



St Mary's Church Wargrave
With Knowl Hill

Our vision is to be a church
at the heart of our community

Parish Magazine

June 2021



Students from the Discipleship Training School
Learn about them in our update from Australia on page 20



St Peter's Church Knowl Hill
With St Paul's Warren Row

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75p

Who's Who: Parish Directory

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Vicar | The Revd. John Cook | johnrmcook@btconnect.com | 0118 940 2202 |
| Curates | The Revd. Hugh Barne | hughbarne@googlemail.com | 07515 488542 |
| | The Revd. Steve Turville | Stephen.turville@ntlworld.com | 0118 901 6720 |
| Lay Minister | Andy Ferguson | andyferguson1@btinternet.com | 0118 940 2925 |
| PCC Secretary | Sheila Williams | sheilamarywilliams1952@gmail.com | 0118 940 3587 |
| PCC Treasurer | Jane Wills | paulandjanewills@btinternet.com | 0118 940 2030 |

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Parish Office

| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| Address | St. Mary's Church, Station Road, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8EU | | |
| Administration | Lucy Bowley | lucy@wargravechurch.org.uk | 0118 940 2300 |
| St Mary's Wargrave Churchwardens | Ian Matthews | matthic@talk21.com | 0118 940 2049 |
| | Peter Mayes | petermayes51@gmail.com | 0118 940 2497 |
| Director of Music | Peter Dart | peter@familydart.com | 0118 940 1068 |
| St Peter's Knowl Hill Churchwarden | Sandra Baker | sbakerdalc@hotmail.co.uk | 01628 822402 |

Parish Registers

Funerals & Cremations at St Mary's

| | |
|------------|--|
| 23rd April | Barbara Berry, aged 93, Cremation at Reading Crematorium |
| 28th April | Sheen Vercoe, aged 82, Cremation at Reading Crematorium |

The Church's Calendar



From Sunday 6th June until 7th November the church officially enters a period of 'Ordinary Time' when the only special days are Saints Days.

The seasonal colour for Ordinary Time is green - a reminder of creation.

Articles of up to 400 words are most welcome for publication in this Magazine and should be sent to the Editor: bobausten@wargravechurch.org.uk

The decision to publish material is at the Editor's discretion.

Views expressed in articles included in the Magazine are not necessarily shared by the Editor.

The Parish Magazine cannot accept responsibility for any products or services advertised in this Magazine.

Restarting

As lockdown measures are eased we are able to meet face to face. June sees the restarting of:

The Welcome Café
Coffee after the 10.30am Service
Butterflies
Baptisms
Weddings

And the continuation of the trial pattern of Sunday Services.

Sunday Services

St Mary's Wargrave

8.00am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language
9.15am Family Service: a short informal service with children's activities

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month:

10.30am Holy Communion in modern language with music

2nd and 4th Sundays of the month:

10.30am Morning Worship in modern language with music

Currently music inside the church is limited to a small group of singers with the congregation humming or saying words... hopefully this restriction will be removed at the end of June. In the meantime, weather permitting, we are singing our final hymn on Mill Green.

It is necessary to reserve a place for services in Wargrave which can be done via the church website www.wargravechurch.org.uk or via the church office if you don't have a computer or tablet... telephone 0118 940 2300.

St Peter's Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month
10.30am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of the month
10.30am Village Praise

St Paul's Warren Row

Services will not resume before July because of the amount of space needed to observe social distancing.

Online

The 10.30am service from Wargrave is available to watch online from late afternoon:
YouTube: St Mary's Wargrave

Coffee on Sunday Morning

Restarts after the 10.30am service on 6th June.

Open Church

St Mary's Church is open for prayer on Wednesdays between 10.00am and 4.00pm.

Monthly Prayer Meeting

Via Zoom at 8pm on Thursday 3rd June. Contact Steve Turville for the link: stephen.turville@ntlworld.com

Welcome Café Every Tuesday from 1st June from 2pm-4pm

The Welcome Café is a place to meet and chat over a tea or coffee and cake and biscuits. Because of the uncertain effects of new variants, we will still be "cautious and careful". People will be seated at tables of 6 and masks will still be required when not seated. Refreshments will be served by volunteers who will all wear masks and have been vaccinated. It will seem rather strange at first, and we understand that some people won't be ready for this yet. If you want to come, it would be ideal if you could make your own way there, but if you need a lift or want more information, please contact the Rev Steve on 0118 9016720 and we will do all we can to help and make you welcome.

Butterflies by Camilla Cook 2nd, 16th and 30th June at 9.30am in St Mary's Church Centre



Baby introductions

After a 15 month leave of absence our mums and toddlers' group, Butterflies, has started up again. When the decision was made to re-open we weren't sure what the advice/regulations would be so decided to open slowly with mums and small babies (under a year old). Thanks to Christine Walker the Church Centre is beautifully clean and sanitised, providing a safe environment for us all.



So far, we have had two sessions, with a further three planned for June. It has been a joy to see mothers returning with their little ones and like many of us, gasping for conversation, friendship and an opportunity to leave the house. On both occasions the atmosphere has been very peaceful and calm – quite different from the buzz that comes with lively toddlers! I'm not sure who is benefitting most at the moment, mums or the Butterflies team? Judging by the smiles on the helpers' faces when allowed a cuddle with the babies I think it might be them! See this photo of a very happy Cynthia Coombes...!

