

Benefice of Langelei

Welcome to our Benefice Newsletter No.41 for September 2021

Benefice Mission: "Our Vision is of a community where Christ has been brought to the community and the community has been brought to Christ. Our Mission as churches in this Benefice area is to maintain sacred spaces, and be flexible, interactive and collaborative with the use of resources."

It hardly seems possible that this is my fifth year as a team vicar in the Langelei Benefice, and that this is now not only my last month here, but the end of my service as a parish priest before retirement. We shall move to the house we bought in Tonbridge just before the pandemic. Tonbridge is within my sending diocese of Rochester, and a few minutes' drive from both Katherine's mother and our daughter and son-in-law.

We are thankful for a very full 27 years of ministry. Katherine and I married less than two months after I was made a deacon in the team parish of Louth in Lincoln diocese. I had left a career in London local government to train for ministry, and Katherine had left a job as a senior teacher in Croydon, to make a life together. Looking back over those 27 years, we have

always followed what we felt was God's prompting as to where we should serve. Sometimes there were challenging situations, but we believe they were where God wanted us to be.

In the New Testament, the apostles were 'sent' (the Greek apostellos means 'one who is sent') For us as a clergy family that has meant a rather peripatetic life, where we always arrive as 'outsiders' to places where many people have lived, often over many years. Coming to St Albans diocese, we stayed in parishes in the Bedford area from 1998 to 2016, not moving further to give our children Elizabeth and James some stability during their important school years.

The Church has a rule that clergy do not retire where they have ministered. That, wisely, gives a chance for new ministry and fresh vision to be given root-room. It also means that, in common with other occupations with tied housing, stipendiary clergy often move away from people and places they have known, and friendships they have made, and that can be another challenge.



Is this a way of sending prayers to Heaven or is Richard just having fun at Buzzy Bees?

Vicarages tend to be larger than many average homes, so I was interested to hear the recently retired priest and poet Malcolm Guite observe in the Church Times that his retirement home "which seemed adequately roomy when it was empty, is now a conglomeration of towers, islands, even mountains of piled cardboard boxes". Keen to minimise that, Katherine and I are carefully weeding the accumulation of 27 years of married life and parish ministry, helped by our daughter who will ask the tough questions, such as 'Where will it go?' and 'Why do you need it?'

So, what will we need? One thing is the inspiration gained by having known many retired people (alongside younger people) who have served the churches in which we have

ministered. They have shown that there can indeed be 'life in abundance' when one leaves paid work. We shall aim to follow their example and look forward to making friends in the area and in the new community of Tonbridge in Kent. Another thing we shall certainly need is your prayers, as we adjust to major life changes.

The final thing we shall need (and which I believe we all need in order to navigate the changes life brings) is the assurance given in psalm 48 verse 13 (the psalm for Morning Prayer a few weeks ago)

"Such is our God for ever and ever. It is He that shall be our guide for evermore"

Whatever we each do, and wherever we go, God goes before us, so we are never actually alone, or without guidance.

Rev'd Richard Howlett

United Benefice Service - 15th August 2021





With grey clouds overhead and a light drizzle in the air, it felt a risky prospect to hold the Benefice of Langelei joint service outside St Mary's, Apsley Church. But in a service dedicated to 'Caring for God's Creation', the rain held off and the sun even came out, at times.

The flat expanse behind the church (the extension that never was) provided a large flat area to host the congregation and, for those still anxious about the pandemic there was the additional safety of being outside.

There was a happy, joyful atmosphere throughout - the joy of sharing our time and faith with the wider church family and of course the chance to sing again.

Thank you to Rev'd Lizzie Hood for providing the thought provoking sermon, reminding us how God speaks in and through His other great book, Nature or Creation, and what a blasphemy it is to destroy that creation.

Thank you also to Fr. James McDonald for conducting the rest of the service, to David Heath for his outdoor musical accompaniment, to the tech. team and all those who helped organise the event - including the chair carriers.

And thank you too to the members of the Chiltern Society and the Herts & Middlesex



What can we do to save our precious local chalk streams?

England is home to 85% of the world's chalk streams, with those running through the Affinity Water patch in the South East regarded as the most endangered.

Chalk streams are 10x rarer than the coral reefs and currently more endangered than both the Bengal tiger and the black thino - but if we all waste less water we can Save Our Streams from drying out.

hat can I do?

