaining freedom and change for thousands of people all around the world as well as

supporting them afterwards but there are still millions more to save. Read some of their uplifting rescue stories on their website IJMUK.org and keep them in your prayers.

Maybe you feel that you want to help them and if so check out their website for how you might do that.

Terry Golding

As I write today I'm thankful that the work of IJM has at last been recognised in the media to help raise awareness of this global organisation in leading the way in helping thousands of people that are unfairly caught up in terrible, illegal and usually life threatening situations. IJM representatives have assisted on TV. In October 2023 the BBC showed a documentary "Hunting the Catfish Crime Gang" and on the ITV NEWS in February 2024. They took journalists to observe from a distance one of the many heavily guarded compounds that imprison trapped people. One journalist stated that, "Awareness is our greatest weapon in the global battle to stop this". "Governments globally need to co-operate to stop this crime and hold criminals accountable".

Good news, in June 2023 modern slavery experts and geographers at the University of Nottingham began working with anti-slavery organisations Transparentem and IJM.UK. They have won funding to investigate how the UK government can better protect people exposed to the impacts of both modern slavery and climate change. This critical research will explore the need



JOBS: Natasha Cook

A long time ago in a country far away I undertook work experience as a Dentist. I was in secondary school and exploring future career options. Ten minutes was all I lasted, observing a gruesome extraction, and was thankful to have managed to exit the room without fainting. The dental nurse busied me at the front desk with the preparation of patient invoices and keeping the accounts. This was much more enjoyable and led to me applying to do a Bachelor of Economics (Accounting) at the Flinders University of South Australia and pursuing a career in Accounting.

Work was scarce for graduates in Adelaide, South Australia so my parents packed me a suitcase and drove me over two days to a greater job market - Sydney. Clearly they were very keen to get me out of the house! I found shared accommodation and soon had my first job.

Interestingly, I've not lived in Adelaide since. My boyfriend followed me to Sydney and we were married back in Adelaide a few years later in St Paul's Catholic Church. On our wedding day, my beautiful gown ripped and snagged on the bottom of the old large wooden Church door. An usher came to my rescue, releasing me so I could proceed down the aisle. Perhaps it was a sign of things to come.

Backtracking to my childhood in Australia, I was born and grew up in Adelaide with my dad being a secondary school teacher, mum a home maker and my sister who is only 13 months younger than me. We worshiped at Malvern Methodist Church and later at Rosefield Uniting Church which was closer and offered the opportunities for participation in youth group, tennis and netball. My ancestors on dad's side were Cornish farmers who came and still have farms to this day in rural South Australia. My mum's ancestors arrived in 1836 on the HMS Buffalo, being among the 176 original colonists of South Australia. No convicts were transported to South Australia - which is good fuel for banter with those from the other Australian States and Territories!

I've been blessed with varied and interesting job roles including accounting for space,... If you're thinking Elon Musk's SpaceX, then sorry to disappoint. It was Millers Self Storage, so storage space. I've also engaged in working for a manufacturer of cable tray and conversely food. Another conducted a rent roll and transacted in real estate, then there was an enterprise affiliated with Macquarie University where I had the opportunity to learn about innovative inventions (light therapy, open source software applications, lasers), meet the academics involved and account for the spin off companies.

In 2005 my sister and her husband decided to go to London, UK for a year on a working visa and asked if I'd like to join them. I was in the process of getting divorced and welcomed the change of scene.

Early July was when I arrived in London and had my first interviews with employment agencies organised for late morning on the 7th... the date of the tube bombings. Thankfully I'd not left the apartment when news started breaking.

Tate Britain as the company accountant was my first London job and I was blessed with access to the amazing gallery each workday and offices that overlooked the Thames. From there I went to work for a ground handler at London Heathrow which was fabulous doing the 'airside training' and an achievement to pass the enhanced security checks to access behind the scenes. I also enjoyed commuting each day on the tube from Fulham (like going on holiday!) and the business of the site. Teletext was my next role which involved implementation

of a new finance package that I enjoyed learning and training others to use. As part of the Daily Mail group they had stringent reporting deadlines - and fabulous parties - including access to the Daily Mail 'box' at Royal Ascot which I was fortunate enough to enjoy on occasion. Following that I was employed in Private Wealth Management, for Damen Hirst and was located in his Marylebone offices with the walls displaying many of his works. We had an installation of one of his formaldehyde works 'The Immaculate Heart - Sacred' which is a bulls heart with the wings of a dove, that meant a day out of the office when they were pouring the chemicals! Key to my job was collating a paper trail to prove ownership of Damien Hirst's extensive private art collection which was fascinating. My subsequent position was also in private wealth management for which I signed a nondisclosure agreement preventing me from sharing any more about it than that.