For the mothers, Butterflies is the first group that has started up locally and they seem to be grateful to be there. If you know of anyone who has had a baby in the past year who might enjoy company with other new mums and /or would benefit from a bit of Butterflies chat and TLC then do let them know that we are up and running.

**The Parish Office will be closed w/c 7th June, otherwise it is open
Tuesday and Wednesday 10.00am - 1.00pm. Answerphone at other times**

5th-12th June: News from Yeldall Manor



The Yeldall Stride for Recovery challenge this year runs from 5th to 12th June. Once again we are holding a virtual event, which means that people can take place wherever they are (we already have Jonathan signed up to join us from Bolivia!)

You can walk, run or cycle a distance of your choice, either in one go, or over the course of the week. You can take part on your own, with family, or as part of a virtual team.

You can be traditional, or adventurous. We have people canoeing and walking three-legged. Last year we had people horse-riding and on a tandem. People also took part in their homes.

All monies raised in sponsorship will go towards the Good Samaritan Fund, which supports men who cannot otherwise afford to access help for their addiction problems.

Please think about joining us. You can find information at www.rideforrecovery.co.uk or contact Sue on 0118 940 4411 / suehedger@yeldall.org.uk.

From 6th June: New 9.15am Family Service

Have you heard about our new Family Service?

This is a new venture, running throughout May and June this year. As we considered the re-booting of Sunday Club and what that would look like (socially distanced, children sitting at chairs and tables apart from one another) the restrictions seemed to take away from how we like to run children's groups. A suggestion was made to trial a 30 minute service specifically geared towards young families: an opportunity for families to meet to worship and learn about Jesus together and to reconnect in a relaxed environment after many months of not being in church.

We've started with a dive into some of the parables that Jesus told, learning what the Kingdom of God is like and about God's amazing grace. It's been wonderful to see the children so engaged in the talks as well as leading the singing (ably encouraged by Lis Hobden), reading the Bible, leading the prayers and helping with the AV. The easing of Covid restrictions has included children being able to sing in church and an increased number being involved in the singing group.

A highlight for many has been families gathering in the churchyard after the service to sing God's praises – something that many of us have missed over the past 15 months!

We'd love you to join us, especially if you have young children. And if you don't have a young family please do pray for us: pray that this service would be encouraging for parents and children in their walk with Jesus.

Our New Curate

Dear Wargrave

We are so delighted to be coming to Wargrave with Knowl Hill this summer.

Having spent three years living at a theological college in North London, we'll be bringing our little family of three to Wargrave - swapping the big city smog for the fresh air of village life. We've heard such wonderful things about the community, and all the events and activities that go on (in normal times!). We're very excited to get stuck in.

Richard will be taking up a position as curate at St Mary's under John Cook and is really looking forward to encouraging and learning from everyone there. In his spare time he enjoys reading science fiction novels and playing frisbee. Mélanie works part-time as a project manager for an Oxford-based charity, and enjoys swimming and reading French books with a cup of coffee. She also looks after our ten-month-old daughter Alice. Alice enjoys turning the pages of books, waving sticks around, and being thrown in the air by her parents.

We're really looking forward to settling into the community and getting to know everybody. Here's hoping that by the time we join you, life will have returned to some semblance of normality. Legislation permitting, we'd love to welcome you into our home to get to know you. No more cups of tea standing two meters apart in the rain!

With excitement for the future.

Richard, Mélanie, and Alice Eves



A Bellringer writes...

“Look to” “Treble’s going” “She’s Gone” – these are familiar phrases for those of us who enjoy ringing church bells. It’s been quite a while now since I last heard these words called out, signalling the start of ringing on a Sunday morning. Visiting the bell tower for the first time in over a year last week, it was lovely to climb the spiral staircase, with its whitewashed stone walls, up to the cozy, carpeted room where we ring. You’ll only hear one or two bells ringing on Sundays at the moment – as ringing tentatively starts up once again. Although for the Duke of Edinburgh’s funeral you may have heard St Mary’s bells being rung half muffled – that can be such a sorrowful sound.

So why would someone choose to become a bellringer – how does it happen? Well my ringing journey began in the 1980’s down the road at St Nicholas, Hurst. A school music teacher put out a plea for bellringers and a group of us decided to give it a go. Dave and Vinni Sullivan taught us to ring - in some cases family members were already ringers, and for others once we started, the rest of the family decided to learn as well.

What’s ringing like then – what does it involve? I’d say it’s a combination of physical stretching, being able to listen and watch carefully and to give a fair amount of concentration, particularly at first. Bell ropes have a fluffy, colourful striped part – the “sally” and ringing involves some co-ordination as you pull down with both hands then transfer your hands to the “tail end”. It takes a bit of practice! And once you master the technique it opens up all sorts of ringing opportunities.

If you enjoy mathematical patterns and a bit of brain work, there’s plenty of complex methods available to ring to keep you on your toes. Or if like me, you love hearing the musical sounds of bells ringing evenly and in time, and enjoy the repetition of ringing in a simple pattern, it can be a wonderful and relaxing, almost meditative experience. There’s excitement thrown in as the bells need to be “rung up” and “rung down” at the start and end of each ringing session. Ringing a bell up can be hard work! Especially if it’s one of the bigger bells – the tenor can require two people. All excellent stuff for the arm muscles!

