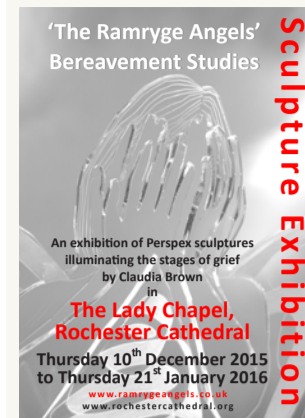


Rochester Link

NOVEMBER 2015

The Ramryge Angels at Rochester Cathedral



See page 12 for details

Bishop Brian Reflects

On 11 September 2001, Islamist extremists hijacked four planes. Two of them were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York. Another was deliberately crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth plane crashed into a field, 80 miles from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The attacks shocked the world and resulted in the deaths of over 3000 people.



Bishop Brian Castle had only just been announced as the new Bishop of Tonbridge at the time. He said, "The world fell apart in the afternoon of 9/11. I now wonder how much of my interest in reconciliation over the years has been shaped by that. I focussed my work during my sabbatical on the Israel/Palestine conflict."

Fortunately, Bishop Brian's ministry has been varied and rewarding. He said, "The regular highlights of my ministry have always been around being there at

the beginning of faith journeys. Licensing someone or being at a confirmation is a joy and a privilege. This keeps me fresh and energised. I have also spent a lot of time working with people through their ordination training. It's lovely to be with them as we help them discern where God is calling them. Ordinations are a time of high emotions, with people cheering them on. It's great!"

The Diocese of Rochester has a number of link dioceses including Estonia, Harare, Kondoa

and Mpwapwa and Estonia. Bishop Brian said, "Working with our overseas Dioceses has been tremendous. The Church outside of this country has always been very important to me. My six months of training with the World Council of Churches in Geneva was very formative; it was multi-cultural and ecumenical and I later worked in Zambia as a vicar."

Working in Zambia, Bishop Brian conducted as many funerals for children under twelve years of age as he did

for adults. He said, "Life and death are very close to each other. In Zambia, life is finely balanced and you live on the edge. I think people there understand life better. We can take a lot for granted because death seems so very far away. Even before Zambia I was interested in the theology of death and dying well. The basis of my PhD dissertation was to compare hymns around death. These conversations are important. People should write their will when they are well, not when they are dying. Laugh and cry about it. We need to remember to give people permission to grieve in this country, or that grief will come out in other, less healthy ways."

A keen traveller and cross country skiing enthusiast, Bishop Brian has visited many countries on vacation. He said, "You only see what is on the surface when you are on holiday. The real blessing of our overseas links is that people open their hearts and their lives to each other and they are changed by the experience. The Church really opens doors so you can have a genuine relationship and I believe we gain more than we give. It's important to understand that it's not a financial thing; people in this Diocese are very generous. This is a mutual relationship and our link Dioceses always say it's about the idea that they are not forgotten. I am thankful that I have had these great opportunities to see other people blossom and flourish."

The Diocese of Rochester celebrated 1400 years of ministry in 2004 and a great many events were planned around that celebration. Bishop Brian was the Chair of the organising committee. He said, "Some made a pilgrimage to Rome and it was fantastic! Some people had an audience with the Pope and five thousand people attended a celebration service in Rochester and the Cathedral wasn't big enough to hold everyone! It

was an amazing event that I remember fondly. It ended with 1400 balloons being released from Rochester Castle. It was amazing!"

2015 has seen Bishop Brian leading a Challenging Poverty campaign. He said, "It's been a joy and a privilege to be part of this campaign. Perhaps the easiest thing for some people is to give money. That's great, but it's not enough. People have reflected deeply on these issues and it has been very moving to see how people have reacted to that."

As his thoughts turn to packing boxes and maybe hiring a skip, Bishop Brian has given some thought to everyday life in the Diocese. He said, "I live in an area where life is very driven; it's frenetic. People are very aware of all they have to say and do. I want people to consider God saying slow down and enjoy life. I say we have many gifts. Slow down and delight in God and in one another and those on the outside that we may not normally associate with."

As a final reflection, Bishop Brian said, "I look back at my years in the Diocese with thankfulness. It's been great! I have met a wonderful cross section of people here and overseas; it's been a very stimulating time which has also enabled me to do some writing. It's been really good."

Bishop Brian will be moving to Somerset with his wife, Jane. He described himself as "helping with a bit of bishoping and teaching" whilst pursuing a few interests of his own like fly fishing, cross country skiing and writing. Jane will continue with her volunteer work training guide dogs for the blind and working with riding for the disabled. We wish them well with this new chapter of their lives.

Allotments And Commitments

Many churches in the Diocese of Rochester, other than some in rural areas, will have celebrated their Harvest Thanksgiving Services within the walls of their churches. Next to us, at the Church of St Andrew on the borders of Orpington and St Mary Cray in the London Borough of Bromley, are the Lower Road Allotments. Bishop James visited the Lower Road Allotment Society in October 2014.