In between my work roles I enjoy lots of travel - remember the Ryan Air £1 return flights! - and have been fortunate to have been to many destinations. It was on a Royal Air Maroc flight to Casablanca where I met my husband Paul. He was joining a hiking expedition to the Atlas Mountains and I was embarking on a tour of Morocco. Together we have been to Paris, Cinque Terre in Italy, walked a significant stretch of the Camino de Santiago and enjoyed many trips to Australia. We've both also summited Mount Kilimanjaro - but not at the same time!

In 2013 our son Bradley was born and my most challenging role began! The early years are all a bit of a blur and I'm so glad I took lots of photos to look back on. My connection with St John's Welling began with a visit or two to Open Door then Church on Sundays. The strong foundation I had from Sunday School of learning about God was imperative for me to provide for Bradley. St John's was very welcoming to us and I couldn't help but say yes when Kate Foot invited me to do Alpha hosted by Ken and Estelle Woodcock from which I enjoyed connecting and also 'adult time'.

In 2017 the opportunity arose for me to apply for a role at the St John's Welling Church Office as the Administrator, and I haven't looked back since.



God's Creation

"Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy." Psalm 96:12

We are so blessed to have Danson Park in our parish and extra blessed that the woods merge into the grounds of our church.

And that blessing was really felt when we met outside in the children's play area at St John's for the 6am Sunrise service this Easter Sunday. It was a real joy to see the sun rise and be out sung by the birds as we celebrated the rising of the Son of God to everlasting life - for himself and for all of us who choose to follow him.

Just in case you thought you aren't allowed there and haven't really seen the trees, plants, birds and butterflies, etc. in our very own church grounds - you are allowed, so go there and have a walk round. For many people, being outside in a quiet (except for the birds and occasionally the Dubsters!) natural area is a great place to be prayerful and reflective. Or just walk around it anyway to appreciate our little part of God's creation.

Try getting up early on a Spring morning to visit a wood (any wood) in Spring to hear the birds sing at sunrise. You may be really glad you did and it won't have cost you a penny.

Bob Morris

Blood Donor

(Galatians 5 v 14, Matthew 5 v 44)

Stratford City recently, and I was delighted to see a blood donation Centre there.

That inspired me to advocate becoming a blood donor to all the folk I met in the mall, as I prayed for their lives and Christian faith journey. I felt able to do that because I have had some experience of blood donation.

Despite being very anxious about the process, I gave my first blood donation in Manchester in late 1969, having been recruited by a lady on the steps of the central Reference Library, St Peters Square, Manchester, some two months earlier.

To celebrate and thank God for my lifetime of abundant good health, I went on to give blood in all the

various places we lived in over the next years, until my bleed on the brain in 2018, curtailed my ability to give blood.

However, I do think it is a lovely positive activity that satisfies the Christian imperative to love one's neighbour as oneself, and the recovery time gives one an excuse to treat yourself with excellent food and rest over the recovery period which is initially three days or maybe longer.

My son came to visit us for Mother's Day recently, and he was advised to re-become a blood donor, to give life and feel good about himself. After he went home, we had a reason to give him a phone call, to ask for his advice and expertise.

"I gave blood today, Dad" he told me, and we chatted about the process, and other issues, plasma donation, recovery, iron tablets, etc.

That chat made my day, and I thanked God that we have this way of loving our unknown neighbours. Just as Jesus said we ought.

Mike Cosser



My Faith Journey: Keith Mackley

I have been worshipping at St John's for the past 50 years ever since I met Jackie in 1970.

