



Parish of Wargrave
with Knowl Hill

OUR VISION IS TO BE A CHURCH AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

PARISH

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

CHRISTMAS IN THE PARISH

From Crib Services to Carols by Candlelight - discover all of our events over the festive period

CHRISTMAS ON MILL GREEN

The Nativity, Lighting of the Tree, Carols, a Raffle and festive food & drink - Wargrave's Christmas family event

VOLUNTEERING

Helping our churches and community. Are you able to help?

In other news:
Have you met? - Sarah Whiteside
Remembrance 2023: Lest we Forget
A sustainable Christmas

IN AID OF
THAMES VALLEY AIR AMBULANCE & ST MARY'S CHURCH

WARGRAVE PRESENTS
CHRISTMAS
ON
MILL GREEN



SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER

4PM - THE NATIVITY
4.30PM - FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC
5PM - TREE LIGHTING, CAROLS & RAFFLE



FREE ENTRY

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ST MARY'S CHURCH

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From the Editor

Welcome to the Christmas/New Year edition of the Parish Magazine and as ever, we hope that you find it a good read! Included in this issue is, of course, the Christmas activities and also a photo of my MBE investiture at Windsor Castle on 24th October, when we were joined by our two sons John and David for this very special occasion!

Having served as Editor of the magazine for well over 10 years, I have decided it is time now to step down and look at pursuing new opportunities. I have very much enjoyed my time behind the editorial desk and have been fortunate to have been blessed with such lovely friends on the editorial teams. I am sure I speak for us all in expressing our hope that you, the readers, have enjoyed perusing the magazine over these years!

Changes are afoot with the magazine and these are detailed in the accompanying insert. We hope that you will continue to support the magazine in its new format.

With very best wishes for Christmas and may our Lord bless you with good health and happiness.

Bob

BOB AUSTEN | PARISH MAGAZINE EDITOR



WELCOME

The copy date for submissions for the February magazine is noon on Wednesday 17th January 2024

Articles of up to 400 words are most welcome for publication in this magazine and should be sent to the Editorial Team: magazine@wargravechurch.org.uk. The decision to edit and publish material is at the Editorial Team's discretion. Views expressed in articles included in the magazine are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Team. The Parish Magazine cannot accept responsibility for any products or services advertised in this publication.

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PARISH REGISTERS : WEDDINGS, BAPTISMS & FUNERALS

Baptisms at St Mary's, Wargrave

8th October Neave Elizabeth Harvey Smith
15th October Ziggy Jojo Diane Wreford
15th October Rafferty Felton Herbie Wreford

Weddings at St Mary's, Wargrave

28th October Gemma Yvonne Archer & James John Wilkinson

Funerals at St Mary's, Wargrave

5th October Sheila Mary Gunn, 98, Interment of Ashes, St Mary's Churchyard
13th October Angela Mary Thomas, 74, Funeral Service
18th October Michael Charles Richards, 67, Interment of Ashes, New Cemetery
27th October Phillip Johnson Smith, 79, Interment of Ashes, St Mary's Churchyard

SUNDAY SERVICES

December

St Mary's Church, Wargrave

8am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language every Sunday
9.45am Service reflective below

1st Sunday of the month: **3rd December - Advent Sunday - Christingle**

9.45am All Age Family Worship followed by Brunch

2nd Sunday of the month: **10th December - Advent 2**

9.45am Holy Communion
Junior Church & Crèche

3rd Sunday of the month: **17th December - Advent 3**

9.45am Morning Worship in modern language with music
Junior Church & Crèche

4th Sunday of the month: **24th December - Christmas Eve**

9.45am Holy Communion
4pm Crib Service



Special Service: Monday 25th December - Christmas Day

8am Holy Communion
9.45am Parish Holy Communion

5th Sunday of the month: **31st December**

9.45am Holy Communion

St Peter's Church, Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month - 3rd December	10.30am	Holy Communion
Special Service - Sunday 17th December	3pm	Carol Service
Special Service - Monday 25th December	9.15am	Village Praise

St Paul's Church, Warren Row

2nd Sunday of month - 10th December	9.15am	Holy Communion
Special Service - Sunday 24th December	3pm	Carol Service

SUNDAY SERVICES

January

St Mary's Church, Wargrave

8am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language every Sunday
 9.45am Service reflective below

1st Sunday of the month: **7th January**

9.45am All Age Family Worship followed by Brunch

2nd Sunday of the month: **14th January - Try Church: Sunday 1**

9.45am Holy Communion
 Junior Church & Crèche

3rd Sunday of the month: **21st January - Try Church: Sunday 2**

9.45am Morning Worship in modern language with music
 Junior Church & Crèche

4th Sunday of the month: **28th January - Try Church: Sunday 3**

9.45am Holy Communion
 Junior Church & Crèche



St Peter's Church, Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month 10.30am Holy Communion
 3rd Sunday of the month 10.30am Village Praise

St Paul's Church, Warren Row

2nd Sunday of month 9.15am Holy Communion

THE NEW YEAR

TRY CHURCH SUNDAYS

A new year is a time where we often start again, either with old habits we want to reinvigorate, or with entirely new endeavours. It might be getting in shape, or taking up a new hobby. But maybe it's something deeper. Maybe in this coming year you feel you want to pursue meaning and truth and beauty? Maybe you want to make time to think about life's biggest and most important questions? Maybe you just have a sense of a need for something 'more' and want to start looking for it? If that's you, maybe you should consider coming along to Church on a Sunday morning.



Try Church

& Junior Church

Sunday services for
 newcomers and explorers

Everything in the service will be straightforwardly explained, and there will be a short talk explaining the heart of the Christian message.

Junior Church for children aged 3yrs - 16 yrs will also gather for fun activities to help grown in faith and build friendships

WHO

Individuals and families of all ages

WHEN

9.45am on 14th, 21st & 28th January 2024

Our Groups

WELCOME CAFÉ

The Café is open on Tuesdays from 2.30pm - 4pm in the Hannen Room



Next Sessions:
5th & 12th December
9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th January

OPEN CHURCH

St Mary's Church is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 4pm.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies returns to meet on 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month (during term time) in the morning, where you can, enjoy a delicious breakfast, chat and parenting discussion time in the Church Centre.

If you are the parent of a baby or toddler, we'd love to meet you! Details can be found on our Facebook page @[butterflieswargrave](https://www.facebook.com/butterflieswargrave)

Butterflies is held in the Church Centre, 9.30am - 11am.

January: 3rd, 17th & 31st

February: 7th & 21st

March: 6th & 20th

Mothering Sunday Dinner: 13th March



LADIES' BREAKFAST

Join us on **Saturday 2nd December** in the Church Centre at 9am where we will enjoy an extra special Christmassy breakfast as we look at Matthew 2: 9-11 Follow the Star.



