

TRIO

March 2016

The Parish Magazine of
St Mary, West Malling,
St Michael, Offham &
St Gabriel, Kings Hill

Contributions welcomed



Twin Cross Sculptures by Gerry Judah
to mark the centenary of the outbreak of
World War I

St Paul's Cathedral, London

Further details on p. 3

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From the Editor

Last Friday I managed, finally, to get to *Finding a Voice*, the Lent course based on Oscar winning film, *The King's Speech*, and I'm so glad I did. Powerful and moving, this, the third session in the series, really brought home to me how dangerous it is to judge by appearances.



The film is a dramatic account of the real-life battle Albert, Duke of York fought to overcome his pronounced and debilitating stammer.

The film opens in 1925, at the Duke of York's inaugural radio broadcast. The tension, embarrassment and awkwardness are palpable. Over the next nine years, the Duchess of York, desperate to help her husband, pursues every avenue she can to try to help cure his stammer, to no avail. That is, until Lionel Logue is recommended to her.

An Australian with a penchant for amateur dramatics, he eschewed conventional medical practices. He cut his therapeutic teeth on helping shell-shocked troops recover after the first World War. He rapidly realised their stammering and inability to express themselves was deeply rooted in the traumas they had experienced. He was QBE (Qualified by Experience) and discouraged smoking prescribed by doctors to 'relax the larynx'.

Having agreed to treat the Duke of York, Lionel insists on working with him in his Harley Street rooms – a safe place. He treats Bertie as his equal, calling him by his first name. He intentionally creates the right environment to help his client to flourish.

Bertie resists Lionel's rules; he's willing to work on the physical aspects of speech production but opposes any attempt to investigate the psychological cause.

Then, he unexpectedly visits Lionel soon after the death of his father. His older brother, David, is now King. A model bi-plane lies incomplete on the table: Bertie discloses how much he wanted to make models as a child, but because his father collected stamps, that was what he had to do. Further gentle probing from Lionel reveals a litany of pain, neglect and abuse he endured as a very small boy. His first nanny had favoured David and used, surreptitiously, to make Bertie cry at the daily 'presentation' to his parents. He would be returned to the nursery and she'd refuse to feed him. It took three years for his parents to notice. He was punished for being left handed, had to wear painful leg braces night and day to correct knock-knees and suffered from stomach problems as a result of his first nanny's cruelty. It is little wonder he developed a stammer.

King George V, who thought fathers should frighten their children, encouraged Bertie's siblings to tease him when he faltered. For all his apparent privilege, Bertie's childhood was isolating and abusive. You would think his position offered him protection: it didn't.

Lionel not only helps him find his voice; he offers Bertie something far more precious – friendship – something he had never before experienced.

It's a remarkable metaphor and a potent reminder that God can do the most amazing things even with the most damaged of us if we trust him and are prepared, like Bertie, to persevere. Do get in touch with Pat if you'd like to join us. *With very best wishes,*

Becky

From David

Within the walls of St Paul's Cathedral, you will see two large white crosses that, viewed from a distance, seem somewhat uneven. As you move close to them, the reason for their irregular nature becomes clear.

Woven into the arms of the crosses are intricate models of settlements, both contemporary and historical, that have been decimated by conflict. The twin sculptures by London artist Gerry Judah (pictured) sit at the very head of the nave and, at more than six metres high, they are imposing; strikingly so.



The installations portray the brutal realities of war fixed upon an instrument of death. It's a powerful image and one that reminds me, yet again, that the cross of Jesus is at once both a place of unspeakable brutality and a symbol of life and peace.

Judah's twin sculptures were installed in 2014 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One. But in an attempt to bring the memorials up to date, Judah stuck townscapes, reminiscent of scenes from Syria and Afghanistan, on the cruciforms.



Those in charge of the cathedral have been thrilled with the end result. Canon Mark Oakley said the sculptures "provoke us into interrogating the present world and the landscapes we casually view on the news every day."

As I write, we are still in the season of Lent but Easter comes early this year and we will

soon face, once again, the realities of our Lord's cross and all that it means for us in being a place of peace and reconciliation, forgiveness, freedom and new hope.

But our thoughts and reflections on the reality of the cross will count little if we leave them stuck two thousand years ago in 1st century Palestine. Like Judah's crosses, the task each and every year, each and every day, is to re-imagine and re-appropriate the truth of the cross into our world and our own lives.

The empty cross is particularly symbolic of Easter Sunday and Jesus rising from the grave. The cross is empty because Christ is no longer dead but eternally risen.

So often the cross we might find in a church is smooth, plain and unmarked. Sanitised even. But the reality was that the empty cross of Christ would bear the puncture marks of the nails that had been driven through hands and feet into the rough wood. It would be stained by the blood and sweat of its victim. They were crudely and roughly made without much concern for their quality and no concern for comfort.