I was brought up in the small village of Old Dalby in Leicestershire and attended the tiny village Church of England school. I also attended the village church, firstly in Sunday School then in my early teens as the cross bearing member of the church choir. As my singing voice resembles that of a strangled bear, being in the choir was quite something, although the two shillings for carrying the cross was a great incentive.

The church played a large part in village life, especially Canon Daybell the vicar. Fêtes were held in the huge vicarage garden, as well as School Sports Days. On several occasions the vicarage garden even attracted the 60 or so turkeys that my mother was rearing for Christmas, all of whom had escaped and wandered up Paradise Lane (Yes Paradise Lane!) to the vicar's garden. I was charged with going to retrieve them - no mean feat to herd a flock of errant turkeys - I can assure you!!! I was also called upon, on several occasions to catch rats with my Jack Russell in the vicar's storeroom - just another day in the life of country folk!!!



Up to my teens and confirmation the church was central to my life but then I entered a spiritual wilderness. This continued until the Lord guided me to Teacher Training College in Nottingham when things began to change. It was here that I met and fell in love with Jackie. She was, and still is, a devout Christian and attended the local church at Clifton Village near the College, so if I wanted to spend time with her I went to church. In July 1974 we married.

Lamplighters at St John's (a children's / young people's club Jackie and I run with lots of help on a Friday night supporting The Leprosy Mission) - oh and by the way Jackie came with the package!!

Jackie's influence over me has been (and still is) considerable as she is a great Christian thinker, reader and pray-er and so my walk with Jesus became a deeper and more meaningful relationship. No sudden seeing the light, rather a gentle maturing of faith.

St John's has been and continues to be a great place to develop as a Christian as there are so many soldiers of Christ whose examples are there for us to learn from, and I have to say, none more-so for me than Jackie's mum and dad (Ruby and Jim). They were a great support to both of us - good and faithful servants!

In my working life as a teacher, deputy and then Head Teacher, my faith has played an important part, as many of the challenges I faced, especially taking over the headship of two schools that had particular problems, I could not have addressed without the Lord leading the way and me putting my trust in him.

I have now been retired for nearly 16 years during which time it has been a joy to encourage our granddaughter Abigail in her walk with Jesus from her desire to get baptised at the age of 7 through to her confirmation last year.

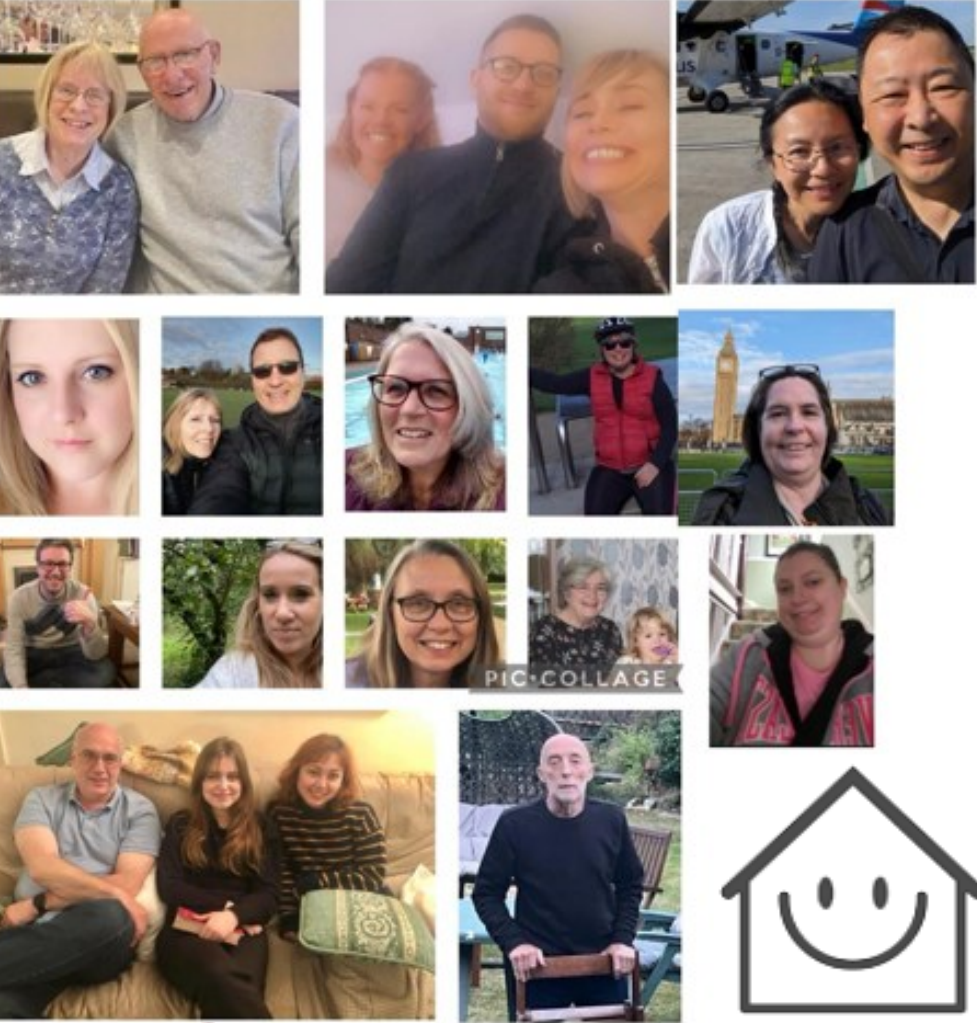
We also host a midday Housegroup led by Miriam G which challenges our thinking as well as further developing our knowledge of scripture as we are drawn closer to God.

