

Good News Parish Magazine

High Downs Parish

Serving the villages of
Eastling, Otterden,
Stalisfield and Throwley

www.goodnews.rf.gd

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Christmas Services

Carol Services by Candlelight

17th December	Stalisfield Church	5.30pm
17th December	Throwley Church	6pm
24th December	Eastling Church	4pm

Christmas Eve

Midnight Mass 11.30pm Stalisfield Church

Christmas Day

Christmas Communion 10am Throwley Church
Christmas Morning Worship 10am Eastling Church



DECEMBER 2023

- 3rd Turning on the Christmas Lights
Stalisfield Green & Pub 4.30pm
- 6th Stalisfield Youth Group 7-8.30pm
The Norwood's House
- 8th & 9th Cinderella Pantomime
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 10th Seniors' Christmas Party
Stalisfield Village Hall 4pm
- 13th Arts Society lecture, Egerton
Millennium Hall, Egerton 2.30pm
- 13th Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 14th Singing Kettle Song Group
Newnham Village Hall 2 - 3pm
- 14th Charing History Society
Church Barn, Market Place 7.30 pm
- 16th Children's Christmas Party
Stalisfield Village Hall 12.30pm
- 17th Carol Service
Stalisfield Church 5.30pm
- 17th Carol Service
Throwley Church 6pm
- 17th Carols at the Carpenters
Carpenters Arms, Eastling 6pm
- 20th Copy deadline for January 2024
goodnewsmagazine@me.com
- 20th Youth Group Christmas Party
Stalisfield Village Hall 7-8.30pm
- 21st Stalisfield Village Carols
Stalisfield Green 6pm
- 22nd Eat, Pray, Walk
Doddington Church 1.30pm
- 22nd Christmas Carols at Throwley
Throwley Forstal 6.30pm
- 24th Carol Service
Eastling Church 4pm
- 24th Midnight Mass
Stalisfield Church. 11.30pm



Carols around our Villages

Turning on the **Christmas Lights**
and tuning up your carols at The Plough
and Stalisfield Village Green
Sunday 3rd December, 4.30pm



Carols at the Carpenters

All your favourite carols in front of an open
fire with mulled wine and mini mince pies.
6pm on Sunday 17th

Stalisfield Village Carols
As usual meet on the Green
on Thursday 21st December
at 6pm



Christmas Carols at Throwley Forstal

Friday 22nd December,
6:30 – 7.30 pm

Traditional Carols round the Christmas tree,
bring your family and join your friends and
neighbours in Christmas cheer!

December Message from Revd. Caroline Turvey

I'm writing this in November amidst the tragedy of war and the remembering those in war past whilst wondering what this Christmas will be like around the world. The questions probe deep into our consciousness. For Christians, Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, thinking particularly of the incarnation of God in humanity as Jesus Christ. God amongst us, beside us, within us. The hope of humanity lies at the heart of the Christian message. That Jesus came as a gift of love to a broken world bringing light to all seems difficult to conceive when we see the pain and suffering of nations torn apart.

Jesus himself knew poverty. He was born at a time of unrest in the Roman Empire, his family fleeing while he was a child through the borders of Israel to safer lands in Egypt. Has the story changed that much over 2000 years?

But we continue to live with hope. In the midst of chaos, we catch glimpses of that hope through international organisations that go into the world to bring aid. I particularly admire those working for the charity Médecins Sans Frontières – incredible people, bringing medical help on the frontline of wars around the world, risking everything to help others. Amazing.

That is what Jesus was about – helping people in front of him, those visible and invisible, transforming the individual both physically and spiritually.

So what can we do on our frontlines?

Currently, we have a team of people working towards launching a project called 'Growbaby' in the New Year. We all understand the concept of a foodbank and have been giving generously to these for many years. Growbaby is a similar idea which enables those who have young families to be able to access



good quality children's clothes from a central source for free. This will all be stored in Lynsted Church – our hub for Growbaby.