And sometimes, ringing can have wonderful... and quite unexpected consequences.... I’d go as far as to say it can even change lives. This bellringer, when she was in her teens used to sit at the back of St Nicholas Hurst in the breaks between ringing on Monday practice nights. And just behind the font was a little wooden bookcase with many a Christian book - it was the St Nicholas Church library. Books waiting to be borrowed by a curious bellringer, who knew nothing of real Christianity and a personal Saviour. So the ringer read about God’s Smuggler, Brother Andrew, Christians such as Haralan Popov who was tortured for his faith in Communist Eastern Europe, Jodi Earikson Tada and the Cross and the Switchblade. And began to think that there must be something in “this Christianity business”. It sounded very real and quite an adventure! I thought that perhaps this Christianity was just an American thing, as it didn’t seem to tally with what I knew. Although a ringer, I wasn’t from a churchgoing background and hadn’t been christened, baptised, or gone to Sunday School as a child. But the books got me thinking...it was the start of a journey that would eventually see me kneeling alone in my room, in floods of tears, crying out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation. I don’t remember exactly when that happened, or quite how old I was. I didn’t keep a record of the date. And as can be the way, there wasn’t a drastic or instant change in my life...

A Bellringer writes... (cont'd)

Instead, I began by approaching the big decisions differently – by praying hard about exams and my future study choices. And although I kept ringing until I went away to study, it took me a while before I began attending church on a regular basis. Eventually I joined a local Baptist Church – which is where, after also settling into a housegroup, I had a “full dunking” baptism in my mid 20’s.

And now, all these years later, I find myself at Wargrave St Marys – where, by happy co-incidence Dave and Vinni are also ringing. So I’ve begun to pick up once again where I left off. For those in the know, who speak the language of ringing, that’s a bit of Plain Hunt, and some Bob Minor – and plenty of call change ringing too. Only this time around – I come to the Church services as well.

Let’s end with a plea – as perhaps you’re also one of the many who learned to ring as a youngster and haven’t for whatever reason been able to keep up ringing since then. A lot of time may have passed. Yet it’s not too late! We have folks learning to ring at all ages – and really, if you’ve rung before, it does come back like riding a bike. Of course, new ringers are always welcome as well – perhaps you fancy having a go? Vinni is a great and very patient teacher. And there are plenty of opportunities to practice ringing at other local churches too. Yes, we’re waiting to hear what the guidelines permit – and looking forward to being able to get back together again.

So if you’ve not yet visited the tower, and explored what’s beyond the little door around the corner, do consider taking a peek, and perhaps joining us – you’ll be made most welcome.





Can You Help?

The Diocese of Oxford has produced a new publication to help promote recruitment for key parish officer roles

The roles of church warden, PCC secretary and treasurer are vital for the successful running of our churches and parishes and, following a year of unprecedented disruption there may be instances where one (or more) of these key officers is standing down. We are aware that there are, across the diocese, always several such roles that are vacant, particularly that of second churchwarden and realise that any vacancy places substantial additional pressure on others.

The diocese has produced an information leaflet detailing the roles and giving some sense of what they involve, whilst being aware that there will be some local differences in how they are fulfilled.

The leaflet can be downloaded from the diocesan website and can be read in conjunction with a longer leaflet written for churchwardens.

In Wargrave we need people to come forward to fill the role of Churchwarden. If you want to explore what is involved further, this information is invaluable. Having said that, every parish is different and at Wargrave many of the Churchwarden's responsibilities are delegated to leaders of the COGs (Cause of God), particularly in the areas of supporting, stewarding, gathering and celebrating.

If you are considering volunteering do not hesitate to talk with the Ministry Team or Vicar.



"In the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having the gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with the gifts of administration and those speaking in different kinds of tongues."

1 Corinthians 12:28-31

Giving by Sean Sutcliffe

As you may remember from previous articles I have written in the Parish Magazine, it is important that we think about how to ensure our parish has the funds it needs to continue the work it does and to do more in outreach and support across the parish. It is largely down to regular givers to the church to provide this financial security.

To support this, we have launched our use of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which has been set up and is administered by the Church of England on behalf of parishes. The PGS scheme makes it easier for individuals to give, saves parishes a huge amount of time in administration and since it is automated considerably speeds up payments of the tax benefit from the government.

At Wargrave and Knowl Hill we have been trialling this over the last year, and it is proving very easy to use, so are now rolling out to the next stage. This means asking givers – whether through bank standing orders, envelope giving or other means to transition across. For people who do not yet give regularly, now is a great time to start at a level that works for you – it is an important part of our contribution to church life. If you have already made the transition, thank you, no further action is required.

To join you just need to sign onto the Parish Giving Scheme and afterwards cancel any existing periodic payment instruction to fit in with the PGS start date. The easiest way to do this is to go onto the website www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/, follow 'Find your Parish' to get to Wargrave or Knowl Hill and fill in the straightforward on-line donation form from the parish page.

You may want to consider a couple of points:

- It is a good time to assess how much you give. If you are able to use this opportunity to increase the amount that would be great as we look to build the work of God in the parish, with many needs and opportunities right now;
- It is particularly helpful to plan for the future if gifts are increased annually in line with inflation, so this is an option you will be asked about including as you proceed.