Please let Linda or Lesley know if you are planning to attend.

lindacaradine9@gmail.com
lesley.turville@gmail.com

OUR GROUPS

There are a number of groups that meet regularly throughout the year. Not all are every week, so please check with the group leader for more details.

More information found online at wargravechurch.org.uk/groups

Tuesdays	Ladies' Bible Study Ephesians 1:17	9.30am 7pm
Wednesdays	Monthly Prayer (1st) Pints of View	11.45am 7.30pm
Thursdays	Seeking Wisdom Braybrooke Gardens Young Families	2.30pm 7.30pm 8pm
Saturdays	Ladies' Breakfast (1st)	9am

VICAR'S LETTER

Dear *Parish Family*

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned - (Isaiah 9:2)

It probably was not a “bleak midwinter” when Jesus was born. Given the climate in Palestine, there probably was “no frosty wind moaning”, and it is highly unlikely that “snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow.” But these haunting lines from the 19th century poet Christina Rossetti’s poem, now known as the Christmas carol “In the bleak midwinter”, still ring profoundly true.

By describing the Lord Jesus coming in the harshest of winters, Christina Rossetti painted a harsh world in desperate need of hope. Her words “earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone” point beyond to the literal state of human hearts - wounded and hardened by pain and death.

Let us remember that in our bleakest winters, the Lord Jesus comes. The One who, as Rossetti wrote, “cherubim worship night and day”, was content with the humility of living “fully human in every way” (Hebrews 2:17). He entered our world, sharing in our humanity to free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Hebrews 2:15). He came to forever free us from the grip of death in our hearts, so we can experience joy.

This is a gift beyond words and repayment. As Rossetti concluded, “What can I give Him, poor as I am?” The carol concludes by reminding us “yet what I can give him... is my heart.”

Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) was a prominent German Lutheran pastor. At first, he had welcomed National Socialism, later opposing it because of its pagan tendencies, and moved to supporting the Confessing Church. His anti-Nazi activities meant he was arrested in 1937. He was confined in a concentration camp due to his continued opposition to Hitler.

On Christmas Eve 1944, Niemöller spoke to his fellow prisoners in Dachau: “My dear friends, on this Christmas... let us seek, in the Babe of Bethlehem, the One who came to us in order to bear with us everything that weighs down heavily upon us... God Himself has built a bridge from himself to us! A dawn from on high has visited us!”

There will probably be, in a whole host of ways, bleak winters. Christmas invites us, as Rossetti knew herself, to embrace the good news that God, in Christ has come to us wherever we are and has bridged the gap between us. He invades our prison of darkness with His light providing light where we are lost, offering to lift our load of guilt, coming alongside us in sorrow or loneliness as well as in the countless other matters which weigh us down.



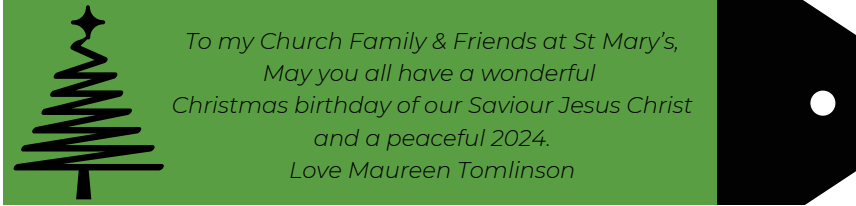
On that bleak Christmas Eve in Dachau Concentration Camp, Niemöller continued, "out of the brilliance that surrounded the shepherds a shining ray will fall into our darkness."

His words echo the dawning light Isaiah the prophet saw from afar, and which Rosetti captures so wonderfully in her carol. No matter where we are or what we face the Lord Jesus Christ offers, if we will recognize Him, to penetrate our darkness with His joy and light and bleak winters with the warmth of His presence.

John

John R.M. Cook
Vicar of Wargrave with Knowl Hill

A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



Parish Activities

December

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

Friday 1st	All Day	Advent Windows (until 24th Dec)
Saturday 2nd	9am	Mill Green Leaf Clearing
	9am	Christmas Ladies' Breakfast
	2pm	Annual Christmas Raffle: Knowl Hill VH
Sunday 3rd	9.45am	Advent Sunday - Christingle: St Mary's, Wargrave followed by Christmas Brunch
	10.30am	Holy Communion: St Peter's, Knowl Hill
Thursday 7th	7pm	Christmas Wreath Making
Saturday 9th	4pm	Christmas on Mill Green: The Nativity, Christmas Tree Lighting, Carols & Raffle
Sunday 10th	9.15am	Holy Communion: St Paul's, Warren Row
	9.45am	Advent 2: Holy Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave
	3pm	Sing-a-Long Carols for under 5s
Thursday 14th	12 noon	CAMEO: Christmas Lunch
Saturday 16th	9am	St Mary's Christmas Decorating

For Christmas Week Events, see page 11

WARGRAVE PRESENTS
CHRISTMAS
ON
MILL GREEN
SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER



Follow the stars this December and get Christmas off to a great start on Mill Green on Saturday 9th December.

The fabulous festivities begin at **4pm** with the true story of Christmas, the **Nativity** play, in front of St Mary's Church. Performed by the youngest Wargravian thespians, the Nativity, tells of Mary & Joseph's unique journey to Bethlehem, complete with visits from shepherds, kings and angels.

From biblical Bethlehem to wonderful Wargrave at **4.30pm** we indulge in the Christmas spirit. Mulled wine and mince pies, hotdogs and hot chocolate will keep us warm and toasty, generously provided by our sponsors in return for a donation.

A small pay bar from The Bull will offer beers & wine for the grown-ups.

Mill Green will be filled with Christmas music followed by the blessing of the tree before the **official lighting at 5pm**. Everyone is invited to sing around the tree.

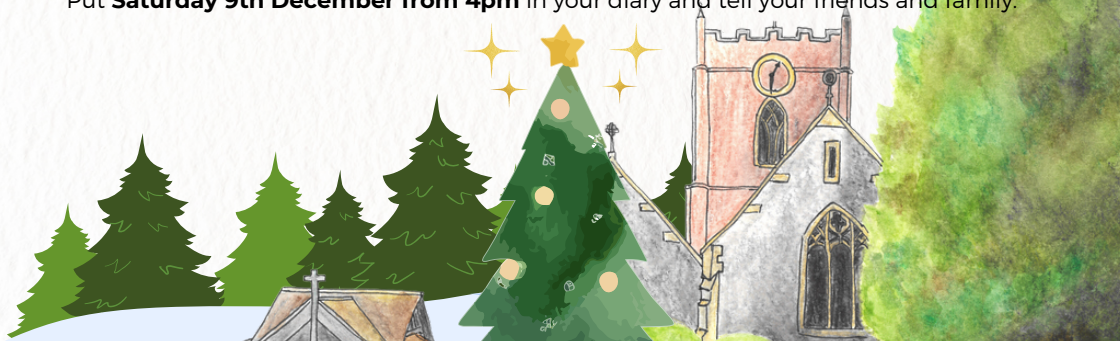
The six-metre tree will be supplied again by local Wargravian Graham Trolley and other sponsors of the event including local builder Phoenix Roofing and Building Services, our brilliant village café Daisy Love, and Rollover Hotdogs.

