

ST PAUL'S NEWS

September 2023



ONE POUND

SERVICES

Sunday 3rd September

The Thirteenth Sunday After Trinity

- 10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Baptism (CW)
President: The Vicar,
Preacher: Rev. Nicholas Burton
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Daphne Pilcher
Link: Susan Powley
- 6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 10th September

The Fourteenth Sunday After Trinity Education Sunday

- 10.00 am Joint Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Minister: The Vicar
Preacher: Daphne Pilcher
- 6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 17th September

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

- 10.00 am Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar
- 10.00 am Family Service at the Church Centre + Zoom
Lead: Wendy Anderson
Link: Karen Millar
- 6.30 pm Choral Evensong (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: Rev. Nichols Burton

Sunday 24th September

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

- 10.00 am Matins (BCP)
Minister & Preacher: Rev. Nicholas Burton
- 10.00 am Family Service with Holy Communion
at the Church Centre + Zoom
President: The Vicar
Link: Liz Goddard
- 6.30 pm Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

Sunday 1st October

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity HARVEST FESTIVAL

- 10.00 am Joint Service at the Parish Church
Ministers: The Vicar, Rev. Nicholas Burton
& Daphne Pilcher, Speaker: Mary Saunders
- 6.30 pm Parish Eucharist (CW)
President & Preacher: The Vicar

DIARY

Saturday 2nd September

10 am – 2 pm Youth Council Car Wash at the
Parish Church

Tuesday 5th September

7.30 pm Autumn Fayre planning meeting in
the Lodge

Wednesday 6th September

8.00 pm Family Service Meeting at the Church Centre

Thursday 7th September

6.00 pm Youth Council meet in the Lodge

Saturday 9th September

10 am – 6 pm Friends of Kent Churches
Ride and Stride

Sunday 10th September

9.00 am Youth Council serving breakfast
before the 10 am Joint Service -Church Centre

Thursday 14th September

11.30 am Communion to Mount Ephraim House
Rev. Tony Rutherford

Saturday 16th September

10.00 am onwards Parish Church Deep Clean

Monday 18th September

8.00 pm PCC meeting in the Lodge

Thursday 28th September

11.30 am Communion to Mount Ephraim House
The Vicar

Sunday 1st October

12 noon Bring & share lunch in the Lodge

Thursdays throughout the month

12 for 12.30 Rusthall Lunch Club
at the Church Centre



Magazine Article Deadlines

11th September for October

16th October for November

13th November for December/January 2024

The time between the deadline and magazine issue is to allow for typing, formatting, proofreading, and compiling the magazine. These all take time and have to be fitted around the volunteer editorial team's other commitments. We would therefore be very grateful if you would keep to the deadlines set. Please send items for publication to magazine@stpaulsrusthall.org.uk.

Magazines are posted on the Parish website by the 1st of the month. Photocopies of the magazine can be made available to those who cannot access the magazine online. Please contact Ginette di Palma at the Church Office (TW 521447) to arrange production and collection/delivery.

From the Vicarage

September 2023

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support, prayers and hard work. Special thanks to Fiona and her team for organising the Junior Choir Camp. A very big thank you to the Junior Choir for their amazing concert, show-casing their talents and treating us to an evening of lovely and spectacular music.

I would also like to thank all those who give of their resources so generously for the work of and ministry in this parish. As I write, I think especially of those who volunteer to clean both churches and, again, register my support of and gratitude for their amazing ministry. Like the many other ways people volunteer within the church, 'Martharing' is a 'labour of love' that doesn't go unnoticed by the Lord and is very much valued by us here at St Paul's. While thanking our 'Marthas' who are all regular part of our worshipping congregations, I should commend the splendid work done by the Community Payback Scheme, who some of you refer to as the Tuesday Group. They work weekly at the Parish Church Grounds and recently repaired the fence at the Church Centre. We are grateful to them for keeping the Parish Churchyard/grounds in pristine condition.

As you may all be aware, we used to have an 8 'O'clock BCP Communion service at the Parish Church that stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic. After a series of discussions, the PCC has agreed and decided to restart this service in September. It has been publicised/advertised for a while now and we are hopeful that people will attend this reflective Said communion service which lasts no more than forty minutes. I am looking forward to welcoming as many of you as are able to attend.

I love reading the Bible but in this modern age with so many opportunities and facilities, I find myself spending less time reading the Bible and more time listening to it. I feel that I have gained more time as I can 'multitask'. For example, I can listen to the Bible while cleaning the chickens or Ducky's pond. Recently, I have been listening to the book of Esther. It is quite a fascinating story but also very troubling as it shows the extent to which human beings are prepared to go in order to achieve their aims – good or bad, or protect themselves from imminent danger. The scriptures also, however remind us that although our actions may seem innocent, God knows and considers our intentions (Proverb 21:2). And Psalm 139, one of my favourite passages of scripture also reminds us that God sees and knows every aspect of our lives.

While it is difficult to accept Haman's hatred towards Mordecai (and his Jewish people), it is equally also seriously disturbing to accept the all out pursuit of those regarded as enemies of the Jewish people. A seeming lack of compassion does not make for peaceful coexistence and community cohesion. My prayer is that irrespective of the negative actions of others towards us, God would enable us to be gracious that we may never get to the point of acting in a vindictive way towards them. Amen.

Ronnie

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Editorial

Gosh! The summer went so quickly, despite the awful weather. While much of the world was experiencing overpowering heatwaves, we had one of the wettest Julys on record, sunshine occasionally but only between the showers, and some really ferocious storms. August has been little better, my friends who live in the south of Italy visited to get a rest from the heat of Bari and were not disappointed. The sunshine has mainly come courtesy of wonderful sporting events, many providing a thrilling watch.

The Tour de France was a thriller, with the predicted 2 horse race between eventual winner Jonas Vingegaard and runner up Tadej Pogacar throwing up many twists and turns along the way. British twins Adam and Simon Yates finished 3rd and 4th and Tim Pidcock was unlucky to fade at the end to 13th when he had spent a lot of time in the top 10. It was heartbreaking to see Mark Cavendish crash out without gaining the extra stage win to put him beyond his and Eddie Merckx record equalling 34 TdF stage wins, especially as he had demonstrated his good form in a 2nd place in the sprint finish the day before. He now has to decide if he will delay his plans to retire to give it another shot. Wimbledon was won by Carlos Alcaraz, beating Novak Djokovic, the first time that a man who wasn't Djokovic, Murray, Nadal or Federer had won since 2002. The British Open Golf was won by Brian Harman, the Women's Netball team came 2nd in the Netball World Cup, going down to Australia despite beating them in an earlier round. And then there was the Women's World Cup, with the Lionesses making it to the final but then being outplayed by Spain. Nevertheless, the televised game has found them new fans and raised participation rates.