The website includes full details of the scheme, frequently asked questions and the benefits, so feel free to look through those. Once you are enrolled with a login, it is also easy to go back in and adjust payment levels without having to contact your bank. If you are a non GiftAid giver then it still makes sense to join PGS to save administrative costs, just leave the 'eligible for GiftAid' box unticked when you get to it.

Alternatively if you have any further questions or need help in making this transition feel free to ask me. It would be helpful if you could let me know by email when you have signed onto PGS so we can track the transition.

Many thanks for your continuing support

Sean Sutcliffe (Wargrave and Knowl Hill Parish Giving Scheme Co-ordinator)
sutcliffefamily1@btinternet.com, 0118 940 1105



Tips on how to live lightly on God's Earth: Part 4 by Mike Buckland

*"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it."
(Psalm 24:1)*

4 – YOUR BATHROOM & KITCHEN

This is the fourth in our series. We began in March with shopping. In April, we gave you 7 tips for a wildlife friendly garden. In May, we looked at ways of avoiding waste. This month, we go into our bathrooms and kitchens.

Here, in no particular order, are eight ways to make a difference:

1. Choose biodegradable (bamboo) toothbrushes, cotton buds, cloths etc.
2. Buy toilet roll made from bamboo or, better still, 100% recycled paper from the UK, which has a lower carbon footprint.
3. Use solid bars instead of bottles of liquid soap, shower gel and shampoo.
4. Take empty detergent, washing-up liquid and shampoo bottles to refill stations such as Maya's Refillables at Woodley market, the Willow Basket in Henley or True Food Co-Op in Emmer Green. If you buy plastic bottles, choose those that are recycled or home compostable. The Waitrose ECOlogical range for example uses 98% recycled plastic in its packaging.
5. If you use a dishwasher or washing machine, run it on a low energy setting and use tablets with plastic-free and fully recyclable packaging, such as those from smol.
6. Most toothpaste tubes are unrecyclable. Consider using powders or tooth tabs, or take your tubes and dead plastic brushes to a Terracycle collection point.



Tips on how to live lightly on God's Earth (cont'd)

Try some DIY. Making your own body oil, dry shampoo, balms and mascara can be fun. Look up some recipes online!

Be wary of palm oil. Even if the packaging says it is from a sustainable source, that may refer to trees that have replaced natural rainforest. Studies from the World Wildlife Fund and others have shown for example that palm oil is to blame for 39% of forest loss in Borneo since 2000, threatening species such as the orang-utan.

A growing list of producers and retailers are avoiding most or all of these pitfalls. Some of us have recommended the following. Others are available!

www.biggreensmile.com
for soap, hand wash, sun screen etc

www.naturalcollection.com
a one-stop shop

www.greenesty.co.uk
for hand cream, sprays and much more

www.thelittlegoatsoapcompany.co.uk
for locally produced soap and shampoo

www.smolproducts.com
for laundry and dishwasher tablets

www.nakedsprout.uk and www.seriousissues.com
for toilet rolls & tissues

www.odylisque.co.uk
for cosmetics and make-up

www.livecoco.com
for renewable electric toothbrush heads, Oral-B compatible

I am grateful to everyone who has contributed, in our church and at 'Twyford Rethinks its Plastic', whose Facebook page and web site (twyfordtogether.org/our-impact/twyford_rethinks-its-plastic/) are excellent at keeping us informed locally. I am also indebted to the Spring 2021 edition of 'Nature's Home', the magazine of the RSPB, for some of the tips.

More next month!

Mike Buckland
Stewarding Lead, Wargrave with Knowl Hill

News from our House Groups

The Wednesday House Group

At the end of March just prior to Easter, we paused for a week to reflect on Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant - who Jesus is, what He came to do, and what He requires of His followers today. Sarah guided us through the end of Mark Ch 8 where the Lord had been travelling to the villages around Caesarea Phillippi and on the way He asked His disciples who the people round about thought He was. The disciples replied that some of the villagers thought he was John the Baptist, others thought he was Elijah, and still others thought he was one of the prophets. Jesus then asked his disciples who they thought he was. Peter answered "You are the Messiah". Peter was not ready to hear what Jesus would say next.... Jesus, the Son of Man would suffer many things, he would be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and teachers of the law, would be killed and rise again after three days. Peter did not like the sound of this and rebuked Jesus. Yet Jesus knew he had come into the world to die and challenged Peter strongly about his words. We read these words, knowing that Jesus would die, and would rise again, three days later. Hallelujah! With this hindsight, it can sometimes be easy for us to criticise Peter for what seems like a lack of faith. It's good to reflect on these things and to consider - or perhaps decide for the first time - who we really believe Jesus is.

Our next study, after Easter was the completion of our pre-Lent series on Proverbs "Real wisdom for real life" - and Chapter 31 - The Wife of Noble Character. If you're not familiar with this passage - we'd encourage you to read it! We were encouraged to think forwards to the fullness of wisdom revealed to us through Jesus Christ, who by his actions, enabled us to live in relationship with Him. The picture we see through the wife described in Proverbs and the life of wisdom shown in this book points us to a life lived in Jesus, with his word and Spirit affecting every aspect of our lives - with the reminder that we do not live alone in Him, but as part of His body, the church. Are you struggling to read the Bible daily? Finding it difficult to know where to start again after a gap? Some have found that the book of Proverbs, tucked away in the middle of the Bible and conveniently divided into 31 Chapters... can be an ideal place to start again for a month of daily readings.