Father Paul Prentice - Vicar of The Cray Valley Benefice, comprising: St Andrew and St Mary - agreed with the allotment holders that we would hold the St Andrew's Harvest Thanksgiving Eucharist in the Allotments. The allotment holders added to their generosity by providing a barbecue and refreshments. I believe the idea to hold the Service on the allotments to be inspired and the enthusiasm with which were welcomed by and hosted by the allotment holders to be inspiring.

Continued on page 9



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What's on in November

NOVEMBER

SEVENOAKS

8 November. Come and Sing Fauré's 'Requiem' at The Drive Methodist Church, Sevenoaks, at 6.30pm. Admission free. Retiring collection for 'Help for Heroes'. Details from 01732 456345. Valerie Ruddle (Choir Director)

ORPINGTON

12 November. Dementia Friends workshops at All Saints Orpington (from 2.30 to 4.30 pm, or from 7.30 to 9.30 pm). Free of charge.

LAMBERHURST

13 November. Jong Gyung Park. 7.30 pm. St. Mary's Church, Lamberhurst. www.lamberhurstmusic.co.uk

GREENHITHE

14 November. Dementia Friends workshop at St Mary Greenhithe (from 2.00 to 4.00 pm). Free of charge.

WATERINGBURY

14 November. 11am to 3pm at the Church of St John the Baptist, Wateringbury, ME18 5PA. Craft bazaar. From beads to bags, and plants to pashminas – over 20 stalls full of items by local craftspeople. Refreshments, mulled wine and mince pieces. Raffle, cake stall and tombola.

GRAVESEND

14 November Christ Church, Echo Square, Gravesend is holding a Twelve Days of Christmas themed Christmas Bazaar at 10.30 am. Stalls including: jewellery, gifts, decorations, cakes, books, toys and tombola. Refreshments available. Father Christmas will be there. Entrance 60p, children free.

MEOPHAM

14 November. Christmas Bazaar from 10 am to 12 noon at Nurstead Court, Meopham. Stalls will include a tombola, Christmas gifts, toys and games, homemade cakes, classy bric-a-brac, plus a basket of bottles raffle and Christmas hamper raffle. Admission £1. Children free. Refreshments.

SEVENOAKS

14 November. "England's Finest" - Concert by Temenos Chamber Choir, conductor Charles Vignoles, 7.30pm, at St Nicholas' Church, Sevenoaks, TN13 1JA. Choral works by Tallis, Vaughan Williams and Gabriel Jackson, and music for recorder and organ from Mary-Jannet Leith and Richard Moore. Tickets £10 (£5 students) from 01959 523765 or visit Sevenoaks Bookshop. www.temenos-chamberchoir.org.uk

PADDOCK WOOD

25 November. Training day on Dementia Inclusive Worship at St Andrew Paddock Wood (from 10.00 am to 3.30pm). Cost £20 inclusive of lunch.

ROCHESTER

27 November. From 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm. Memory Cafe in Rochester. If you have dementia, or are caring for someone with dementia, come along to your local Cafe, you'll be very welcome. Your local Cafe meets every fourth Friday of each month from 1.30pm to 3.30pm in the Parish Centre at St Peter, Delce Road, Rochester, ME1 2EH. Please contact: johnportman@talktalk.net or 07989 783447 or Pam Moss: 01634 721886

TUDELEY

28 November. The Baroque Singers at All Saints' Church, Tudeley at 7.30 pm. Performing seasonal music including the "Great Mystery" Mass by Tomas Luis de Victoria and the Gloria by Vivaldi. Tickets (£10 and £5 for under 16's) online from www.barquesingers.ticketsource.co.uk

DECEMBER

WATERINGBURY

5 December. 7.30pm Music for Advent and Christmas conducted by Alan Vincent with soprano soloist Alice Brown, at the Church of St John the Baptist, Tonbridge Road, Wateringbury ME18 5PA. Tickets at £10 (£5 children/students) from Ros Diment 01622 813032, Rebecca Moate 07715 399320 and Wateringbury Post Office.

12 and 13 December. 2.30 – 4.30 pm at the Church of St John the Baptist, Tonbridge Road, Wateringbury, ME18 5PA. Visit the church to see nativity cribs and angels, enjoy a cup of tea with angel cakes and biscuits.

GRAVESEND

5 December. Christmas Fayre 10am to 2pm, St George's Church, Church St, Gravesend DA11 0DJ. Free entry and free face painting and children's activities. Hot refreshments, cakes, raffle, tombola, DVDs, jewellery, cosmetics, bottle stall.

SEVENOAKS

30 minute 12:30 pm recitals. Admission Free. Refreshments from 12:00.