In September we bask in the recollection of holidays and then return to work, school, college or university. It is always a big step if a change of institution is included, and all the more for this current cohort affected particularly by the pandemic, but I think they should consider the versatility and resilience they have developed which will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. If you want to get into that 'back to school' mood, be at King's Cross Station at 11am on Friday 1st September and you will hear the departure of the Hogwarts Express announced – though as muggles you won't be able to wave it off, of course.

Do consider cycling or walking around some churches on Saturday 9th September, and if you can't do that, what about taking a turn church sitting to sign the Ride and Stride forms for the visitors? With recent damage to the church roof we need all the funds we can get. Also make a note to check arrangements regarding road closures for the Hospice in the Weald Half marathon, 10k, and 5k runs on 17th September.

Articles for the next magazine to reach us by Sunday 10th September please.

Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare

From The Registers

Baptisms – we welcome as newly Baptised members of the church

Wren Zachary John Barden
Brandon James Lennon Seale
Joshua James Fagan
Tallulah Rose Waters

Marriages – we ask God to bless the marriage of

Jenny Lynne Murray and Benjamin James Perry
Catherine Louise Kay and Charles Stephen Armstone Geary
Hannah Louise Braisted and Matthew Liam Peckham

At rest – the sympathy of the Parish is extended to the family and friends of:

Hazel Margaret Hollamby
Josephine Elizabeth Karen Gamble
Wendy Helena Freeman
Christine Jenifer Fenner
Mark Nicholas Rees
Jane Rowe
Stephen Thomas

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Churchwardens' Notes



Before we give a brief report on the mainly mundane events of the past two months, we should like to express our thanks and admiration for all those members of the church, who organised the extraordinary concert on 12th August. The breadth of the musical talent amongst the children was reflected in a bold programme, which enthralled the large audience. The refreshments were also excellent and added to the occasion.

We owe our gratitude to the team, who worked with the children all week, and whose enthusiasm produced wonderful music equalled by very few Parish Churches. Whether individual performances or the choir as a whole, the standard was so high, and the evening finished with a standing ovation.

As mentioned in the last magazine, Rod and I went to meet the archdeacon (Ed - an annual official event when churchwardens are admitted to office called a Visitation). The Archdeacon officiated at a gathering at a church, which seemed to be in the middle of nowhere, and it was only thanks to the expert navigation by Ronnie, that we managed to find the venue [Ed – St Mary's Platt]. The service was simple and the food excellent and in ample quantities.

We met Bishop Jonathan after a brief service in the Cathedral, given by six choir members, who filled the building with a series of older works. It was most impressive. This was followed by a reception in the garden of the bishop's delightful house and again the hospitality was superb. It was here that we had several informative chats to wardens, who knew considerably more than us.

It did strike us that Rochester is not the easiest place to reach, unless you are willing to drive and have precise knowledge of the city.

Otherwise we have learned a lot about (non-)

communication with the various firms, who maintain and repair the church buildings. It seems ironic, that in an age, where communication is possible in so many ways, it can be so difficult to receive a response to phone calls and emails. Anyway, we have repaired the leak in one of the loos and replaced the lock on one of the doors in the Lodge.

Rod is now an expert on drains and water courses and he is determined to create a map of all the stop cocks at the Parish Church and the Church Centre.

We spent an interesting morning at the Church Centre with the Fire Officer, who inspected the whole building in detail, and now we need to react to the report, which Graeme has received.

We have also met the engineers who installed the two gas boilers in the Parish Church. They could not have been more helpful and we are confident that the system is just what we need for the future. Communication with Fairs & Green was so straightforward and we spoke the same language with both the engineers, who outlined what we need to do in order to maintain the system and they will return as the weather turns colder to fire up the boilers.

We are also gradually learning about candles. Life can't get much more exciting than that!!!

Chris Reece and Rod Garcia-Fermer

Witty Short Ones

I saw a robbery in an Apple Store. Does that make me an iWitness?

If a child refuses to sleep during nap time, are they guilty of resisting a rest?

Milk is the fastest liquid on earth. It's pasteurized before you even see it!

I had a fear of speed bumps but I slowly got over it!

Q: When does a duck wake up?

A: At the quack of dawn

Q: What vegetable was forbidden on the shops of Arctic explorers?

A: Leeks!

A Musical Note

On Saturday 15th July the choir travelled to London to sing Evensong at Westminster Abbey. As they have a limit of forty singers due to lack of space in the choir stalls we were not able to take all of the children on this occasion which was a shame. We sang the responses by Sanders, Dyson in D for the canticles and Like as the hart by Howells as the anthem. We also had an incredibly lengthy psalm to sing which was rather exhausting and bizarrely in the middle of the summer the hymn was Thine be the glory! At Westminster Abbey you are not able to bring your own organist to play but instead they have one of their organ scholars playing for visiting choirs. Our organist, Matthew, was very good and very nice and we had an excellent rehearsal with him before the service. It was wonderful to see so many supporters from Rusthall among those who had come to listen to Evensong. I was told by the Precentor that our service was the busiest and the fullest they had been all year! The choir sang really well in the service and at the end the Canon told us that it had been a privilege to be a part of the service so I think it must have gone quite well!



On Monday 7th August we began our week of Choir Camp! This year the theme was the work we would be performing in the concert at the end of the week, "Lights, Stories, Noise, Dreams, Love and Noodles" by Will Todd and Michael Rosen. On Monday we managed to sing through all of the concert music and then went over to the cricket pitch to play Crounder (Choir Rounders) which was, as always, absolutely hilarious!

On the Tuesday we sang more in the morning and then in the afternoon Angela and Chris very kindly let us come and swim in their pool. The weather was not very pleasant so it was great to be able to swim with the roof on.

On Wednesday we went to London for the day.



We started at the National Gallery where we had invented a quiz game looking at paintings which bore some relevance to the theme of the week. The children had to find clues within the paintings which would ultimately spell out the name of the restaurant where we would be having lunch. For lunch we of course went to eat Noodles in keeping with the theme of the week.



We then walked up Charing Cross Road to the crossroads where Tottenham Court Road tube station is, where there is an incredible immersive video display which you can experience for free. We then walked over the river to the South Bank to get an ice cream and have a go in the Appearing Rooms, which are fountains where you have to dodge the water jets. Mostly we were quite successful but a couple of the children did get absolutely soaked!

