

St Bartholomew's Church, Otford Parish News



SERVICES AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

January	8.00am	10.00am	4pm	6.30pm
03 January Epiphany	Holy Communion	All Together Worship		Evensong
10 January Baptism of Christ	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	-	-
17 January 2nd Sunday in Epiphany	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Evensong
24 January 3rd Sunday in Epiphany	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Messy Church	-
31 January Candlemas	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	-	Candlelit Candlemas Service

SUNDAY CLUB (FOR AGES 0-14)

Crèche: 0-2 years Infant: 3-7 Junior: 8-11 Senior: 12-14

These groups meet in the Church Centre during the 10.00 am service, except on the first Sunday when in Church for All Together Worship. Crèche is available every Sunday.

EPIC (for school year 5-7) meets on the 2nd Saturday in the month, 6-8pm in the Church Centre

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP meet every Sunday evening during term time in the Church Centre, 6.30 - 8.00 pm.

HOLY COMMUNION Every Wednesday 10.00 am (Book of Common Prayer)

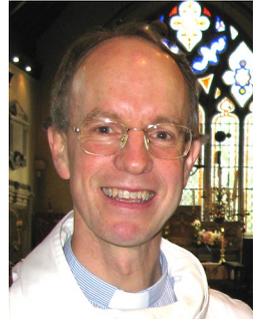
If you would like to book a baptism or wedding, please contact the Church Office 01959 523185.

Cover Photograph: taken by Richard Worssam
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Magazine No. 01 Volume 86

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

"I find your lack of faith disturbing." So said none other than Darth Vader in the original Star Wars movie. The same could be said for Digital Cinema Media (DCM) who infamously banned the 60-second advert featuring the Lord's Prayer that was due to be shown in the ad-reel prior to the showing of the latest Star Wars movie, "The Force Awakens". This ban raises all sorts of questions - not least the secular humanist assumption that any expression of faith will be found offensive.



This assumption can be dealt with straight away. The one-minute Lord's Prayer advert is no more offensive than a carol service being broadcast on the BBC or a copy of a Gideon's Bible being placed in a hotel room. And what is there to find offensive? There's no propaganda, no coercion, no dismissing of other's views; just an implicit invitation to discover the power of prayer for yourself. (If you haven't yet seen the advert then you can find it at www.justpray.uk - and you can judge for yourself whether or not it is offensive.)

I find it most ironic that DCM are perfectly happy to show adverts connected with Christmas shopping, but not an advert at Christmas time linked with the very reason for the season. Also, it would seem that the Jedi "religion" is OK for the big screen, but the Christian faith is not.

Yet faith and prayer are everywhere in our society. Even those who distance themselves from churches nonetheless may find themselves praying at moments of great joy or sorrow or difficulty. Prayer features in pop songs, school assemblies, and national commemorations and it is a vibrant part of the lives of millions of UK citizens, and billions of people worldwide.

The Lord's Prayer touches the heart of what it means to be human. As Bishop Nick Baines pointed out in a blog, we all live in relation to God, we have daily physical needs, we face

tempting dilemmas, and forgiveness and reconciliation are as vital on both an individual and an international level as ever they were two thousand years ago.

Prayer is not just presenting God with a shopping list in order to satisfy our own desires. Rather, prayer is all about "keeping company with God." As an intentional activity, prayer brings us into a conscious awareness of the presence of God and gradually we discover that our self-centred desires and preoccupations are realigned to reflect more of God's loving purposes. As we seek to live in the perspective of the divine, we discover that the values of the Kingdom of God come to shape our own. Prayer is an invitation to change and grow as we are increasingly open to the work of God in our lives and in the world.

Through prayer we can be open and honest in our relations with God, with one another, and with ourselves. The theme of our Lent Course will be all about prayer, and you are warmly invited to come along - there will be more details in next month's magazine.

In the meantime, I highly recommend the website www.justpray.uk Once you've signed up then you can receive a daily e-mail with a thought-provoking comment about prayer. I encourage you to try it as your New Year Resolution!

Your friend and Vicar, *Richard*



DIARY FOR JANUARY 2016

Morning Prayer will be said in Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week at 9.00 am and on Fridays in the Cranmer Room at 9.00 am

3 **The Epiphany**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am All Together Worship

6.30 pm Evensong

4 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

5 8.00 pm Worship Advisory Group

6 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards

9 6.00 pm EPIC

10 **The Baptism of Christ: The First Sunday after Epiphany**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion

Magazine material for the February edition by today, please, to the Church Office, st.bartholomews@otford.net

11 7.45 pm Coffee and chat (17 Leonard Avenue)

13 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

14 7.45 pm Bellringing practice followed by Otford Guild of Bellringers AGM

16 2.00 pm Thanksgiving Service for Laurie Young (St Bartholomew's Church)

17 **The Second Sunday of Epiphany**

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Holy Communion and baptism of Benjamin Robin Taylor

6.30 pm Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service

18 7.45 pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

20 9.30 am 'First Steps' (Otford Methodist Church Hall)

10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) coffee afterwards

24 **The Third Sunday of Epiphany: Septuagesima (BCP)**

8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Holy Communion

3.00 pm Messy Church (Church Centre)

25 7.45 pm Focus (17 Leonard Avenue)

27 10.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

8.00 pm Finance & Standing Committee (Church Centre)