4 November. Pupils from Sevenoaks School with Tau Wey.

11 November. Jean Bentley's Old Tyme Dance Band.

18 November. Pupils from Knole Academy. 25 November, Trevor Brearley Organ. Venue: St Luke's Church, Eardley Road.

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De 4:31

GROOMBRIDGE

St Thomas the Apostle, Corseley Road, Groombridge TN3 9SF. Cost: £3 per lecture on the door. Refreshments available. Contact: Sharon Francis 01892 864265 revsharon.francis@outlook.com www.stthomasgroombridge.org.uk

11 November at 7.30 to 9pm. Facing Climate Change: Despair, Hope and Spirit Dr Judith Anderson, UKCP Psychotherapist.

2 December at 7.30 to 9pm. Social Responsibility. Speaker: the Rev Dr Alan Le Grys, Lecturer, University of Kent.

13 January 2016 at 7.30 to 9pm. Theology and Science: A new paradigm for the 21st century? Speaker: the Rev Andrew Bigg, MPhys (Oxon), BA, MA.

24 February 2016 at 7.30 to 9pm. 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in you': St Augustine. Speaker: Dr Margaret Lane

Contact Us

Submissions for Link should be emailed to:

linknews@rochester.anglican.org

We regret we are unable to accept hand written submissions.

Copy deadline for the December Link is 1600 on 12 November.

Views expressed are not those of the editor or Diocese.

On Being British



Values are mediated through institutions. So what happens when we no longer value the institutions?

These are momentous days for Britain and what we understand it to be. In the 2015 General Election, the Scottish National Party made astonishing gains; neither the Conservative Party nor now the Labour Party has any effective representation north of the border. England belongs largely to the Conservative Party, with some cities and other places remaindered for Labour and some feel the choice of Jeremy Corbyn to be Labour leader will only reinforce this pattern. A critical debate is underway over the value and purpose of the European Union at the very moment an unimaginably large wave of refugees is hoping to make their home in its countries.

What, then, is distinctive about Britain and its contribution to the world? France has its coherent values of liberty, equality and fraternity which cleverly balance capitalism, socialism and nationalism respectively. No-one visiting France and seeing its municipal architecture could fail to appreciate this. Anyone touring Britain would have a harder time discerning values. For some this is seen to be a strength. On the right, the preference for pragmatic solutions over ideological beliefs is believed to have kept us rooted in tradition and incremental change; on the left, diversity is championed more than national coherence and talk of distinctive British values is often frowned upon.

Significantly, when people are asked about what makes them British today, they are most likely to describe a set of values - fair play, tolerance, freedom of speech, democracy - which are shared by many other nations and are thus not distinctively British. What used to make Britain distinctive was regard for its institutions - the monarchy, Parliament, the courts, the police service, the BBC, the armed services, the NHS, the Church of England, trades unions and small businesses. Though other countries fairly claim similar structures, these institutions were both informed by a particular British ethic and helped to shape public values.

The deriding of these and other institutions, so popular today, has diminished a sense of what holds us together. Values are mediated through institutions; if the latter no longer matter, the former must find another means of expression. Increasingly this is through global, digital media. This media is more demotic, less restrained and more prone to exaggeration. It is also prey to populist politics and religion, as we are discovering to our cost. Most of us probably like the ferment of ideas, images and art which we can draw on so easily now from any source, but there is a reaction against such cosmopolitanism. The retrenchment into ethnic nationalism is becoming palpable across Europe. Some of this is benign; increasingly it is malevolent. The European project itself had the laudable goal of emptying its countries of poisonous nationalism. For some there are good reasons to abandon this project, but it would come at the cost of more chauvinism.

The goal of civic nationalism is preferred, where citizens can rally around a nation's institutions and the public realm is open to all. If we continue to assault our institutions without any regard for praise where it might be due, we will struggle to develop an inclusive, egalitarian community with places of common ownership and loyalty.

In Britain the Church still has a considerable public role which, if anything, feels like it has grown in recent times. Its primary loyalty will always be to Jesus Christ. Part of this loyalty is to find ways of blessing the nation through a witness to its Saviour which is rooted in truth, love and a practical regard for the vulnerable. If there has been a particular British ethic before, its tone was largely set by a living or residual respect for the Gospel of Christ. This is a witness we should sustain in volatile times.

