



Stalisfield Church Celebratory Service

Sunday 4th July at 3pm

The celebration service for Jean & her team is taking place at 3pm on July 4th but sadly there will not be any refreshments afterwards in light of the extended Covid restrictions. To aid planning it would be helpful if you could please email stmarystalisfield@gmail.com if you are intending to be there, indicating how many will be in your bubble.

Stalisfield Treasure Hunt

Sunday 25th July

Meet at the Village Hall from 2.30 - 3.30pm

You will be given a map and clues to solve as you walk through the beautiful countryside of Stalisfield.

Invite your friends, it's for all the family with shorter walk available for little legs!

Cost is £2 per person and includes prizes and refreshments served as you return to the village hall.

A SPECIAL SERVICE AT EASTLING

Sunday 1st August, 10.30am

We will be holding a service of Holy Communion on 1st August when our Rector, Steve Lillicrap will be the celebrant and the new curate, Caroline Turvey will preach.

Following the service, we are hoping to go to the village hall (Covid precautions permitting) for a

Celebration of Norman and Sylvia Fowler's ministry and to present them with a gift.

Donations towards the gift will be welcome and can be made by cheque, payable to High Downs PCC, or by BACS: email eastlingchurch@gmail.com for bank details



July



JULY 2021

- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| 4th | Celebratory Service | 3pm |
| | Stalisfield Church | |
| 7th | Eastling Gardeners visit | 2pm |
| | Norton Court Gardens | |
| 11th | Open Gardens | 12 - 5pm |
| | Doddington | |
| 15th | Copy deadline for August Good News | |
| | goodnewsmagazine@me.com | |
| 25th | Treasure Hunt start 2.30 - 3.30pm | |
| | Stalisfield Village Hall | |

AUGUST

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------|----------|
| 1st | Special Communion Service | 10.30am |
| | Eastling Church | |
| 4th | Otterden & Stalisfield W. I. | 7.30pm |
| | Stalisfield Village Hall | |
| 8th | North Downs Sponsored Walk | |
| | Glebe Field, Harrietsham | |
| 28th | Stalisfield Village Party | 6 - 11pm |
| | Stalisfield Village Hall | |

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|-----|------------------------|
| 4th | Eastling Village Party |
| | Eastling Village Hall |

OCTOBER

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 9th | Stalisfield Harvest Supper |
| | Stalisfield Village Hall |

Good News Parish Magazine

High Downs Parish

Serving the villages of Eastling, Otterden, Stalisfield and Throwley

www.goodnews.rf.gd



Life at Eastling Primary School continues to have some adjustments due to Covid restrictions. We are still operating as two bubbles and unfortunately, we are unable to have parents attend normal end of year activities including sports day, Oak class production and the leavers service. The children are not missing out and we continue to ensure that all our children have a full education which includes extra curriculum activities.

Since Easter the children in Willow class have been able to go swimming once a week at Faversham pool. Silver Birch visited the Otterden Estate for a maths morning on

Eastling Primary School News

Friday 30th April. On Friday 7th May our reception children came to school dressed as pirates for an action-packed day at Westbrook Bay. The children designed and built their own walk the planks, made pirate maps, sang sea shanties, made telescopes and played phonic games.

On Thursday 13th May Birch class had a school trip to Wingham Wildlife Park to consolidate their learning on animals and their habitats. Thursday 20th May was National Outdoor Learning Day which of course Eastling Primary School

celebrated. There was a whole school focus on den building which every class took part in over in Eastling woods. The children were creative in their designs and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Oak class focused on their topic of the Mayans and cooked tortillas and salsa outdoors. They also made Mayan headdresses and learnt a Mayan game 'Pok-a-tok.' Willow class focused their learning around the Romans. They made catapults, sun dials, Roman numeral clocks and number lines. They also acted out Romulus and Remus myth. The younger children performed a story, made masks and art.

On 27th May Acorn class had a visit from Pirate Colin and they enjoyed a second day of dressing up. Willow class visited Reculver Beach on Friday 28th May to learn about the environment and the impact of rubbish.

The final term began on Monday 7th June with Year 6 enjoying two amazing adventure days in lieu of a residential trip. They visited Bewl Water on Wednesday 9th June where they went paddle boarding, did hammer throwing and archery. Then on Monday 14th June Year 6 went to Kingswood Activity Centre. The children abseiled, went on the 3G swing, went climbing and conquered the Leap of Faith.