30 9.30-4.45pm Come and Sing Mozart 'Requiem' with the Sackville Singers

31 Candlemas: Presentation of Christ in the Temple: Sexagesima (BCP)

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Morning Worship

6.30 pm Candlelit Candlemas Carol Service

DATES FOR 2016

January

17th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service (6.30 pm St. Bartholomew's Church)

February

6th Wedding Preparation morning (Church Centre, 10.00 am)

10th Ash Wednesday Service of Holy Communion, St. Bartholomew's Church, 10 am and 8 pm

March

4th Women's World Day of Prayer, 2.00 pm , Otford Methodist Church

6th Mothering Sunday

20th Palm Sunday Ecumenical Procession, 10.45 am Otford Methodist Church

24th Maundy Thursday Service, 8.00 pm Otford Methodist Church Hall

25th Good Friday

27th Easter Day

April

24th Service to Commemorate Departed Loved Ones

May

5th Ascension Day Service of Holy Communion, St. Bartholomew's Church 8.00 pm

15th Pentecost/Whit Sunday.

June

18th St. Bartholomew's Church Fair, 2.00 pm , on and around The Green

July

3rd Sunday Club Celebration Service and Parish BBQ in Vicarage Garden

August

24th St. Bartholomew's Day

September

10th Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

October

2nd Harvest Services

23rd Bible Sunday

November

13th Remembrance Sunday

19th Christmas Market (Church Centre)

27th Advent Sunday

December

4th Christingle, 4.00 pm

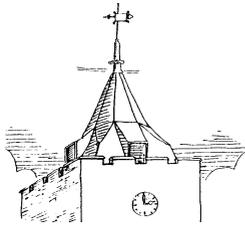
11th Choir Christmas Concert

18th Nativity Play & Christmas Presentation, 10.00 am; Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, 6.30 pm

24th Crib Service, 4.00 pm; Midnight Communion 11.30 pm

25th Christmas Communion, 9.00 am Christmas Morning Worship 10.30 am

FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



CHRISTMAS MARKET - THANK YOU

My sincere thanks to everyone who helped make the Christmas Market such a success, and especially to Santa's deputy, who greeted everyone, to the stallholders who worked so hard before and on the day, to Janet and her helpers in the kitchen, and to everyone who came and supported us. The weather was cold, wet and windy outside, but inside we had the warm and cheerful Church Centre with the stalls laden with superb goodies, delicious refreshments, and lots of people creating a truly joyful atmosphere. The total raised was £2,646.49 - splendid! Well done everyone!

Sylvia Grafton

OTFORD GUILD OF BELLRINGERS

We thank our ringers for the committed work they put in over the year. Their AGM will be held on Thursday, 14th January at 9.00 pm, following ringing practice.

MESSY CHURCH

The next Messy Church event will take place on Sunday, 24th January at 3.00 pm. An enjoyable afternoon is promised for all who come. It is particularly suitable for families with children up to the age of 11.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place at St. Bartholomew's Church on Sunday 17th January at 6.30 pm.

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH FAIR

This will take place on **Saturday, 18th June at 2.00 pm on and around The Green.** Please put the date in your new diary!

RINGING ROUNDUP

As you may know, St Bartholomew's church has six very lovely bells which are rung for Sunday morning services between 9:15am and 10:00am, Easter services, Remembrance (with the bells half muffled), many Christmas services and every week on Thursday for our regular practice night between 7.45pm and 9.15pm.

Our ringing band is a happy group of people who love to ring. We are looking to increase as we are sometimes quite low on ringers, having only six or seven ringers available on practice nights and Sunday mornings. We would love it if you could come in to the tower and have a look at what we do and find out what ringing is all about. Whether it is Sunday mornings or Thursday night practices we would be happy to show you the art of bell ringing, and if so, take you further to learning more about bell ringing and how the bells and the ropes work.

We have rung for special occasions such as The Queen being the longest reigning British Monarch and we ring for weddings and, quite often at request from an individual or a member of the ringing band; we do a quarter peal (ringing for forty minutes) and full peals (ringing for around two and a half hours), these can be very exhausting but you have a great feeling at the end knowing you have completed it.

We look forward to seeing you and hope you enjoy the ringing of our bells.

Alexander and Stephanie Runting (bell ringers)

UPDATE ON THE REORDERING AND REDECORATION SCHEME

OUR VISION IS TO UPHOLD AND ENHANCE OUR HERITAGE

Together we can complete a project to enhance our much-loved church!

We are very privileged to worship in our beautiful and historic church which has been so well cared for over the generations. We want to both uphold and enhance this heritage.

Our vision is for St. Bart's to be a place where all can feel at home, both young and old, as we encounter God through the worship we offer and the fellowship we share. We want to improve the fabric and facilities of our church for many reasons:

- * to enhance the presentation of all-age talks and sermons
- * to make the celebration of communion more inclusive
- * to provide for informal services
- * to make the church more warm and comfortable
- * to improve our ministry to the community through baptisms, weddings and funerals
- * to extend the use of our facilities by the village for concerts and talks
- * to ensure people of all physical abilities are welcomed.