And now, having finished reading Proverbs, we are exploring the Old Testament - this time looking at the life of the prophet Elijah "a man just like us". We are learning more about the challenges he faced, his obedience to God's calling - and God's wonderful - and sometimes very unexpected provision. Elijah doesn't have his own book - he appears suddenly, from nowhere in 1 Kings Chapter



17 to bravely confront King Ahab, and prophets of the false god Baal. We're just beginning our studies on Elijah - and looking forward to finding out more. We'd encourage you to have a read about this man if he's not someone you're familiar with - perhaps your children, or grandchildren may like to hear some of the exciting things that happened to him too!

News from our House Groups (cont'd)

Braybrooke Gardens House Group by Rosie Creedon

The Braybrooke Gardens house group currently meets on 2nd and 4th Thursdays on Zoom. At the start of this year we began a 4-session 'York course' on prayer, which included sessions on praying with perseverance, praying in the face of unanswered prayer, praying for the marginalised, and prayer and covenant. The introduction to this final session says: "Deep within the Biblical story of God's relationship with human beings is the concept of covenant. It is a reminder that this relationship is built on promises, from God to humans and from humans to God. These promises are the foundation on which prayer is built." A recurring theme that kept emerging from our discussions was the importance of making time to be still and quiet and listen to God as well as talking to God.

YORK COURSES

During Lent, we suspended our group meetings in order to join in with the parish-wide Lent course on caring for creation which was written about in last month's magazine.

For our first post-Easter meeting we prepared by reading the final post-resurrection chapters from all four Gospels in parallel which led to a fascinating discussion as we explored these amazing stories of Jesus appearing to his disciples, and the joyful hope his resurrection gives us.

To join our group contact rosiecreedon@btinternet.com



News from our House Groups (cont'd)

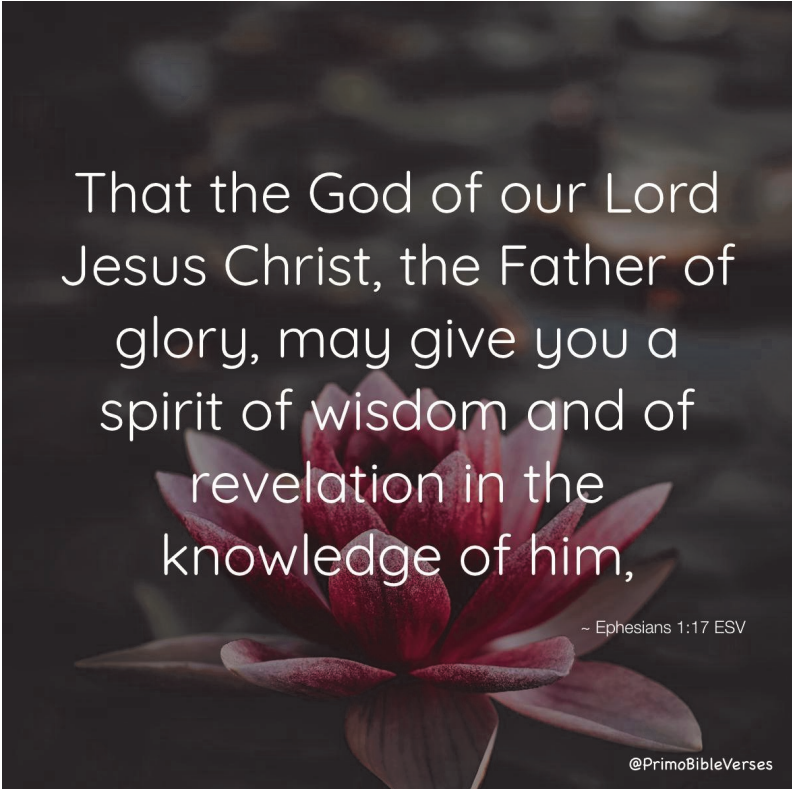
Ephesians 1.17 Group

by Steve Turville

After a few months looking at the book of Isaiah, The Ephesians 1:17 Group (after Paul's prayer that God would give the Ephesians the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they would know him better) joined the Lent Course on Creation Care. We really appreciated joining with the other groups on this well run course, learning and discussing and getting to know each other.

Since Easter we have been looking at the Bible accounts of Jesus's appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, but our next study will be in the book of Joshua, which contains some challenging passages. We will punctuate the Joshua studies with monthly looks at some of the basic questions of Christian faith and life, and continue to break for the monthly Church Prayer so that those who want to can attend that.

We meet from 7.45-9.05 on Tuesday evenings, the evening split half and half between Bible study and praying for each other. Currently we are still meeting on Zoom and await further lifting of restrictions. if you want more information, please contact Steve Turville. stephen.turville@ntlworld.com



That the God of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of
glory, may give you a
spirit of wisdom and of
revelation in the
knowledge of him,

~ Ephesians 1:17 ESV

@PrimoBibleVerses



"...live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:1-3

Dear friends,

I wonder what this 'life worthy of the calling you have received' will look like for each one of us as we emerge from the Covid pandemic?