The whole school enjoyed a visit to Otterden Estate organised by Countryside Learning. The children took part in several workshops including learning about farming and animals; planted seeds; went minibeast hunting; learnt about game keeping and watched a bird of prey display.

We do have a few spaces for Reception in September 2021 so if you know of any families that are looking for a place please contact the office on 01795 890252 for further details.

For further information please visit our school website where newsletters are displayed and updated regularly.

Melanie Dale, Headteacher

Mouse Makes

The Parable of the Good Samaritan
A man asked Jesus "Who is my neighbour?" and Jesus replied with this parable:

A man was attacked by robbers, they tore his clothes, beat him and left him almost dead. A priest saw him but walked by on the other side. A Levite saw him but walked by on the other side. A Samaritan saw him and took pity on him, he poured oil and wine on his wounds and then bandaged them. He lifted the man onto his donkey, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he gave the innkeeper two denarii to look after the man until he returned.

Which of the three travellers do you think was the neighbour to the man who was attacked?

Read the full story in Luke 10:25-37

CROSSWORD PUZZLE:

Across:
1. CLOTHES P
2. H N JESUS RA
3. M E R C Y S L O S
4. B I R O B B E R S
5. G J M P W V A E
6. H E P A O I J D
7. B R A R U T E C
8. O I S A N E R A
9. U C S B D E U R
10. B R H I L S B S E
11. W A S L O I L D S A M A R I T A N O O E E O A P
12. P R I E S T A O A M A G O O D C N I N N T U L A
13. G O D O I G C W W I N E A T A K W J O U R N E Y
14. E N T D E N A R I I D T W O P O U R E D M

Down:
1. J E S U S
2. P A R A B L E
3. J E R U S A L E M
4. J E R I C H O
5. J O U R N E Y
6. M A N
7. R O B B E R S
8. S A W
9. C L O T H E S
10. D O W N
11. R O A D
12. P R I E S T
13. P A S S E D
14. P L A C E
15. S I D E
16. L E V I T E
17. C A R E
18. G O O D
19. S A M A R I T A N
20. C O M P A S S I O N
21. B O U N D
22. W O U N D S
23. P O U R E D
24. O I L
25. W I N E
26. M E R C Y
27. I N N
28. T W O
29. D E N A R I I
30. R E P A Y
31. B A C K
32. N E I G H B O U R
33. G O D O

A message from Caroline Turvey, who is due to be ordained as a Curate in the Benefice on 3rd July and will be moving into the Doddington Vicarage.

I am writing this in the last week of living in Goudhurst. Dan and I will be unpacked and starting the new adventure of our life story in Doddington by the time you read this.

We are surrounded by immense oak trees in our current home. Big, strong specimens of trees, with goodness knows how many years of existence through undulating seasons making up their life story. They'll have viewed the comings and goings of the many families who have lived in our cottage since 1790. They'll have watched us catching escaping chickens this week and given shade, shelter and home to a plethora of wildlife in their branches (including the pesky squirrels who eat all the chicken food!).

We all have our life stories and mine is full of love, laughter, joy, sorrow, tears, death, new life, as, I'm sure, are yours. I'm heading, imminently, towards the big '5-0' eek!

Dan and I have four adult children; Bethany, Reuben, Lily and Jude, whose stories are full of complexity, adventure, romance and discovery. My extended family hail from the West Country and Dan's from Orpington. Some of my seasons include acting, singing, estate agency, school chaplaincy, waiting at table, event managing, among others.

The roots of my life are sunk deeply into rich soil, reaching down to the water of life which sustains and refreshes me through the whole caboodle.

I am often taken back to Isaiah, the great Old Testament prophet, who understood what it was like to praise God and also to express great sorrow. He suggests that even those who mourn will be called 'oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendour'. (Isaiah 61) In our weakness, God makes us strong.

That's so reassuring.

With every ending, however sad (not sure we'll be sad about the ending of covid restrictions though...), there will be mourning and joy joy and mourning. And when we reach deeper into that which sustains us, we find richness and fullness of life, enough to cope and live and display the splendour of who we are.

So, our stories are about to collide. We are very excited to see what that brings, but know you will find rest and peace and sustenance under the branches of our new home, the Vicarage, in Doddington. Come and meet us ... and our chickens soon.