We are at the beginning of something that feels right and has come from our Benefice as a response to the difficulties in our current social climate. If our remit as Christians is to seek justice for the poor and the oppressed, then this gives us that opportunity to work together for this cause and essentially, God's Kingdom here on earth.

How can you help initially?

- We need good quality children and baby clothing (age 0-5) that you no longer need.
- We need people to help wash, iron and sort the clothing.

Perhaps you might consider buying something new as a present to someone you don't know.

- We need financial donations to be able to offer hospitality to our visitors and to purchase other essentials as and when needed.
- We need people to offer spaces as 'drop off' points for donated items.

If you would like to help us, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Karen at growbaby@kc-hd.org.uk for more details on how and where to donate.

We can all bring light and hope into the world this Christmas.

May your Christmas be bright and full of joy.



Prayer a day till Christmas:

December 1st

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Prayer

Wonderful Counsellor, we ask for your guidance at this time. Help us to take the right paths and the correct decisions. Lord be our guide. And even when we take a wrong turning, help us to trust that you are with us, healing, restoring and forgiving. In Jesus' name, Amen.

December 2nd

"Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."

Isaiah 9:7

Prayer

Lord, have mercy, bring order out of chaos, protect the vulnerable, strengthen the weak and give voice to the voiceless. Let your peace come to us, God, and let righteousness and justice flow like a river. Amen.

December 3rd

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."

Isaiah 9:2a

Prayer

Lord, we name before you those we know who are going through times of darkness. We think of them and ask, gracious God, that you may bring them light, hope, love and direction. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Christmas Coffee Morning



Friends of St Mary, Norton
Saturday 2nd December
11:00 - 12:30
Norton Village Hall
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The Plough Inn The Plough Inn, Stalisfield;

a family run, independent, award winning pub & restaurant offering an extensive menu of both 2 AA rosette dishes and your traditional pub classics.

Why not plan a walk & finish back at the pub for a hearty lunch of Richard's take on a Croque Monsieur or Madame with organic sourdough & homecooked ham, followed with a crème brulee for £16 (lunchtimes only).

Curry night on Tuesdays, with a choice of 3 authentic curries available at £15 between 5.30pm & 7pm.

Wellbeing Wednesday, pop in for a free tea or coffee and chat with others or enjoy 10% off drinks, see you between 4.30pm & 6pm.

Keep up to date by following us on Facebook, Instagram or X (twitter)

Stalisfield Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 0HY
Tel: 01795 890 256 Email:
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December 4th

"On those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned."

Isaiah 9:2b

Prayer

Lord, have mercy on all those who are living in the place of the shadow of death. Those in that valley coping with terminal illness or those who have lost loved ones. God, who is light, bring strength, hope and comfort today. Amen.

December 5th

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light"

Ephesians 5:8

Prayer

Lord, help me to stand for truth today. Make me a person of honesty and integrity. Lord, when my courage fails, as it does, grant me your close presence to remind me that healing, forgiveness and love flow from you to me. Thank you, Amen.

December 6th

"For the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth."

Ephesians 5:9

Prayer

Lord, make me a person of goodness. Slow to anger and abounding in love. God, in the power of your Spirit, change me and make me more like Jesus. Are there areas of my life that need to be changed by you? I name them before you now. Come, Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Otterden and Stalisfield W.I.

In preparation for the forthcoming festive season, we were able to secure an extremely good Speaker this month, in the form of Kathy Hook who lives quite locally in Marden. Kathy produces handmade Belgian chocolate truffles filled with a ganache blended with her homemade Sloe Gin. She took us through the formulation of her business, that she runs from home during the winter months, and then onto the process of making and marketing her wonderful chocolates. A sample was provided! The bag of 6 truffles wrapped in red foil, if all eaten at once, are enough to take you over the drink/drive limit, so quite strong, but delicious. The chocolates have a fairly short shelf life, so the product cannot be stored for long, and she sells bags, boxes and hampers from home. Kathy is a natural speaker and great fun too, regularly attending other W.I. Groups. Her 'other' completely different job during the rest of the year is working in a motorbike shop, as her passion is Classic Motorbikes, through which she met her husband.