New for 2023, we will also have three special prizes to win at our Christmas Raffle which have been kindly donated by Richard of Hurst:

- 1st - Christmas Hamper and Gutter cleaning
- 2nd - Window Cleaning both inside and out
- 3rd - Window Cleaning outside

Tickets are £1 per entry and will be sold in advance from Daisy Love, The Bull and from St Mary's Church. Also available on the day and announced just after the carols.

Let's get our village together and welcome an amazing family Christmas to Wargrave! Put **Saturday 9th December from 4pm** in your diary and tell your friends and family.



Christmas Week

Sunday 17th	9.45am	Advent 3: Morning Worship: St Mary's, Wargrave
	3pm	Carol Service: St Peter's, Knowl Hill
	6pm	Carol Service: St Mary's, Wargrave
Tuesday 19th	2pm	Senior Carols & Afternoon Tea
Sunday 24th	9.45am	Advent 4: Holy Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave
	3pm	Carol Service: St Paul's, Warren Row
	4pm	Crib Service: St Mary's, Wargrave
	6pm	Family Carols: St Mary's, Wargrave
	11.15pm	Midnight Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave
Monday 25th	8am	Holy Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave
	9.15am	Village Praise: St Peter's, Knowl Hill
	9.45am	Parish Holy Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave

DELIGHTFUL DILEMMAS: Christmas Carols

The season of carolling will soon be upon us and, once again, we will enjoy singing and hearing those much-loved Christmas carols. So many are familiar to us, and yet, how well do we really know them?

Your challenge this month is to identify the titles of the Christmas carols from which the lyrics below are taken. Some you will manage with ease; others are a little more difficult. How many of the 10 carol titles can **YOU** identify?

1. And all the bells on earth will ring, on Christmas day, on Christmas day
2. Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!
 3. Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation
4. The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing
 5. Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices
 - 6 What can I give him? Poor as I am
7. So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
 8. Sing we joyous, all together. Fa la la la la, la la la la.
9. And smile in dreaming, little one. Sleep well, lully, lullay
10. Page and monarch forth they went, forth they went together

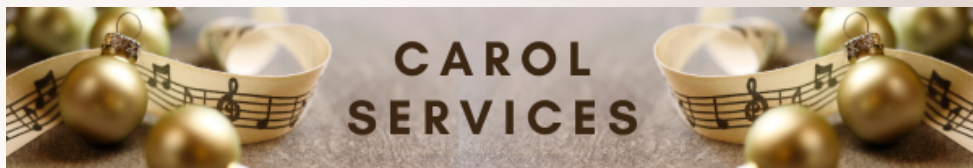
Answers on page 24

Christmas

in the Parish

Sing-a-Long Carols for Under 5s

Join us on **Sunday 10th December at 3pm** in St Mary's Church Centre for Carols, crafts and nibbles! This is a great event for anyone with young children to entertain. We gather for baby sensory inspired carol singing (all the good old carols you know from your childhood but with bubbles, lights, flags etc... added to keep the children entertained). The carol singing happens in two halves with craft in-between. It all takes place in the church centre so babies and toddlers can make as much noise and mess as they please.



Carol Service: St Peter's, Knowl Hill

Join us for our Candlelit Carol service on **Sunday 17th December at 3pm** at St Peter's Church. After the service, we invite you to join us for a mince pie, or two, and some mulled wine.

Carols by Candlelight - Carol Service: St Mary's, Wargrave

This is St Mary's most traditional Carol Service. Come along on **Sunday 17th December at 6pm** and join in with the many opportunities to sing favourite carols, along with a few choir pieces, including the ever-popular 'O Holy Night.' There will be Bible readings taking us from the promises of the Old Testament through to the story of Christ's birth and the visits of shepherds and Wise Men.

Senior Carols & Afternoon Tea

On **Tuesday 19th December at 2pm** in St Mary's, the 30 minute service will include some favourite carols and Bible readings, followed by a Christmassy afternoon tea party in St Mary's Church Centre finishing at 3.30pm so that everyone is home by dark. If you would like to come, please let the Parish Office know on 0118 940 2300, for catering purposes. Do you have a relative, friend or neighbour who might appreciate this Service? If you do, it would be wonderful if you could bring them along.



Christmas Eve

Sunday 24th December

Carol Service: St Paul's, Warren Row

Join us on **Sunday 24th December at 3pm** for a short informal Carol Service at St Paul's Church, Warren Row. Wrap up warm and enjoy singing some well-known carols as we celebrate the birth of Christ.



CRIB SERVICE

Crib Service: St Mary's, Wargrave

Our crib service on **Sunday 24th December at 4pm** is a short service for children and families in a re-telling the Christmas story around the manger. Children are welcome to dress up as shepherds and join us around the crib. A few songs will be sung.

Family Carols: St Mary's, Wargrave

Come along and join a full church on **Sunday 24th December at 6pm** to sing carols and hear the Christmas message. This service is suitable for families, young people and everyone who wants to enjoy the Christmas spirit.

Midnight Communion: St Mary's, Wargrave

On Christmas Eve, **Sunday 24th December at 11.15pm**, we start our Midnight Communion service ensuring that the service finishes on Christmas Day. It is a simple communion service with carols and musical contributions.

CHRISTMAS IN THE PARISH

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

Monday 25th December

8am	Holy Communion	St Mary's Church, Wargrave
9.15am	Village Praise	St Peter's Church, Knowl Hill
9.45am	Parish Holy Communion	St Mary's Church, Wargrave

12 TIPS OF CHRISTMAS CARE

Mike Buckland

At Christmas we celebrate God coming to earth in human flesh to rescue the world He created. What better gift can we give in return than to care for it? Here are some practical ways in which we can show we care. Whatever you do, be gentle on yourself and be realistic, but challenge yourself too.



CHRISTMAS CARE

1. **Support overseas farmers** buy [Fairtrade](#).
2. **Rent a tree:** [countryliving.com](#) Search 'Rent a Christmas Tree' or reuse an artificial tree, decorate a living one in your garden with lights and bird food.
3. **Go for a natural wreath and decorations.** See what you can find.
4. **Re-use cards and wrapping.** Buy recycled (lower ecological footprint) and make sure to recycle. Remember to remove the sellotape before you do so.
5. **Create homemade gifts.** Baked goods, a glass or vase filled with chocolates or flowers, Kilner jars filled with goodies, all make great gifts.
6. **Don't let your gifts cost the earth.** Many beauty products contain palm oil whose production causes deforestation, air pollution and human rights abuses.
7. **Give the gift of time.** Consider offering to cook for someone regularly, take them for a coffee, babysit, or clean their house. Put a 'gift of time' voucher in a card.
8. **Dim the lights but not the joy!** You could make your table festive with candles made from beeswax - avoid paraffin-based ones.
9. Practise **generosity and hospitality.** Invite someone over for Christmas Day.
10. Try some **meat-free meals.** A lot of meat production causes overgrazing of land, deforestation, habitat loss, pollution, and intensive use of water or fossil fuels. If you eat meat, make sure it's local, organic and free-range.
11. **Recycle right.** More waste ends up in landfill over Christmas than during the rest of the year. Find out what you can recycle where at [recyclenow.com/recycling-locator](#).
12. **Go for walks.** Nature needs us, and we need nature. Visit [arocha.org.uk/wild-christian/](#) for ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature.