by the Ven Simon Burton Jones,
Archdeacon of Rochester

Bishop James' Diary - November 2015

Sunday 1	10am	Confirmation, All Saints Belvedere	Sunday 15	6pm	Confirmation, All Saints, Orpington.	Sunday 22	10.30am	Confirmation, Farnborough
	3pm	Evensong, Brenchley	Monday 16	10am	House of Bishops Standing Committee, Lambeth Palace		4.30pm	Consecration of Memorial Garden, Christ Church Erith
	6pm	Confirmation, Yalding with Collier Street	Tuesday 17	12.30pm	Senior Leadership Development Group	Monday 23	6.30pm	Confirmation, Dartford Deanery
Tuesday 3	10am	Poverty and Hope Group Meeting	Wednesday 18	All Day	Senior Leadership Development Group	Monday 23 to Friday 27	9am	Finance Committee
	7.30pm	Institution of the Rev Brian Senior, South Gillingham	Thursday 19	6.30pm	ACEVO Annual Dinner	Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25	All Day	House of Lords Duty
Wednesday 4	All Day	Prison visits, Manchester		12 noon	King's Hill Cluster Meeting	Saturday 28 to Monday 30		General Synod
Friday 6	9am	The Granville School, Sevenoaks	Friday 20	7.30pm	Confirmation, St Peter, Ightham.			Annual Leave
	11.00am	St George's C of E Primary School, Wrotham	Saturday 21	10am	Police Chaplain's Business Meeting			
	12.45pm	Southborough C of E Primary School		1pm	What are Prisons For?			
Sunday 8 to Sunday 15		Deanery Visit, Malling	Saturday 21	9.30am	Affirming Catholicism			
Wednesday 11	All Day	Bishop's Staff Meeting		3pm	Commissioning, the Rev Pamela Davies, Sundridge with Ide Hill and Toys Hill			
	7.30pm	Dedication service, St Martin's Church, Eynsford	Saturday 21	7pm	Winter Shelter Launch, St Augustine's RC Church Tunbridge Wells			
Sunday 15	3pm	Collation, the Rev Alison Newman, Biggin Hill						



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Recent surveys show that knowledge of the Christmas story is fading.*
Among 5-7 year olds, 36% don't know whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas.
Among adults, less than 12% know the full nativity story.

*Survey findings from ComRes 2007, 2010, 2012.

Rochester Ordinations 2015

Saturday 26 September saw the Ordinations for the Diocese. Emotions run high in the run up to Ordinations day, as people really come to terms with what they are about to commit to. These are some of the thoughts from the Rochester Ordinands just before they went on retreat prior to Ordination.

Rev Rosheen Browning
(St Andrew, Paddock Wood)
said, "I am completely overwhelmed!"

Rev Nigel Griffiths
(Southborough Team)
Nigel previously worked in the field of commercial medical research and clinical trials. He said, "I'm really excited. This is the culmination of three years of my life after a tangible call (to ordination) discernment and training. It will be big and it will be a moment of affirmation."

Rev James Harratt
(Rainham)
James previously worked as a library assistant at a theological college in Cambridge. He said, "I'm a bit apprehensive and excited as well. Ordination is both awesome and terrifying. There has been a long period of discernment. I'm really excited about the possibility of serving but slightly jittery too!"

Rev Andrea Leonard
(St Justus, Rochester.)
Andrea previously worked as an inclusion manager at a secondary school. She said, "I feel a bit Maria von Trapp-ish! Nothing comes from nothing. I am completely overwhelmed with God's goodness. I have an amazing incumbent and have worked with her and some really lovely people. I feel like I have won the lottery!"

Rev Michael Payne
(Northfleet with Rosherville)
Michael previously worked as an English teacher at Hugh Christie School in Tonbridge. He said, "I think I am feeling

calm but excited in tandem. I will be continuing the work I have started in the parish, but now as an official, ordained deacon which is great!"

Rev Ruth Peet:
(St Mary, Bromley)
Ruth previously worked as a partner in her family business. She said, "I feel quite excited! It's a very new feeling for me. I have been holding ordination at arm's length for a few years and now that feeling has dissipated. It feels like an essential next step, somehow."

Rev Nigel Poole
(Penge)
Nigel has previously worked as a consultant in social housing. He said, "It's been a 38 year journey and apprenticeship for me. Work in Social Housing does prepare you for this calling. I am thankful for God's faithfulness for seeing me through the 38 years. Living and serving in the same place is something special!"

Rev Matthew Robinson
(Sevenoaks)
Matthew previously worked as a barrister concerned with family law and child protection. He said, "I'm looking forward to it. It feels like the culmination of a long journey and the destination is the right one. I have felt more and more reinforced in my calling."

Rev Karen Seggie
(East Gravesend Cluster of Churches)
Karen previously worked in a special needs school. She said, "I'm a bit nervous. The enormity of it has hit me. I'm excited as well."

Rev Carrie Walshaw
(Pembury)
Carrie works as a singing teacher and is a self-supporting minister. She said, "I'm really looking forward to it. I've not quite got it yet! I'm not quite into the mood of not being at school. After a couple of days on retreat, I'll be in a different place. It's been on my mind for a very long time – I have been a Reader for nineteen years. It's been nagging at me for years. I am most looking forward to seeing the parish in a new, more pastoral way. I will be working at the Hospice in the Weald and Pembury Hospital."

Rev Dennis Woodward
(Beckenham)
Dennis originally hails from the Netherlands. He said, "I'm excited and still have a sense of being unworthy; I'm thinking, 'why me?' I feel humbled and am looking forward to Saturday. My family and friends from the Netherlands will be there for me. It's amazing! - Bringing the Good News. I think this is the right parish for me; we are on the same page."