Caroline



**Get ready to say
'Thanks!'**

The nation's first ever national Thank You Day is happening on Sunday 4th July, to say thank you to all those in our communities who've helped us through the pandemic. The campaign is calling on people to mark the day by getting together with their communities, neighbours, friends and families and joining in a huge nationwide thank you. The aim is for as many people as possible to be involved, however they would like, so that everyone who deserves it gets a thank you - and as much of the UK as possible gets together.

If you're thinking of planning an event you may like to visit the Thank You Day website: <https://thankyouday.org.uk> for resources, ideas and much more.

Prayer Pointers

July 2021

Mondays - Pray for families planning a holiday and for those who cannot afford a break.

Tuesdays - Pray for our public service staff exhausted by coping with the turmoil of Covid.

Wednesdays - Give thanks for our food and pray for those who are hungry.

Thursdays - Give thanks for clean water and pray for those without.

Fridays - Give thanks for our homes and pray for the homeless.

Saturdays - Give thanks for our families and pray for those living alone.

Sundays - Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us listen to the Lord, our God.



Stalisfield Highlife

Stalisfield Village Hall

25 th July	Treasure Hunt
28 th August	Village Party
9 th October	Harvest Supper
10 th /11 th Dec	Village Panto
12 th Dec	Children's Christmas Party
18 th Dec	Seniors' Tea



Village Party

(subject to Covid restrictions)

Saturday 28th August

6pm - 11pm

Free to all of Stalisfield & Otterden

to be held within the confines of Stalisfield Village Hall

You will be welcomed with a glass of **Pimms**, **Pizza** will be served between 6 - 8pm

Local band **Group Therapy** will be playing from 8pm onwards

There will be some of the usual fete stalls for your enjoyment so bring some **pennies for donations**

Tickets **MUST** be obtained in advance - Contact Katie Toombs at mrsat@me.com

Contact Melanie Carter: mjcart64@outlook.com for more details.



Eastling Village Party

Saturday 4th September

in Eastling Village Hall

by kind permission of the Trustees

It's been a long time since we held a Get Together for the whole village [or it seems like it!]

On 4th September we are holding a party for all Eastling villagers so everyone has a chance to meet up, catch up and enjoy themselves.

There will be **Afternoon Tea** and later that evening a **Hog Roast** and live music from local band **Under the Wood**.

Other activities include a '**Sports Day**' for the younger members of the village and an appearance by our very own village '**Circus Rum Baba**'.

Donations and help

As word of this plan has spread we have had really good support for the idea. However to make it happen, we need as many donations as possible to cover the costs.

We have set up a Just Giving page to make it as easy as possible to donate

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eastling>

Please could we ask you to dig deep and support this financially if you possibly can. It would be greatly appreciated and the more we can raise the more festivities we can provide.

If you would rather make a donation personally then please do contact any of us on the party committee and we would be delighted to hear from you (or email tishneaves@gmail.com) We'll keep you updated with more details and news of the fundraising progress in the Good News and also on the village Whats App group. Tim Philpott is the administrator for this, if you're not on it please do contact him and he will be happy to add you (07850080007). It's a great way of staying in touch. Please save the date, spread the word and contribute if you can

Thanks and see you there!

Tim Philpott, Anne Adams, Lauren Brand, Rich Maxted and Tish Neaves

Stalisfield Highlife

POT LUCK

LADIES LUNCHEON

To all ladies of the village
CANCELLED
due to extended Covid-19
restrictions
back with
and our ladies
planned for 16th July.

Contact Jean on 01233 712270
to register your interest.

Otterden & Stalisfield WI

There is light at the end of the Covid Tunnel! We had hoped to meet again at the beginning of July, but with the Government's announcement of the extension of restrictions, it would be impractical. Therefore our first Meeting this year will be on Wednesday 4th August at 7.30p.m. at our usual venue of Stalisfield Village Hall, Stalisfield Green. It will be an informal social evening, just getting together again and catching up with tea and cake of course.

The next Meeting will be our deferred AGM on Wednesday 1st September. Please do consider joining the Committee - we could do with a few new ideas! There have been some newcomers to the area, so it would be great to welcome some of them along to our small and friendly WI Group. Please invite any ladies that would be interested in getting to know people in the area.