POETRY PIECES

CHRISTMAS SEASON



RESIDENT POET: ANDREW CURTIS

Our first poem is a BRAND NEW piece, written for us by our resident poet Andrew Curtis. His inspiration for the piece came after reflecting on the current plight of refugees. He says: 'I called to mind that Mary and Joseph fell strongly into this category. The business of being pregnant, homeless and worn out from an incredibly long and tortuous journey to a strange place where there is no welcome, only rejection, must be so frightening and stressful. I tried to contrast this with the pure joy at the birth of Jesus, our saviour, becoming man for us'.

Holy Night (2023)

Seeking rest in David's busy city,
the homeless couple are fraught, rejected
by every inn, doors slammed in their faces.
She is with child, so tired and exhausted.
They locate a cave, stark and primitive,
where cattle breathe warmth into dark, dank air.
In the quiet night the Word is made flesh,
snuggled in the warmth of his mother's arms,
wrapped in love, in cloths and humility.
In the east, wise men are searching the sky,
watching the rise of a dazzling new star,
its brilliance dimming all the others.

With the Holy Spirit's fine work replete,
great joy of the Father is now complete.

POETRY PIECES

THOMAS HARDY (1840 - 1928)



In our 2nd poem, published in 1915, Thomas Hardy, imagines the animals kneeling at the manger, as if aware that our saviour lay within. A far-fetched idea perhaps, but Hardy longs for the image to be true, and uses the picture to consider the nature of faith.

The Oxen (1915)

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know',
I should go with him in the gloom
Hoping it might be so

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: Lest we forget

Annette Dart

The annual Remembrance service in Wargrave took place on Sunday 12 November in St Mary's with over 300 people gathered together, including representatives from the local branch of the Royal British Legion and all our village Guiding and Scouting groups in attendance. After the impact of Covid and lockdowns on previous years' remembrance services, it was wonderful to be able to come together with our young people's groups and restore remembrance as a fully community occasion.



It is hard to believe that the war in Ukraine looks set to continue into a third year and another terrible conflict began in Gaza only a couple of weeks before we came together to remember our fallen Service men and women from two World Wars. The opening procession was accompanied by the rousing hymn 'Lift high the cross,' with Bob Austen leading and holding the cross aloft.

The Collect prayer for the day took on an extra significance as violent protests and marches connected with the Gaza conflict took place in cities around the UK.

O God of truth and justice,

We hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever.

“

”

The service was led by The Revd Canon John Cook and included Bible readings from Denise Simpson (Mark 15: 33-40) and 11-year-old Charles Monte (15: 13-17) with the poignant words:

'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

Major General Rob Thomson CBE DSO gave the sermon. He talked about the nature of courage through three men who have inspired him: Staff Sergeant Oz Schmid, his bomb disposal expert who lost of life while diffusing a bomb in Afghanistan in 2009; Noel Chavasse, a Christian doctor serving in the First World War and winning two Victoria Crosses for bravery and his third inspirational man is Jesus Christ, who demonstrated the 'most awe-inspiring physical, moral, emotional and spiritual courage on the cross'. The Major General left us with this thought-provoking question, 'How will you answer Christ in the days ahead?'

The Revd Richard Eves led the prayers of intercession with Tad Riley from the Cubs, Toby Bingham from the Scouts and Lydia Calverley from the Guides offering prayers for all those who fight, are wounded and bereaved. Lydia's prayer for peace struck a special chord as the world struggles with the sudden latest war in the Middle East.

“

Creator of all people, who marks out their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands, we pray for the nations of the world and their leaders. Would you restrain all those who seek to do evil, all who are motivated by pride and vainglory, and all those who harbour hatred towards their fellow creatures. Would you reign in the hearts of all mankind, we ask, that there might be peace.

”

The closing procession continued from the church onto Mill Green for the Service at the War Memorial, and many more people from Wargrave joined in. The St. Sebastian Wokingham Band played again this year, leading the hymns which included ‘O God our help in ages past,’ ‘I vow to thee my country’ and ‘Abide with me.’ The service followed the familiar and poignant order with prayers, followed by the Roll of Honour for those from Wargrave who lost their lives in the service of their country in both world wars.

The Last Post sounded out by the solitary trumpet on a hushed Mill Green before the 2-minute silence and then the piercing sound of the Reveille. Following the laying of wreaths, 69 memorial crosses were planted by the Wargrave Scouts and Guides, and a further 19 memorial crosses by representatives of the Piggott School in memory of former pupils and also families of those named on the memorial also planted crosses.

The remembrance service always includes the Exhortation before the last post ‘They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them’, and the Kohima Epitaph ‘When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today’.

We hear these beautiful tributes every year and they never fail to elicit sadness, anguish, respect and pride all at once.



CARING FOR OUR CHURCHYARD

Ruth Howse



Saturday mornings are often a busy time in St Mary's Churchyard, and teams of keen mowers keep the grass under control. We also have the 'Let it grow' zone where wild flowers are being actively encouraged and a less frequent pattern of scything is in place.

Mike, Angie and Ruth had a lovely time scything and preparing areas for sowing wild flower seeds on Saturday 28th October. A big thank you goes to the wonderful children who then helped Mike and Angie sow the yellow rattle seeds in the churchyard during November.

The wildflower area is very special to Mike and Angie, as their grandchildren Joel and Isla helped to sow this year's spring flowers in April, the week before Joel's tumour was diagnosed.

Unlike most flowers, yellow rattle takes its nutrients from grass roots not the soil. This weakens the grass and gives the wild flowers a better chance to grow. It is often called "nature's lawnmower".

Sowing yellow rattle is considered best practice for places where long grass takes a bigger hold than we want it to. Seeds must be sown in the autumn, on or near to the surface of the soil, and they need a frost in order to germinate. Once yellow rattle is established, it self-seeds. This is the third time that it has been planted in the past three years, and it's been great to have children from the church involved in planting. The very first seeds were sown by children from our church in October 2022; we are grateful to Christine for instigating that. Annie and the Junior Church helped last year.

Grass cutting has now stopped for the winter, and if you're interested in joining the team of mowers next spring, please contact Bob Austen, or why not pop down on Saturday 2nd December at 9am to help with the Annual Leaf Clearing of Mill Green.