On Thursday we rehearsed in the morning and then played games on the cricket pitch in the afternoon. The games, as is traditional, involved quite a lot of being shot at with water guns.



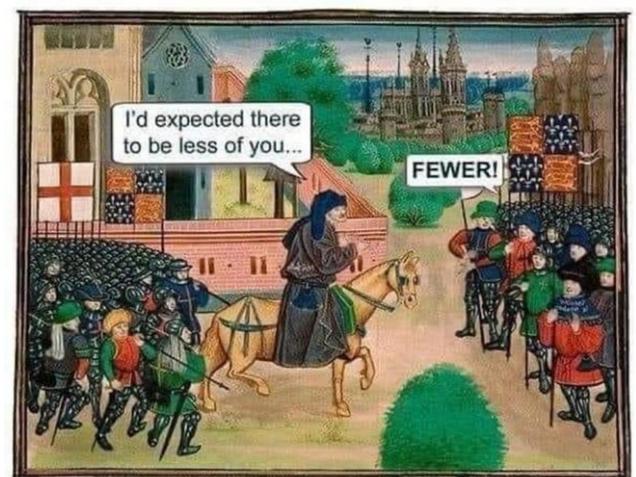
When we got back to the church we were treated to a wonderful barbecue prepared by Ginette and Debbie and their wonderful team of helpers. After the barbecue we eventually headed into the church for our sleepover. The older children had written us an excellent bedtime story and then we settled down to get some sleep. Some of the children slept very well, others rather less so! On Friday morning we emerged from the church somewhat sleep deprived to find Ginette, Rosie, May and Deborah already in the lodge preparing a wonderful breakfast for us. After breakfast we played our Friday morning game, Cowboys and Indians. I would try and explain it but it really has to be seen to be believed, and then had a quick sing through before lunch which Lizzie and Anthony very kindly provided for us. After lunch we sang for a wedding and then the children all went home.

On Sunday afternoon we reconvened at the church to rehearse for the concert in the evening. Due to the lack of rehearsal time this was the first time we had put some of the pieces together so it was quite

exciting. The concert itself was absolutely brilliant. We were treated to some exceptional solos from Tom, Marcy, Hannah, Izzy, Alice and Alex and there were a few choral pieces in the first half as well. At the end of the first half the children performed "Revolting Children" from Matilda the Musical with full choreography and with an outstanding solo section from Lucia. In the second half we performed "Lights, Stories, Noise, Dreams, Love and Noodles" with band and lighting design! Our band was an unbelievably brilliant group of musicians. We had Jenni Millar on Bass Guitar, Alex Robson on Piano, Jennifer Farman on Saxophones and Brad Webb (who is Jamie Cullum's drummer) on Drums. The children were joined by a small group of singers from the adult choir as the piece is scored for children's choir and SATB and the adult singers were absolutely amazing having had only one proper rehearsal for the piece which was certainly not easy to sing!

I hope everyone who came to the concert enjoyed it; we certainly had a lot of fun putting it together and I thought the performance was one of the most exciting things that we have done whilst I have been at Rusthall. The week was tiring but definitely worth it for what we were able to achieve. The children were an absolute joy to work with and the way that they look out for and support each other is so encouraging to see. Special thanks to the adults who gave up their time to make this such a lovely week for the children. James, Thomas, Jennifer, Nic, Jane, May, Rosie, Caroline, Rose and Alex were a brilliant team and special thanks to Brad for popping over on Friday morning to do the heavy lifting ensuring that the church was back to rights in time for the wedding. This was an unforgettable choir camp and I am already looking forward to next year!

Fiona Johnson



The Pedants' Revolt

September Sermon

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Well, summer's end is in sight, at least in terms of holidays. Weather wise I suspect the weather will warm up just as the children go back to school and work, for some, starts again in earnest. I hope that those who did manage to get away enjoyed their vocation or staycation as the case may be. Certainly our journey through Europe (taking in France, Italy, Sicily, Switzerland and Germany) was a joy and thankfully completed before Europe became frazzled. There were a number of highlights: the train ferry across the Messina Strait into Sicily (they actually load the train on to the ferry and it is the last surviving train ferry in the world); the train journey from Milan to Bellinzona past the lakes Maggiore, Como and Lugano and the next day up through the Gotthard Pass before dropping down to one of the great railway stations of the world, Basle. The actual inspiration for this month's sermon came from our visit to the vast Metropolitan Cathedral of the martyred Saint Agatha in Catania, Sicily, dating from the 11th Century. Sitting there and gazing at a vast Statue of Jesus on the cross (see below) reminded me that Holy Cross Day falls this year on Thursday 14th September.

Holy Cross Day confronts us squarely with the singularly unique feature of the Christian faith—the cross as the event of God's self-revelation to the world. Jesus shows us what it is to be God in the way he dies as a human being. Put another way, on the cross Jesus shows us who God is and what God does.

Heaven is God's space but earth is the place where God wills to reveal himself. God wants to be known, and he wants you to know him. But because no one can ascend into heaven God has willed that there should be a descent from heaven to earth. A real descent, into human flesh. This descent is the mission of Jesus. One theologian put it this way: “Jesus, the man Jesus, can speak of heaven because he has left it, and because, though he has left it, it still remains his home.” Jesus shows us what is true in heaven on earth, in his flesh, on the cross.

Isn't that what St Paul is saying in the reading from Corinthians. The cross is what? A display of God's wisdom and power! If you want to know

who God is just look at Jesus Christ and him crucified. The theme is heaven but the place of insight is earth, the man Jesus, his flesh pinned to the cross.

John the Evangelist is also the author of Revelation and taken together these two books provide us with a wonderful image of how the cross reveals heavenly truth on earth. At the end of the gospel there is John with the Blessed Virgin Mary which is not surprisingly portrayed at the foot of the cross. It is this scene that is portrayed in the Cathedral of Saint Agatha. Looking up John beholds the crucified body of Jesus. Meanwhile in Revelation the same John writes about a vision that he was granted. He looked into heaven and what does he see but the Lamb who was slain seated upon the throne.

What if these are two views of a single event. The earthly reality of the cross is the death of Jesus of Nazareth but with spiritual insight one is able to see the heavenly reality: the Lamb of God slaughtered for the sin of the world now enthroned in glory and power and wisdom.