2015 Priests:
Rev Cathy Knight-Scott; Orpington, All Saints. Rev Mandy Young; Snodland w Lower Birling. Rev Mell Jemmett; Fawkham & Hartley. Rev Wim Mauritz; Tunbridge Wells, St James. Rev Andy Bond; Beckenham, Holy Trinity. Rev Jane Winter; Orpington, St Andrew. Rev James Crockford; Crayford. Rev Dorothy McGarvey; Eynsford w Farningham & Lullingstone. Rev Stephen Niechcial; Sidcup, St John the Evangelist. Rev Nathan Ward; South Chatham. Rev Clive Wood; Belvedere, All Saints. Rev David Howarth; Bromley, Christ Church.



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Jet Lag and Contentment

Sister Anne speaks of her life at Malling Abbey

Stereotypes are usually unhelpful; they are often a casual short-hand for those of us who either don't have the time to be original or maybe can't really be bothered to look more deeply into a person or situation.

Here is a challenge: Think about nuns in the UK. What's the first image that comes into your mind? Doubtless, your mental picture had something to do with a white wimple and a black habit. Audrey Hepburn, perhaps? Maybe your visual image will have been around Mother Teresa and you will have envisioned an older lady wearing blue and white. But these things are not what a nun is – that's simply what a nun wears. Lots of people think nuns are always Catholic but that's not true. Perhaps you think that all nuns make vows that are something to do with poverty and chastity, but that wouldn't be right either. Perhaps the first thing to remember is that all nuns are someone's daughter. They have a family.



Malling Abbey is a community of Anglican Benedictine nuns. Sister Anne, part of the Community living and working at Malling Abbey near King's Hill in Kent has a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Cambridge and spent a significant part of her life earning a comfortable living as a software engineer. She said, "When I studied for my PhD, I was just one woman out of a group of 40 male PhD candidates. It was quite unusual for a woman. At the time, something like simple data entry was considered as a suitable occupation for a women."

Relaxed and comfortable in a guest room, Sister Anne reflected on her life before the one she enjoys now in the Abbey. She said, "I was brought up in the Church and I am drawn very deeply into trying to understand the meaning of life. I wanted to do something of value for the world. I was married for sixteen years although I never had children. After my marriage broke down, I was in pieces and I needed to find some healing and reconciliation."

Searching for some spiritual healing, Sister Anne said, "At the time I cast around in New Age healing; I had one foot in the Church and at the same time I dipped into Buddhism. I had some difficulty in naming God as Jesus Christ. I can't quite remember what brought me back to Church. Whilst I was exploring the Buddhist tradition, I was encouraged to find whatever spirituality was right for me. I trained in massage. I was trained in how to be with someone in a prayerful way and find healing, and there was something about being a nun that was niggling at me although I didn't know any nuns personally. On a Buddhist retreat in 2007 I realised I needed to commit to one tradition and that was to follow Jesus on the Christian path. Shortly after that a friend suggested that I should visit some contemplative communities. I now know that the Christian journey contains everything for me."

Eventually, Sister Anne committed herself to staying with a contemplative community in West Malling in 2008, just

to 'get it out of her system.' She said, "I had what I call my 'oh sh*t' moment. There I was with a bunch of women dressed in habits but I just felt that this place makes sense. It has a very deep peace. The work the nuns do here nurtures that. Everything I need is here – even a holiday. It's gorgeous and it's a way of finding contentment. I entered Malling Abbey formally in 2009."

Sister Anne describes 'coming alive' at the Abbey and said, "I really came alive here in a way I had never known. It was ten years since my marriage had broken down; I forgave my ex-husband and I cried a lot. I was told not to make my mind up in a hurry, but I knew I had to do this. I had arrived at a point in my life with a sense of not living my life as I should be. I was in a final salary pension scheme and had a very good salary; I had very marketable skills and I knew at 50 that if I stepped off, I wouldn't be able to step back on. I am a resourceful, intelligent women and I decided now was the time to trust God."

Like any loving family, Sister Anne's parents were very concerned that she was doing the wrong thing. She said, "My parents thought this was a disaster. They saw me as a very needy person caught up with a bunch of manipulative nuns who needed a new recruit. But I had close friends who understood exactly what was happening and said, 'oh that's what we have been seeing in you!'"

Since joining the community at Malling Abbey, Sister Anne feels she has become more herself. She said, "There are obvious signs of visible conformity - like the clothes we wear and there are constraints, but this is a total environment. We do pursue other things like crafts and music or gardening. Perhaps the hardest thing was letting go of my daily timetable and I did struggle with that. I have found a freedom from that though." Sister Anne asked to enter West Malling as a Postulant in September 2009 having rented out her own home. Prior to that, she spent the summer visiting friends and family and describes that

as "rather fun." She said, "The day before I arrived, I ate the most expensive lunch I have ever had, and spent £12.00 on an exquisite glass of red wine."

