

# GRAPEVINE

grapevine@stjohnswelling.org.uk

www.stjohnswelling.org.uk

020 8303 1107

editors: MCC &amp; NC

## Roots are the depth of faith,...

I planted an apple tree about 5 years ago. The first year yielded a good crop of Bramleys, but it gave very few after that. Last year looked very promising. There was a lot of blossom, but the leaves didn't form and the tiny fruit shrivelled up. And this year, in the recent windy weather, the tree blew down! It appears that the apple tree had not put down strong roots.

Which got me thinking about our roots as Christians. What gives us support and nourishment and strength? Do we have roots deep enough to find joy in the midst of troubles?

Colossians 2:6-7 states: ***So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflow-***

***ing with thankfulness.***

Our roots are the depth of faith by



which we hold firm to Christ's love in every season of our lives. It is in our relationship with Him, when we learn to rest in Him and trust His purpose for our life, that we find hope and peace and joy, whatever the world seems to be throwing at us.

When life is kind, we need to be growing in our faith, putting down those strong roots, so that when life gets tough, when those storms hit, we will be able to stand firm on the truth that God never leaves or forsakes us, and that He walks with us, even in the deepest of our valleys.

If you are going through tough times at the moment, my prayer is that you remain strong in the promise of God's love and find shelter in His tender arms; and if times are good, may your roots be firmly established in the knowledge of our Saviour. With much love in Christ.

**Beverley Beaumont**  
St John's Welling

## St John's News

A week ago as I write, we were considering resurrecting our BBQs, this week we are putting on extra layers as, in true British style, the temperature has decided to plummet!

However, the Spring flowers are continuing to bloom, and Lent has started with Holy Week, Easter and even, warmer weather sure to follow.

These post Christmas months have been busy with lots going on at St Johns and, believe, a real hope as, week by week, we welcome new people at our worship services and see God is taking us into a new season.

Our **Sermon series** are providing a nourishing Spiritual diet, Joshua is both exciting, and sobering with much relevant application. Likewise, the Minor

prophets and Isaiah.

The **February afternoon tea** was so good we are encouraging Douglas to date in another one, for which I believe, he will request some practical help!

It was a privilege for St John's to be able to host the **Eco Market** at the beginning of March. If you weren't able to come to date in the next on the 1st Saturday of May at Christ Church Bexleyheath. Along with the washing products there were many wonderful and reasonably priced craft items.

The **Uganda Nine**, as we called them, were away much of February and have returned with much to share both challenge and encouragement. **Sue and Steve** will also be home by the time you read this.

There are currently two **Alpha Groups**, one afternoon and one evening. We are having such good times as we grow in human friendship and understand more

about how to have real Friendship with Jesus.

**THE PARISH PROFILE** (the information that any prospective Vicar will read about us before applying for interview) was sent to our Arch Deacon several weeks ago and we are currently waiting to hear whether she advises any amendments. Hopefully the situation will have moved on by the time you are reading this and certainly by June.

**Family News** WE continue to pray for and visit **Mushi** in Lewisham hospital.

**Ian Giles** is battling an array of conditions, primarily a major Heart Attack and has just been moved from St Thomas's to Darent Valley Hospital.

**Andy Inglis** is now home with carers. Following a fall, **Twink Upson** has just (March 15th) been admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We pray for all these folk and those caring for them.

So, until May!

**Estelle Woodcock**



# St John's Church Playgroup

We have had a very busy year so far and below is a summary of the setting and a few of the things we do. There is so much more as well!

We have a great, hard working team all with excellent ideas and highly trained and it is a pleasure to work with all of them :)

We are a pre-school setting which follows the EYFS curriculum. We have 6 permanent members of staff and 3 cover staff. We can take a maximum of 32 children per day and currently have 45 children on the register as some do not attend every day. The children are from 2 years old to rising 5's.

We run a Key Worker system and complete observations of the children using an

online learning journal called Tapestry.

We have taken on the Hygge approach in the setting which is Swedish and is all about warmth and bringing natural resources in.

Each year we hold several coffee mornings, some to raise money for charities such as CIN, Comic Relief and MacMillan and others just for the parents to come and chat.

We do two trips around the park in Autumn and Spring and the parents are invited to come along and we also do a trip to the farm in July. We hold a Sports Day. Have Guide dogs and owls visiting and invite people from the church to come and do music sessions with the children. Each

week CRIBS come to do a Bible story and on Mondays we have a football coach in to do a session.

We run differentiated groups every morning as well as doing the Talk Boost programme and WELLCOMM screening.