This descent of heaven to earth is *totally* and *absolutely unique* to Jesus Christ. He is God's *only* begotten Son. “No one has ascended into heaven except *the* one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” Jesus Christ has no contemporaries, no peers, no colleagues. Likewise, the gospel is not simply one religious message among many that are all designed to bring you to the same end. Jesus is *the* way, the *only* way, to the Father. We cannot ascend into heaven apart from the one who has descended from heaven. We may have all sorts of interesting ideas and opinions about God but Jesus is the only one who can speak with any authority on the subject. Therefore, we should listen to him.

And just what is it that he has come to say? “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God *loves* the world. So while the means of God's grace is particular to Jesus Christ the effect of God's grace is universal: *everyone* who believes!

It is the same love that appeared to Israel in the desert in the form of a bronze serpent. You can read part of the story. All that wandering around in the desert had made the Israelites go a little crazy and they turned against God and against Moses. Their poisonous words became poisonous snakes that bit them and many died. But the Lord instructed Moses: “Make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” And that's what happened.

Obituary

Whenever a serpent bit someone that person would look at the serpent that Moses lifted up on the pole and live. The thing that was the enemy has become the remedy. Most of us are afraid of snakes - I know Ronnie is, but then he had good reason for in Sierra Leone there are many poisonous snakes - but perhaps we ought to think of the bible reading as food for thought.

You see that's what happens on the cross. We've been bit by the power of sin but, says Jesus, "just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." The thing that was the enemy, sin and death, becomes the remedy, Christ crucified for the sin of the world. And now anyone that looks at him lifted up on the cross, seated on his heavenly throne, will live. That's the *power* and the *wisdom* of God!

That's the truth of the gospel. That truth is not determined by popular opinion and it is not up for a vote. Whether you're in the here and now or first century Palestine, the Truth that all other truths are talking about is the heavenly truth of God's saving love poured out on earth in our Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That's the truth that Christians all over the world confess in every liturgy and in every life that points to the cross. And it's the most important truth in the world: that God loves the world so much that he sent his only Son to save the world from itself and everyone—anyone at all—who simply trusts him will be saved.

Do we really believe this? Are we passing on the faith that we have received, to our children and to others, like it's the most important thing in the world? Do we give financially like we believe that the mission of the church matters? Jesus Christ has come from heaven to earth to make the love of God known to all. O that he might be lifted up in our church so that others might see and believe and enter into the life of God.

So as we remember Holy Cross Day perhaps you will say with me **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

Recommended readings:

Numbers 21:4b-9;

Psalm 98:1-6;

1 Corinthians 1:18-24;

John 3:13-17

Tim Cripps



Mark Rees
1942 – 2023

Mark (nee Brenda) Rees, was born in Tunbridge Wells in December 1942, the sole survivor of premature twins. A sister was born in 1946. Although Brenda was a tomboy during childhood, it was not considered a problem until early puberty when, unlike her peers, she refused to adopt feminine dress and behaviour. Unlike her fellow pupils, rather than wear the school summer uniform of pastel dresses, she preferred to swelter in the school winter uniform of shirt, tie, skirt and blazer because that was less feminine than a frock. By now she regarded herself as cursed by her female body. Indeed her fervent prayer was that she would change sex. In spite of her increasing unhappiness and even a short, voluntary stay in a psychiatric hospital when she was 17, she continued to believe that God would help her.

The story of Mark's dawning realisation of his masculine identity, and the struggle to express that, is told through his autobiography, "Dear Sir or Madam" (Cassell, March 1996; ISBN: 0304333948). The struggle was all the more as he had been born at a time when roles were assigned very rigidly by gender, and employment considered suitable for women strictly defined.

Brenda became a WRNS in 1963 while attempting to live as a woman, but the ongoing stress of her situation led to a medical discharge. It was only in 1969 that she discovered that she was not unique, when The Times reported the proceedings of an International Symposium on Gender Identity. It described the condition of transsexualism and its successful treatment through gender reassignment therapy. At last, there was an explanation for her years of turmoil. The article gave her people to contact in order to find support, counselling, a psychiatrist specialising in the field and ultimately a surgeon. This enabled the hormone treatment

and surgery to allow Mark to live as a man from 1971.

Studying at an Anglican college in Canterbury and with Canterbury Cathedral as his local church where he was both a guide and a server, Mark felt that maybe he was being nudged towards ordination. He realised that with a baptismal certificate in the name of Brenda, there could be problems so he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. Coggan replied sensitively and courteously but had to inform Mark that because he was still legally a woman and at that time the Church of England did not ordain women, Mark could not be considered for the priesthood.

This rejection prompted Mark to begin his determined fight for legal recognition in 1972. The fight took him through layers of legal process all the way to the European Court of Human Rights – requiring immense courage in his day. The court hearings spelled the end for any vestige of privacy. Mark experienced considerable media attention and some of the consequences of his notoriety were unpleasant.

Mark lost this single-handed battle for legal recognition at the European Court in Strasbourg in 1986, yet his apparently fruitless fight had not gone unnoticed and sowed the seeds for other important cases to come. He was contacted by the well-known Barrister and Liberal Democrat MP, Alex (now Lord) Carlile QC – a man more recently famous for his defence of Royal Butler Paul Burrell. With the experienced Parliamentarian's encouragement and support Mark organised a meeting for other concerned trans people at the House of Commons in 1992. The afternoon ended with the foundation of the trans rights campaign, "Press for Change".

From 1989 until 2001 Mark travelled the length of the UK speaking at local, regional and national conferences. During this period and in spite of being publicly known as a trans man, Mark was elected by the people of Rusthall to serve as a Member of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council from 1994-98. Some unwelcome publicity followed this but he was treated with friendliness and respect by both his fellow councillors and constituents. Their concern was that he fulfilled his role. His gender status was not their business. Mark found this attitude very helpful. Although it had initially been a shock to be "outed" by Strasbourg, Mark said that he realised that ultimately it had been a blessing, because it enabled him to undertake such tasks without fear of being exposed. It was no longer news.