In doing all this we join with the faithful in earlier generations who have sought to make St. Bart's a place of worship and prayer and a centre of ministry reaching out to the whole community. We still benefit from their contributions, and we seek to continue in this living tradition that we have inherited.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE SCHEME

The scheme includes:

- * The consolidation of our temporary nave platform.
- * Improved heating

- * Enhancement of lighting
- * New projection facilities
- * An enlarged Lady Chapel
- * Better provision for wheelchair users
- * Redecoration and cleaning
- * Preservation of the essential ambience and character of our church.

NOW'S THE TIME!

The scheme has been under consideration since the parish's five year plan in 2001. Since then our wonderful Church Centre has been built and the Tower has been restored. The PCC returned to the issue in 2011, shared and discussed proposals with parishioners in 2013-14 and incorporated the resulting ideas in 2015. We now commend the revised scheme to the parish as a continued contribution to the story of St. Bart's, stretching back over 1000 years.

Our hope is for the work to take place from mid-September to early December 2016, ready for our principal Christmas services. The main church building would be closed during this time. The Church Centre would be used for smaller services, and the Church Hall for the principal 10 am services on Sunday mornings.

We warmly invite you to help in the completion of this project. **We are holding a brief meeting on Sunday 10th January at 11.30 am to explain the background and set out the way forward.** We will be circulating a wallet to all church members with further details.

We'll also be holding two events for the wider village community - an Antiques and Collectibles Valuation event on Saturday 12th March in the Church Hall, and a Gift Day on Bank Holiday Monday 28th March when all visitors can enjoy the beautiful Easter flowers in the church.



IN MEMORIAM



Carol Griffiths, 1935 - 2015

Carol was born in 1935 in Woolwich. Her father worked at the Woolwich Arsenal. During the war the family moved to Leeds where Carol completed her schooling. After the war the family, including her brother Roger, returned to Eltham where she trained as a librarian.

Carol soon obtained a job at Fort Halstead which started an association that was to last more than 65 years. At the Fort she met a young Welsh scientist, Neill. They were married on 5th October 1957. They first bought a house in Kemsing. As the family grew to include three sons they moved to The Old Walk (or 'The Palace Estate' as it was then known) in Otford in 1964.

Drawing upon her original training, when the boys were older Carol worked as a librarian mainly at Sevenoaks Library, but also in the surrounding villages as well. This enabled her to combine her thirst for history, local knowledge, research and her desire to work with other people.

Neill and Carol travelled every year on holiday and she would enjoy researching places to visit and interesting things to do. Initially these were family holidays, but later in life these were trips where she accompanied Neill on business trips, notably the regular '*International Ballistics Symposium*' (chaired by Neill) travelling to Stockholm, Singapore and Interlaken to name but a few. After Neill passed away in 1994, she continued this travel and supporting the symposiums, so it wasn't long before she was off to South Africa travelling by herself to visit Table Mountain and going on safari.

In the early 1980's, as well as running a house,

working at the library and bringing up three boys, she also managed to find time to train as a 'Blue Badge Guide' in south east England. Her regular trips to Dover and the Cinque ports to pick up tourist groups for the 'Darling Buds of May Tour' and 'Smugglers Cove Tour' became a regular and enjoyable feature in her life.

Over the years Carol would be seen with her Beagles walking around the village on her way to the Heritage Centre, or to Shoreham and back.

At the age of 70 she left the Library, but not long afterwards she was working at Dunton Green Vet's Surgery - again wanting to be helpful and working with people. From 1986 Carol provided an excellent PA service for her son Simon's osteopathic practice, answering the phone and booking appointments. However a patient would sometimes call to make an appointment which would then turn into a 10 minute chat!

Carol was very involved in Otford village life, playing an active part in the Otford Society, and also participating in numerous quiz nights, Otford Players productions and village events that she attended or helped out with. She also enjoyed going to the theatre, cinema, concerts and playing with her friend Brian.

Carol was immensely proud of her five grandchildren and all their individual achievements and as they matured and grew up, she became their "*confidante*" particularly when school, university, work or life in general was proving a challenge.

In June 2015 Carol was diagnosed with cancer which she faced up to bravely. Her memory will be treasured by all who knew her.

DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS



Telephone: 01732 227000 www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Cllr.Lowe@sevenoaks.gov.uk
<http://michellelowe.yourcllr.com>

We are now in 2016 and I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

As we enter the new financial year from April, Sevenoaks District Council will be completely self-sufficient from any funding from central government. This really is an amazing achievement and we are one of the first councils in the country to achieve this aim.

Due to austerity and the need for the government to pay down the deficit, severe cuts were made in public services. Local government shouldered a disproportionate amount of the cuts as services such as the health service and education were protected.

As we saw our central government grant slashed by huge amounts each year, we not only made huge efficiency savings by reducing many of our back office functions and sharing services with other councils to reduce costs, but also began our journey towards self-sufficiency.

It has been a difficult journey and we have had to make a large number of cuts – while protecting front line services such as the weekly rubbish collection. As well as pursuing joint services and making dramatic cuts we have invested our savings in a property portfolio that includes a petrol station and forecourt shop in Swanley as well as offices in Sevenoaks that are generating an income of £400,000 a year.

We will continue to sell various council assets that yield a low return and invest in assets with a better return so we can continue to protect our front line services.

Now Sevenoaks District Council no longer needs money from central government. We have enough income to provide the services that you our local residents quite rightly expect us to do. We are in a financially sound position and will be able to provide not only our statutory services but some other services as well.