The Judah sculptures in St Paul's Cathedral remind us once again that even if the world still hurts and bleeds on a daily basis, the answer to that pain takes its journey to eternal life through the cross, through suffering and death and only then do we reach the hope of new life and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

David Green

Easter Services 2016

Palm Sunday, 20th March

8:00 am	Pledge Sunday	St Mary, West Malling
11:00 am	Pledge Sunday	St Mary, West Malling

Maundy Thursday, 24th March

7:00 pm	Seder Meal	St Lawrence, Mereworth
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Good Friday, 25th March

9:30 am	Morning Prayer	St Michael, Offham
11:00 am	Walk of Witness	St Thomas More, West Malling
2:00 pm	Quiet Hour	St Mary, West Malling

Easter Day, Sunday 27th March

6:00 am	Dawn Service	St Michael, Offham
8:00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary, West Malling
9:15 am	All Age Communion	St Michael, Offham
11:00 am	All Age Communion	St Mary, West Malling

For the Parish Registers

St Mary, West Malling

Funeral

4 th February	Patricia Joyce
19 th February	Evelyn Milenski



Rooms for Hire

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£15 per session (am/pm/eve) To book contact: Alastair Loxton

📞 01732 875559 ✉ al@alastairloxton.co.uk

What's on at St Mary's

Mothering Sunday, 6th March

You are warmly invited to our special All Age Service at 11:00 am when we will be giving daffodils to all those who care for and look after us (whether we call them 'mum' or something completely different!) and thinking about Mother Church.

Pledge Day – Palm Sunday, 20th March

During Lent we have been considering how God would like us to use the Time, Talents and Treasure he has entrusted to us. David's sermon on Time and Reflections on Talents and Treasure can be found on pages 15-20.

If you haven't received a letter about our 2016 Stewardship campaign from David and John, there are copies on the small table at the back of church for you to take home and pray about. Please bring them to church on Palm Sunday – we will offer our pledges to God during the service. If you can't come to the Palm Sunday service, please post your form through the Vicarage door. All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Annual Egg-stravaganza

We like to offer all who come to our Easter Service a blown, decorated egg.

If you don't like blowing eggs, there are egg blowers available from Amazon, but I use a syringe acquired in an ink refill pack. The trick is to make only one hole at the bottom and gently force air *into* the shell – which will magically encourage the egg to come out. Shaking the egg hard beforehand helps to liquefy the contents. Your eggy goo can then be used for omelettes, or scrambling or cakes. I can recommend blueberry muffins.

Decorate with decoupage, paint, stick on jewels, fabric, feathers – the only limit is your imagination! Please leave eggs in boxes at the back of St Mary's. If you are not feeling artistic, blown eggs would be very gratefully received.

Advance Notice – Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday, 24th April at 10:00 am – there will be just ONE church service on this special Sunday when we will give thanks for the blessings we have received over the past year, elect our churchwardens and PCC and take a glimpse at what our future might look like.



On Monday, 14th March at 2 pm, David Green will preside at our annual service, which will be followed by tea in the Church Centre.

Gail Crutchfield

Women's World Day of Prayer at St Mary's

We are thrilled to be hosting this event on Friday, 4th March. Refreshments are available from 9:45 am and the service will start at 10:30 am. The service has been created by Christians in Cuba. Further details are on p. 14.





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St Michael's Offham News & Muse

Mothering Sunday on **6th March** is a time to remember Mother Church and mothers and families everywhere. At a **Special All Age Service at 9:15 am**. Children may bring gifts of flowers to be blessed during the service, which they can then give to their mothers.

Holy Week at St Michael's

- Good Friday, **25th March**, 9:15 am Service of Morning Prayer
- We join Churches Together in Malling at 11:00 am for the Good Friday Walk of Witness starting at St Thomas More Church, West Malling. The walk takes us to the High Street and the Parish Church, ending at Pilsdon with refreshments.
- Easter Day, **27th March** - at 6:00 am - Sunrise Service
- Easter Day, **27th March** - All Age with Holy Communion at 9:15 am.

Following last year's format, this year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on **Sunday, 17th April** after a short act of worship at 9.15 am, instead of our usual Sunday service. The intention in arranging things this way is to increase attendance and engagement with our annual meeting, since attendance at the mid-week evening APCM of past years has not been good.

Please put the date in your diary and come along to both worship God, but also to review the last year and give thanks, and to look ahead together. All are welcome to come and hear reports for the year and to elect the Churchwardens, PCC and office holders.

As Robin Stranack has indicated his wish to stand down we will need a new volunteer to take his place as Churchwarden; also, our Hon Treasurer, Caroline Dyer, wishes to stand down, so we are looking for a treasurer to take her place.

The **Lent Conversations** continue on **Wednesday, 2nd March** when St Michael's joins our friends at Offham Methodist Church for a series of ecumenical meetings to share our Lent preparation for Easter, using the York Course - *The Psalms – Prayers for Today's Church*.

Wed 2nd March *'How long, O Lord?' (Ps 13)*

led by Helen Cooke

Wed 9th March *'You spread a table before me' (Ps 23)*

led by Eileen Rowe

Wed 16th March *'Unless the Lord builds the house' (Ps 127)*

led by Margaret Moore

We start in the Methodist Hall with a cup of tea at 3:45 pm, listen to the CD at 4:00 pm which provides a background introduction to the topic for the day and follow with an informal discussion, led by the group leader for the day. We aim to finish by 5.00 pm. In addition, the York course handbook is made available so that you can study the topic a week in advance.

All are welcome – even if you don't want to join the discussion, just come and listen.

Dawn Service on Easter Day

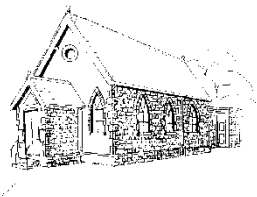


Early in the morning on Sunday, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid and saw the stone had been rolled away. Join us to celebrate what happened next!

Offham Methodist Church

Our Annual Coffee morning will be held on **Saturday, 12th March** from 10.00 a.m. till noon. Proceeds in aid of Heart of Kent Hospice. We welcome your support for this event.