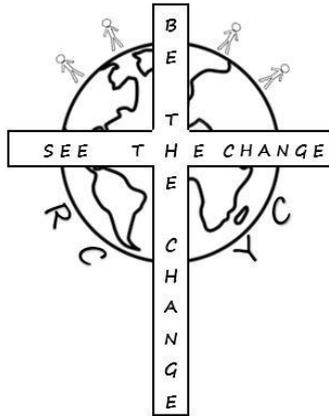
Considering the immense energy and bravery required to take on such impossible-seeming odds in his day, Mark Rees always remained a quiet and unassuming character, whose enduring ambition was to build bridges and pursue reconciliation with the very people who prevented him from achieving his vocation. Following the passage of the Gender Recognition Act, Mark organised a Christian service of thanksgiving and reconciliation held in St Anne's Church, Soho, in 2005 – at a time when many trans people felt only anger and pain at the way they had been maligned and mistreated by others claiming to be Christian. He said, "I knew that all the work the service had involved was rewarded when one of the members of the congregation wrote that she had never believed that she could have felt so accepted". Another attendee said that, "the church was full of love." Although no longer actively involved with Press for Change, Mark continued to "politely batter the church". In July 2004, in a letter published by the Church Times, Mark roundly chastised some of the bishops who had opposed the Gender Recognition Bill in the House of Lords – prompting important debate within the Church and further invitations to write for reputable Christian publications.

Given his track record it was ironic that Mark did not immediately feel able to use the Gender Recognition Act to re-register as male, as others can now do. Having reached sixty before the Act was passed, Mark was granted a state pension as a woman. Were he to re-register and become legally male before his sixty-fifth birthday that pension would be stopped. It's a cruel anomaly which the Government refused point blank to address during the passage of the Act. For Mark it was especially poignant, as the Act represented the conclusion to processes which he himself had set in motion with his own pioneering challenge. Effective use of the law by trans people has been crucially important because it emerged as the only setting in which the issues they faced could be examined logically, factually and without hysteria. Yet before people would begin to use the law it needed someone to show the way. Mark epitomised that most important virtue for all people living on the wrong side of society's mindless prejudice — an ability to be calm and to retain one's dignity. People are assured of recognition when they shout a lot and make a fuss. Mark Rees showed that there is another way too. In that way he deserves a leading place in trans campaigning history.

Deborah Bruce

With acknowledgement to Christine Burns MBE Trans Rights Campaigner Manchester, UK

St Paul's Youth Council



RUSTHALL CHURCH YOUTH COUNCIL



The Youth Council is becoming ever more ambitious and exciting! We enjoyed a great swim, burger and sausage afternoon before discussing our Autumn programme.

It is wonderful to see new friendships, confidence and interests blossom.

Saturday 2nd September

Car wash at The Parish Church also raising money for the bees.

Sunday 10th September We will be serving bacon sandwiches, tea and coffee before the joint service to be held at the Church Centre. Please don't eat breakfast before church that day!

Our next meeting is **Thursday September 7th at 6pm** in The Lodge behind the Parish Church. Everyone aged between 11 and 17 is very welcome. Please don't be shy for you will receive a very warm welcome. We look forward to welcoming our local archaeologist Nigel, who is going to explain why he thinks the original Pantiles may have come from The Dell opposite the church.

Thursday October 5th will see us cooking healthily!

Future meetings **Thursday 2nd of November and December 7th** will hopefully include a discussion with Ranger Dan and also how we can look after our money!

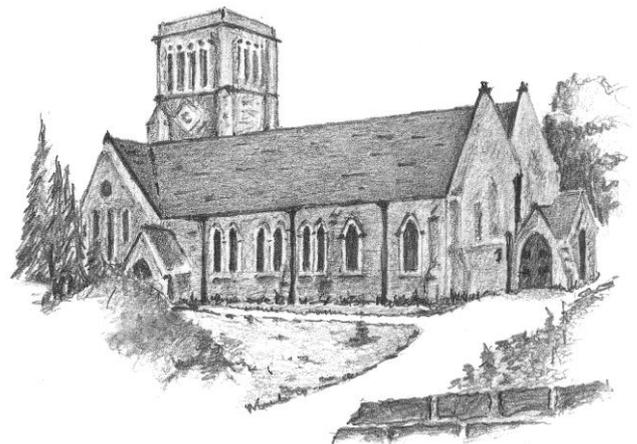
We are also building links with Mt Ephraim House Care Home and will be visiting to entertain and chat. In the background continues our determination to fight for a road crossing.

If you or your child is interested in joining The Youth Council either just turn up to one of our events or meetings (First Thursday of every month) or if you would like more information e-mail stpauls.cyc@gmail.com. You will be sure of a very warm welcome.

Angela Culley

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St Paul's Parish Fellowship

Great Comp

On 13 July a group of over twenty members gathered at the entrance to Great Comp well before 11 o'clock for our much-anticipated visit to the gardens. The weather was kind to us and we managed to dodge the odd sharp shower. The garden was looking at its best with many trees and shrubs in flower. There was plenty of time for a leisurely cup of coffee and a cake before our tour of the garden with Kate, one of the full-time gardeners. She told us something of the history of the house and garden. We learnt, among other things, that in 1903 a lady called Frances Heron-Maxwell and her husband Patrick arrived at Great Comp. She was a formidable female, set to revolutionise women's hockey and cricket, laying out a pitch at Great Comp garden, naming it her Oval. Not many people know that the birthplace of women's cricket is so close to home!

Strolling round the garden, relaxing on one of the many benches or enjoying a leisurely lunch was pleasurable and everyone seemed to be having a good time.

Church visit to King Charles the Martyr

On 10 August a rather smaller group gathered at King Charles the Martyr for our visit to this well-known church, in fact the oldest Anglican place of worship in the town. Philip Whitbourne with his long association and great knowledge of King Charles, gave us an introductory talk. He drew attention to some of the architectural features and other points of interest which we were able to look at in more detail after the talk.

Later we gathered in the choir pews for Compline, which made a fitting end to the day. We thank both Philip Whitbourne and Paul Clark for their generosity and their welcome.

Future dates

Thursday, 14 September at 3pm **Melanie Gibson-Barton – Three women, one man – glamour, wealth and heartbreak**

Thursday, 12 October at 3pm **Gilly Halcrow – Shopping through the ages**

Everyone is most welcome to attend, charges for members £1 and for non-members £2



Animals of the Bible

Final Part 7

The animals which the Israelites regarded as 'clean' and therefore suitable for eating were those that chewed the cud and had cloven hoofs – cattle, sheep, goats, wild deer and antelopes. Venison is the name we give to meat from the deer and we are told that Isaac asked Esau to go and get him some venison.

As far as we can find out there were three types of deer and two types of antelopes in Bible times. Palestine once had the three types of deer which are found in our country the red deer, the roe deer and the fallow deer. The Hebrew words translated as hart and hind could refer to any of these types. One desert antelope – the Arabian Oryx – could well have been the creature referred to in the Old Testament as the 'wild bull'.