If there is anything that I can do to help you, please contact me at Cllr.Lowe@Sevenoaks.gov.uk.

With best wishes for a very happy and healthy 2016,

Michelle



FAITH IN THE FAMILY...

January: Jesus says 'Follow me!'

Pause for thought: Read the Bible story on page 16. As adults, we often spend much time urging the children in our lives to work hard at school and to achieve academic success. Do we spend equal time encouraging them to follow Jesus? If we long for them to do this, perhaps we first need to pinpoint why we ourselves decided to follow him and then share this with our young people. Spend a few minutes thinking about your reasons and how you might explain them.

How we can follow someone who is not here in person?

- We can read about him and the things that he did and said in the Bible.
- We can spend time with him in prayer, trying to listen to what he might be saying to us.
- We can catch glimpses of him in the things that other people do and say.
- Even though we cannot see him, Jesus is always with us in spirit.

Jesus said that if we want to be God's children, we need to 'take after him' and do as he does. Following Jesus means listening to his teaching and putting it into practice, and there is no promise that this will be easy. Can you think of times when being a Christian hasn't been easy?

The Chatterbox

Follow me!

You will need: a small toy boat, some netting (such as that containing satsumas in the supermarket), lots of small simple fish shapes cut from the backs of old Christmas cards, some pencils, all placed in your special box or tin

Before you retell the Bible story about Jesus calling the first disciples, give everyone some fish shapes. Tell the story in your own words, and ask everyone to fill the netting with the fish at the appropriate moment.

Wondering: Why does everyone think that Peter, James and John left their boats and followed Jesus?

Sharing: You might want to share with one another the reasons why you follow Jesus. Take the fish out of the net and invite everyone to write or draw as many reasons as they can think of on the fish, eg Jesus looks after me, Jesus heals people, Jesus died for me, Jesus is the Son of God etc. Let other members of the family tell the story and gather together the fish once more for the big catch.

Jesus says, Follow me and . . .

Play an adapted game of 'Simon says'. Everyone mimes the (excellent) action if preceded by the words, 'Jesus says, follow me and . . .'

- Smile at everyone
- Jump out of bed
- Make your bed!
- Put the Christmas decorations carefully in a box
- Take the dog for a walk
- Wash behind your ears
- Set the table
- Write a 'thank you' letter
- Feed the cat

Everyone stands still if the (negative) instruction is simply, 'Follow me and . . .'

- Make a miserable face
- Shake your fist at someone
- Stamp your foot in anger
- Put your tongue out!



Everyone can take turns at being the caller and making up different actions! Chat about the times when we need to go against the crowd.

Make 'Follow me' friezes

1. Fold a piece of paper over four or five times.
2. Draw a simple elephant shape on the top with a tail going off at one side and a trunk at the other.
3. Cut round the elephant through all the layers of paper but don't cut along the end of the tail or trunk.
4. Open out your frieze and give your elephant some features.
5. Draw or write some things on each elephant to show how we can follow Jesus or write 'Don't Forget to Follow Jesus!'
6. You could tape them all together and hang them up.

An easy life?

A man said to Jesus, 'I will follow you wherever you go.'

Unscramble to following Bible verse to see what Jesus replied!

Luke doesn't own birds and
the nests have to have
dens of a Man but have his
foxes call place.
(Son 9.58)

Wondering: What does everyone think Jesus meant by this? You could chat about how Jesus grew up in Nazareth and Joseph taught him to be a carpenter. Then when he was 30 years old, he left home to do God's work, walking from village to village and telling people that God loved them and longed for them to lead good and kindly lives.

Perhaps Jesus was pointing out that following him would not always be easy (in this case, because he and his followers never knew where they would spend the next night). With older children, share any experiences of the difficulties of following Jesus eg, teasing at school/in the work place, having different values from others, befriending someone who is unpopular, etc.

New Year Resolutions

Keep any old Christmas cards with the Three Kings on them. Talk about Epiphany on 6th January being the time when we remember them following the star to find Jesus. They kept persevering on their long journey.

Use the backs of these pictures to write (or draw) some New Year Resolutions that would please Jesus. Play some music as everyone thinks quietly what God might want him or her to try to do this year. Tape them to a bedroom mirror or notice board as a reminder to keep persevering and as a reminder to pray for each other to keep going!

Vicki Howie



IN CONVERSATION WITH...MARGIE TORRY

The second of four children, Margie was born and brought up in Sheffield in the leafy suburb of Ranmoor. Her father was a chartered accountant and, prior to her marriage, her mother had been headmistress of the prep school which Margie and her sister were later to attend. This was a busy Christian household; the family were active in the local Church of England where her father served as church warden and treasurer whilst her two brothers sang in the choir. Margie recounted that, in those days, children were not allowed to go to church until they could be relied upon to behave properly. That meant that churchgoing became a treat and a privilege!



All four siblings went off to boarding school at a young age, the two girls to Queen Ethelburga's in Harrogate and the boys to Worksop College. Boarding school life then was not what it is today. Margie spoke of a spartan existence without emotional warmth: at bedtime the girls would have to file past the housemistress, greeting her formally and shaking her hand. The school was mainly staffed by reserved single women and Margie found her time there something to be endured rather than enjoyed.