At Christmas we perform our Nativity in the church to the families and in the New Year we do a Dolly Baptism.

We have a lot of EAL and SEND children and we are an all welcoming and inviting setting.

We have Bible stories every week as well as worship songs, and we teach the children to pray at the beginning and end of the sessions.

We are currently full up with a waiting list and our children move on to quite a few local Primary Schools.

**Julie Stedman,**  
Manager



## IJM

Hi everybody, as you know from our notice board and annual visitors to St John's from

International Justice Mission, they help people all around the globe to deal with horrendous situations, so I thought it would be good to focus on good news from IJM. They are having a great impact globally by partnering with authorities, survivors and supporters to stop slavery and violence working in 31 regions across 16 countries and saving tens of thousands of people. Remarkably they have succeeded in reducing slavery and violence between 50% - 86%% in several places and they are not easing up on their efforts.

Here's some more encouraging information taken from IJMUK, IJMUK.org:

**Praise God that at the end of last year, the National Police of Colombia's Purple Patrol held an event to promote women's rights and safety, with the support of IJM.** Many of the police in attendance personally committed to eradicate this type of violence in Colombia. Please pray that we see the impact of their commitment this year.

**Praise God that last month, IJM was formally awarded an honorary commendation by the Embassy of Ukraine in Romania.** IJM's practical support of Ukrainian refugees since the beginning of the war in February 2022 was recognised

to be of great significance to the entire Ukrainian people. Please pray for the continued protection of refugees from human trafficking.

Breaking news: **this week, (Nov 2014), IJM is attending the first-ever Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children.**

This is an unprecedented opportunity for IJM to advocate for better care and justice for children, as high-level government officials gather from over 100 countries, including the UK.

'Protecting children from violence is urgent. **Up to one billion children aged two to 17 have experienced violence in the last year.**

'This Ministerial Conference is the first time global leaders have come together in this way to make commitments to ending violence against children – and **it could be a game changer in helping children like me,' shared Vanessa Bautista,** a survivor leader in the Philippines and Advocacy Lead at IJM

One of IJM's key asks for the conference is for governments to prioritise tackling the explosion in online violence.

**Praise God for a new law increasing sentences for trafficking in Romania.** In a significant milestone, the Senate of Romania just passed a bill increasing minimum sentences and preventing suspended sentences for human trafficking. IJM extensively advocated for these legislative changes. Please pray as the law now goes

We're on PrayerMate!  
Join us in praying for justice on the app.



for promulgation to the President of Romania. **Mat 2024**

**Praise God for survivor-run businesses in South Asia.** IJM works with several survivor groups who have started their own creative ventures making textiles, block prints, or other handicrafts. These businesses give them opportunities for leadership development, creative outlets and dignified income for their families. Pray they will find opportunities to sell their beautiful handmade goods!

**People across the UK are being invited to Gather for International Women's Day on Saturday 8th March!** Gather involves getting together with friends over a meal, breaking the silence around violence, and fundraising together to help protect women and children. Please pray that many people would be inspired to get involved and help IJM stop violence against women.

Please pray for the support and protection of these brave people at IJM as they continue to do God's work in these terrifying and dangerous conditions to save his people in our broken world.

Maybe you have been inspired and have ideas how to help IJMUK, and if so please see me and together we may be able to make it happen.

**Terry Golding**



# WASTELESS MARKET

The Eco Market came to St John's at the end of February for the first time and it was a real hit! That was the feedback from the Wasteless Market organisers and from some of you, so well done to those of you who went to have a look and surprised them by how many visitors they received.

Don't know what the Eco Market or the Wasteless Market are? See for yourself at one the events announced on their website- [www.wastelessmarket.com](http://www.wastelessmarket.com). For example at the producers' markets at Danson House and Lesness Abbey. And they will be coming back to St John's.

My summary would be that the Wasteless Market stall sells eco-friendly bathroom, kitchen and cleaning products in bottles or better still, you take your own for them to fill. They



also sell washing up cloths and brushes etc and they take all sorts of things for recycling that the Council don't and raise a little money for Pathfinder dogs for the blind and the Air Ambulance.

The Eco Market has the Wasteless Market stall plus other sustainably minded stalls together in one place. Examples in the one at St John's this time sold honeys, soaps, cushions, boxes and bags, bird feeders, cakes and pink salts as well as Discover Welling selling hot drinks.



Hosting them fits well with the direction we are going at St John's Welling.