The final Meeting of 2023 will be held after the Stalisfield Christmas Pantomime on Wednesday 13th December at 7.30pm. Andrew Higgs is back with us again by popular request, to provide us with a Wine Tasting evening. Cheese and nibbles will also be provided. All Members are welcome to bring Guests. Contact our President Helen Brooks on 07477580727 or Secretary Ellie Cameron on 01795 892016.

Have a Happy Christmas everyone.

December 7th

"The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the lamb is its lamp."

Revelation 21:23

Prayer

Lord Jesus, be my everything. In trial and success, in tears, in laughter, be my everything, and remind me always of the joy that is mine through your amazing sacrificial love. Amen.

December 8th

"I am the light of the world."

John 8:12

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for your love. Forgive me for the times when I wander away from you. Rather than basking in the warmth and brightness of you I see you dimly at a distance. Lord, help me to draw closer today, to seek you and to worship you and know again your affection for me. Amen.

December 9th

"Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12b

Prayer

Lord, help me just to follow you. Sometimes I want to know every possible turn in the road, measure every risk. Help me to have the trust just to follow so that I am not stumbling about in the darkness. Give me courage God to answer your call and follow you anywhere at any time. Amen.



Christmas in Stalisfield

Dates for your diary in December

Sunday 3rd: Turning on the **Christmas lights** at the Pub/
Village Green – 4.30pm

Friday 8th and Saturday 9th:

Stalisfield Panto - Cinderella - at the Hall 7.30pm

Ticket only £7 (£4 children) from Sharon

tickets@stalisfieldvillagehall.co.uk or on 01795 890415

Sunday 10th: Stalisfield and Otterden

Seniors' Christmas Dinner - at the Hall - 4pm

Prebook only contact Bridget at

bawithell@yahoo.com or on 01795 892125

Saturday 16th: **Children's Christmas Party** at the Hall
- 12.30pm. Prebook only contact Julie on 07584 798415
(evenings) or at julie.beames@hotmail.co.uk

Sunday 17th: **Carol Service** at the Church - 5.30pm

Join the village to celebrate with carols, readings, mulled wine and mince pies!

Thursday 21st: **Village Carols** starting on the Green - 6pm

Sunday 24th: **Midnight Mass** at the Church - 11.30pm



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See our availability here: <https://www.eastlingvillagehall.co.uk/calendar>





Stalisfield Village Hall

Presents

Cinderella

A Villages' Production

December 8th & 9th at 7.30pm

Get ready to be whisked away on a magical Panto experience like no other! Join Cinderella on her quest to find true love. With hilarious twists, unforgettable characters, and plenty of fairy-tale magic, that'll have you laughing, cheering, and believing in the power of dreams.

Book your tickets now: £7, £4 children, from Sharon: 01795 890415 or tickets@stalisfieldvillagehall.co.uk



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Stalisfield Village Hall
Saturday 17th December,
12.30pm

The children of Stalisfield and Otterden are invited to the Hall for the Annual Christmas Party. From littlies to biggies, every child is welcome.

Pre-book only - contact Julie on 07584 798415 (evenings), or julie.beames@hotmail.co.uk



Christmas Party

Stalisfield and Otterden Seniors' Christmas Dinner

Stalisfield Village Hall
Sunday 10th December - 4pm
Prebook only contact Bridget at bawithell@yahoo.com or on 01795 892125



Stalisfield Youth Group

December dates:

6th at The Norwood's house
20th Youth Christmas Party in Stalisfield Village Hall
7 - 8.30pm Free to all 11-18yr olds.

We have table tennis, craft, games, summer outdoor sports equipment, music, Wii and Xbox gaming, tuck shop and free cake!