She did however say that the experience was character building and taught her self-reliance. Her fondest memories are of the chapel, where she sang in the choir and found comfort in her faith. Services were held every evening as well as on Sundays and, for Margie, they were 'a haven of comfort' providing a sense of continuity with her home life.

With O-Levels and A-Levels (English, Biology and Geography) out the way Margie, who had always been fascinated by 'medical things', decided to do a medical secretarial course at a college in Sheffield. Her sister Catherine had just become a nurse and Margie wanted to do something different. Margie's first job was in a GP practice in a pleasant part of Sheffield where she stayed for five years, and ended up virtually running the show. She loved everything about her role; the medical elements, the patient contact and the whole atmosphere of the surgery. A further job interest was that the patients included Seb Coe and his family!

Having heard about the attractions of London from several friends who had gone there, Margie decided to move south for a change of scene. Initially she worked in a private GP practice behind Sloane Street, but then started temping which gave her the opportunity to work all over London. She said that she felt like a tourist in London at that time and enjoyed many visits to the theatre and to galleries. The move to Kent occurred when her sister Catherine (by now married with two children) was due to go to Japan with her husband for two years. They asked if Margie would live in their house in Weald and look after it for them whilst they were away. Although still

commuting to London, it was then that Margie met her future husband, Adrian, through local church activities.

Margie and Adrian married in 1987 and moved to Otford where Margie says she immediately felt welcome and at ease in St Bartholomew's Church. She described how their home, next to her parents in laws' house on the Shoreham Road, soon became a hub for Cedars, a follow on group from YPF for the twenty year olds of the Church. Members of this group included several young people who subsequently married, including Ellen and Andrew Bratby, Mags and Clive Southgate and Alison and David Crawley. Margie has fond memories of that time calling it 'a Godsend' and recounting how Clive would play the guitar and how her first child, Emma, who was often present at the meetings, became a bridesmaid to Mags and Clive.

Before being married, Margie loved choral singing, and performing in light opera and amateur dramatics. With the birth of her four children, Emma, George, Rachel and Edward, and with the demands of Adrian's job, family life took over. 'Your hobby becomes being a taxi driver', laughed Margie. Nevertheless Margie has always found time to be involved with the Church; currently she is on the Fair Committee, is a Sunday Club leader and provides coffee and cakes for alternate Wednesday morning services. Recently, as the children gradually leave home, she has joined the Tonbridge Philharmonic Choir. She also holds a qualification in reflexology; a complementary therapy which fascinates her and which she may well take further in future.

Christeen Malan



THE NIGHT SKY IN OTFORD - JANUARY 2016

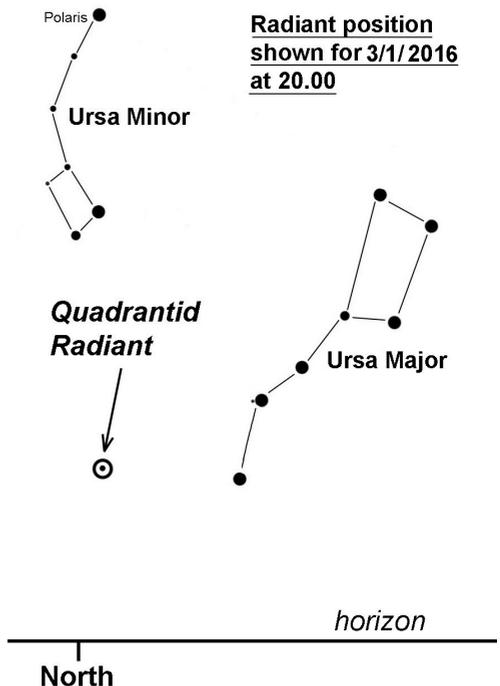
The Earth, as it moves on its elliptical orbit around the Sun, will reach the point when it is closest to our parent star on January 2nd. This is known astronomically as perihelion. At that time the distance between the two bodies is “just” 147 million kilometres compared to 152 million kilometres on July 4th when the Earth is at its furthest from the Sun (aphelion). This may seem counter intuitive as naturally you would think that the Earth is closest when the weather is at its hottest. Well, for those in the southern hemisphere, that is the case. However, changes in our distance from the Sun have a very limited effect on the amount of heat we receive. The thing that makes a vast difference is the tilt of the Earth’s axis, without which we would not have seasons. Put simply, when the north pole of the Earth points away from the Sun we experience winter in the northern hemisphere and when the north pole faces the Sun we have summer. The opposite is of course true in the southern hemisphere.

If the festivities have been too much for you why not go outside and see if you can spot any meteors (shooting stars) between the 1st and 6th of January. This particular shower is called the Quadrantids and is named after a constellation that no longer appears on star maps. The best time of all is on the night of the 3rd to the 4th of the month, and looking as late as possible will give you the greatest chance of seeing something. Look generally towards the north as the radiant (the point that meteors appear to radiate from) lies close to the two mythological bears; Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Ursa Major is, of course, commonly referred to as The Plough, although this encompasses only the seven brightest stars that form that universally recognised shape. The map shows the position of the radiant with respect to the previously mentioned constellations and the horizon at

8pm (20.00). The pole star, Polaris, is also shown as this is the star around which the sky appears to rotate. This has nothing to do with Polaris, it just so happens that the Earth’s north pole points directly towards it.