CARING FOR OUR CHURCH

MUMBERY FIELD NATURE RESERVE

Helen Perry

Mumbery Field nature reserve has been managed by a small group of volunteers since 2011. The field at the outset was grass and brambles with a large number of native trees some of which were choked by the brambles. Over the years an outdoor classroom was created and a pond excavated. In creating a wild flower meadow, yellow rattle seeds were sown. As the yellow rattle plants spread they helped to thin out the grass. This allowed dormant wild flower seeds to develop and create a floral display as shown in the photographs taken back in the summer.



Over the years a number of the brambles have been cut back and cleared encouraging mainly oak and damson trees to grow more freely. The cut brambles are used to make a dead hedge creating wildlife habitats. In several areas of the reserve, hedgelaying of the hawthorn shrubs has taken place alongside the dead hedges. Grass snakes, sloe worms, bats, moths, butterflies, insects and many species of birds have been identified at the reserve over the years. Pond invertebrates have also flourished.

In late summer after the flowers have died back, the grass is cut by using scythes and allowed to dry, weather permitting. The dried grass is baled up using a box baler, which was made by a former volunteer before he moved away from Wargrave. This year around 20 bales were made and given away.

Our working party meet on the 3rd Saturday of each month and would welcome new volunteers, so please get in touch with Helen Perry or Mike Buckland.

mikebuckland54@gmail.com

FAIRTRADE CHRISTMAS STALL

Mike Buckland

Thank you everyone who supported our Fairtrade Christmas stall in November this year.

We sold 36 chocolate, plastic and palm oil free Real Advent Calendars, over 100 Christmas cards with nativity themes, and some cosy, beautiful home made woolly hats, gloves and slippers from Nepal. I am grateful to Julia Freeman, Sally Reason and Rosalyn Lane Heath for helping me to keep shop.

Don't miss out on the Real Easter Eggs in March. None of these are available in UK supermarkets or High Street chains. All of them help the poor and God's earth.



THE REAL ADVENT CALENDAR

HAVE YOU MET?

Sarah Whiteside



Born in Swindon, I have spent the majority of my years living in the South East, settling in Crazies Hill, with my husband Rog, in 2006.

Introduced to church life from an early age by Mum, I attended Langley Baptist Church throughout my teenage years. Although I believed 'something', I didn't feel confident enough to make any firm commitment, and on leaving home, (and without Mum's influence), thoughts of God were soon left behind.

Rejecting university, I began working for Marks & Spencer, joining a training scheme which led to my appointment as a Departmental Manager, working in different stores around the country. I met Rog when both working in the Reading store. We married in 1982, and soon after, we both moved to buying departments at M&S's Head Office; me in textiles and Rog in the food division.

My career break came with the birth of Laura followed by Jonathan. When they were old enough for school, I worked part-time in a school for children with special needs. It was this experience that convinced me to become a teacher. I gained an O.U. degree, completed my teachers' training and was appointed as an English teacher at Cox Green Secondary School. Despite the stresses and strains of teaching teenagers, I loved my work, especially when teaching less able pupils in need of additional help.

Having spent 10 years at Cox Green, the final five as Head of Department, I moved to St. Mary's School for girls in Ascot. After a year, however, I required an unexpected brain operation, leading to my early retirement in 2014.

The operation, although successful, also left me with severe anxiety, which I still battle with daily.

In 2016, following a series of traumatic events, I suffered a nervous breakdown - the worst time of my life, and perhaps also the best, as God re-entered my life - for good this time! Discharged from the clinic, one Sunday I felt compelled to go to church and was moved to tears by the whole experience. After this, Camilla and I prayed together weekly. During one of our prayer times, when feeling particularly distressed, I cried out for Jesus to help me and almost immediately I felt at peace.

I experienced a sense of total serenity and I knew that the despair that plagued me might finally retreat. I had hope for the future. Despite rejecting the Lord for so many years, He had never given up on me and had brought me back to where I belonged.

Since joining St Mary's I've been involved in several areas. Currently, I am co-ordinator for the Nurturing CoG and co-leader of the 'Seeking Wisdom' bible study group and - oh yes, the best news of all: I was confirmed in October 2022.

REINSPIRED RETURNS

Richard Eves

This month, one lovely facet of St Mary's vibrant relationship with our village schools returned after a Covid hiatus. REInspired is a programme where a team of Christians from a local church partner with a school to provide pupils with an opportunity to bring their RE lessons to life. Team members lead the children in a range of interactive and sensory activities all centered around a simple question like "Why is Christmas important to Christians?" Most importantly of all, the team provide the pupils with living breathing Christians to get to know, chat with, and ask their deepest and most tricky questions. Do please be praying for the team as we visit the schools once a term - that we would love the pupils really well, and be used by the Lord to serve them and share with them the good news of the Lord Jesus.

A POSTCARD FROM NICKY & LEN: Serving with YWAM

Nicky & Len - Osaka, Japan

Hello from Japan!

Thank you to everyone for your prayers for a safe delivery for our baby girls. Clementine and Aria were born on September 20th, weighing 7lb and 7lb 3ozs. The twins and I spent a week in hospital being very well cared for before coming home, and the girls are now settling in and growing well. Thank you too to everyone who has sent gifts for the girls - we have been overwhelmed by your love. Mum and Dad (Lesley and Steve) have been able to visit us for a month, helping out with feeds, housework and shopping, and also making sure Jed was well occupied with trips to the park.

Mission-wise, we have just hosted a mission team from Toowoomba, Australia and in December, we will host two mission teams, from Honolulu and Reno in the USA. In February 2024 we start a School of Biblical Studies (SBS), with 6 students from Japan, USA and Germany. Len and my main focus (apart from the girls and Jed) will be the DTS starting in April. Currently we are taking applications for this and sorting out all the admin for the study and mission elements and prospective students. Because of this increased busy-ness, we are currently praying about renting an extra building, and finding a



CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

kitchen manager to join our team. Meanwhile, community work and relationship building continues, plus still learning Japanese!

We have also joined a new church that has started up in Takatsuki - Osaka International Baptist Church. Our Japanese friend who was baptised recently is now playing in the worship group, so it's wonderful to see him thriving in this new church too.

We keep in touch with what's happening in the parish via mum and dad, and the parish website and hold you in our prayers. Thank you for all of your prayers and support.

Sayonara!

JUNIOR CHURCH:

Best Buys for Your Kids this Christmas

Jubiracy da Silva



My wife and I love Which? Reviews. Those geniuses go through the trouble of testing stuff thoroughly only to write fun-to-read, spot-on reviews of said stuff before one buys stuff, better known as rubbish, only to resent or return it. For a year we paid a subscription and went straight to the Best Buys whenever we needed.

As they do not offer a category of great Christmas gifts for kids, we are making our own. We are no geniuses who tested any of this stuff, but you are no subscription-payer either, are you? We just think these are a good idea and hope your kids will too. You may need to Google it.