The day she arrived at West Malling, Sister Anne was met by the Abbess Mother Mary David and the Novice Guardian. At the time, she wore secular clothes and just started to live at the Abbey, joining in with daily activities and chores. She said, "I started with a half time workload as a novice with vigils at 0430. I felt like I had jet lag and was very tired to begin with. I just needed to become accustomed to the rhythm of life here."

Life in the community is remarkable and quite different from life outside. Sister Anne said, "We are all concerned with the needs, health and strength of the community. I feel like I am stepping up to my greatest responsibility as I approach my 60s. Abbess Mother Mary David has tremendous energy and I feel as though God's strength

will carry me through. We are privileged to live in a beautiful and peaceful place that protects us from the noise and distractions of life outside, but we still worry about things like our ageing parents and how we will pay the bills – the normal things in life. We open ourselves up to God in prayer. There is an agenda here – the centre of gravity is the work of God as carried out by the community and we are bonded together as that community."

It was initially hard for Sister Anne's parents and her two sisters to accept her calling; they were angry and felt rejected. But as time has passed, they have become reconciled to the choice Sister Anne has made. She said, "It was hard for me, but I knew I wasn't doing this to hurt them. One of my sisters is two years younger than me and she is very good at making connections. She brought my parents to stay in a bungalow here after my first year. I really enjoyed seeing them. They were in their own space and I could spend time with

them. We celebrated my mother's eightieth birthday in the guest house here last year and it went really well. They have seen that I am happy here and that it suits me. I did feel the constraints of life here at first, but that soon passed. There was a letting go of my personal agenda and a freedom in finding that your own agenda is less important."

Sister Anne took her Solemn Vows on 16 May 2015, with Bishop Laurie presiding at the ceremony and Bishop James attending as a guest. These are not just vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but include vows of stability, obedience and conversion of life. She explained, "I was a Postulate for eight months; then I took the habit in May 2010. I continued to wear a white veil for two years (some women wear it for three, depending on when you are ready to take the next step.) You then let go the white veil and take the black one and take on a full work-load. At this stage there is no commitment either

way, but after a year as a full black veil novice, you make a promise to stay for two years and this is a two-way thing. Then you feel what it is like to live your life under a promise."

Sister Anne describes feeling affirmed by the community, but this is not the same for all women. Some come and they leave after deciding that this life is not for them. She said, "Mother Mary David has grasped that things need to change here. That was my biggest struggle – not the number of youngsters coming in. We need to re-order the estate. We have our own guest accommodation and the facility to provide hospitality but my struggle was around what is going to happen in the longer term. There is a relief in trusting God and a belief in the community that I will be provided for. I have disposed of my possessions and my house and my pension will come to the community. It feels good now."



The Rev Sharon Copesake



The collation, induction and licensing of the Rev Sharon Copesake as Vicar of St Francis Church, Strood on 28 September 2015. Sharon is the first female incumbent in the Strood Deanery.

The Rev Copesake said, "The licensing was a wonderful occasion and it is a great privilege to be

made vicar for St Francis, Strood. I am very much looking forward to serving the people of Strood and working with them to continue to build God's kingdom here on earth as in heaven."

Sister Gill Martin (Church Army) Associate Minister: St Francis Church, Strood.

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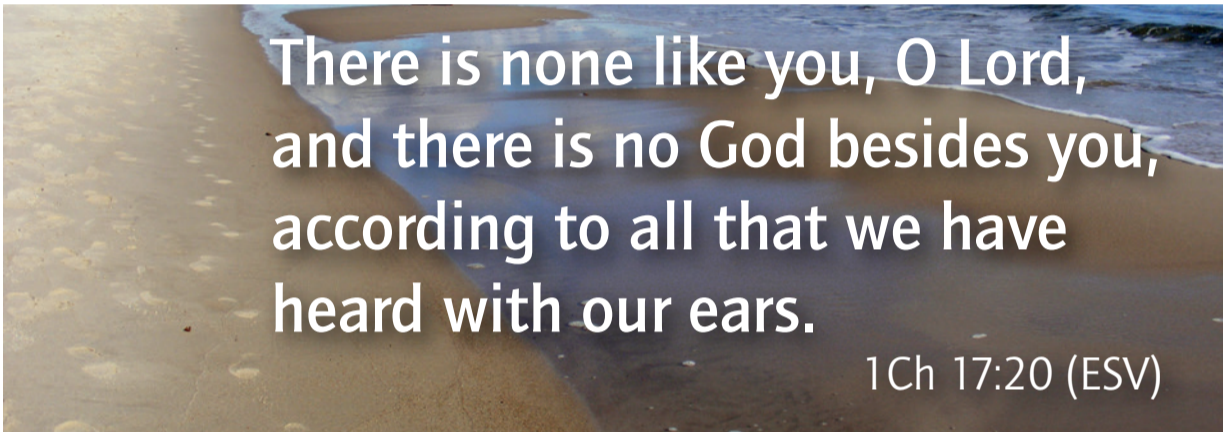
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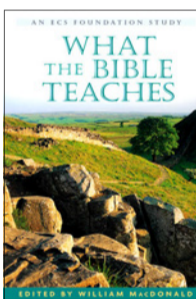
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and there is no God besides you,
according to all that we have
heard with our ears.