When the Hebrews set out on their Exodus, wild game animals were much more common in Palestine than they are today. The hunters would only have had very simple weapons, but they probably killed one of them from time to time to make a welcome addition to their desert rations.

The strict food laws of the Hebrews meant that some wild animals which have been hunted in many countries have been left alone in Palestine so that is perhaps why some have survived until today. This includes the wild boar which is the largest animal in Israel. It does have cloven hoofs, but it does not chew the cud. Since it could not be eaten the hunters would only go after it if it did serious damage to their crops and orchards. In the Psalms the wild boar is described as the beast that lives in the reeds and it is true that most pigs enjoy a good wallow.

Moses described the hare as an animal which chewed the cud, but did not have a cloven hoof. We probably would not describe either a hare or a rabbit as animal which chews the cud. Chewing the cud is simply an animal's way of dealing with indigestible food. In the case of hares and rabbits they both share the habit of eating their droppings so food passes through their body twice and it is on the time that most of the digestion is done. A name often given to the hare in the Bible was the cony.

Trying to identify the smaller animals referred to in the Bible with those whom we know today is more difficult. Today in Palestine you will find many smaller types of rodents, but the word mouse only appears in just two Bible passages. The worst pests in the cornfields of Palestine today are voles.

There are many types of birds found in Palestine, so perhaps it is not surprising that the Hebrews only gave names to just a few of the birds which were either important for food or were enemies of their crops or animals. Like the other animals birds were divided into clean or unclean. The unclean birds which could not be eaten were those who lived on flesh and carrion.

Wildfowl were not common in the parts of Palestine occupied by the Hebrews. The only poultry clearly mentioned in the Bible is our barnyard fowl. In those days chicken were kept for both egg-laying and for eating, but they also served another useful purpose for they tended to wake everyone up around dawn. I suppose the one story we all remember about the cock is about Peter when Jesus said before the cock crows you will have denied me three times.



In the Spring quails would have travelled through Palestine and we are told that the children of Israel had so many of them that they got tired of eating them. The rock partridge lives in the hilly country of Judea and Galilee. The turtle dove was another bird which would have travelled through Palestine twice a year. Jeremiah knew all about bird migration when he tell us – the stork in heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle dove, the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming. Perhaps we don't think of these early

Biblical people as being interested in such things, but we know from the writer of Proverbs that he admitted there were certain actions of wild animals that were more than he could understand and one was – the way of an eagle in the air.

On the whole the dove and the pigeon were almost interchangeable – the pigeon usually being the larger of the two. They had their place in that they were used as sacrifices by the poorer people. Ducks or geese are not mentioned in the Bible, but it is possible that the ‘fatted fowls’ that Solomon ate could well have actually been geese.

It is not possible to be sure that the names given to animals in the Bible are the animals we know by that name today. When the Bible was first translated into English, travel was not worldwide and the translators would have given creatures mentioned in the older texts the name of an animal with which they were familiar and apparently had the same sorts of habits. However don't let us forget that the natural world had its part to play in the Bible.

Daphne Pilcher

Len Evans 100th Birthday

Many long standing members of the congregations in both our Churches will remember Len Evans, a founder member of the Family Service and one who believed in unity between our two Churches. For many years he attended Family Service in the morning and Evensong at the Parish Church in the evening. On Tuesday 25th July he celebrated his 100th birthday.

He is very comfortable in a nursing home near to his daughter Margaret in Battle. Sadly his eyesight has gone and he can only partially hear with some help but he remains bright and alert but was pleased to hear all the news when Tim and Pat visited him. They conveyed greetings from the Parish on his marvellous achievement. He asked to be remembered to all who know him.





New ticket charging model

We are moving to a donations only model of sustaining our Cinema for Saturday evening films.

All regular Saturday evening tickets will be free, and we ask that a suggested donation of £5 is made for each seat reserved. If you can afford more, that would be appreciated. If you can't afford £5 then just give what you comfortably can.

We hope to receive enough to pay for the ongoing costs of licenses, media, hire fees etc. The Cinema will pay the card processing fee (25p on a £5 donation). If you can add Gift Aid please do.



Tár (2022) Cert 15

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 2nd Sept 2023
Director: Todd Field
Genre: Drama, Music
Runtime: 158 mins
Starring: Cate Blanchett, Noémie Merlant, Nina Hoss



Jean de Florette (1986) Cert PG

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 16th Sept 2023
Director: Claude Berri
Genre: Comedy, Drama
Runtime: 120 mins
Starring: Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Daniel Auteuil



Alleluia (2022) Cert 12A

Doors open: 6.30pm Saturday 30th Sept 2023
Director: Richard Eyre
Genre: Drama
Runtime: 99 mins
Starring: Jesse Akele, Louis Ashbourne Serkis, Lorraine Ashbourne

Clues Across

1. Small farm in the Scottish highlands
2. A Shanty
4. Building used for storing grain or fodder
5. Medieval Inns
7. Small building used for Christian worship
9. Mexican type of beach hut
12. Where you might stay on holiday
13. Where a train stops
14. People are judged here
17. Where horses might be shod
18. Where you might find a relic of a saint
20. Clerks work here
21. Mountain side building used by climbers
22. Tall square building at the end of a church
23. Minister's house in Scotland

Clues Down

1. Building for Christian worship
2. Keep your garden tools here
3. Type of house in continental Europe
5. Eskimo's summer home
6. Where you might have our hair done
8. Home for pigeons
9. Medieval fortified home
10. Home on one level
11. Place where goods are bought and sold
12. Family houses
13. Place for keeping things
15. Agricultural buildings
16. In the Inns of Court there is an inner and outer one
17. Strongholds
19. A structure running into the sea

This Wordsearch has words connected with the Bible and the Church. The words are written forward, backward, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. At the end you will be left with 6 unused letters which will give you the name of something you can see in church.