Craft / Activities

- Baker & Ross have some great Nativity craft ideas from stickers to calendars.
- Puppets can be used together during the year to tell bible stories.
- Fancy dress clothes that older children can use to make their own videos of bible songs.
- Find sheet music of worship songs that they can learn to play.
- Have a notebook printed with your surname on the front and start a family prayer journal. You can get these from websites like Etsy.
- There are lots of Worship music CDs available - too many to list here. Or you could create a Spotify playlist of the music you want them to listen to.

Adventures and Outings

- Book tickets for a show at the Wintershall Estate.
- Take 8+ yrs on an Adventure Plus weekend in Oxfordshire.
- Go to a worship concert e.g. prom praise, a worship central performance.
- Think about signing your child up for a Summer camp or going as a family to somewhere like the Keswick Convention or Word Alive. There are also great options for skiing and summer holidays with Richmond Holidays and Oak Hall.

Books and Bibles

- 2-6 yrs olds - 'God's Big Promises Bible Story Book' from the Good Book Company. Colourful and engaging, it lets you choose different thematic 'routes' through the bible.
- If you know a young child with a Tonie or Yoto - why not record yourself reading a bible story?
- 'Good News Bible - Family Edition' - a large bible that you can read as a family, colour in and then wipe clean and start again!
- 'The Action Bible' - comic cartoon style bible, mainly for older children, very fun to read for adults too.
- 'Doodle Through The Bible for Kids' - you get the idea.

Other

- Pictures or posters with encouraging bible verses (e.g. "You are wonderfully and fearfully made" on a poster to go next to a mirror)

Of all these, the Best Buy is the one no one can buy: the gift of prayer. In the past, Annie has committed to pray for people faithfully over a specific time period, like 40 days, as a gift to them. What about that for your child, perhaps during Advent or the days between Christmas and New Year?

Our first All Age service after the new year will be on Sunday 7th January at 9.45am in St Mary's Church, Wargrave.

EVENTS

DECEMBER

Christingle Service & Brunch
Sunday 3rd at 9.45am

Christmas on Mill Green
Saturday 9th at 4pm
Nativity followed by turning on of the
Wargrave Christmas Tree lights

Sing-a-Long Carols for under 5s
Sunday 10th at 3pm

Crib Service
Sunday 24th at 4pm

Family Carols
Sunday 24th at 6pm

FUN, FAITH & FRIENDSHIP

PCC UPDATE

Sheila Williams - PCC Secretary

The PCC met on 13th November 2023

At this meeting Peter Dart, Director of Music at St Mary's, was invited to make a presentation to the Committee. He reviewed the success and variety of musical experiences provided during his 12 years in the role - from modern songs in family services to classical concerts.

He highlighted a particular need for more male voices in the lower register to join the music group - and indeed any new members would be welcomed to boost the number in the pool of singers and musicians for certain times of the year e.g. holiday periods and special services.

He shared his vision of possible musical developments to enhance our range of services and the PCC undertook it to look at his ideas for the future.

Other items discussed included

- The installation of LED lighting at Knowl Hill
- A new programme to be provided by the Parish for local schools
- The possibility of employing a Youth Worker at St Mary's
- Announcement that Mike Buckland appointed Deanery Environment Co-Lead
- Confirmation Safeguarding Training has and continues to take place for all those undertaking roles requiring this
- Churchwarden Sue Witney has now completed her certification for the Leadership Pathway in this important area.

It was also agreed that the "Roadmap" produced for the Parish some years ago should be regularly reviewed and updated. This would take place at every PCC Meeting when specific areas of ministry would be reviewed in rotation. Any members of the congregation who would like to suggest changes or developments in the life of the Church in Wargrave and Knowl Hill are encouraged to speak to a member of the Clergy or the PCC. The "Roadmap" was designed to be a living document reflecting where the Parish is, and where it is going - all members of the Church are encouraged to participate in its evolution - it is "our" roadmap.

DELIGHTFUL DILEMMA ANSWERS

1. I Saw Three Ships
2. What Child is This?
3. O Come All Ye Faithful
4. It Came upon the Midnight Clear
5. O Holy Night
6. In the Bleak Midwinter
7. O Little Town of Bethlehem
8. Deck the Halls
9. Coventry Carol
10. Good King Wenceslas

MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA ENCHANTS AT ST MARY'S

Peter Dart - Music Director, St Mary's Church

On the evening of Saturday 18th November, St. Mary's Church was filled with the harmonious melodies of a spectacular concert that left the audience in awe. Approximately 150 people gathered to witness the musical talents showcased throughout the evening.

The distinguished Richard Pearce, Organist of the Royal Choral Society and the Royal Albert Hall, not only provided brilliant accompaniment but also graced the audience with a mesmerizing performance of JS Bach's D minor Toccata and Fugue on the organ.

Local musicians Liz Drew and Laura Anstee, joined by Richard Pearce, captivated the audience with their rendition of Beethoven's trio in B flat, Op 11 for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano. Liz also charmed listeners with pieces from the Victorian Kitchen Garden Suite by Paul Reade. Renowned in St Mary's, Paul Speed showcased his trumpet prowess with delightful renditions of pieces by Stanley, Telemann, and Saint-Saens, earning well-deserved applause from the audience.

The Wargrave Community Choir, under the direction of Johnny Fitzpatrick, infused the air with enthusiasm as they performed hits like 'Mr. Blue Sky', 'Suspicious Minds', and 'Higher & Higher'.

VOCES8 Scholars, displaying a diverse repertoire ranging from renaissance to rock, received high praise from the audience. Notably, their rendition of 'How Lovely are Thy Dwellings' from the Brahms' German Requiem left a lasting impression. The concert featured memorable solo performances by Rosie Dart singing 'Meadowlark' and Katie Dart with 'Fields of Gold', both receiving acclaim from the captivated audience.

Behind the scenes, the concert's success was made possible by a dedicated team of helpers. Special thanks to Andy on Box Office, Bob & Jane serving exquisite wine provided by Lidl, Doug on PA, Mark and family on logistics, and Ros on PR and programme design. Annette's hospitality for the performers and helpers added much welcome nourishment to the event.

Since the concert, numerous notes of appreciation have flooded in, a testament to the magical evening created by the performers and the tireless team of helpers. A heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to making this musical extravaganza a resounding success.



ANNUAL CONCERT 2023



VOLUNTEERING WITHIN THE PARISH

Mark Puddy

We have been studying the Book of James in our sermons each week. In this, he says that, while our salvation is through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the vitality of our living faith is shown in our actions. One way that we can do this is by getting involved with the many activities of the Church.

Two things have struck me in my time as a Churchwarden. One is our reliance on the work of volunteers. While it is brilliant that there are over 100 people on a rota of some kind or another, we have been very reliant on some of our older members, who have covered many areas for a number of years. To sustain the work of the church going forwards, we need to give them a hand, so that, when in time they stand down, others will be able to cover all the tasks.