Our "Tea & Chat" continues on the first Tuesday of the month – **1st March**, meeting in our hall from 2:00 until 4.00 pm; you are invited to join us to meet old friends and maybe some new ones over a cup of tea.



Programmes have now been delivered to each house in the village and the first meeting takes place on **Thursday 17th March** - 8.00 pm in the Village Hall entitled '*Bringing your Past to the Present*' - a talk by Celia Heritage on tracing your family history. Celia is a Kent based lecturer who regularly speaks on the subject at national conferences and courses as well as undertaking family research.

The following month on **Thursday, 7th April** at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall we will hold our AGM – join us for drinks and canapés at 7:30 pm.

The short business meeting will be followed by '*The Madness of Gardeners*' - an illustrated talk by Sally Berkeley, garden historian and an expert on the Renaissance gardens. Her entertaining and amusing talk covers plant hunters and avid collectors throughout history, who have gone to great lengths to discover and collect rare and new plants.

*The Offham Society needs a **Committee Secretary**, so if you would like to volunteer and join the Committee to take minutes and act as a point of contact the Chairman, Mike Rowe, we would be delighted to hear from you. Keyboard skills and the ability to produce agendas and minutes would be an advantage. We hold five committee meetings a year.*



Offham Open House This month's meeting, will take place on **Thursday, 3rd March**. The meeting starts at 10:00am and will take place at Ann Baldock's house - Chimneys, Teston Road. The theme will be "Just a Minute or Two"; we would like members to contribute on a personal moment that you would like to share. It could be your most embarrassing moment, your encounter with a celebrity or anything else of your choice.

Offham Parish Council will be holding its **Annual Parish Meeting** on **Tuesday, 26th April** from 7.30 to 10.00 p.m. in the Village Hall. This is an open meeting for residents and is your opportunity to raise any issues, concerns or ideas that you may have about the village.



St Michael's, Offham wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

St Michael's Church in Offham has received £8,500 of initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the church's restoration and renewal project. The Grade I listed parish church needs significant repairs which this funding will help to fund. The church has already raised £7,500 towards the work.

The project aims to carry out essential repairs to the church's walls; repair the roof and replace all of the guttering to prevent water further damaging the building. It also hopes to make the building more available to the local community by encouraging visitors and housing a new education programme for local schools. Once repairs are completed, the church hopes to develop the project by providing new facilities to better meet the needs of young and old.

The local Priest-in-Charge, Rev David Green, said: "We are delighted that the HLF have confirmed what local people already know really well - that this is a beautiful and atmospheric ancient building that deserves to be preserved and enjoyed not only by the local worshipping community, but by the whole of our village and the wider world."

The HLF's development grant will enable the church to commission a detailed study of further work needed, before applying for the full grant later. The total cost of the project will be in the region of £125,000.



The HLF has recognised the importance of the church because it is an almost complete late 11th or early 12th century church with a handful of important architectural features. You can just see the 'Hagioscopes' – small holes in the wall also known as 'squints' to each side of the great chancel arch. Clergy standing on this side of the arch would have been able to watch the priest celebrating Holy Communion in

the chancel; the squints allowed the priests to co-ordinate their movements.

The church appears in the *Textus Roffensis*, a document written in 1122, and Offham appears in the Domesday Book of 1086.

Local MP, Tom Tugendhat, said, "St Michael's Church in Offham is at the centre of a vibrant village. That's why this Heritage Lottery Funding is important not just for the Church, but for the whole community. For centuries, St Michael's Church has been synonymous with life in Offham and this grant will help continue the tradition. The fundraising effort of the local church already highlights the importance of this project and I hope that works can get underway as soon as possible."

David Green Photo: Mike Rowe

Glimpses from St Gabriel's



Our monthly breakfast goes from strength to strength – over sixty people joined us on Sunday 28th February to chat as we munched. It was lovely to mingle and meet one another. We are very grateful to all who help with the catering and make it such a lovely occasion.

What's on at St Gabriel's

Monday, 7 th March, 8:00 pm	Cluster Prayer Time	27 Ames Way
Tuesday, 8 th March, 8:00 pm	Housegroup	27 Ames Way
Wednesday, 9 th March, 1:00 pm	Knit & Natter	5 Cellini Walk
Wednesday, 9 th March, 7:30 pm	Shine Brighter	Venue tba
Tuesday, 22 nd March, 8:00 pm	Housegroup	27 Ames Way
Wednesday, 23 rd March, 1:00 pm	Knit & Natter	5 Cellini Walk
Wednesday, 23 rd March, 7:30 pm	Shine Brighter	Venue tba
Sunday, 27 th March, 9:30 am	Easter Service	Discovery School

King Hezekiah's Seal



Archaeologists in Jerusalem have found a clay seal in excavations just south of Temple Mount. It was found whilst doing a 'wet sift' and was probably used to fasten a papyrus scroll – tiny fragments of the material have been found on its reverse.

Although it is small, measuring approximately one cm, its size belies its importance: the writing at the top reads *Hezekiah*, one of the greatest Israelite kings in the Old Testament (his story can be found in 2 Kings 18 and 2 Chronicles 32).

Also imprinted on the seal is an image of the winged sun and an *ankh* (a symbol of life) to its right. King Hezekiah is an important figure in Jewish history and the seal's discovery places him firmly in Jerusalem, bringing the history of the Old Testament into life.