1Ch 17:20 (ESV)

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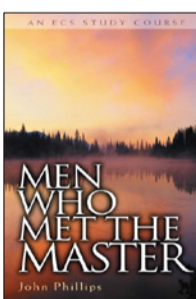
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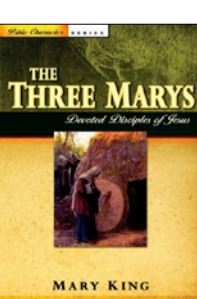
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freshexpressions.org.uk/events/margins15



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Friends of St Paulinus Celebrate Success

The Friends of St Paulinus Church held their Annual General Meeting in the Church Hall on the afternoon of St Paulinus' Day and retiring Chair Marilyn Evennett, reported on a very successful year for the Charity. She thanked the Officers and Committee for their hard work and support in raising money to help preserve Crayford's historic church.

A Valentine's Quiz Night, Coffee Morning and an Old Time Music Hall were the highlights of the Friends Fundraising activities. The Weekly Draw run by Margaret Drew was also an important source of funds. Treasurer John Holbrook

presented the Accounts and the Secretary, Alan Baxter, gave a vote of thanks to Marilyn Evennett for her five years of service as Chair of the Friends.

She was also presented with some flowers in recognition of her leadership. The Rt Hon David Evennett MP and the Rector, the Rev Canon Antony Lane, were among the guests at the AGM. Officers elected for 2015/6 are: D Pennington-Jones, J Holbrook, A Baxter, M Evennett, M Drew, J Baxter, B Bunce, J Dunlop, I Holloway, J Peers-Jones and Julie Burr.



Pictured are the new Officers and Committee with the Rt Hon David Evennett MP and the Rev Canon Antony Lane.

300 Join Bishop Ridley Church Fun Day

On Saturday 19 September, hundreds of people of all ages enjoyed a day of fun at Bishop Ridley Church, Falconwood. Visitors had fun on the bouncy castle, got their faces painted, played old-fashioned family games and enjoyed BBQ food and refreshments

The Community Fun Day, organised by the church, also included arts and crafts, a treasure hunt,

tea and cakes. Those who came along learned about the activities Bishop Ridley Church organises for people of all ages, from babies and toddlers, children and young people, families and adults to older members of the community, through a range of displays in the church and chats with activity leaders. Stan Tither, member of Bishop Ridley Church and event organiser, said: "Bishop Ridley Church is

lucky to be located in the middle of The Green, the central point for Falconwood and our fun day was an opportunity for us to celebrate being in the heart of our community. Our church is more than just a building; our church is the people who live in and serve the local area. It was great to meet more of our neighbours and we look forward to welcoming them back soon – our door is always open."

About Bishop Ridley Church

Services are held each Sunday at 9am and 10:30am at Bishop Ridley Church, The Green, Falconwood, Welling, DA16 3PG.

Bishop Ridley is an open and welcoming church on The Green in Falconwood, Welling. Together we share faith and a mission of sharing the love of

Jesus in our community. We do this through weekly Sunday services, midweek groups for all ages, support for uniformed and other community groups as well as Bishop Ridley Church of England Primary School. You are most welcome to come along to one of our services and worship God with us.

For more information, please visit: <http://brchurch.org.uk/>, call the church office on 020 8303 9998 or email info@brchurch.org.uk.



Allotments And Commitments

Continued from page 2

One of the allotment holders announced that - amongst the many allotments in the Borough of Bromley - Lower Road Allotments Society had received seven awards, including an award as the second best allotment in the whole of the Borough. Two thoughts occurred to me. My first thought was that success by them in caring for their plots in those allotments requires absolute dedication and commitment. My second thought was that members of

St Andrew might have received a modern day parable, insomuch as we can only be true Christians if we show 'absolute dedication and commitment' by letting God act through us in our lives in the caring of his people and of his gifts.

Malcolm Deering
Photograph by Evelyn Magee



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Diocesan Pray-ers

The Fellowship of Pray-ers exists to provide prayer support to the work and worship of the Diocese of Rochester, as well as to pray for those in urgent need. Routine prayers are submitted by deanery coordinator, but to ask the pray-ers, urgently or confidentially, to hold an event or person in their prayers please contact the Bishop's Chaplain: Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff, Tel: (01634) 814439,

lindsay@rochester.anglican.org
Similarly, contact the Bishop's Chaplain if you are interested in joining the Fellowship.