Secondly, getting something done is actually really satisfying. We all know that pleasure which comes from completing a job in the garden, like clearing leaves. This is even more the case when getting involved with sorting things for the church and seeing things come to fruition.

The areas I cover are the Communicating & Supporting CoGs

- Are you creative and have ideas for articles for the Parish Magazine?
- Do you want to use your IT skills to help the team in the Parish Office, or perhaps join the AV team in Church?
- Do you have an eye for detail that means that you could help with Health & Safety?
- Have you got a knowledge of buildings which means you could help with the supervision of routine maintenance of the buildings?
- Do you have skills in HR which mean you would be able to support the HR work within the Parish Team?
- Could you help publicise activities and events in the Parish e.g. via social media?

If you want to talk to me about any of these, please speak to me: 0118 940 2028 or email markpuddy@btinternet.net.

If God has given us talents, let us use them to do His work.

THE WELCOME CAFÉ: Help needed

Steve Turville

The Welcome Café is open at the Hannen Room next to St Mary's almost every Tuesday afternoon from 2.30-4pm and we attract customers from within and beyond Wargrave. Many people bring themselves, but we especially need drivers who can bring people who are no longer able to bring themselves. Might you be able to help by bringing someone and taking them home? If you think that's something you could help with, please contact Revd Steve Turville. We'd also love new hosts to join our team, serving tea and cake and offering a friendly welcome. Thank you.

steve.turville@wargravechurch.org.uk



CELEBRATING: It's an ideas thing!

Sue Witney

Our newly formed Celebrating team has been running for just over a year and we have been involved with a variety of activities.

The Celebrating Team is made up of people from a wide range of ages. We have young families and also older members of the congregation involved. Some of the events we have been involved with are church brunches, Harvest Supper, Cheese & Wine evening and of course the Burns Night. Not everyone is able to help with every activity but people help as and when and every contribution is valued. We are also always open to suggestions of other events we could run which would serve our community. We are a great team and it is also a fun way to get to know people better.

We are always looking for more people to get involved, so if you would like to join this newly-formed yet dynamic team, please don't hesitate to contact me.

suewitney8@gmail.com

STEWARDED TOGETHER: Becoming sustainable

Mike Buckland

The Parish always needs volunteers to look after our buildings and land. Without volunteers, very little would get done. Everyone works in pairs or in a team, so it's sociable work. The contacts are as follows:



- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| St Mary's Church cleaning | June Knox |
| St Mary's linen | Christine Walker |
| St Mary's Centre cleaning | Christine Walker |
| Hannen Room cleaning | Cynthia Coombes |
| Brass, candles, flowers | Sheila Williams |
| Churchyard | |
| Mill Green & cemetery | Peter Mayes |
| Nature conservation | Mike Buckland |
| St Mary's grass cutting | Bob Austen & Bill Bookless |
| St Peter's Church | Lesley Bell |
| St Peter's churchyard | David Bell |

This is not the full list of duties – just those where more volunteers would help. In many cases the commitment is just for a few times or even only once a year.

If you can help or have questions, please get in touch with one of the above or email Mike. Cynthia invites you to contact her directly at cynthiacoombes@aol.com or on 0118 940 2937.

We particularly need someone to take oversight of St Mary's churchyard – someone who can spot what needs doing - walls, trees and grass. Please contact Peter or Mike if you can help or would like to know more.

mikebuckland54@gmail.com

CAMP MOHAWK

Samantha Rosier



Camp Mohawk

The Woodland Centre Trust
Registered charity no. 1202580

Camp Mohawk is an activity day centre set in 5 acres of beautiful countryside in Wargrave. We provide a variety of specifically designed, adapted facilities and activities for children and young people with a range of cognitive and physical disabilities. We have no geographical boundaries and actually have a family registered with us from as far away as Scotland. The majority of our young people come from the South East - with highest numbers visiting from Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and West London.

The children and young people along with their families are affected by a variety of diagnosed conditions. We support families right from the beginning of the diagnostic process, through childhood and into adulthood and we also support families where the children are young carers.

Camp Mohawk enables children and young people with special needs to spend time with their families. They can relax, play, develop their social skills and build their self-confidence all in a positive and uplifting environment. They are free to be their authentic selves away from judgement.

Camp Mohawk always welcomes new volunteers and there are lots of ways you can get involved. Helping hands are always welcome for site maintenance and gardening or how about volunteering at a range of local events.

For details about the charity's work please visit our website. You can also follow Camp Mohawk on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to keep up with all the news.

campmohawk.org.uk

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING



YELDALL MANOR

Sue Hedger



A Christian response to addiction

Yeldall Manor is a residential Christian recovery centre, just up the road in Hare Hatch. We are home to up to 34 men who want to overcome their drug or alcohol addiction, and it is a privilege to be part of seeing them turn their lives around.

We immensely value people's support in many ways – prayer, finance, and practically. We particularly welcome volunteers in the following areas: driving to appointments; staffing the Reception desk and admin; catering; house maintenance (good trade or DIY skills needed) or grounds/horticultural work. In most instances, we would be looking for someone to offer a regular weekday slot, although driving is a bit more ad-hoc (still weekdays), and catering can include weekends too.

We will also need volunteers to help staff our annual Open Day which will be on 29th June 2024.

suehedger@yeldall.org.uk / 0118 940 4411



TWYFORD VOLUNTEER DRIVERS



Our volunteer drivers take elderly, mobile people to local hospitals, surgeries and other medical appointments.

We are seeking more drivers to help with growing demand. Drivers use their own cars and choose the trips they want to do and how frequently they want to drive.

Please contact us for an informal chat on 0118 934 3010 or email twadvc@yahoo.co.uk

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION: Appeal for Volunteers

Patricia Vella

Many of you will be familiar with Christian Community Action (CCA) charity in Reading.

For the last 30 years it has helped people in furniture poverty in Reading by providing them with second hand furniture. It has grown to include 4 charity shops as well as a second hand furniture shop whilst continuing to provide essential furniture, bedding and kitchen packs to those living in deprivation.

Despite the affluence of many areas in and around Reading three of our shops operate in areas that have people amongst the bottom 5% most deprived in the country and the remaining shop in Reading operates in an area with people in the bottom 10% most deprived in the country. (In contrast Wargrave is one of the less deprived areas of the country).

CCA is currently being led by a Wargrave resident Patricia Vella on a voluntary basis as she overhauls it's strategy and operating processes to set it up for the next 30 years and she urgently needs help from other professionals. She is looking for professionals who are able to help on a voluntary basis. The areas below give some areas where help is particularly needed:

- HR advice with documenting policies and procedures
- Organise fundraising events
- Website development
- IT support
- Word editing support to put all policies into standard format



If you have any questions about Christian Community Action, want to donate to us, visit us, get involved or invite us to come and talk to your organisation, please us a call or drop us an email, we would love to hear from you!