Any questions please contact Catherine on 07929 928 046



Mouse Makes

ADVENT comes from the Latin 'AD VENTO' which means **ARRIVAL**

In Advent we celebrate Jesus' birth and look forward to the time when Jesus will come again.

GOD'S PROMISE
Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON
GIVEN • WONDERFUL
COUNCELLOR
MIGHTY • GOD ★

EVERLASTING
FATHER • PRINCE
PEACE • LORD

AN ANGEL MESSENGER
Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL
JOSEPH • MARY
FAVOUR • SON ★
JESUS • GREAT ★

THRONE • REIGN
FOREVER • HOLY
SERVANT • WORD

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
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P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
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B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
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A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
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A LONG JOURNEY
Luke 2:1-20

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John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED
WORLD • HE • GAVE
ONLY • SON
WHOEVER • BELIEVES
ETERNAL • LIFE

Colour in one star each day until Christmas

Dec23 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk



On 9th November 2023 a special Service of Dedication of a new memorial stone took place in the churchyard of St. Mary, Eastling.

Private Sydney Court was the son of Ethel Lucy Court of Eastling and was husband to Gladys Barbara Frances Court of Newnham Lane, Eastling. Before the war Sydney worked as a baker's assistant for the bakers in Eastling Street and lives with his grandparents in Newnham Lane in what is now Magnolia Cottage.

Sydney joined up with the Royal East Kent Yeomanry at Faversham on 29th January 1914 and saw service towards the end of the Gallipoli campaign and unfortunately contracted typhoid shortly after this, being hospitalised Alexandria before being repatriated home in 1916.

Family stories say he spent some time at the Western front, where he was gassed, although the only surviving records for him do not confirm this as they are primarily his medical records from later in the war. Many soldiers' documents were destroyed by enemy bombing during the second world war and so the story is not complete. He was transferred to Ireland and this is where, because of his war service, he contracted TB in January 1918. He was transferred to the Lothians and Border Horse in September and discharged in April 1919.

Sydney married Gladys whilst convalescing at Woodbridge in October 1918 and their first child Lionel was born whilst living with Gladys' mother in Hammersmith in April 1919. They moved to Eastling to live with Sydney's grandparents (whom he thought were his parents) in Newnham Lane, where their second child Jim was born in September 1920. Sydney died of TB on 15th June 1921.

Private Sydney Court was buried elsewhere in the churchyard in 1921 and the new stone has been provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Footnote: If anyone has any other information on the Court family please get in touch with Sue or Peter Parry (sueandpeter@live.co.uk), current residents of Magnolia Cottage, and they will be happy to pass it on to the Court family.



Where my Life Began

By Audrey Keen.

Speckled sun on lime trees
 Show trunks a deathly black,
 As wind blown leaves fall in
 flurries
 On the grassy gravelly track.
 And spatters come between the
 height
 Of boughs, and life that swings
 With the motion of the tree
 As the happy blackbird sings.
 The wood rooks fly from parkland
 And grassy meadows span
 This place that is a part fo me
 And where my life began.

A Prayer for Peace

by The Very Reverend Andrew Nunn

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.' *Matthew 5.9*

Lord Jesus, who walked the land you made holy and blessed those who made peace;
 Look with compassion on the people of your land today,

Jew, Muslim and Christian,
 Israeli and Palestinian.

May peace come for all with justice, may war cause and all live in harmony, and be the children of the one God who you made known, now and always. Amen



December 10th

"God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all."

1 John 1:5b

Prayer

Lord God, help me to reflect upon my own life. Show me the areas of darkness in me. (Silence) Where I have become hardened to the plight of others or where I have lost the will to do good, Lord help me. Bring your light and your forgiveness and help me today to walk in your light. Allow me to see that in the darkest places it is possible for the light to shine brightest. Amen.

December 11th

"If we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:7

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus – the Light of the world. Thank you that He brought light and life to all who received Him during His life on earth and that He still brings light and life to all who receive Him. Amen.