Coming out of a series of lockdowns is potentially disorienting. It's exciting that we'll be able to socialise more but there will be many of us struggling with general well-being after 15 months of isolation, working from home and/or little social contact. Paul's words challenge us to take care: to take care of others. In his letter Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to be humble, gentle, patient, and loving.

For many of us the last months have been spent in our own space doing our own thing and we may have become more self-centred. Re-emerging into shared space will be a challenge and we'll need the Lord's strength to give us humility, gentleness, patience and love. Let's pray that the Holy Spirit will refine us and make us more Christ-like as we put others before ourselves. If these graces were to become part of our road map to the new normal what a witness Christians would be in their homes, communities and workplaces!

Have you noticed that to 'bear with' each other and to 'keep the unity of the Spirit' we need to meet together? It's in meeting together as Christians, as the people of God, in what's called church that we are both challenged and encouraged. We're challenged to love others who we might not necessarily choose to be with, those who we find difficult; those who unwittingly refine us by testing our patience and humility! Encouragement comes from meeting together to support and encourage one another through singing God's praises, opening up the Word of God and prayer: sharing moments of great joy and sharing each other's burdens in times of sorrow and pain.

John Wesley said, "There is no such thing as a solitary Christian."

Why not? Because we need to '*spur one another on*' if we're to serve Christ wholeheartedly. As Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us:

"...let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching."

With my prayers,

John Cook

St Barnabas - Patron Saint of Cyprus Saint's Day June 11th

Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus, is a little known figure who had travelled with the disciples ever since Jesus was baptised. He became a member of the first church in Jerusalem formed following the resurrection of Jesus and is first mentioned in the Bible in Acts 4: 32 – 37. In these verses Barnabas is shown as a generous giver of property having sold a field and giving the money raised to the disciples for the needy in their community.

After the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost the message of the 'Good News' of salvation in Christ spread rapidly from the church in Jerusalem over a much wider geographical area. Barnabas, a church leader, was gifted with teaching the gospel so went to Antioch where he helped the church there by preaching and encouraging the believers.

He called the new convert Paul from Tarsus (formerly called Saul and violently opposed to the church) as his assistant and helped him become accepted by the disciples and those he had formerly persecuted. Barnabas joined with Paul in bringing famine relief to the Christians in Judea. Later they undertook many joint missionary journeys. Barnabas was even humble enough to step aside when it became evident to him that Paul was the best person to lead the church in the new mission to the Gentiles. On their first missionary journey they had taken John Mark, Barnabas's cousin and writer of the Gospel of Mark, as an assistant. Later, a serious conflict over the future ministry of John Mark caused Barnabas and Paul to separate and Barnabas sailed to Cyprus taking John Mark with him.

There is little told of his subsequent activity, except for a brief note that both he and Paul worked to support themselves during their ministry. While the Bible does not mention how Barnabas died, he reportedly was martyred for his faith.

But in every story there is something we can relate to even though we live in a different world. Barnabas wholeheartedly lived for God and sacrificially served His people. His example reminds us that Christian service is primarily not about us, but about those whom the Spirit directs us to serve; using our gifts to further the work of the church; a generous giver; an encourager; a missionary; a sharer of faith and supporter of team members.

For those in the church with long memories you will recall that for decades we supported St Barnabas church in Homerton with encouragement, finance and exchange visits.



St Peter and St Paul's Day by Jim Hadden

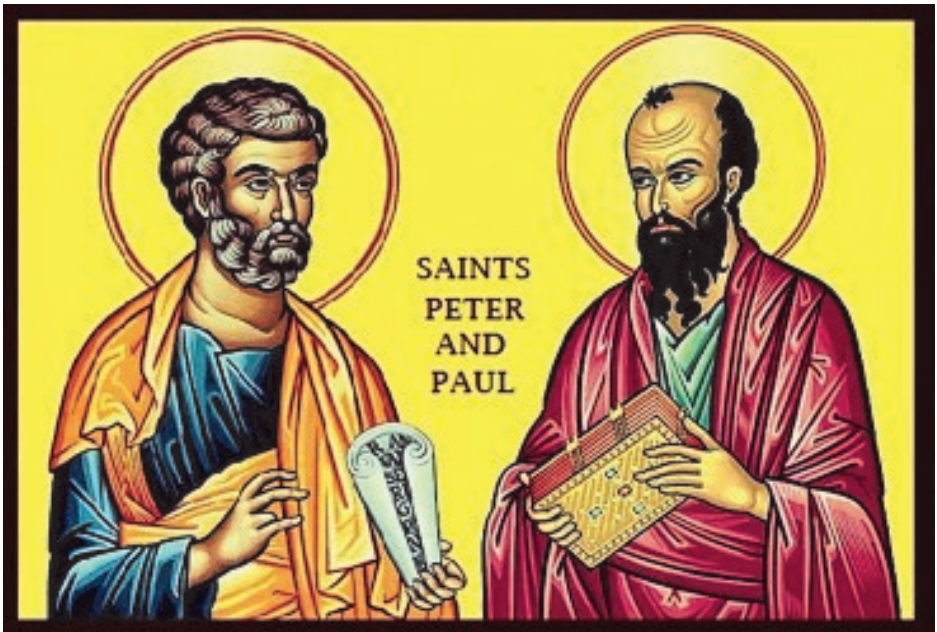
Did you know that June 29th is St. Peter and St. Paul's Day? If you did have you ever wondered why these two saints are celebrated on the same day?