Please contact our President Ellie Cameron if you would be interested in joining Otterden & Stalisfield WI on 01795 892016

Stalisfield Open Gardens

The rain stayed away and the sun shone for the Stalisfield Open Gardens event to raise funds for repairs to St Mary's Church Stalisfield which took place on Sunday 6th June 2021. Over 150 visitors enjoyed the delights of seven gardens, the plant stall and the refreshments en route.

A variety of styles was on display: from formal to country cottage; wildflower meadow to eco and organic. Plants attractive to wildlife were much in evidence.

The event committee wishes to extend its heartfelt thanks to those who so generously opened their gardens and toiled tirelessly to ensure their gardens were at the top of their game on the day.

Thanks too to the helpers without whom the event would not have been such a success.

The committee is pleased to report that over £1,400 was raised, a welcome contribution to the cost of building works to be undertaken.



Eastling Gardeners' Club:

The next meeting of the Eastling Gardeners' Club will be a visit to Norton Court Gardens on Wednesday, 7th July. Please meet in the car park of Norton Church for a 2pm start.

The cost (including tea) is £7 for members of the Gardeners' Club and £8 for non-members.

For further information

please telephone

Sharon on
01795 890615.



Open Gardens of Doddington

Sunday 11th July
12 - 5pm

Tickets available from
Doddington Village
Hall At £5 per adult
Refreshments also
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Sunday Services

(Subject to Covid restrictions)

4th July Trinity 5

2 Corinthians 12. 2 - 10, Mark 6. 1 - 13

Doddington 10.30am Benefice Communion

Stalisfield 3pm Celebration Service

11th July Trinity 6

Ephesians 1. 3 - 14, Mark 6. 14 - 29

Throwley 10.30am Morning Worship

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

18th July Trinity 7

Ephesians 2. 11 - 22, Mark 6. 30 - 34, 53 - 56

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

25th July Trinity 8

Ephesians 3. 14 - 21, John 6. 1 - 21

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

1st August Trinity 9

Ephesians 4. 1 - 6, John 6. 24 - 35

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Wychling 4pm Evensong

From The Registers

Interment of Ashes

Alison Humphrey
22nd June 2021 at Throwley

Online Daily Worship Continues

As well as the services in our churches, the daily 9am Morning Prayer at Lynsted will continue and be live online on

www.kingsdowncreekside.co.uk - also on the YouTube Channel 'Breakthrough at Lynsted'.

More information is updated weekly on

St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':

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

High Downs Parish

Rector Reverend Canon Dr. Steve Lillicrap
01795 522510 highdownsvicar@gmail.com

Curate Caroline Turvey

Reader Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)
4 Glebe Cottages, Eastling

Churchwardens

Eastling Andrew Baxter (01795 890598)

Administrator Janet Payne
E mail: eastlingchurch@gmail.com

Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King (01795 890366)

Administrator Shirley Pritchard
Email: Stmarystalisfield@gmail.com

Throwley Gaynore Moss (01795 890995)

Parish Office Email: eastlingchurch@gmail.com
facebook.com/highdownsbenefice

CONTACT THE GOOD NEWS EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in the August 2021 magazine, send your submission by 20th July 2021 to:
goodnewsmagazine@me.com.

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews or www.goodnews.rf.gd



...just humour him - he's hoping it'll
help him reach the young people in his diocese...

KCC Councillor's Report from Rich Lehmann

After a miserable May, weather wise, it's been great to finally enjoy some warmer weather through most of the month of June.

The downside to the sunny weather is that it caused an explosion of growth along our roadside verges. Obviously we are used to seeing many of the country roads narrow a little during May and June, but in some areas this year it has seemed like we've had two month's worth of growth in the space of just a couple of weeks, leaving some roads even narrower than usual for the time of year and some junctions with poor visibility. As a result I have been contacted about three different roads and junctions in the past week which have required urgent work to be made safe.

The reports of the past week have been in sharp contrast to the majority of the verge complaints I've received recently. Instead of verges needing cutting back, resident's main concerns have been centred around verges being cut back or sprayed with pesticide when there is no need (ie. the verge is not presenting an issue to road safety or blocking a footpath).

The increased awareness of the decline of pollinator populations, combined with initiatives like 'No Mow May' mean that many residents would now prefer to see verges cut back only when it is

necessary. I was pleased to see KCC taking positive action in this area when they released a Pollinator Action Plan (called Kent's Plan Bee) back in 2019. Unfortunately a number of the recommendations made in the plan still require more action, including the fact that KCC still sprays verges using glyphosate, a herbicide widely acknowledged to be harmful to bees.