December 12th

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14

Prayer

Draw me closer to you God. Help me to reflect your light in places of darkness. If I am not bright, help me, through your Holy Spirit, to wait upon you and know your presence. Amen.

Sunday Services

3rd December Advent Sunday

1 Corinthians 1. 3 - 9, Mark 13. 24 - 37

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Doddington 10.30am Advent Carol Service with Reflections

10th December Advent 2

2 Peter 3. 8-15a, Mark 1. 1 - 8

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

17th December Advent 3

1 Thessalonians 5. 16 - 24, John 1. 6 - 8, 19 -28

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Stalisfield 5.30pm Carol Service

Throwley 6pm Carol Service

24th December Christmas Eve

Romans 16. 25 - 27, Luke 1. 26 - 38

Lynsted 10.30am Family Communion

Eastling 4pm Carol Service

Newnham 5pm Crib Service

Stalisfield 11.30pm Midnight Mass

25th December Christmas Day

Hebrews 1. 1 - 12, John 1. 1 - 14

Throwley 10am Holy Communion

Eastling 10 am Morning Worship

31st December Christmas 1

Galatians 4. 4 - 7, Luke 2. 15 - 21

Doddington 10.30am Holy Communion

7th January 2024 Baptism of Christ

Acts 19. 1 - 7, Mark 1. 4 - 11

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Online Daily Worship Continues

As well as the services in our churches, the daily 9am Morning Prayer at Lynsted will continue at Lynsted and online on <https://kc-hd.org.uk>.

More information is updated weekly on St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>



High Downs Parish

Rector Vacant

Benefice Administrator Joyce Warren
01795 521831 joyce.warren@kc-hd.org.uk

Associate Priest Reverend James (Jim) Pye
01795 890726 jim.pye@kc-hd.org.uk

Curate Reverend Caroline Turvey
01795 886351 caroline.turvey@kc-hd.org.uk

Reader Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)

Anna Chaplain Caroline Ramshaw
AnnaChaplaincy@outlook.com

Reader Pim Baxter (07710 116269)

Church Contacts

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Administrator E mail: stmaryeastling@gmail.com

Stalisfield with Otterden
Jenny King, Warden (01795 890366)

Administrator Shirley Pritchard
Email: Stmarystalisfield@gmail.com

Throwley Tim Jones, Warden
Email: timothydavid.jones@yahoo.co.uk

High Downs Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mark Harlow (07979 864000)
E mail: mark.harlow@kc-hd.org.uk

From The Registers

Funerals

Lionel William Pope

20th November 2023 at Stalisfield

Roger Scutt

23rd November 2023 at Throwley

CONTACT THE GOOD NEWS EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in the January 2024 magazine, send your submission by 20th December to: goodnewsmagazine@me.com.

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on www.goodnews.rf.gd

Anna Chaplaincy

Please contact our Anna Chaplain, Caroline Ramshaw, if you know of someone who is isolated, alone, or unable to attend church.

An Anna Chaplain can offer a listening ear and company.

Communion can be brought to you in your own home.



Contact your local Anna Chaplain on:
annachaplaincy@outlook.com

07799538809



Updates from Citizens Advice Swale

citizens advice

We're delighted to announce that our Sheppey drop-in session is now up and running, in addition to Sittingbourne and Faversham. Call in without an appointment at one of the following times:
Mondays, 10am-12pm - Swale House, Sittingbourne
Tuesdays, 10am-12pm - Sheppey Gateway, Sheerness
Wednesdays and Fridays, 10am-12pm - 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Our services are subject to adviser availability. Please follow us on social media (Facebook and Twitter) for up to date opening hours.

In addition to our face-to-face services you can still contact us on the phone and online (see below).

The last drop-in session before Christmas will be on Friday 22, with our offices reopening on Tuesday 2 January. The national Adviceline service will be running a reduced service over the Christmas period (excluding weekends and bank holidays).

We wish all our clients a very merry Christmas.

How can we help you?