H	T	N	H	L	E	S	E	C	O	I	D
C	A	A	O	E	I	T	I	T	N	O	F
O	O	G	H	C	A	E	M	A	D	A	P
N	T	T	G	G	A	T	V	Z	E	N	L
E	I	S	H	A	A	E	A	S	I	H	S
T	A	C	E	E	I	C	D	E	A	O	Y
A	Y	S	R	V	C	E	M	L	V	J	N
L	N	T	T	H	R	U	T	C	O	O	O
E	E	A	A	E	E	A	A	S	U	E	D
R	P	E	B	D	R	N	H	B	U	L	L
P	U	O	E	L	O	U	R	I	O	H	C
S	U	T	C	N	A	S	E	M	A	J	P

ADAM	ALBAN
ALTAR	BULL
CANON	CHOIR
COPE	DEACON
DIOCESE	DOVE
EASTER	ENOCH
FONT	HAGGAI
HARVEST	JAMES
JOB	JOEL
JOHN	JOSHUA
LYCHGATE	NAVE
NOAH	PRELATE
REDSEA	RETREAT
SANCTUS	SYNOD
TEDEUM	TITHE
VEIL	ZACCHAEUS
ZION	

Name the Wild Flowers

They are all well known and can usually be seen mostly in Spring and Summer. You need to put a vowel in the circles and a consonant in the squares.

1. M
2. A
3. U
4. P
5. T
6. L
7. L
8. X
9. H
10. L

A Story of a Donkey, a Cockerel and a Lamp

A Jewish Rabbi was making a journey to an unknown country and he took with him a donkey, a cockerel and a lamp. Because he was a Jew he decided not to stay at any of the inns in the village, but to find a spot to sleep in the nearby forest.

He lit his lamp as it got dark so that he could study his holy books before going to sleep, but suddenly the wind got up and knocked over the lamp and broke it. Oh well, said the Rabbi, it is probably time to go to sleep. God knows about the broken lamp. It was he who sent the wind.

During the night along came some wild animals and they frightened the cockerel so that he fled into the depth of the forest. As the night progressed some thieves, who were making their way through the forest, spotted the donkey and decided this was just what they needed and took him. When the Rabbi woke up he found the cockerel and the donkey were both missing. Oh well, he told himself, God knows that they are missing. Whatever happens, He is in control.

So the Rabbi gathered up what remained of his property and went back towards the village where he had refused to stay the night before. On his arrival he found that enemy soldiers had invaded it during the night and killed all the inhabitants. He also learnt that the enemy soldiers had travelled through the same part of the forest where he had chosen to stay the night.

If his lamp had not been broken, he would have kept it alight all night and the enemy soldiers would have found him and killed him. If the cockerel had not been chased away it would certainly have crowed and given him

away, and very certainly the donkey might have brayed. The Rabbi very quickly said a prayer to God as he reminded himself that whatever happens God is behind it and in the end it is always for our good. Perhaps a thought for us to remember when things are not going the way we want them to.

Answers

Ten birds in the grid reading from left to right:

Snipe Quail Eagle Heron Hobby Swift Raven Goose Twite

A Crossword for you to try

Across

1 Croft 2 Shack 4 Silo 5 Taverns 7 Chapel 9 Cabana 12 Hotels
 13 Station 14 Courts 17 Forge 18 Shrine 20 Offices 21 Huts 22 Tower
 23 Manse

Down

1 Church 2 Shed 3 Villa 5 Tupek 6 Salon 8 Lofts 9 Castle
 10 Flats 11 Shop 13 Store 15 Farms 16 Temple 17 Forts 19 Pier

Wordsearch

The remaining 6 letters give you Pulpit

Wildflowers

1 Primrose 2 Daisy 3 Bluebell 4 Poppy 5 Buttercup 6 Dandelion
 7 Cowslip 8 Foxglove 9 Thistle 10 Violet

The things children say:-

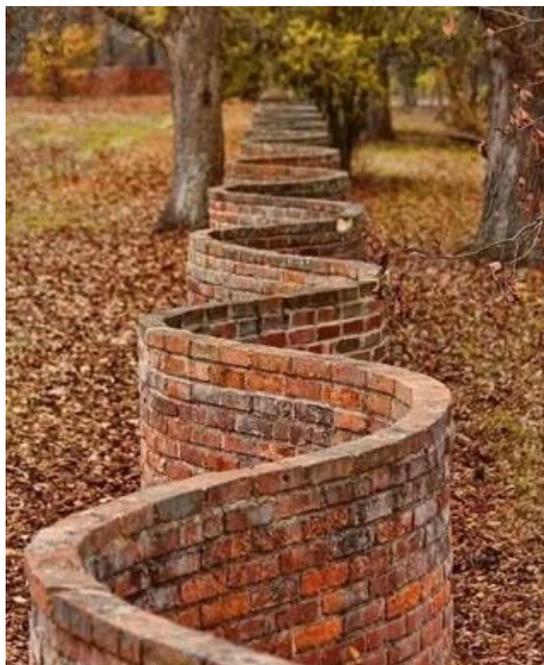
We had a mischievous boy who found it easy to take advantage of the teacher's absence. So, instead of making him come with me to answer the phone, I thought it a good idea to make him a "phone monitor", and told him what to say and to be polite.

So when it rang, off he went like greased lightening, picked up the phone and said "

"oo d'ya want, she ain't 'ere".

Oh well, think again Mrs B.

Shirley Barter



Wavy Walls

In England, you can occasionally see "wavy" brick walls. Surprisingly the design uses fewer bricks than a straight wall. A straight wall that is just one brick thick is not sturdy enough to stand alone and can be easily toppled, so they generally have a thickness of at least two or more layers of bricks, and may also be reinforced at regular intervals with vertical posts serving as buttresses. However, a wavy "one-brick" wall stands just fine on its own due to the arch support provided by its shape, which combines both wall and buttress. Such a structure is sometimes called a "crinkle crinkle wall" - the Old English version of "zig zag."

Sadly walls are usually used to mark boundaries and boundary lines are straight, not wibbly wobbly. This is a shame, because the wavy wall is very beautiful and offers lots of sheltered spots for plants, or places to sit and read.

Poems for September

For many this will be the start of a new academic year: at nursery, school, university, or job. At this exciting and challenging time, here are poems of love and resilience.

Susan Barber

Rise

Rise, child,
and take your place in these stars,
they made themselves bold for your eyes.
You may not know your future, Child,
but rise.

All awaits you here,
broken into the fragments of light
that glitter so softly
in the darkened skies,
you were born,
and so may rise.

The air you breathe
was exhaled by Achilles
so long ago
that we have fixed the flaws
that failed him.

Now you are burdened
with nothing more
than the endless possibility
of this soaring sky
that stretches out so far
we call it infinite.

Within it you may make your home
like a God, or an eagle
that never dies.
Look to the stars,
Child, rise.

Jay Hulme



My Brilliant Image

One day the sun admitted
I am just a shadow.
I wish I could show you
The infinite incandescence
That has cast my brilliant image!

I wish I could show you,
When you are lonely or in darkness,
The Astonishing Light
Of your own Being!