From my childhood in Old Dalby, through my early teens, then as a husband, father and grandfather, the Lord has been the rock on which I stand, and to quote a line from a well known song, his continued presence means

'It is well, It is well with my soul'

Amen

Welling Way Housegroup



WE don't have a posh name or even a Nick name!
 We are just the Tuesday evening group that meets at Welling Way (with Murphy the Cat!)
 Our overall membership number is heading for 20 but although everyone is very much part of the group, increasingly, pressure of work and consequent midweek exhaustion means that actual attendance is around 8-12.
 HOWEVER, our WhatsApp group enables us to keep in close and regular contact enabling us to share personal news, prayer requests and answers to prayer on a daily basis.
 Most of our members are considerably younger than their somewhat mature (in years) leaders, and are at the stage in life when significant life decisions are being made and activated. Interestingly, courses both secular and spiritual always seem to fall on a Tuesday evening! But we remain committed to each other and are so glad we meet up regularly at Church on Sundays.
 It is a massive privilege to support and encourage one another and explore God's ongoing call on our lives pray, learn and share together. We encourage those who attend courses such as **'Growing Leaders'** and **'It's your Calling'** Days even when it means they leave us to be ordained! But we also help each other with other career and work and life decisions, all of which we pray through together.
 We welcome new members. Recently Dani Cook and John Kurowski completed Alpha, (which had met at our house), and moved seamlessly into House Group.
 We have also said many goodbyes as members have moved away from Welling but not from our friendship with each other and the Lord Jesus who is the focus of our group.

Estelle Woodcock



Baptisms

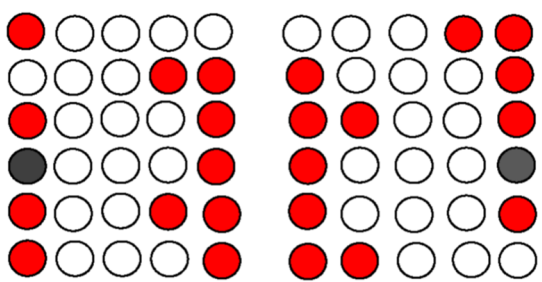
Sunday 21st of January 2024
 Alora Rose D'Souza (right),
 and

Sunday 25th of February 2024
 Noah James Lucas (left),
 were Baptised at
 St John's Welling.

Welcome to our Family.



Competition: If you are the first person to tell me correctly what this picture represents, then you will win yourself a large bar of Tony's Choclonely (the only make of slave free chocolate). The answer will be in the next edition of Grapevine.
Kate Foot PS Be careful, you could be fooled...



Lionel Carter King

8th January 1936
 to 14th February 2024

Well done Good
 and Faithful Servant.

The Service of Thanksgiving
 for the Life
 of Lionel Carter King
 may be viewed [here](#)

