



GRAPEVINE

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Greetings, St John's!

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”

Ephesians 3:20

Greetings, St John's! I am writing this in Worthing, just a few days from moving with Sue into St John's Vicarage. We are so very grateful to the people of St John's under the supervision of Val Gompers for the decoration and cleaning of the house, and to the Diocese for necessary repairs. Deep gratitude sums up how we are feeling at the moment...mixed with excitement! What a church to be a part of! Thank you, God! A little information about me: I have just returned from three years working with CMS in Laos as a priest for the Diocese of Singapore for an English-speaking church there. We had a wonderful time:



we saw growth and learned loads. Prior to that I was an incumbent of two parish churches in Bradford, and a curate in Stourbridge, having left being a school teacher to follow the call to ordained Anglican ministry.

My background is that I am the son of a Methodist minister, who at 89 is still preaching every Sunday. I was born while he was serving in Antigua. His

Charismatic faith became mine as a small child and I have stayed in church since, leaving the Methodists to worship in the Vineyard church, a Salt and Light church and then an Anglican benefice.

Sue and I have two children: David, working for the Christian charity *Fusion*, engaged to Emily; and Ruth, an engineer who is currently raising her child and helping at her local church, married to Daniel.

Since discovering the tangible presence of God, seeing Jesus move through the power of the Holy Spirit, I and Sue (who is also an ordained Anglican priest), want to live in the centre of His will, see people come to faith, and, in the words of John Wimber, “meet people's needs with heaven's resources”.

Blessings, Ian.

Rev Ian Jennings

St John's News

By the time you read this, Ian Jennings will have been installed, instituted, and collated i.e., He will be our Vicar and the new St John's Chapter will be underway.

You have probably already read Ian's article. It goes almost without saying, lets be praying for Ian and his wife Sue, that they settle in easily and happily, and will increasingly discern God's vision for our Church.

The last two wintery months have been busy with opportunities to learn, serve and grow in our faith.

We have had helpful and challenging sermons at both the 10.30 and 4.00pm services, including those from our Mission Partners. These have really helped us be more informed, and to pray and support

three of our Mission Partners: Rukungiri, the Leprosy Mission and IJM.

We were able to join Bishop Ridley for ASH Wednesday Communion and are now appreciating many different Lent activities organised by Churches Together in Welling.

St John's hosted the TBB (Transforming Bexley Borough) Leaders Breakfast at the end of January... an excellent opportunity to learn where God is at work in our Borough.

Sue and Steve Read have been in Rukungiri with a team including Linzi Golding and Kay Andrewartha from St John's and are all back home with much to share.

Whatsapp has enabled us to be in regular contact with them and pray for different situations as well as see Linzi's wonderful pictures and video clips making it ALMOST as good as being there!

The Afternoon Tea organised by Douglas was a lovely relaxed occasion with people from several other Welling churches joining us. Talking of food, there has been both Men's and a Ladies' Breakfast and the men have also had a Curry Night!!

A first was Michelle Cronin's lovely prayer focus at the Ladies' breakfast It has been a delight to welcome Mushi at Zoom Prayer a number of times in the last few weeks. We continue to pray for Wendy Cole, back at Church after a spell in hospital and Julie Stedman who, as I write has just lost her Father, and Andre Hui whose Mother is receiving End of Life care.

So on to Easter, Late Spring and Summer, and praying regularly to the only One who can bring real Peace.

Estelle Woodcock



The work of CRiBS supports the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of children and young people, and has done this since 1993. We seek to inspire Growing Faith and promote Living



Values, by sharing the light, love and life of Jesus with children and young people. Our desire is that all have the opportunity to explore and think through the values they live by and the beliefs that underpin them.

We're able to deliver RE lessons and workshops, tour with our Easter and Christmas productions, and provide intervention and wellbeing support to many boys and girls through our Unlimited programme, and continue to do so, and this wouldn't be the case without

the prayer and financial support that churches and individuals give us.

The productions that we perform at Easter and Christmas take the Good News of the gospel message to more than 35 primary schools on each seasonal tour, with two performances at larger schools so that all children are able to see them, which amounts to over 13,000 children and staff, twice a year.

Year on year we teach a range of Christian lesson series as part of the RE curriculum, currently in 10 schools, and deliver workshops on money management and the transition to secondary school in at least 25 schools every year. We also support teaching at community events such as 'Spark in the Park'.



The aspect of wellbeing needs has grown massively, particularly in recent years, and the team seek to support schools in this by offering regular small group discussions in primary schools and 1:1 mentoring



sessions in secondary schools, currently working with almost 400 children and young people from across 12 schools. We have also just started our first

'Mentoring Hub', an out of school time mentoring facility delivered in conjunction with local churches.

We are a fairly small charity – with 10 full-time and part-time paid staff, plus a number of sessional workers and volunteers – but we have a significant reputation and impact across Bexley Borough and beyond.

For more information or to support us go to www.cribsonline.org

Paul Davis, Director



Eco Market

Those of you who visited the third Eco Market event at St John's Welling on Saturday 7th March will know what how interesting and relevant it is.

If you have not been before, see for yourself when it comes to St John's Welling again on Saturday the 2nd of May. You could even just arrange to meet a friend for a coffee at St John's that day and observe; then you will see what the excitement is about.

It is relevant because it connects us to the community in a different way. Stall holders and visitors who might never have anything to do with churches or our faith come to us and (they tell us) feel very welcome; relevant because it takes our environmental commitment beyond just thinking about renewable energy and insulation, etc and shows Christians actively helping bring about change by hosting this sort of event; and relevant because people evidently enjoy the event.