More information can be found under 'Pray-ers' within 'Prayers & Intercessions' in the Ministry menu on the Diocesan Website: www.rochester.anglican.org/
Their calendar of prayer is in the same place under 'Praying the Way'.



Diocesan Cycle of Prayer

Owing to administrative difficulties, November's cycle of prayer will not be printed here, this month. Parish clergy should have a copy of this quarter's prayer calendar, which can be found at www.RochesterWorship.WordPress.com

and on the diocesan website under intercessions.

I apologise for any inconvenience this might cause.

The Rev Lindsay Llewellyn MacDuff
Bishop's Chaplain

Inter Faith Week

I am very honoured to have been asked to become Bishop James' adviser on Inter-Faith Concerns. I began my one-day-a-week role in September, alongside my post of Priest-in-Charge of two parishes in Gravesend. As well studying other faiths during my ordination training, I have been a secondary school RE teacher, and, in my years as a Church Army officer in Dewsbury, served in a Church in a predominantly Muslim area, being member of the North Kirklees inter-Faith Council. I have found that relating to people of other faiths whilst holding onto Christian beliefs is challenging, stimulating and of immense value. I hope that in my new role I can help others discover the richness of such encounters,

already taking place elsewhere in such initiatives as Scriptural Reasoning and the new Faith Centre at the LSE.

I would like to gather news of existing inter-faith initiatives and co-operation across the Diocese, so do please let me know of anything that is going on in your area. If you would like to start something, especially for Inter-faith Week (15-21 November, www.interfaithweek.org), and would like to chat it over, or would like some ideas about how to inform people about other beliefs, please be in touch at ramartin@talktalk.net

The Rev Richard Martin



Here is a prayer you might like to use in Inter-faith week:

Heavenly Father
Thank you for the many positive contributions which people of faith make to our communities.
Help us to build good links with those who have different beliefs to ourselves, growing in understanding, working together for the common good and reaching out to those who find belief difficult.
We pray through Jesus Christ, who reconciles the whole world to you
Amen

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The Ramryge Angels



The Ramryge Angels will be on display at the Lady Chapel in Rochester Cathedral from 29 November 2015 to 8 January 2016

Claudia Brown is a Hertfordshire-based artist who graduated from the University of Hertfordshire with a BA (Hons) in Applied Art. The theme of this work, which formed part of her final year degree project, concerns the stages of bereavement.

Claudia said, "The bereavement process generally begins with 'Denial' and proceeds through 'Anger', 'Bargaining', 'Depression', 'Acceptance' and (unofficially as Claudia has added this one) 'Peace'. Each angelic figure has been designed to emulate one of these emotions. Often stone graveyard angels adopted such forms as if to identify and empathise with those who have lost a loved one.

The angels were created from sheet perspex, hand-sculpted and designed specifically to fit into 6 empty statue niches in the original gothic Ramryge Chantry Chapel, located within St Alban's Cathedral. The etching on the body shapes is stylised, to be reminiscent of the curls of smoke that can emanate from a snuffed candle."

Your visit

Please take time with each angel. Perhaps you are on a bereavement journey yourself, or recognise the stages in others around you. Bereavement is not just about loss of a loved one, it can also be about the end of a relationship, a job, ill health, changes in circumstance and so on. Is there a stage that resonates with you and where you are in your life right now? There is a comment book at the end of the sequence in which you can leave comments, prayers or thoughts that occur to you.

If you would like more information, please visit:
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 Email perspexangel@outlook.com
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Royal British Legion

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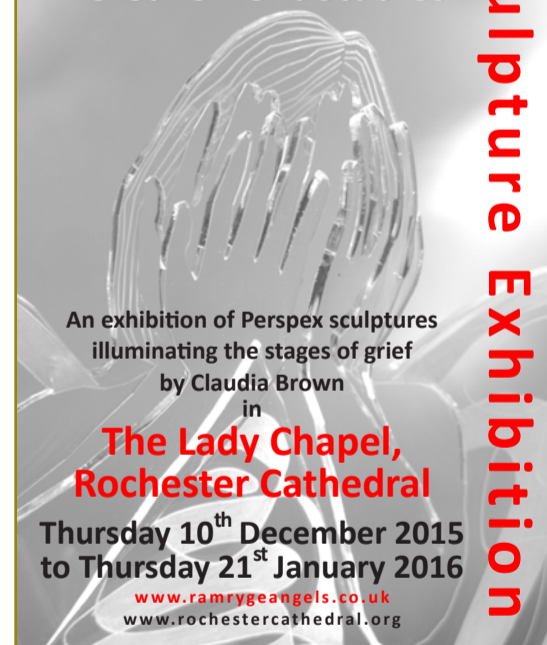


If you would like to know more or to donate to the Royal British Legion, please visit:

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'The Ramryge Angels' Bereavement Studies

Sculpture Exhibition



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