0118 9512 336 mail@ccam.org.uk ccam.org.uk

FAITHFULLY SERVING THE LORD

John Cook

'...Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" "I have not made trouble for Israel", Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals."

On November 17th, the General Synod of the Church of England voted to encourage the bishops to make available same-sex blessing services on an 'experimental basis'. It might be that some of these services could start being used before too long.

“ Experimental basis ”

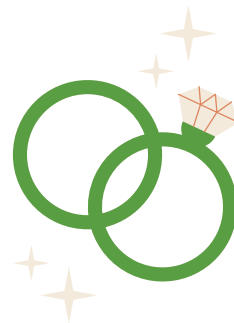
A number our church family have left us since this was first mooted a few years ago, and moved to other churches as they felt they could not with integrity remain and attend a Church of England church with the direction of travel in our denomination. The motion was passed by the tightest of margins: just 51% in favour and 49% against amongst the non-ordained Synod representatives. The pattern amongst the clergy was similar. Even among the bishops, the vote in favour was just 62%. The General Synod (which I served on for twenty years) was a house divided.

Real questions have emerged about the process followed. Normally for major changes of official doctrine or liturgy Synod is required to have a two thirds majority, recognizing the need for consensus and that such changes can never be made lightly. However, the bishops who promoted the motion dodged this on a technicality by using the word 'experimental'. They promised supporting materials, but these were never provided.



They also, it appears, had received legal advice which they did not make public. That has never happened before. Usually at the General Synod all papers are circulated to the laity, clergy, and bishops. The Bishop of Rochester, who courageously spoke against the motion, warned of a resulting breakdown in trust in the bishops - and this has occurred.

The grief at this goes beyond mere process. This does not stem from homophobia as some suggest. Listening to the debate a number of those who spoke against the motion spoke candidly of their own experience of same sex attraction. In our churches we welcome all to come to hear the life- changing news of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is so serious at this time is that our Lord's words which are so clear are being ignored and brazenly disregarded; His Lordship and His government of His church rejected. The world-wide church across all denominations (with the exception of Europe and the USA) are continuing with the historic Biblical understanding of marriage being between a man and a woman.



This is a watershed moment, because the Church of England's founding documents show we are a denomination which is supposed to be governed by the words of the Lord Jesus in the Bible. In rejecting them we are rejecting Him.



One of my clergy colleagues was at a very large meeting in Oxford this week, and it is clear much disruption will now follow. Do read the words of Jesus in Revelation 2: 18-29, where He calls His people not to tolerate those who promote sin.

“ Churches who hold to His truth are distancing themselves from bishops and other churches ”

This means we are already seeing churches who hold to His truth distancing themselves from bishops and other churches who do not. Local working relationships are, with regret, across England being suspended.

Many churches will be accused of being disruptive and schismatic. So also, was Elijah in 1 Kings 18: 16-18. The background is that King Ahab had led the nation away from the true and living God, to worship gods of human invention.

Elijah prayed drought upon the land, to bring the king to his senses. Ahab then accused Elijah of being a troublemaker. See how the prophet replied: it has a very contemporary ring!

This has serious implications for our churches here in Wargrave and in Knowl Hill. Please join me in praying for wisdom as we look to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus here.

CSW everyone free to believe

CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE

On 5th November, Remembrance Sunday, we joined the rest of the Christian world in marking the **International Day of Prayer** for the Persecuted Church, remembering those who have died or are persecuted for their beliefs as well as those who have died in war.

The Bible says:

Continue to remember those in prison as if you were with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Hebrews 13:3

This Christmas and New Year, we urge you to download CSW's prayer diary at csw.org.uk/prayer and use their "Connect & Encourage" directory to send cards to prisoners of faith and their families. Cards from children are especially encouraging for those with young families.

csw.org.uk/connectencourage

**FRIDAY
26TH JANUARY**

**BURNS
NIGHT**

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

7PM - 9.30PM

St Mary's Church Centre

Traditional Recitations, Haggis & A Wee Dram!

More Info & To Book: suewitney8@gmail.com

LADIES' BREAKFAST: 4th November

Linda Caradine

Ladies breakfast on the 4th November was, as always, an absolute delight.



The breakfast itself is great but it is so wonderful to take part in a group that is friendly, accepting of each other, and where there is freedom to say exactly what you want or need to say.

We explored the pros and cons of being a lark or an owl. And by thinking about Mary Magdalene who was a lark and Nicodemus who was an owl, we learned that it doesn't really matter what time of the day or night we come to Jesus as long as we come.

Both Mary and Nicodemus found that their time with Jesus changed them as people and their understanding of who he was and what a difference he made in their lives, giving them a sense of meaning and purpose.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS with RAMBLIN' BOB

Jane Austen

Our last ramble of the season was held on Sunday 29th October when our group met at the Royal Oak in Knowl Hill for a walk across the open landscape of rich agricultural land between Knowl Hill and Waltham St Lawrence. We set forth in light rain but it thankfully soon brightened up for most of our ramble.

Waltham St Lawrence has a very pretty centre with a pound located outside The Bell pub; that must have been very welcome for the farmers of old!

We followed the footpath alongside St Lawrence Church (pictured) and through a farmyard to see a flock of turkeys roaming around their pen. How sweet and innocent they appeared, oblivious to their destiny in a few week's time!

The path wended its way past Weycock Hill, once the site of a Roman villa, and then through a hedged path known as Roman Road before returning to Knowl Hill Common and the Royal Oak. There we enjoyed a delicious Sunday roast, a fitting end to our year's Rambles with Bob!



ST PETER'S PROJECT UPDATE

Lesley Bell

KNOWL HILL NEWS



Toilets

As part of the preparation for the installation of toilets to St Peter's, soil testing has to be done in order to establish whether the ground would be suitable for a digester to be placed under ground.

To this end, two holes were dug, as per the photo, and we are now awaiting the results before we can proceed.

Lighting

Also we have now had all the lighting changed to LED which was long overdue and will save the congregation from wearing head torches during the winter months!



CAMEO: OCTOBER 2023

Lesley Bell

At the October CAMEO get together, we were joined by 10 members of the Knowl Hill Academy school council and their teachers.

Everyone enjoyed an afternoon of mixed activities from playing cards, dominoes and scrabble to drawing but most importantly chatting to the members.

Squash and specially made Halloween cakes, kindly provided by Caroline Shailes (pictured) were demolished with relish!



ELVIS IS BACK IN THE BUILDING: KNOWL HILL

Lesley Bell

During October, Elvis (aka Gary Roman) made his annual visit to Knowl Hill.

As the music started, almost immediately everyone got up and joined in with the singing and dancing. Half way during the evening, the fish and chips arrived, which were then quickly consumed so that all could resume their participation in the entertainment. A great night was had by all and a few pounds were raised for the church.





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