I mentioned "our environmental commitment" because actively minimising our church's environmental impact and actively trying to change things among our congregation and community is actually a core expectation of the Church of England (it's there in the Five Marks of Mission), not just something for those who are particularly interested in that sort of thing.

I haven't described what happens there; not even shown you a picture! Find out yourself by going to the next one in May! Or you can ask me or Viv McGill or google "wasteless market", which will show just a part of what goes on.

Bob Morris

Pilgrimage Encounters

My pitch to shop-workers, after I have admired their working area and conditions is 'Hello, I'm

a Christian, I bless staff in shops with a free prayer, can I pray a blessing for you, and your life, (its free, I am not a Begger)?'

Lots of people say no, and if they cannot be dissuaded, I recommend them to become a blood donor, and reluctantly depart. When people consent to a prayer, I ask their name and then bless them and their life with a blessing prayer that is standard for everyone.

On the third of November 2025, I was in Westminster, my next station on the Jubilee Underground line. I had in mind to try to purchase some ceramic poppy badges like the ones I had bought last year, and so I happened upon a queue of people in front of a British Legion pop up stall. I heard a distinctive male Lancas-

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My Faith Journey: Harry Finlay

My faith journey began at the age of sixteen, just reading a Bible. I was an inquisitive lad and really wanted to find the truth about the Christian faith.

I was one of seven siblings and always had a hard life, in the care system away from my other siblings for years, even locked up in a kind of prison for young offenders. On my journey I had stolen from my mum, used drugs, had been abused, and my father had abandoned me, and gave me very many beatings.

I ended up in prison for drug running, but this was a time when I learned that it's when you're at your lowest, God has a way to rescue your life.

I was in Cardiff prison, looking at a possible seven years for my crimes, and I was an Englishman in a Welsh prison. My life was on the line too many times to count, but deep within there was a sense that I was looking for God.

I read a book called 'The pilgrim's progress', and it made me see and have more faith.

On the day before my hearing at Crown Court the guys got really stressed about the judge who had a certain reputation.



As I was led to the dock, I stood up and expected a lengthy sentence, but only heard the judge saying 'Mr Smith, (my previous name) it would progress your career in crime if I gave you a lengthy sentence, and given that, I am giving you six months for the crimes committed and you are free to go.

I was in shock! Not only had I been set free, but all the other prisoners that day got heavier sentences than usual. We never know what God has planned for us, but we realise that He loves us more than anyone could.

There are more miracles to talk about that God has done in mine and other's lives.

By God's grace we are His children. And through it, my prayers have been answered.

GOOD NEWS for Everyone!

How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? Romans 10 :14

I am very proud to inform you that in January this year, I took over as the Chairman of the local Dartford and Greenwich Branch of Good News for Everyone, the new name for the Gideons. Who had to rename and relaunch to allow the recruitment of ladies as full members, to become compliant with the Equalities Act.

However our role remains the same, introducing the public to our Lord Jesus Christ through the Bible, testaments and Hope and other magazines.

To this end, we speak and distribute in Hotels, Schools, Churches, shops and in the street,... both in our local area and further afield, for example, when we are on holiday.

I learned to speak in public, by working as a Probation Officer in Court, where I had to address magistrates in proceedings. Confidence in so doing enabled me to join this work back in 2002. Nowadays, the Holy Spirit gives me the joy which enables me to talk about my Christian faith to strangers, mostly staff in shops. I also promote Blood donation via

the NHS Blood and transplant, as a good way to thank God for our health, and to demonstrate the desire to save the lives of those in urgent need of blood.

So if you have time to spare and feel passionate to share your Christian faith, why not consider joining Good News for everyone? It's a vehicle to help you spread the love, and after all, God is love. **MCC**



THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

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trian voice, and saw a familiar face on a well-presented smiling man.

I pitched to him and he consented to be blessed by me and told me that his name was Lindsay. He told me that he is the Speaker of the House of Commons, and a Christian, and that he and others pray every morning at 09:30 am in the House.

I had blessed the right honorable Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, the 158th Speaker of the House of Commons since November 4th 2019.

He is the Labour Party MP for Chorley, and has been since 1997. Upon his election as speaker, he left the Labour Party to act as a politically impartial speaker.

He was knighted in 2018 New Year Honours for Parliamentary and Political services.

I found him to be a very nice likeable human being, and as we said goodbye, he had remembered my Christian name, which was most impressive. **MCC**

The 106th Archbishop of Canterbury Installation at 3.00pm, Wednesday 25th March 2026

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally will be installed as the Archbishop of Canterbury at 3.00pm on Wednesday 25th March. For the preceding six days Bishop Sarah, along with her husband Eamonn, are walking a 140km route along the Becket Camino from St Paul's Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting her journey from Bishop of London to Archbishop of Canterbury as part of her spiritual preparation for her Installation service at Canterbury Cathedral. It is the first time in modern history that an Archbishop of Canterbury has undertaken a pilgrimage of this nature in the lead-up to their Installation. Please pray for Bishop Sarah as she prepares to take on the role of Archbishop of Canterbury.

A live stream of the installation service for the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury at 3.00pm on Wednesday 25th March 2026 is available per the link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/archbishops/watch-installation-106th-archbishop-canterbury-sarah-mullally-canterbury-cathedral>