If you are an early riser and it is clear on the morning of 9th January, take a look a little way above the horizon towards the south east. There you should be able to see the brilliant planet Venus looking like an extremely bright star, and just to the west (right) of it you should be able to see a fainter star. This is the planet Saturn that will be very close to Venus, in fact just a fraction of a degree away. The two planets are in fact not close together at all, they purely by coincidence lie in the same line of sight. When two planets appear close to each other like this astronomers refer to it as a conjunction.

Brian Mills FRAS



LYRICS AND LIVES: HYMN WRITERS ACROSS THE CENTURIES

Peter Abelard 1079-1142

Peter Abelard was born near Nantes, the son of a knight of a minor Breton family, a bright handsome, intelligent boy, yet argumentative and arrogant whose father encouraged him to pursue an academic career. He became a wandering scholar, arriving in Paris in about 1100, the foremost place of study of its day. Under William of Champeaux he studied dialectic at the Cathedral School. At first a humble student, Abelard's arrogance and argumentativeness soon came to the fore and he competed on equal terms with his master causing him offence. So he left Paris and started his own school at Melun with himself as the teacher later returning to Paris in 1113, where he obtained a Chair at the Cathedral School, conditional upon his remaining single. His charismatic teaching of rhetoric and dialectic gained him re-known and thousands of students flocked to hear him.

The young Heloise d'Argenteuil was living in the house of her uncle Fulbert by the cathedral and Abelard became her tutor. She was an intelligent, educated girl, skilled in the classical languages of the day. They had an affair, Heloise became pregnant and was sent to Abelard's family where she gave birth to a son. They married secretly but denied it publicly to prevent Abelard losing his job. Fulbert was furious at Abelard's treatment of his niece and hired some ruffians to castrate the young man.

Heloise was sent to the convent in Argenteuil where she eventually became the Abbess. Abelard went to the Abbey of St Denis near Paris, but his presence was disruptive and he

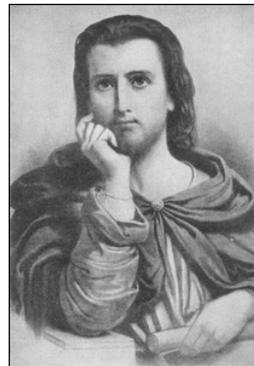
returned to Paris to his teaching. He founded his own oratory and pupils flocked to him as before. On the closure of the Abbey at Argenteuil he invited the nuns to join him.

He continued to live at St Denis periodically. His writings were theologically very controversial and he was suspected of heresy, as he disagreed with the Church over the nature of God and the Paraclete. Abelard in his arrogance suggested that clever men like him had no problem understanding the nature of God.

Abelard is regarded as a brilliant theologian, but in his day his attitude to Church authority as well as his relationship with Heloise led to his downfall. The Council of Sens decided that he should be condemned as a heretic, so he decided to consult the Pope but collapsed at Cluny on the way and died shortly after in 1142.

His writings such as sermons, poems, and correspondence with Heloise have been preserved. He wrote hymns for the nuns of Argenteuil and perhaps his hymn NEH 432 is a heart-felt cry for the peace and joy of the heavenly Jerusalem after his life of turmoil.

Gillian Shilling



ANCIENT WISDOM - MODERN LIVES

Jesus calls his first disciples (Luke 5:1-11): but does he choose wisely?

Have you ever had to choose someone to work in a team? Maybe at work, or in a volunteer capacity. You'll be looking for someone with the right skills and attitude and experience. You might even use psychological testing to pick team members who will complement each other well.

But when Jesus chooses his first disciples, he seems to take a rather different approach!

Luke tells us that the first disciples are three fishermen: Simon Peter, and two brothers James and John. On the day Jesus visits they have worked all night and caught nothing. Jesus borrows Peter's boat to use as a kind of pulpit from which to preach to the crowds on the shore. Afterwards he tells Peter to put out into deep water and let down his nets for a catch. Despite his previous lack of success, Peter obeys. And to his amazement they catch so many fish that Peter has to call James and John, in their boat, to help! Peter is awe-struck and scared by this demonstration of Jesus' supernatural power. Jesus says, 'Don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men'. The three fishermen pull their boats onto shore, leave everything, and follow Jesus. Jesus has chosen men who will follow him to the Cross and beyond, playing a vital role in the creation of the early Christian church.

But does he choose wisely? Peter and his friends are not well educated. They show no

evidence of the leadership skills that they will need in abundance as leaders of a Church under severe persecution from the Romans. They have not demonstrated any ability at rhetoric, in order to influence the crowds that they will later address. Nor have they shown that they will be capable of writing wise Epistles: letters to churches that are now important books in our New Testament. And Jesus does not carry out any psychological testing!

But here is the key point: the disciples do not need any of those things as long as they have Jesus. The net full of fish shows that Jesus' presence makes all the difference. Without Jesus, no fish. With Jesus, a huge catch. With the physical presence of Jesus, or his Holy Spirit after his ascension to heaven, the disciples can do almost anything. Amazingly enough, so can we, if we only rely on Jesus to empower us and help us.

Bill Lattimer, Reader



MISSION MATTERS...SAYT

Ding Ding ... All Change

2015 has been a eventful year for SAYT. As I look back on what I've previously written about I realised that this time last year marked the beginnings of a recruitment campaign to replace James; who moved on to pastures new as a support worker at Trinity School in September, and to cover for Holly as she went on maternity leave.