- General Advice: Call Adviceline on 0808 278 7979, send an online request at <https://citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice/> (Monday-Wednesday) or come to a drop-in session.
- Debt: Request a call back at <https://citizensadviceswale.uk/debt/>

We offer free, confidential and impartial advice to people living or working in and around Faversham, Sheppey and Sittingbourne. In addition to general advice we offer specialist advice services including debt and benefits. We're an independent charity and we rely on donations and grants to make a difference to people in our community.



THE ARTS SOCIETY EGERTON

The Arts Society brings people together through a shared curiosity for the arts

We meet at Egerton Millennium Hall, Elm Close TN27 9DS on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm (doors open from 2.00). Our next lecture will be:

THE 3 KINGS – THE REAL STORY presented by TONY RAWLINS

Wednesday 13th December at 2.30pm

A light-hearted seasonal lecture for Christmas, describing what we actually know about the three kings – or rather what we don't know! For a start we don't know how many "kings" there were. Matthew doesn't tell us. We assume they were 3 because they brought 3 gifts. But why gold, frankincense and myrrh? Also, there's no reason to suppose they were kings of anywhere. We don't even know their gender – some of them might have been women. And since they gave away the location of the baby Jesus to Herod the alleged baby slayer, we can reasonably assume they weren't too clever – let alone wise!

Visitors are always very welcome at £6, refunded if you join. For further information please contact Christine Willis, our Membership Secretary via cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377.

See also our website www.theartssocietyegerton.org.uk

There will be no lecture in January



CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING

Our usual bring and share buffet, wine and quiz.



Thursday, 14th December 2023

Where: Church Barn, Market Place
Time: 7.30pm doors open

Festivities start there!!!

www.charinghistory.co.uk

Like us on Facebook!

December 13th

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

Prayer

Lord, help me not to hide my light. Save me from apathy and the blandness that so easily envelops us. Let me use my energy in ways that bless others and demonstrate your love. May the peoples praise you, O God. Amen.

December 14th

"Your word is a lamp for my feet."

Psalm 119:105a

Prayer

Lord, I thank you that you don't leave me in confusion. I don't need to be paralysed with fear, unable to move my feet forward. Thank you that you have given your word as a lamp to my feet so that I can see what is around me. Help me to pay attention to the light. In Jesus' name, Amen.

December 15th

"A light on my path."

Psalm 119:105b

Prayer

Lord God, give me confidence to move forward. Let me stride into the future you have for me with boldness. Let your word direct my steps, God, so that I am aware of every danger and navigate around it. And Lord, if ever I fall I thank you that you are there to pick me up.

North Downs Walk – final figures better than expected

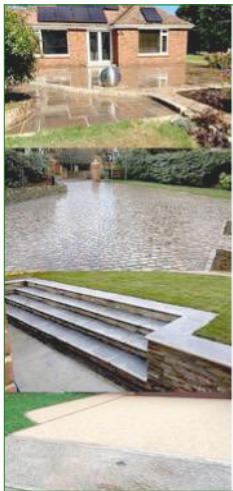
The Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent held its annual North Downs Walk on Sunday 11th June. The weather was great and the results are better than originally estimated.

The event is a sponsored walk in aid of Cancer Research UK and the walkers' own choice of good causes. Walkers may choose to donate 50% of their sponsorship to their own nominated cause, or all of it to CRUK. There is a choice of routes from 1 mile (fully paved, therefore suitable for wheelchairs or baby buggies) to 9 miles including a climb up the North Downs

which attracted a full range of ages and abilities of walkers, including Brownies, Air Cadets, keen hikers and Active Retirement Associations. Of the 357 walkers, some had pre-registered and downloaded sponsor forms via the Weald Rotary website and others entered on the day, making a donation to CRUK. With all the sponsorship money now collected and counted, the confirmed totals exceed the early estimates. Including Gift Aid, the total amount raised was £27,000. £17,700 was donated to Cancer Research UK and £9,300 to 26 other good causes nominated by the walkers.