The conversion of St. Paul is observed on 25th January so why does he also share a saint's day with St. Peter? Well that is enough questions so let's get to the reasons.

St. Augustine gave the classic explanation of the double celebration of St. Peter and St. Paul on 29th June. In one of his sermons in their honour he declared: *"Both apostles share the same feast day, for these two were one; and even though they suffered on different days they were as one. Peter went first and Paul followed. And so we celebrate this day made holy by the apostles' blood."*

The original observance of the day dates back to AD 258 and it is one of the oldest festivals in the Christian calendar. Originally it was not necessarily observed on that particular date as the anniversary of their martyrdoms as the precise martyrdom dates were probably unknown. It is most likely that the date marked the moving of the apostles' bodies to their resting place in catacombs adjacent to the present church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way in Rome. In the next century their bodies were finally laid to rest in the basilicas constructed for them by the Emperor Constantine at the Vatican, where St. Peter was crucified and on the Ostian Way where St. Paul was killed.

Finally on a lighter note my research has shown there is no truth in the rumour that the group "Peter, Paul and Mary" chose their name following visits to Knowl Hill, Warren Row and Wargrave respectively.



Update from Australia

Recent Highlights

Jedidiah is travel ready (even if the world isn't yet)! We received his British passport in the post this week and are very excited! His Fijian citizenship is still being processed but it feels great to have one formality checked off the list!

Another really cool thing Len has been a part of lately is RI (religious instruction) in local schools. He is currently teaching multiple classes at a local school not far from where we live. He started last term as an assistant helping to run the classes and lead activities. He ran his first class last month before the Easter break and is planning to start teaching on his own soon. He is currently with the year 5s and 6s and he has found it such a blast discovering Biblical truths with them and learning how it effects our lives. He has enjoyed being part of a team of encouraging and hard-working teachers who put an emphasis on scripture and prayer. The current focus in class is the resurrection of Jesus and the evidence for this. He would appreciate prayer for wisdom when he teaches as well as soft hearts for the students.

Discipleship Training School Update

Our front cover photo is of students from the Discipleship Training School. After 11 weeks of lectures the DTS has begun their outreach phase this week! They will be heading all around Australia, ministering with refugee communities in Toowoomba, youth and skaters down the east coast and Aboriginal communities in Darwin. It is really exciting to commission a team who will be focussed solely on this nation we call home! We cant wait to hear all God is going to do in the next 2 months.

We had the opportunity this week to teach the school on the topic of communication and conflict resolution. We had a lot of fun teaching again and were proud to manage a morning of teaching with Jed in tow!



Update from Australia (cont'd)

Family Updates



During April we celebrated our 5 year wedding anniversary as well as Nicky's 32nd birthday. We were able to celebrate by going out to dinner (we are blessed that restaurants are operating normally here in Australia.)

Len has been enjoying playing rugby again. He has been playing for 2 local teams. One is a new team made up of Fijians living on the Sunshine Coast, they have played a few 7s and 10s tournaments and have won 1st place twice! He also plays for the local rugby union team the Maroochydore Swans. Len loves rugby but also the chance to connect to the local community and share his faith with his team mates.

Prayer Requests

For more guest/backpackers to book to stay at the Wave House. We would love for around 15-20 people to build up a good community again here to share our home with! It will also help to cover costs as student and staff numbers have dropped dramatically in the last year but outgoings remain the same or have increased.

For wisdom and discernment as Len and I pray and prepare to leave Australia. For guidance as we plan for Japan.

For our outreach team. That they would be unified with one purpose - to love God and love people.



Thank you for your prayers and support!
- Nicky, Len and Jedidiah -

Ladies Breakfast 1st May 2021 Make Every Moment Count!

"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Psalm 118 v 24

Being content with who we are and what we have, is a real blessing from God.

We looked at six ways in which we can live every day to the full.

1. Still the voices of the past: We need to still the voices of the past: to receive forgiveness and freedom from yesterday's failures, at the Cross; to lay down regrets and disappointments, receive the power to forgive those who have let us down and renew our faith in God **who is good all the time.**

It's time to let the past go, so that we can be truly blessed in the present.

2. Don't let the future steal your present: It's so easy to live with the feeling that life will start after a big life event. There's nothing wrong with making plans for the future or dreaming about things to come, but when the future prevents us living in today, it's time to call a halt and start to embrace *now* with faith and enthusiasm.

The truth is we don't know what the future holds. Today is the only currency we have; and we need to spend it well.

Although many of us feel we cannot *help* worrying, it actually stems from a lack of trust in the goodness of God. We are saying God, we don't trust you!

3. Start a new habit: Let's be serious about developing a new habit of giving our full attention to the activity in hand. Start by taking notice of, and giving thanks for, the blessings which grace each day; by choosing a routine activity and really concentrating the senses; by focusing fully on others when they are speaking; and by dragging our wandering thoughts back to the task at hand. It won't happen overnight, but little by little we can begin to explore God's gift of 'now'.

4. Look for God's presence in the day to day routine: The bible is full of ordinary people having life-changing divine appointments in the midst of everyday life. They were the ones with the receptive hearts.