The spring felt very dark with the first round of recruitment, like previous campaigns before it, drawing a blank and several trustees indicating that they wished to step down after many years of combined service. Despite all this the team maintained the work in schools, at the Youth Cafe and on detachment in Greatness Park.

By the summer things were looking up. A second round of recruiting was far more successful with two new part time members of staff being appointed (more on them later). Dawn donned the wellies to provide canvased catering for the annual combined SAYT, Bessels Green, and VEC trip to Soul Survivor.

By the latter part of the year the spring woes were all well behind us. The annual celebration at St Luke's was well attended by people from the Sevenoaks District and allowed us to meet Daren, a former youth pastor, who also enjoys spending his time with a surfing mission down on the south coast. And Stefan who previously ran the youth programme for a church in Hammersmith and professionally tested computer games.

At the end of October, one of the Thursday night regulars, Callum Seal, set off with a team from KiliRide to cycle the 210 miles round the base of Kilimanjaro. Proceeds from this event are being split between an education charity and SAYT.

With the newly enlarged team, plans were hatched to begin a second night of outreach, with scout trips to Otford, Kemsing and other areas to determine possible locations.

Outside direct youth work, the team have maintained their other support activities. The monthly Prayer Breakfast at different churches has good attendance with new people coming to share stories, advice, support and most importantly God's word.

Now back down to earth... only some of this comes for free. Following the recruitment campaign SAYT effectively expanded its Youth Worker team from three to four. Over the past few years a reserve had been built up and it was felt wise to put it to good use expanding the team and the outreach programme, increasing the time spent spreading God's love, especially given the depth of knowledge Daren and Stefan possess. So I'll close with the following, which is taken from the literature at the Celebration and SAYT's website.

What we do...

- Tues - Lunch Club at Trinity School
- Wed - Youth Café in The Basement (Future minibus work TBC)
- Thurs - Lunch Club Knole Academy Evening minibus work at Greatness

Running Costs

Annual costs £42,750 Monthly costs £3,560
Annual Income £29,650 Weekly Shortfall £250

The Lord has been so gracious to me, and through good experiences and very difficult times, He has proved His Faithful Love to me again and again. I am so excited to bring who I am to the SAYT team. I invite you to come and get to know us better as we share the JOY of truth, forgiveness and abundant life with the young people of Sevenoaks.

OUT AND ABOUT...



Please save the date for our next big concert, a gala charity performance of

Messiah for the Hospice in

the Weald. This will take place on **23rd January 2016** at Pamoja Hall, Sevenoaks School. We do hope you will come and support this important charity and hear The Cantate Choir with orchestra 'Vivace!' and internationally renowned soloists performing this most wonderful of Oratorios. Tickets at £20 are now available from Sevenoaks School box office on 01732 467765 or online at <http://boxoffice.sevenoaksschool.org>



OTFORD EVENING WI Our next meeting is on the 14th of January, 2016 @ 7.30pm in the Otford Memorial Hall when Barbara Darby will show us an

eclectic selection of her famous videos. Our annual subscriptions are also due in January.

If you would like to come along, please contact our President on 01959 524 831 for more information.

OTFORD-HARDELOT TWINNING



On Saturday 26th September we filled a coach with Otfordians and their families for another twinning visit to Hardelot. It was great to see

such a mix of ages and three generations of some families coming along. The sun shone and we had no delays on the crossing which made our very early start well worthwhile and really helped us take in the lovely scenery.

In Hardelot our French twins went out of their way to make us feel welcome once again. They greeted us with wonderful food and activities planned for the day. Some enjoyed a tour of the biscuit factory with tasting included, of course. Others joined in a friendly game of petanque or enjoyed the restaurants, shops and beach at Hardelot. The amazing and energetic Isabelle planned a treasure hunt for the families, where French and English families had to work together to follow clues and bring back objects for prizes. It was good to see the children making friends and breaking down language barriers.

We were also very humbled by the wonderful service the French put together to remember Richard Knight, coinciding with the service in Otford at the same time; this was attended by around 50 people, both French and English, showing their level of regard for Richard.

It is encouraging to see that contacts and links are developing into warm and close friendships with our French twins. Several people commented about the way the children were working so well together to achieve a common goal, learn about Hardelot and find their way around the town and beach. "I liked finding out about the famous people who lived in Hardelot, especially Bleriot", said Alex.

We'd love to see more children and young families involved in future visits. If you are interested in finding out more or would like to join the next day trip to France please contact Jane Lawrey c/o Otford Parish Council or why not join us in the Woodman for our AGM at 7.45pm on Monday 18th January 2016?

PUZZLE PAGE

The Wise Men and St Paul were both on trips when they first encountered Jesus, but how different those trips were!

The Wise Men, whom we remember on Epiphany (6th Jan) were seeking the One for whom the Star shone, and came to Bethlehem to worship him. St Paul, whose conversion we remember this month (26th Jan), was on his way to Damascus, seeking to kill those who worshipped Jesus. When the Wise Men encountered the Baby Jesus, they

worshipped him and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. When St Paul, the proud, fanatical Pharisee, encountered Jesus, he fell blinded on the road, and then worshipped him by giving him the rest of his life. St Paul endured years of suffering and hardships in his work as the great apostle to the Gentiles. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.