Weald of Kent Rotary have been running the North Downs Walk for 38 years, missing only 2020 due to lockdowns, and plan to continue running it as long as there are walkers. The 2024 Walk will take place on Sunday 9th June.



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December 16th

"Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly."

Matthew 1:19

Prayer

Lord God, we pray for all those who are isolated. Some that live in isolated communities across the world, and others who feel alone even in the midst of many people. We pray that they may know your presence. We also pray for those who go to isolated communities across the world bringing supplies, medicines and support. Lord, have mercy. Amen.

December 17th

"An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: 'Joseph, Son of David, do not be afraid.'"

Matthew 1:20

Prayer

Lord, we pray for all those who are captives to fear. Those who face each situation with dread. Those with fears in the present and those fearing the future. Lord, draw near and bring your love. God, we ask for those who live in countries where their situation can change for the worse at any moment. Those with no control over what happens to them. Make your presence known, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

December 18th

"So Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David."

Luke 2:4

Prayer

Gracious Lord, we pray for all those who are refugees. Those running in fear. Those in camps. Those taking tremendous risks just to survive. We pray that you might be with them and we ask for your presence to be with all those who work with refugees. Give them favour and encouragement in their work. Amen.

All faiths are not the same

For many religions, God is considered unknowable – just a supreme power or presence ‘out there’ somewhere. Not so Christianity. The heart of the Christmas message is His coming to us in peace and love – as the Bible says: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’ (John 1:4 RSV)



Jesus was born a baby, grew up amongst us, healed us, did many miracles, taught us, and then went on to die for us. He entered our time and our space, and we could approach Him and talk to Him. Jesus made clear that to see Him was to see the Father. What a wonderful God!

He is the Creator of the Universe, but He is also Jesus, who calls us into a daily relationship of love and dependency upon Him.

The Ven John Barton considers the Christmas story ...

No Room? On the Contrary

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests’ and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears no
The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, you men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.*



The angels’ goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God’s all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven’s doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: ‘On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.’

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God’s kingdom is home for every race: ‘I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.’ He reassured those anxious about the future: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms...’

No room? Don’t you believe it!

Luke 2:13-15

Angel hosts

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.’

The darkness of the Judean hillside was lit up by the appearance of a great angelic choir, messengers sent to herald the birth of the Saviour. Their song breaks the stillness of the night, first in praise of God for his act of mercy in sending the Son, and then in proclamation of the peace the child will bring to earth. The shepherds now decide to do the unthinkable -leave their flocks, and head off into town to see the new born King. Such is the drawing power of the Saviour.

Sometimes there are things we too must leave behind if we are to follow his call, but whatever sacrifice is needed, it will be worth it just to find him for ourselves.


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December 19th
"For no word of God will ever fail. 'I am the Lord's servant', Mary answered."

Luke 1:37-38

Prayer
Lord, we thank you for what we learn from one another. We love the miracle of the worldwide Church. People of all ages brought together through your amazing love. Those of every tongue, tribe and nation. Help us God never to lose sight of the global Church and all you are doing in and through it. Amen.

December 20th
"And they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')."

Matthew 1:23b

Prayer
Lord, we thank you that you never leave us. Thank you that you don't move on to the next thing and abandon us, You are Immanuel. You are with us. Lord be with all those who are still suffering through past disasters. Those who feel abandoned and uncared for. May they know encouragement as they bring hope and peace in your name. Amen.

December 21st
"She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger; because there was no guest room for them."

Luke 2:7

Prayer
Lord, for all those who are homeless, we ask that you may provide help and care for them. Give your Church compassion and help us not to just pass by. Lord, show us what we can do practically this year that would lift up those who are struggling. Lord, we pray for those agencies that work with the homeless, may they receive the resources and wisdom they need. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



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December 22nd
"When Herod realised that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious."
Matthew 2:16

Prayer
 Lord, your word tells us that when one part suffers we all suffer. We pray now for our brothers and sisters across the world who are being persecuted for their faith and we pray for all persecuted people, that your love would be with them. Amen.