I met with a KCC landscape officer earlier this week to discuss this issue. I was pleased to hear that trials to look into alternative methods of verge control not involving glyphosates had been undertaken, but sadly all the methods trialled so far have been deemed either inefficient or too expensive. In the coming weeks I am hoping to look at the best practices of other councils in the UK to help push KCC forward in this area and ensure that, as far as possible, they honour the commitments made in Kent's Plan Bee.

As a temporary solution, the landscape officer advised of an alternative way to save some of our local verges and help more pollinators; if reported via the KCC Highways fault reporting tool, KCC are willing to look at a reduction in the management of some verges, providing they are in areas where there is no threat to road safety and they won't block a public right of way

or footpath. This will involve the area being mowed or cut just once a year in the autumn, rather than six times a year throughout the spring and summer, and will hopefully help to provide some vital additional corridors for pollinators.

The KCC Highways reporting tool can be accessed via tinyurl.com/kccroads. Simply choose the 'Grass – Maintenance Query' option from the drop down menu and select the location of the verge in question. If KCC deem the area to be suitable for reduced levels of management, they will make the necessary changes to their maintenance schedules.

Alternatively, please feel free to email me at rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk with a map detailing the area which is being excessively mown and ideally a photo of the verge too, and I will pass the details to the landscapes team.
Rich Lehmann

How climate change could affect your cup of tea



Now here's something that will send you straight to your kitchen to put the kettle on: the Great British cup of tea may not taste quite so good in the future.

It seems that extreme weather and rising temperatures could lead to inferior leaves in the future, according to Christian Aid.

Kenya, the world's foremost exporter of black tea, is now affected by erratic rainfall, floods, droughts, and rising temperatures. India, Sri Lanka and China, also major tea producers, face climate change problems as well.

Climate change has been predicted by some as likely to cut production in Kenya's best tea-making areas by as much as a quarter by 2050. Even areas of only average growing conditions could see production fall by 39 per cent.

As one tea farmer in Kenya's Western Highlands, explained: "We cannot predict seasons anymore. Temperatures are rising, rainfall is erratic, often accompanied by unusual hailstones and longer droughts. If this continues, it will make growing tea much harder."

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden

07794 010 394

or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

With the closure of Newnham Lane the journey up or down North Eastling Lane has been quite an experience, especially in the school run. So may I suggest that anyone using this route takes extra care slowly.

I was the attempted victim of a scam this week. A call from 'BT' began by telling me that there was a problem with my broadband and they wanted to fix it. The extraordinarily thing was that they knew all my BT details, i.e. my package and the last four digits of my bank details, that is all they knew. Be very careful of this scam it is quite a clever one and either be like me and tell them where to go or just put the phone down.

There have been warnings from the police regarding door step callers. Do not hesitate to ring the police, or me, if you feel threatened.

There are persons out there who will quite happily relieve us of our possessions so please advise of any suspicious vehicles that are seen touring the area.

Take care
Have a good month
Alan.

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- Casual pot wash (weekends) includes holiday pay + tips

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Got friends visiting? Then don't forget we have beautiful bedrooms too.

Also, dare I say it but, Christmas Day book early to avoid disappointment.

Keep up to date by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
Stalisfield Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 0HY Tel:01795 890256
Email:
info@theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk

Belmont House and Gardens



House Opening

We are delighted to be welcoming visitors back inside the House once again. From Thursday 1st July, visitors can enjoy self-guided free flow tours on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons between 1.30pm - 4pm. Tickets are now available to book online.

Meet the Head Gardener Tuesday 6th July, 1 - 3pm

Join our Head Gardener, Graeme, for a walking tour around our beautiful gardens to see some of the many species of plants and trees we have at Belmont. He will also tell you about the seasonal work involved in maintaining the gardens
£10.00 per person. Booking online required.

Natural First Aid Workshop Wednesday 14th July, 10am - 2pm

There are many healing herbs which can be used for first aid treatment and minor ailments. Garden herbs can be extremely effective, abundant, easy to find and quite often have more than one benefit. During this workshop, you will be able to gather some of the herbs we have growing in the gardens at Belmont. These will then be used to make a versatile antiseptic tincture and healing ointment for you to add to your own first aid kit.