West Malling's Hidden Gem

Nestling alongside St Mary's Abbey lies Pilsdon at Malling, a community that provides hospitality and a home for individuals going through a tough time. Some stay for a night or two, others settle into the community for months or even years. Currently, there are four full time members; Wasantha, Livia, the new Guardian, Viv Ashworth and her husband, Tim; around eight longer term guests plus occasional visitors. Viv took some time from her varied and busy schedule to show me around.

The community is accessed from Water Lane, the road that borders Manor Park and runs parallel to Swan Street, between the High Street and Lavenders Lane. It's on the left hand side going down the hill. Its large double gates are open during the day and there are often items on sale on a barrow just inside – logs at the moment.

Surrounded by high stone walls, you may have noticed the long thin windows of an old stone building towering above the wall just past a small door. Although it doesn't look incredibly inviting from the roadside, this 15th Century barn has been converted into a light and airy chapel. Services are held here on a daily basis and all are welcome to attend. Pilsdon is a Christian community, but you do not need to be a Christian to go there – people of any faith and of none can apply. The love and hospitality offered is an expression of the grace of God as revealed in Jesus.

The newest additions to the community are two large, cosy log cabins. One houses up to four wayfarers and has disabled access; the other has a communal room and a large freezer and food store. Pilsdon operates the local foodbank and it is from here that Livia organises and distributes the donations. The internal fitting out is well under way; proper paved access to both buildings is the next big priority. If you could help with this in any way (providing expertise, materials or labour), Viv would love to hear from you.

All are involved in rotas for the daily chores; cooking, washing up, laundry, cleaning and so on. Pilsdon strives to be self-sufficient, with ducks, hens, sheep and pigs keeping them in eggs and meat. Vegetables, herbs and fruit are grown, so there's gardening to be done as well as the animals to care for. There is very little waste: kitchen scraps go to the chickens and pigs. A flock of geese – excellent intruder alarms – are being considered as another source of eggs and meat.



Days at Pilsdon begin at around 8 o'clock for breakfast. People come into the dining room as they wish, some help themselves to a cup of tea or coffee; others have toast or cereal or something more substantial. Once all are there, notices are shared. It could be anything from a reminder of a birthday celebration, to ensuring there is transport for a hospital appointment, to asking for help with a special project.

A light lunch is served at 12:45 and is another opportunity for all to meet and chat in the dining room. Its finish is signalled by one of the members thanking the cook (or cooks) for creating the meal.

Later in the afternoon, tea is served in the Scriptorium, a large communal room with TV and an ever-expanding library. Clues to the Guardian crossword are read out and they have become so adept, it often takes only twenty minutes from start to finish. It's a fun thing to do together and is often the catalyst for interesting conversations.

Supper, the main meal of the day, is served in the evening. Again, it's a time for everyone to get together and to chat. If there is a special occasion to celebrate, this is when it is done. The day I visited, preparations for a farewell meal for one of the guests were underway. He was moving on from Pilsdon to sheltered accommodation locally.

Guests are free to do as they wish afterward supper has been cleared – they can choose to spend time with company in one of the communal rooms or have an early night in the privacy of their own room – all that fresh air can be very tiring. The main gates are locked in the evening so if guests want to go out to evening meetings, they need to make arrangements to gain access through the side door.



The new log cabins have allowed for a significant amount of reorganisation, freeing up space in the Grade 2 listed cottage (pictured) which once served as guest rooms for the monks who lived there until 2004 (Saints' nameplates still feature on many of the doors).

Potentially charming, this needs a lot of work to bring it up to standard: doors and windows are in need of replacement or repair. There seem to be issues

with damp. Rooms need work to make the most of the available space and to make the building work better: there are bathrooms and loos in all sorts of odd places! So there is a lot of planning to do to make sure works are effectively and efficiently planned.

A small sub-committee including Diocesan Surveyor, Mark Trevett, is considering how best to reorder and refurbish the cottage so it can be utilised to its potential. As the building is listed, any repairs or replacements will have to be done in keeping with the original, which will almost inevitably increase costs. If you can offer expertise with building work or joinery, please contact the Guardian.

Bikes have literally been re-cycled to provide members and guests with two-wheeled transport and there are still a few available for sale, providing funds for ongoing work.

If you could help this lovely community continue its valuable work in any way – financially or practically – for a one off project or regularly – please get in touch with Viv:

📞 01732 870279 ✉️ pilsdon@pilsdonatmall.org.uk.

Becky Clifford

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WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

FRIDAY, 4th MARCH

St Mary's, West Malling

Refreshments from 9:45 am

Service from 10:30 am

Receive children. Receive me.





Friday 4th March from 9:45 am

St Mary's, West Malling

Receive children. Receive me.

This year Christian women in Cuba have devised the order of service for the worldwide day of prayer. The Republic of Cuba is the largest Caribbean island, located at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico and called 'the Key to the Gulf'. It is roughly the same size as England. In addition to the large mainland there are thousands of smaller islands!

Politically at odds with the USA, Cuba suffered greatly due to the economic embargo imposed upon it in 1960 but has found strength within itself to move on and overcome many of its problems.

Join us for refreshments from 9:45 am. The service, which is jam-packed

with great hymns, songs and music, starts at 10:30 am. Through symbols, drama and readings, you will learn more about life for Christian women in Cuba. If you're interested, you can join in the choir which will be having a final rehearsal at 9:00 am. Cuban music will be played whilst refreshments are being served and there'll be chance to chat and meet people from other churches before the service starts.