December 23rd
"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God."
Luke 2:13

Prayer
 Lord of beauty and majesty, you revealed to simple shepherds the very joy of heaven in Jesus, but you were proclaiming to the whole of creation that things had changed forever. The Messiah, the anointed one, had come. Lord, we thank you that that same Jesus is the one we meet by faith today. The Jesus of new life, forgiveness and hope is with us. Hallelujah, we praise your name and join with all creation in celebration. Amen.

December 24th
"Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."
Luke 2:14

Prayer
 Lord, I receive your love with joy. I welcome you here, God, You are good and you are worthy to be praised. You wrap me in arms of grace, you smile on me. I am yours and you are here. Thank you Jesus for being my Saviour, my hope and my friend. Amen.

Kent County Councillor - Parish Magazine Report

KCC Household Waste Recycling Centres

After much jubilation last week at the news that KCC's proposals to close Household Waste Recycling Centres (including the site at Faversham) appeared to have been binned, it seems the celebrations were premature. As opposed to the speculation in the papers at the beginning of the month, news came directly from KCC on Wednesday 15 November that the plans were merely on hold rather than scrapped. Given the amount of media coverage the story received across Kent, it seemed highly unlikely to me that the leadership would push ahead with the plans against the wishes of the majority of councillors, but given the financial strain the council is under perhaps they see it as unavoidable.

From the outset, the plans never appeared to be fully thought through. I opposed them at length during my group leader's speech at the KCC full council meeting in May and also through my role as chair of the Environment Committee at Swale (a role I'd only been in a few days when the plans were first announced!). If they do resurface, I hope they are accompanied by suitable levels of data and evidence to try and justify how such a backward looking proposal could be considered during a climate and biodiversity crisis.

Arguments about the size of the Faversham tip which were put forward when the plans were first revealed lead me to believe that

KCC will still be looking to close the Faversham site. With this in mind, I will continue working in my dual roles at both Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council to see if a better site can be acquired for a Recycling Centre fit for the future, which will be even more necessary if plans for an additional 2500 houses on the South East corner of Faversham come to fruition.

Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan Consultation

Still on the subject of consultations, KCC currently have a consultation open on their walking and cycling plans for the county. The plans include 30 key routes across the county which are proposed for improvements.

There are three key areas in Swale earmarked. Most relevant to our area is a proposal to improve the cycling route along the Lower Road between Faversham and Sittingbourne. It's a route which can feel fairly dangerous in places for cyclists (and sadly saw the death of a cyclist near Tonge last year). Also featured are plans to improve walking provision around the northern side of Sittingbourne and cycling provision across the northern coast of the Isle of Sheppey.

The consultation is available online at the following address - <https://tinyurl.com/kccwalking>

Alternatively, a paper version can be requested by calling KCC Highways on 03000 418181.

Rich Lehmann
rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk
<http://kentgreencouncillors.news/>

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394 or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

The usual reminder that the police will be around more than usual looking out for those people whom decide that they will drink and drive over this holiday period. These people are most selfish as we hear on the news every day about families being devastated due to irresponsible people drink/drug driving.

There is poaching, hare coursing, driving through arable crops and fields continuing in our local areas, so if seen please ring the police, if in progress on 999, and report the circumstances.

At this time of year the scammers will be around trying to con us out of our hard earned monies, please be very alert and remember to be very careful on line as if it sounds to be a really cheap deal there is always a catch

Merry Christmas to one and all
Take Care

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Simply clean it with shaving foam. It provides a protective barrier which stops mist forming. Ice hockey players use it to stop their face masks from steaming up while they're on the ice.

It's easy to do. Put a good dollop of shaving foam onto a clean towel, and then wipe it all over the windscreen. Then take a second clean towel, and gently wipe off the shaving foam. This leaves a protective barrier, but it will need to be regularly reapplied, to continue to work.

This tip can be found on the RAC website:
www.rac.co.uk