£45.00 per person. Booking online required

Wild Classroom Family Cooking Workshop Tuesday 10th August, 10am - 1.30pm

Step outside this summer and join Wild Classroom where you and your family will be able to cook over fire using fresh ingredients from our Kitchen Garden. £55.00 includes the registration of 2 children aged 4 - 15 years and 1 adult. Booking required



Belmont House & Gardens, Throwley, Nr Faversham, Kent ME13 0HH
W: www.belmont-house.org E: events@belmont-house.org
T: 01795 890228

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Extract from 'The Woodcutter's Wife'

by Audrey Keen

There was no other sound except the singing birds and the breeze that played on the grass and filigree leaf. I did not tread to near the clover for fear of stepping onto the bees that took nectar from the flowers, but I was conscious of their scent which told me it was summertime indeed.

The heat of the red sun was balm to my soul and the trees, that were once moved rapidly by the wind, were still. A strange sense of peace came upon me and I was filled with an indescribable love for life, and my fellow man.



Sweet, sweet decay
Of yet a thousand leaves.
Peace of an empty field
Life on the living trees.
And rooks, rooks above all these,
Distant houses, red brick and neat,
Beyond these green woods and fields repeat.



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New research shows ivy is the most effective plant cover for cooling buildings during hot weather

so says a study by the Royal Horticultural Society and University of Reading

In an effort to restore the plant's reputation, the RHS has been showcasing the species at its flagship garden in Wisley, Surrey. It hopes to set a new trend, and to get people to stop seeing ivy as 'the enemy.'

At Wisley you can now see 390 varieties of ivy, with a vast array of leaf shapes, sizes and colours. The RHS wants people to see that ivy can be an attractive and even eco-friendly addition to your home.

RHS experts say that ivy is a 'super plant' that not only has insulating benefits, but also offers habitats for a variety of wildlife, as well as being a food source for birds and pollinators during months of the year when there is very little else for them to eat. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/press/releases/New-research-shows-ivy-is-the-most-effective-plant>



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North Downs' Sponsored Walk

on behalf of Cancer
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Organised by the Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent

Sunday 8th August

The North Downs Walk in and around Harrietsham has been an annual event for the past 35 years, until last year when we had to cancel for the first time ever. However, we are determined to put on the event this year, although it will be a somewhat different format.

There will still be the choice of 4 routes 1, 3, 6 and 9 miles, all starting and finishing at Glebe Field, Harrietsham (opposite the church), and taking in the beautiful North Downs.

It will be fully marshalled and signposted with regular checkpoints for you and your dogs to take on refreshments.

We are still finalising the details but you can check out our website <https://wealdofkentrotary.org.uk> to get regular updates and to find out more about us.

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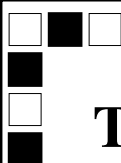


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Jo White considers the need for listening.

Reflected Faith series: the spaces between

Most of us have been in situations where we are not in control, and we don't know how to feel or how to react to our situation. We need help.

The most valuable gift you can have at those times – is time itself. Time to be 'listened to'. Really listened to. But it is not easy to find someone who will 'actively listen' to you.

Think of the last time you were in the reverse position with a friend or a colleague, and they were talking to you. How easily do you recall what they actually said? Most of us are so busy getting our replies ready for when the person has finished speaking, that we don't clearly hear their punch line.

With God it is different. We can take everything to Him; all our worries and cares and failures and faults. And He listens.

He doesn't necessarily jump in with an instant, easy solution, but rather He promises to always guide us, if we ask Him, through life's challenges, and He promises to never leave us. He often speaks to us through his written word, the Bible.

This last year, when many of us have been communicating with others by phone or Zoom, we get nervous if it all goes quiet. We feel the need to 'nudge' the other person, to make sure they are still there. Silence is not a natural state for many of us – and yet it is in the quiet we can hear ourselves and God most clearly.

So, when we talk with God, our conversation should not be rushed and one-sided. We need to give space to our silence before Him, to wait and listen for Him to speak to us.

Next time you worship in church, listen to the silences: the spaces between the words, the music and the actions. Listen to all the prayers that are spoken.

Look at your surroundings and reflect that they have absorbed thousands of prayers – and holy silence – down the centuries of their existence.

Look out the window and see the vastness of the sky above you – and let your prayers join with those that have gone before you. May the knowledge that you are not alone encourage and strengthen you

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5pm Fanfare and flute

5.30pm Music to be confirmed

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Sunday 1st August,

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