The service has been translated into over 60 languages and 1000 dialects. In the British Isles alone over 6,000 services will be held. The day begins as the sun rises over the island of Samoa and continues until it sets off the coast of American Samoa, some 35 hours later. The theme 'Receive children. Receive me' is based on Jesus blessing children (in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10). This is the focus of the service and a reminder that everyone is a child of God and equally worthy of our love and respect. The service booklets contain all the information needed for the service and fascinating background information on all sorts of different aspects of life in Cuba: its diverse flora and fauna, the political situation, its history, education and health, its society and women's place within it, culture and food. There's also a guided study on the Bible passages which are used in the service.

This is not a day of prayer just for women - everyone is welcome to attend. It's a great way to become involved in a world-wide wave of prayer which encircles our globe for nearly a day and a half.

Mike Rowe & Becky Clifford

THE JULIAN MEETINGS

"Be Still and Know" Exploring Contemplative Praying

An Ecumenical Teaching Day
on Contemplative Prayer

Led by Bishop Dominic Walker
(Retired Bishop of Monmouth)

**on Saturday 23rd April 2016
10.00am to 4.00pm**

at St. Matthew's Church
Drewery Drive, Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NX

Cost £10 per person including drinks
(please bring your own picnic lunch)

Bookstall and information about Julian Meetings
Please register by post to Michael and Ann Echlin, 10
King Street, West Malling, Kent ME19 6QT
enclosing a SAE, together with your cheque
(payable to Ann Echlin)
and the names of those attending

Further information telephone 01732 845550

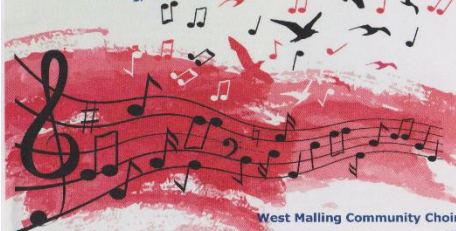
The day has been arranged
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Spring concert

Sunday 13th March

7.30pm

St Mary's Church, High Street
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In advance from:

Jean Roberts: 01732 873022/ Linda King: 01474 705519
(or at the door.)



ANTIQUES AND THE ROAD SHOW – A FAMILY AFFAIR

Saturday, 23rd April at 7.30pm
St. John the Baptist, Wateringbury

David Sandon, son of Henry and brother of John, will be at the church giving an interesting and humorous talk on antiques and the Road Show. Whilst Henry and John appear in front of the cameras, David and the rest of the family are all interested in antiques and often attend the filming days. David will tell us about some of the more memorable moments.

Tickets: Adults £6, Children/Students £4. Available from: Sheena Stewart on 01732 873737. Also available from Wateringbury Post Office.



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DO LENT
GENEROUSLY

Time – Sermon preached by David Green on Sunday, 14th February 2016

Ephesians 5.1-2,10-17 and Matthew 6.25-34

As long as we live, each one of us will have twenty-four hours each day. Twenty-four hours can sound like very little. When we talk about needing more hours in the day, that is precisely our point. It is a scarce resource and when it has gone, it has gone: it is something we can never have again.

But let's put it a different way. Twenty-four hours is 1,440 minutes: it feels like I can do a lot with 1,440 minutes. I know they are the same but much of our approach to life will be determined by our focus.

Unlike our Talents and also our Treasure, which vary from person to person in quality and quantity, time is the great leveller. We all have the same amount of time each day. CS Lewis once wrote, "The future is something which everyone will reach at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he or she does, whoever he or she is."

Longevity of life is not the issue here. Some people live very long lives and never accomplish anything of great significance. Others can live relatively short lives but accomplish a huge amount.

For the Christian, the key question is, "Will I accomplish what God has called me to accomplish, in the time that he has given me?" In what ways are you using the time that God has given to you?

In many ways, time is *like* money. It is a resource, a *valuable* resource, and it is available to us to use in whatever way we choose. We all have fixed expenditures: housing, utilities, council tax, food, clothing, transportation. We might live to a standard of living that uses all their money or even try to live at a standard that goes beyond our money.

But let's assume for a moment that our fixed expenditure leaves some left over, some 'discretionary' finances... which we can use on the luxuries of life: entertainment, having fun, eating out, holidays. Now, unlike fixed expenditure - the things we have to do – those discretionary expenses require us to make decisions. That dress, or this football match, that coffee or this charity?

Exactly the same is true of our time. We all have 'fixed' expenditures with our time. We need sleep... and getting good amounts of sleep is vital. We have regular work. We need to eat, including preparation time for the food. We are wise to see our families and spend time with those we love. If we're married, or courting, we need to see our partner. Whatever we have left after that is our discretionary time and we can spend it however we choose.

However, one important factor to consider is that, like money, the lifestyle standard we choose with its level of 'fixed' expenditure will have a knock-on impact on discretionary time. If you spend more on fixed stuff, a mortgage, M&S food instead of Tesco then guess



what? – Less money available for other things. Similarly, if you put all your time into work, sleep, eating... it will directly affect what we have available for entertainment, having fun, resting, holidays and... God.

Now by that, I don't mean that God isn't present when we are sleeping, eating, working, with our families because He is and they are important things that He has called us to exercise each and every day. It is how He created us to be.

What I'm talking about is what we can do in that discretionary time to build God's Kingdom in direct and overt ways through the Church or through other organisations or by our own individual vision and effort.

Our discretionary time is directly affected by the choices we make regarding our fixed commitments. We often feel like we don't have any choices, but we always do.

So are we thoughtful, disciplined and intentional in our commitments, or are we just letting them happen? Because I guarantee you this... if you are not in charge of your choices, then someone else will be.