Wise

Men

Trips

Paul

Encounter

Jesus

Different

Epiphany

Star

Shone

Bethlehem

Conversion

Seeking

Kill

Baby

Gifts

Gold

Proud

Blinded

Road

Suffering

Apostle

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CREAM OF TOMATO AND ORANGE SOUP



Serves: 6 – 8

50g Unsalted Butter
1 tablespoon Olive Oil
4 Small Red Onions – chopped
2 Celery Sticks – chopped
450g Butternut Squash – peeled and chopped
3 Fat Cloves of Garlic
4 Heaped Tablespoons Marmalade
2 x 400g Tins Chopped Tomatoes with Chilli
600ml Chicken or Vegetable Stock
150ml Single Cream
Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper
8 Cherry Tomatoes on the Vine for garnish – optional.

In a large saucepan melt the butter and the oil and gently fry the onions, celery, squash and the garlic for about 10 minutes or until the onion is soft.

Optional – Place the cherry tomatoes on a baking sheet and roast in a hot oven for 10 minutes. Set aside.

Stir in the marmalade, tinned tomatoes and stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 – 35 minutes until all the vegetables are tender.

Allow to cool slightly, then liquidize the soup in a blender. This may need to be done in batches. Stir in the cream – leaving a small amount for decoration. Adjust the seasoning and return to the pan to reheat gently.

Pour into warmed serving bowls, drizzle with a little cream and place one roasted cherry tomato in the middle of each bowl.

NOTES:

This soup can be made up to 3 days ahead and kept in the fridge.

It freezes well.

It can be eaten hot or cold (like gazpacho).

450g Butternut Squash is approximately ½ a squash. Any remainder can be chopped and frozen.

I use Bonne Maman Bitter Orange Marmalade – it adds a touch of sweet orange and tempers the acidity of the tomatoes.

Napolitana sell tins of chopped tomatoes with chilli and Tesco's sell cartons of chopped tomatoes with chilli. Otherwise use plain tinned tomatoes and add a whole deseeded and chopped chilli – add to the saucepan when frying the onions, celery, etc.

Use vegetable stock for a vegetarian version.

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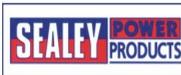


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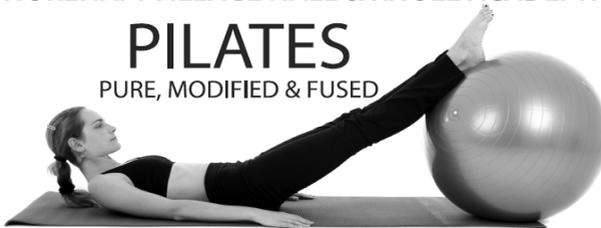
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Who's who in the Parish Church . . .

VICAR:	Richard Worssam 01959 523185
READERS:	Dawn Hallam 01959 526865 Bill Lattimer 01959 522058 Margaret Lidbetter 01959 524831 Mags Southgate 01959 524720
READER EMERITUS:	Peter Downing 01959 522327
PASTORAL ASSISTANTS:	Susan Reid 01959 523234 Margaret Lidbetter 01959 524831 Donna Worssam 01959 523185
HONORARY MINISTER:	Chris Reed 01959 523439
CHURCHWARDENS	Margaret Lidbetter 01959 524831 Nick Page 01959 928071

Organist and Choirmaster: Kevin Grafton 01732 452117

Sacristan: Tony Grogan 01959 523649

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Vice Chairman: Derek Shilling 01959 522059
Hon Treasurer: Janet Hunt 01959 523820
Freewill Offering Sec: Mervyn Harris 01959 522813
Hon Secretary: Sam Barnett

PARISH OFFICE

Monday to Friday 10.00am-12.00pm:
Susan Reid,
Clive Southgate
01959 523185
Email: st.bartholomews@otford.net

CHURCH HALL

Manager and Booking Sec: Robert Hunt 01959 523820

MAGAZINE

Editorial team: 01959 523185
Vicki Howie, Christeen Malan,
Clive Southgate, Richard Worssam
Advertisements: Deborah Vigis 01959 523331
st.bartholomews@otford.net

CHOIR

Choirmaster: Kevin Grafton 01732 452117
Practice night: Friday 8.00-9.30pm New members always welcome

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

'First Steps' (for parents and pre-schoolchildren)
Contact: Najen Harris 01959 522813

SUNDAY CLUB (Sundays at 10.00am)

Infants (3-7s)
Juniors (8-11s)
Seniors (12-14)

For all groups contact Donna Worssam 01959 523185

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

Contact: Dawn Hallam 01959 526865

OUTREACH

Chairman of Mission Links:
Andrew Hill 01732 469538

BELLRINGERS

The Tower Captain: Bobbie Fairclough 01959 522696
Secretary: Janet Whitehead 01959 524088
Practice night: Thursday 7.45-9.15pm

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Vicar and the Churchwardens Margaret Lidbetter* and Nick Page, Samantha Barnett, Jo Chandler, Jason Gunn, Dawn Hallam*, Andrew Hill, Mark Holmes, Vicki Howie, Janet Hunt*, Mike Jones, Bill Lattimer, Derek Shilling#, Sue Stephenson, Anne Stevens, Mark Tierney, Steve Vigis, James Wall.

Ex-Officio (Diocesan Synod) * Ex-Officio (Deanery Synod)