We too can cultivate the same hope and expectations that this moment offers; the opportunity to meet our heavenly Father.

Be attentive throughout each day, so we don't miss an opportunity to touch eternity. Do we have receptive hearts?

5. Use your imagination: Learn to do the small things with faith and expectation. Our imagination is a wonderful God-given gift. What if we used it to enlarge our ideas of what God can do with ordinary things which are offered in faith?

Many of us yearn to make a difference but feel encumbered by our present situation or feel we could never do much of value.

6. Release blessing: A blessing in the bible was actually *expected* to produce something. The wonderful blessing in Numbers 6 24-26 was given to Aaron in order to put the Lord's name (and all that it represented) on the Israelites.

A blessing pronounced in faith can influence the climate of a whole region. This one small act can have an eternal outcome.

The priestly blessing: Numbers 6 24-26

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace"

Meet Julia Freeman

The Freeman Family arrived in Wargrave in October 1982 and made their home in Langhams Way. Anthony was a civil engineer specialising in bridges and was working for Mabey and Mabey. Julia had at one time been a nurse and then a midwife. Their family consisted of Anna at 6 months, Mark at 4 years and Sarah at 7 years. They all quickly found their home at St. Mary's and joined Verna and David Houghton's house group at Wargrave Court. Sarah went to the Piggott Junior School and was taught by Chris Wood and Jane Shaw (amongst others!) and Mark eventually started at the Piggott Infant School. Julia enjoyed staying at home with Anna and adding other toddlers as she delighted in some child minding!



Six months later, the Lloyds arrived at Shingleberry and Mark met Jonathan at school and they have all remained firm friends ever since. Richard Lloyd and Anthony had both been to Worcester College, Oxford and also their fathers before them!

In August 1985, the Freeman family moved out to Bangkok, Thailand where they stayed for 7 years returning to Wargrave in January 1992. By this time, both Sarah and Mark were in boarding school in Sussex and Anna followed them in the September. As Anthony was still travelling for work, Julia did some relief duties at The Mount as well as getting involved in tennis officiating, which is still greatly enjoyed.

Sadly, Anthony was involved in an accident whilst working on the Tagus Bridge in Lisbon in April 1997 and was in a coma for 15 months before he died in July 1998. Since then, Julia has needed more than ever the love and support of the church family. With the children all away, Julia needed to keep busy and tennis came to the fore, even going to tournaments abroad in Copenhagen and especially in Auckland NZ, which she has done for the last 18 years!

Unfortunately, the pandemic has put a stop to the life Julia was enjoying. There was no tennis (playing or officiating) and no child minding for grandchildren (since 2012, Julia had been going over to Woking and helping with Sarah's 2 children Ben and Aniya – staying from Tuesday to Thursday each week.) There were no Church Services or House Groups, no social contacts or clubs. Suddenly, Julia found that she wasn't too busy to get involved with various groups in the Church and locally and had to work quite hard at reintroducing herself to various groups.

Lockdown has made her more aware of those living on their own – people's "aleness" is even more apparent.

Perhaps her greatest delight has been the arrival of her 5th grandchild in April last year – Connie to Anna and Phil. Although Julia has not been able to see much of her, Anna has been very good at supplying photos. Family zooms have been a fantastic blessing.

St Peter's Update by Sandra Baker

We are happy to have resumed two services a month at St. Peter's which are Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month and a Village Praise service on the third Sunday, both at 10.30 am. Unfortunately we cannot have services at St. Paul's yet because of being unable to socially distance. We are still eagerly awaiting permission from the Diocese to carry out the renovation work to the church which will give us so many opportunities for community activities once the Covid restrictions have been lifted. Despite not having been able to carry out maintenance work in the cemetery during the past year the bluebells are looking spectacular.



Knowl Hill School is open again after having had to close because of Covid infections. All the staff are doing a wonderful job of coping with the children in their bubbles and supporting parents and children during these difficult times. They are all getting very excited about auditioning for the forthcoming production of Mary Poppins which will take place later in the year.

Elizabeth Court

Elizabeth Court by Andy Ferguson

It's been fascinating to learn more about Elizabeth Court as I settle into the role of Chairman of Wargrave on Thames Housing Association.

I've had the opportunity to visit several empty apartments as we have not been recruiting during the pandemic resulting in 20% of our accommodation currently available for rent.

The Housing Association is a charity whose purpose is to provide affordable accommodation for senior residents of Wargrave or relatives of people living in Wargrave. I have been pleasantly surprised by the standard of accommodation and the way in which the site is maintained with gardeners, window cleaners, painters and maintenance workers all present on a regular basis working under the direction of the House Manager. When a resident leaves, each apartment is refurbished to a high standard so that the new tenant does not have to do anything except supply new curtains and carpets if they wish.

Although there is an excellent residents lounge, Elizabeth Court is not a care home... people must be capable of independent living and whether or not you get involved in some organized activities is entirely up to you. Personally, I'm looking forward to meeting many of the residents as Covid restrictions are lifted and we hold our end of lockdown party.

The apartments are affordable with a rent of around £700 per month, depending on size, which includes heating, water and all service charges.

If you're looking to release equity from your house, for any reason, Elizabeth Court is an ideal place to move to if you want to remain in Wargrave.

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