I see it in others on a regular basis. I notice it in myself too. We try to find fulfilment in life in all sorts of ways, whether money, or entertainment, or sex, or relationships, or sport, or achievement, or ambition, the list can go on and on and on. If I was able to do an audit of a person and see their bank statement and then have a similar statement of their time I think I could tell pretty easily where they are trying to find fulfilment.

As Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart."

Carl Sandburg, a famous American author and poet, wrote, "Time is the most valuable coin in your life. You and you alone will determine how that coin will be spent. Be careful that you do not let other people spend it for you."

But there's another layer to that. In Christian terms, we might say: If we do not put God first in the choices we make, then some other god will inevitably be receiving our worship. I am not asking you to suddenly quit your job and throw all your time into the work of this church. But I am asking every one of us today, this Lenten season, to reflect on how we use our time, and whether God is truly being honoured by those choices.

As St Paul said in our reading today from Ephesians: 'Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time.'

Making the most of what God has given means seeking his wisdom prayerfully. The world tells us to indulge ourselves... meanwhile God asks us to do his will. We have to set our sights beyond the deceptions and attractions of our culture and recognise that we find true fulfilment when we recognise our Creator and honour God in all aspects of our lives.

We are not wired to do anything different. If we fight it, we will feel it. And the cruel and wicked spiral for many is that because they're dissatisfied with a life out of balance is they go on seeking new pursuits, new diversions, new ways to fill their time... that just leave them feeling equally empty.

St Benedict spoke about the importance of rhythm and balance in life. The Sisters at West Mallory Abbey live that every day... time for prayer, time for work, time to rest, time for hobbies, time for self, time for others... it's all there in their rule of life.

If you are tired and stressed, or if your marriage is struggling, or you are down and depressed, I would suggest to you that the balance is off. The rhythm is not there... the choices you are making with your time are off kilter.

The Good News is that with God's gracious help, you can do something about it. God is always present, of course, in all our time but to be in proper balance, and a good steward of his resources that He has given you, you need to be allocating time well... including time for Him. Time to be prayerful, to study His word, to serve and contribute to his Kingdom.

I can't begin to tell you how encouraging it always is to watch people learn how to contribute to his Kingdom and watch them, as they find, time and again, that for all they give... God returns it to them in so many ways.

God is such a genius Creator... time is fixed: we all know that. And yet, when we say "I don't have time" what we actually mean is "I don't want to". Because when we do want to, we find we actually have the power to *create* time. We can make time for things.

Nelson Mandela said, 'We must forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.'

In all that I say today, I'm not saying that we all need to be busier. Frankly, some of us need to slow down. But it does mean that we need to carefully and intentionally use this time God has given us. What opportunities has God recently given you to use your time for him? Ask God's Spirit to open your heart and mind to His direction and then act on what He shows you.

One thing I do know: when you stand before God's seat of judgement and mercy, He won't credit you for how much overtime you spent at the office, neither will He be impressed by a vast and intimate knowledge of EastEnders or Corrie.

So, this Lent, I would ask you to ponder along with me. How am I using my time? Is my life in balance? If it's not, then how am I going to get it in balance? Do an audit of how your time is spent: what does it reveal about who is receiving your worship?

And, amongst all the other important things that God calls you to steward – your family, your work, your health, your rest, your play, your talents... would you please ask "how much of God's time that he has given me am I going to give back to him in the service of his church and the community?"

Lord, thank you for this day.

Each and every day, your mercies are new to us.

Thank you that we were born for this time and this place and this moment.

Help us all to ponder carefully the balance of our lives,

how we use the time you have given us

and help us to ensure that our worship is offered to you and to no other. Amen

Talents

(a reflection on Finding a Voice, the Lent course based on *The King's Speech*)

Poor old Bertie had the odds stacked against him: the second son of King George V suffered from a debilitating stammer in the age when radio broadcasts were the new, exciting medium of instant communication. But he knew his position as Duke of York required him to undertake duties which involved public speaking and – as detailed in this month's editorial – worked incredibly hard to overcome his speech impediment.

When his older brother chose to marry Mrs Simpson, Bertie became King George VI. Throughout the trials of World War II, he kept his family in London and, for many in our nation, was a potent symbol of resilience and hope.

As a metaphor of somebody who chose to do his duty and persevered to overcome his inability to fulfil all that God – and the nation – asked of him, it's incredibly powerful.

The climax of the film is his speech to the nation to confirm the outbreak of war: a six-minute live broadcast – a terrifying prospect for him, I am sure. Part of it reads:

For the sake of all we hold dear... it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge... We can only do right as we see right and reverently commit our cause to God.

Following the broadcast, what is evident in Bertie's face is the delight, the pleasure and fulfilment in knowing he has faced the challenge – and faced it well.

We have not been asked to face the challenges that faced our nation 80 years ago, but we are faced with knowing that our talents are God given. We have an obligation to consider how we can put those talents to good use, for building God's kingdom here on earth, as it is in heaven – just as Bertie did.

Becky Clifford



FINDING A VOICE
A Lent Course based on the
film 'The King's Speech'

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sessions start at 10:30 am
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Rev'd Pat Dickin | 01622 814568 | pat.dickin@kmwchurches.org

Book now to order a copy of the course booklet through Pat. Please watch *The Kings Speech* before the course starts. If you can't access the film, please ask, we may be able to help.