Hafiz



Still Here

I been scarred and battered.
My hopes the wind done scattered.
Snow has friz me,
Sun has baked me,

Looks like between 'em they done
Tried to make me

Stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin'-
But I don't care!
I'm still here!

Langston Hughes

*"If one has courage,
nothing can dim
the light
that shines from within" – Maya Angelou*



COMMUNITY LARDER

What is it?

A community larder receives surplus short date food from supermarkets to offer to people in our community.

When and where is it?

Our community larder will be in the St Paul's Church Centre every Friday between 12:30pm and 2:00pm

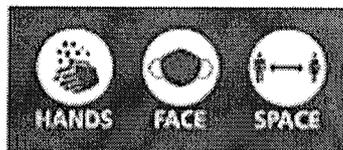
Who can use it?

Anyone can come and visit the community larder. There are no restrictions, no booking necessary, just turn up with a carrier bag to fill.

How much does it cost?

We suggest a small cash donation of £2, or as much as you can afford. For this, you can take away a bag full of quality food.

Please help us all stay safe by wearing a face mask, respecting social distancing and using the hand sanitiser provided.



WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU!

**For more information, please email contact@rusthallvillage.org
or telephone 07805 475397**

Malawi

Over the last few years, members of Family Service, as well as other friends, have helped us to support a village in Malawi which we visited in 2019 and the home of a friend, Gilbert, who we have known from our time living in Malawi.

One project we initiated was to help the village to plant fruit trees. The fruit trees were given to 47 households benefitting at least 235 people (considering a family size of 5). The fruit trees included grafted mangoes, lemons, avocado pear, oranges and guavas. The planted seedlings were duly monitored by the community leaders to check on management and survival. After three years, beneficiaries started getting fruits from the planted trees. Then in March 2023 the community was hit by the devastating effects of tropical cyclone Freddy. As a result of this storm many of the fruit trees were washed away, but about 65% planted as a result of the project have apparently survived although some families have lost all their trees.

Another project involved helping families who could not send their children to school because they could not afford the cost of school uniforms (compulsory for attendance and costing about £3 to £5 each). School uniforms were bought for 59 pupils. Girls got dresses while boys were provided with pairs of shorts and shirts. As a result of this support school attendance improved and we are told cases of absenteeism and drop outs significantly reduced. We also provided some money to enable the school to buy books, but some of these were damaged in the storm which also damaged the classroom school block that was being used by learners from infant classes. As a result of this all infant classes are being conducted outside under a tree, which will be cold as the weather gets colder and wetter in October.

Many of the houses in the village were destroyed by the storm, including our friend Gilbert's. It seemed pointless to help rebuild on the flood plain (this was the second time his family had lost their house to floods) so with the help of our family and many friends and members of Family Service, we have enabled Gilbert and his family to buy a house in a higher area and the family moved into the house on 15th June 2023. Friends visiting Malawi also took out a few small items such as reading glasses, data cables, a memory stick and a wristwatch, not much but important to those who lost everything in the storm.

The villagers have been very grateful for all the support and Gilbert has messaged us to say "this would not have been possible if it weren't for your family and friends and members of Rusthall

Church. We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and please extend our appreciation and sincere thanks to them all."

Thank you very much for your support to this community over the years - a small drop considering the needs worldwide, but it makes a huge difference to some lovely people. We do have a small sum of the money donated left and are planning to use it to enable more families to buy school uniforms and to replace some of the books lost by the school. We will also look into a cost-effective way of sending 2nd hand warm clothes.

Liz and Helen

PS Some further news arrived from Malawi saying "One of the learners from the group of 52 learners you have been supporting with primary school fees and school uniforms, Henderson Levison, has emerged as the best performing among all the pupils in Malawi who sat for the 2023 primary school leaving certificate exams and has been selected to Dedza Govt secondary school, a school for very bright students. In total 8 pupils have been selected to different national secondary schools"



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Easy Payment Terms

Income from magazine sales is important to us at St Paul's. If everyone paid the £1 cover charge we would raise over £1500 a year, which would not only cover the cost of producing the magazine but also contribute to other costs such as leasing the photocopier.

If you often find yourself fumbling for the right change, perhaps you might like to pay in advance for a year's "subscription", 10 issues for the sum of £10, (you might even feel tempted to be more generous!)

Your contributions are much appreciated.

Please make cheques payable to St Paul's Church, Rusthall and send them to the Parish Office

General Information

Organisations

Vicar

Rev Ronnie Williams, 521357
The Vicarage, Bretland Road, Rusthall

Reader

Miss Daphne Pilcher 521691

Churchwardens

Mr Rod Garcia-Fermer
Mr Chris Reece

Please contact via email to

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Mr Graeme Anderson 532922
Mrs Margaret Brown 680455
Mr Chris Dobson 539539

Parochial Church Council Secretary

Mrs Mione Palmer 667951

Treasurer and Planned Giving

Mrs Pat Cripps 521447

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Miss Daphne Pilcher 521691

DBS Officer

Clive Brown
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Vivienne Sharp 543263

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Miss Fiona Johnson 07540 273303

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Mrs Pat Stevens 529187

St Paul's Parish Fellowship

Mrs Zillah Witt (Chair) 523028

Mrs Vreni Gould (Secretary) 522185

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Gemma Bradley 07377 061398

Brownie Guiders

Mrs Wendy Anderson (Thurs) 532922

Ms Tina Francis (Mon) 545877

Rainbows

Mrs Mary Saunders 319872

Email – saundii@aol.com

Mothers and Toddlers

Mrs Annie Softley 548366

Rusthall Lunch Club

Mrs Ros Rodwell 01892 618538

Rusthall Community & Youth Project

Barry Edwards 680296

Rusthall Village Association

Alex Britcher 07967 011467

Rusthall Parish Council

Council Clerk 07805 475397

Rusthall Bonfire and Fete Committee

Annie Softley 548366

Friends of TW and Rusthall Common

Clive Evans 534040

Churchyards

Enquiries to the Parish Office

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

All worshippers who are baptised members of the Church of England, and aged over 16, should have their names entered on the Electoral Roll. This entitles them to attend and vote at the Annual Parochial Meeting. Forms for enrolment will be found in the Parish Church or the Parish Office and should be sent to the Vicar.



The Parish Office

Parish Administrator - Mrs Ginette di Palma

St Paul's Parish Office, Church Centre, Rusthall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8RE

Telephone (01892) 521447

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The Office is open on weekday mornings (except Tuesdays) between 10 am and 1 pm.