On the subject of recycling, still keep putting milk bottle caps (not from other bottles) in the round red tub on the church kitchenette counter; you can now drop off spent tablet blister packs at Boots in Bexleyheath; and Morrison's in Welling have a new recycling station in the covered area outside their door by their car park.

**Bob Morris**

## My Faith Journey: Leigh Hills

I wasn't brought up with much religious input. We sang hymns at primary school and were each given a bible which I have always kept. I felt safer with the bible in my home, especially when the children arrived I felt protected. Mum sent us to Sunday school but that was for a bit of peace and quiet. My brother and I liked it because we got orange juice and a biscuit, things we didn't have at home.

I remember praying when I was around 8 years old. I



had a dental appointment the following day and was on my balcony looking up to the sky asking God to remove all of my teeth overnight to avoid the dentist! Thankfully he didn't! I also prayed when in secondary school, I'd played truant. I promised never to do it again if I wasn't caught but I did do it again!

As an adult I had 2 Christian friends and attended church sporadically. I liked the safe, warm feeling and the singing. I thought that I was living life as a decent person with morals and standards so I didn't need Christianity. I attended my first Alpha course in 2008 but I still didn't get it!!

In 2011 I was introduced to St John's by a friend. Shortly after I attended another Alpha course. That summer I went to Lark in Sidcup. I was in the big tent surrounded by Christians rejoicing in their faith. I sat amongst them and cried. I wanted what they had.

Whilst attending Alpha something happened in my personal life that caused me a lot of emotional pain. I decided to pray a heartfelt prayer to God asking for relief. When I awoke the next day my heart was full of love, peace and joy. I had been healed!! I couldn't deny him anymore!!

I prayed the prayer at Alpha asking Jesus to come into my life.

My faith and love for Jesus grew. In 2012 I was baptised at St John's, which is still my spiritual home.



# The Evangelists Conference

The Evangelists Conference, 14-16 January 2025. Mercure Daventry Court Hotel.

Billy-Jo again kindly gave me a lift to this Conference, and we both agreed that it was an amazing Christian experience. We were ministered to by Glen Scrivener, Rachael Heffer, Les Isaac, Joe Boot, and Tim Dilena.

It was lovely to be sharing the same air with the very humble and understated Nicky and Pippa Gumbel, to hear of Nicky's German Jewish Banking and legal ancestors (the subject of a book he is currently writing) and to see him interviewed by J John about Alpha and the dire state of the Christian Church, in these challenging days for our world.

However, the three sessions from Tim Dilena, the senior pastor of Times Square Church in New York City on the providence of God, were undoubtedly the high point of the



conference, given the freshness of his analysis and the passion of the delivery, which was startling and inspiring.

Christian apologist Joe Boot got a standing clap for his presentation, which left me encouraged, but Les Isaac, the founder of Street Pastors, was very much more down to earth.

Further highlights for me personally, were to briefly chat again with my friend Andy Economides, to encounter J John and Killy on a couple of occasions, to pray with Holy oil on a tissue for Mushi 's recovery, together with Andy, and the chats I had over meal breaks with about a dozen

fellow evangelists. These were my tribe, my fellow workers in our Christian ministry.

Next year the Conference moves to a new larger venue, Chesford Grange in Kenilworth, and expands to 350 delegates from this year's 200. Please come and join Billy-Jo and myself, and be inspired and encouraged, in your faith and your calling, to evangelize with love.

**MCC**

Link for booking 2026 - <https://evangelistsconference.com/>

## General Synod

**The Church of England General synod: One of our church members Billy-Jo is a voted member to The General Synod which is the national assembly of the Church of England. The General Synod considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, formulates new forms of worship, debates matters of national and international importance, and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level. General Synod has three houses, house of Bishops, House for Clergy and the house of Laity. As one of Eight members representing our Diocese (Rochester) Billy-Jo, from the house of Laity, spoke into a debate on 'working class into ministry' and the national 'growing younger and more diverse' conversation.**

**Billy-Jo shares - " it is really important that we are creating a culture where good robust debating can happen in a mindful way. Sharing diverse views as well as holding on to each other's differences. The church and Jesus are not mine they are ours. Together we make Jesus known and show those around us the love of Jesus. This should be done wherever we meet. I am a mother of a 22- and 17-year-old, my views need to accept the difference they also share with us. I am from a working-class background in church leadership, I know I see things differently, but I also know I have views and ideas that are welcome and different. We are all important to the tapestry of church and to Jesus, this includes you reading this!"**

**If you would like to know; Billy-Jo love's diet coke and cake. You can come and sit in the open public gallery, or you can google The Church of England General Synod.**