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CartoonChurch.com

This cartoon by Dave Walker was first published in the Church Times

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Treasure – A Reflection on David’s Sermon preached on Sunday 28th February

2 Corinthians 9.1-8 and Mark 12.38-44

David had struggled with this topic – after all, it’s not very British to talk about money, is it? – and he’d written three different sermons. But looking at the parables, Jesus talks about money a lot – almost half of his ‘stories-with-a-meaning’ involve money in some way, shape or form. Think of the Prodigal Son – the father kills the fatted calf and clothes him in special robes to celebrate his homecoming. Or the Good Samaritan, who gives the innkeeper money to look after the wounded man and promises more if needed.



There are three reasons why we should be open handed with our Treasure:

Firstly, we need to be open handed because it’s in our DNA. We have been created in the image of a generous God - a God who loves us so much he gave His son for us. His grace, mercy and love are at His heart. When we emulate our heavenly Father’s qualities, we grow to be more like him.

Secondly, our treasure is really a gift from God – it’s an illusion that it belongs to us. Everything we have comes from God and we are asked to give back a part of it. When God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden, he asked him to look after it – to steward it – and that’s what we are required to do with our treasure.

Where we put our treasure reveals a lot about our priorities. David wondered if any of us struggled to remember who we bank with. Of course, we know where we have put our money! We recognise it as a precious resource. But where we spend it tells people a lot about our priorities. If we’re not considering how we best use our money to honour God – in the widest sense, how are we going to feel when we have to account for ourselves – when we come face to face with Him? It’s not just about our church buildings, it’s about our community and building up God’s kingdom on earth.

David told us of two Lions Clubs: one has a legacy which more than covers their running costs, the other operates on a shoestring. The former is moribund – it barely functions. The second is vibrant and flourishing.

David said that he and Kerry have practised tithing (giving away 10% of their income) since they married. Although there are times when it has been tricky, their family has never had to do without. When they have been in need, something has always turned up: hands that are open in giving are also open to receive. Once, when a car shunted their vehicle from behind, they felt they could hand the problem of being without a car over to God and trust that He would answer their prayers. And He did.

Jesus said, ‘Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.’

The question is, what do my bank statements say about my heart?

Becky Clifford

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Sunday 6th March 2016

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Archbishop Justin Moves to Fix Easter Day



The Archbishop of Canterbury is working with other Christian churches to agree on a fixed date for Easter. Justin Welby made the announcement following the meeting of Primates (pictured left) in January this year. He is in talks with Pope Francis, Coptic leader Pope Tawadros, and the leader of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Bartholomew.

Since it was mooted in the 10th Century there have been numerous attempts to settle the date of Easter. In the UK, an act of Parliament passed in 1928 allowed for Easter Sunday to be fixed on the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. In 1990, the Vatican approved a proposal for a fixed date, which was subject to agreement with other Christian churches and governments. That agreement has not yet been reached and Easter has remained variable. The Orthodox church follows the Julian calendar, hence has later Easter celebrations compared with those of Western Christianity.

The date for Easter is determined by the moon's cycle, which is approximately 29.5 days which means the full moon shifts approximately one day each successive month. Easter is on the first Sunday after the first ecclesiastical full moon following the spring equinox, meaning it can be celebrated on a Sunday between 22 March and 25 April. This year Easter will be celebrated on March 25th – comparatively early.

Easter is the most important Christian festival, as it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ following his death by crucifixion on Good Friday.

Archbishop Justin said he hoped the change would happen in between five and ten years. "I would love to see it before I retired", he added.

David hopes agreement can be reached. He said,

'I would be delighted to see the date of Easter fixed for two reasons. Pragmatically, it's always a real pain at this time of year to be trying to handle Lent and Holy Week when you've only just finished Christmas and, in the middle of it all, usually writing annual reports, signing off accounts and trying to find church officers for the coming year. Fixing the date of Easter would at least help everyone establish a better rhythm. Secondly, more profoundly, it would be an awesome statement of unity for the worldwide church. Ultimately, no-one knows the exact date on which Jesus died (just as we don't know if he was born on 25 December) and so whichever date is chosen will be arbitrary but it would be great to see all Christians everywhere mark this most special day at the same time each year.'

New Dean for Rochester Cathedral



The Reverend Canon Dr Philip John Hesketh BD, AKC, PhD, Canon at Rochester Cathedral is the new Dean of Rochester Cathedral.

He said, "I feel it is an enormous privilege to have been asked to be Dean at this time. The Cathedral faces enormous challenges and I am confident that together under God we can meet them. I have been truly humbled by the warmth of support I have received during my time as Acting Dean, and by the confidence and trust that others have placed in me. It is important to remember that no one is an island, and it is only together that we can be what God wants us to be. Each of us has been called to serve in various ways and to

make a difference. I look forward to continuing the bonds of friendship that have already been forged over many years, and building upon them for the greater good of the community and the furtherance of the kingdom of God."

The Right Reverend James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester said, "I warmly welcome the news that Canon Philip Hesketh is to be the next Dean of Rochester. Phil was nominated to the Crown for this post through a full and open process, during which he demonstrated his capacity to lead the Cathedral community in the next phase of its life. Phil is already well-known to the Cathedral and wider community, not least through his recent time as Acting Dean. I assure him of my prayers as he prepares to move into the substantive post, and I look forward to working closely with him in the years to come."

Philip spent his childhood on the "gem of God's earth", otherwise known as the Isle of Man, and came to the big city in 1983 to study Divinity at King's College, London. Before ordination he worked with the homeless in South London and served his curacy in the Diocese of Canterbury.

Philip was previously Canon Pastor at the Cathedral has had both a pastoral and an educational brief, with particular care and oversight of visitors and pilgrims to the Cathedral. With four young children, he has a special interest in developing the Cathedral's work with young people both within the Cathedral and in the wider community. During his time at Rochester he has covered the roles of both Precentor and Dean during an interregnum.

Philip is a Governor of The King's School, Rochester and a Governor and Trustee of Sir Joseph Williamsons' Mathematical School. He is also a Trustee of Kent Aid, a local charity supporting those living with AIDS, and is a member of the Medway Holocaust Memorial Day Committee.

In the Garden with Adam's Gardens

As you read this I hope you're feeling upbeat – we've seen off winter and spring is now upon us. Spring sees leaves emerging on the trees, more colour appearing (I find tulips bring the richest hues), more daylight hours and warmth from the sun... Spring is full of anticipation. It may be full of promise but it's also full of tasks to do in the garden!



With the Easter holidays coming at the end of this month, plus the clocks going forward (remember – *spring forward, fall back*) you'll probably find yourself surveying your garden and thinking it took a beating during winter. It might seem daunting but an hour here and there will benefit your garden for the rest of the year.

If it's dry enough (and that includes the soil) then the lawn can be cut. Before you do, get the mower serviced or at least the blade sharpened. A sharpened blade won't tear the blades of grass which helps promote a healthy lawn (no yellowed tips). Set the blades on their highest setting: don't fall into the trap of cutting it short as this will stress the grass, resulting in a washed out lawn rather than a rich green.

If you've been walking on the lawn during the winter, you will have compacted the soil. This restricts drainage. The best way to alleviate this problem is to aerate the ground. Just push a fork into the ground and lift it slightly. You could fill the holes left with sand (not builders sand, though). A stiff broom is handy for brushing it into the holes.

After a couple of cuts, think about applying a 'weed and feed' fertiliser: this will do what it says! If you have bare patches in the lawn, I'd suggest seeding the area (a week or so after applying the fertiliser) as it's roughly 80% cheaper than turf and far less work too.

The borders will look unkempt (if you haven't touched them since winter set in) so start clearing away the spent perennials and grasses. By just doing this, you'll be surprised how much tidier it'll look. Once that's done, mulch the bare soil. I say it at least twice a year, but I believe it's a crucial task: it suppresses weeds, retains moisture and adds nutrients to the soil.

If you didn't do the rejuvenating pruning of roses in the winter, there's still time to do this now. Remember roses only flower on this year's growth so reduce their height unless you like looking up at flowers!

Don't be tempted to prune back any evergreen shrubs as a sharp frost can burn the open cuts. Evergreen pruning is done from mid-May when the growing season is in full swing.

Finally, don't fall into the Easter ambush of bedding plants that garden centres and DIY stores try to tempt you with. Frost wasn't very prevalent over the winter months but we always get a few sharp ones in Spring and those tender plants won't recover, so bypass the shelves of summer bedding until May. Let the retailer take that risk.

So, what are you waiting for? Spring is here – jump to it!

Adam McKay 07957 461958 | 01732 846796 | adamurgardener@aol.com

Calendar – Regular Events (*unless otherwise stated)

St Mary's, West Malling

Sunday 8:00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 11:00 am Holy Communion*
 (Common Worship)
 Monday 7:45 pm Bell Ringing
 Tuesday 10:00 am Morning Prayer

St Michael's, Offham

Sunday 9:15 am Holy Communion*

Offham Methodist Church

Sunday 11:00 am Worship

St Gabriel's, Discovery School, Kings Hill

Sunday 9:30 am Holy Communion*

Barn Chapel, Pilsdon at Malling

Wednesday 12 noon Holy Communion

Sunday 4:00 pm Open House Tea

6:00 pm Holy Communion

March 2016

1 st 2:00 pm	Tea & Chat (p. 10)	Methodist Hall, Offham
2 nd 3:45 pm	The Psalms Lent Course	Methodist Hall, Offham
8:00 pm	Cooke/Betts Housegroup	
4 th 10:00 am	Offham Open House (p. 10)	11 Pepingstraw Close
10:00 am	Finding a Voice Lent Course	Venue tba
6 th Mothering Sunday		
9:15 am	All Age Service	St Michael, Offham
11:00 am	All Age Service	St Mary, West Malling
<del>~~~~~</del> Coffee and cakes after the Service <del>~~~~~</del>		
7 th 10:00 am	Church Cleaning	St Mary, West Malling
8:00 pm	Cluster Prayer Meeting (p. 15)	27 Ames Way
8 th 2:30 pm	Mothers' Union	St Mary's Church Centre
8:00 pm	Ransom/Fortnum Housegroup	27 Ames Way
9 th 1:00 pm	Knit & Natter	5 Cellini Walk
3:45 pm	The Psalms Lent Course	Methodist Hall, Offham
7:30 pm	Shine Brighter	Venue tba
11 th 10:00 am	Finding a Voice Lent Course	Venue tba
13 th Lent 5		
16 th 3:45 pm	The Psalms Lent Course (p.9)	Methodist Hall, Offham
20 th Palm Sunday		
8:00 & 11:00	Pledge Sunday	St Mary, West Malling
22 nd 8:00 pm	Ransom/Fortnum Housegroup	27 Ames Way
23 rd 1:00 pm	Knit & Natter (p. 15)	5 Cellini Walk
7:30 pm	Shine Brighter	Venue tba
27 th Easter Day	Come and celebrate – Jesus is Risen!	
9:15 am	All Age Communion	St Michael, Offham
11:00 am	All Age Communion	St Mary, West Malling