- Sign up for FREE water saving gadgets at SaveOurStreams.co.uk
- Answer a 3-minute questionnaire and get an individual personalised water action plan
- Order free products tailored to your home
- Book a free 15-minute video chat help with fitting your free devices and, if you have drippy taps or leaky loos, a free visit from a plumber can be hooked.
- Take part in challenges to help you save water, which saves you money and saves our precious chalk streams

Shocking shower fact

Switching to a Flowpoint shower head can save you up to 10 litres of water a minute



Wildlife Trust who gave their time to inform and drive home the environmental point.

The service having concluded, it was time to continue to share fellowship with a Church Family picnic and I would like to say a final thank you to all those who attended and made this such a special event.

Fiona Shirley & Katharine Harper, St. Mary's

Apsley. They were spotted in the gardens outside Sainsburys last year but had been cut down before I could take a photo.
Fortunately they came up again this year. Although not rare, it's good to see them flowering in such a place, but how did they get there?



Hopefully, they will continue to spread, maybe even across the road to St Mary's churchyard!

Peter Bladon, St Mary's



riting this five weeks after my operation, I seem to be gaining strength steadily so would like once again to thank all who have sent me best wishes, gifts and food parcels - and of course, all the prayers which I am sure must have helped me on my way.

Rosemary Bladon, St Mary's

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CONTACTS

Norma Howie 01923 266 596 - saintskl2@tiscali.co.uk Benefice Office: Church Lane, Kings Langley WD4 8JS Monday 11.00am - 4.00pm; Wednesday 7.00am - 4.00pm; Thursday Noon - 4.00pm; Friday 7.00am - 9.30am - no visitors - please email or phone

HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN Bedmond Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8LJ The Rev'd Lizzie Hood - Team Rector 01442 264 860 - lizziehood@aol.com The Rev'd Jos Perris - Associate Priest 07979 590480 - josperris@hotmail.com

ST. MARY'S, APSLEY END London Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9ST

The Rev'd Richard Howlett - Team Vicar 01442 767 738 - revrhowlett@gmail.com

ST. BENEDICT'S, BENNETTS END

The Rev'd Richard Howlett

Peascroft Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8EP Details above

> ALL SAINTS, KINGS LANGLEY Church Lane, Kings Langley WD4 8JS

Fr. James McDonald - Team Vicar

01923 903 531 - james.a.mcdonald@live.co.uk

BENEFICE NEWSLETTER

Editorial Team: Jean & Mike Chrisp - mikeandjean23@btinternet.com.

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Nun's prayer from the Seventeenth Century

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will one day be old.
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.



Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody,

helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.





Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains

- they are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other pains but help me to endure them with patience.



I dare not asked for improved memory,

but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.



Keep me reasonably sweet:

I do not want to be a saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is one of the crowing works of the Devil.





Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people.

And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen

"I found this prayer in a Holy Trinity Newsletter from Bromley Common in Kent - it makes me chuckle!" Gillian Redman, Holy Trinity; illustrated by Katharine Harper, St Mary's.

IMPORTANT: FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE AND WEEKLY SHEETS SOME SERVICES MAY BE ON LINE AND SOME ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED

HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN - PARISH DIARY

Sundays 10.00am Holy Communion and Junior Church (Sunday School) - Common Worship

2nd Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

3rd Sunday6.00 - 7.30pmTYG (The Youth Group)2nd Monday7.45pmTrinity ReadersTuesdays9.00amMorning Prayer

3rd Tuesday 10.00am Music and Meditation 63 The Horseshoe, Leverstock Green

Wednesdays 10.00am Said Holy Communion

2.00pm Craft Group

2.45pm Collective Worship at Leverstock Green School - Term Time only

3rd Wednesday 10.00am Mothers Union Corporate Communion

Thursdays 9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Toddlers Church - Term Time only
4th Thursday 3.00 - 5.00pm Friendship Teas in the Trinity Room

Fridays 7.00pm Choir Practice Saturdays 9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Coffee Shop in Trinity Room with Traidcraft Stall

1st Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon Churchyard Gardening Party

HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN - SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS

September

Tuesday 7th

12.30pm
Deanery Chapter meets at HT

Wednesday 8th
7.30pm
Parochial Church Council meeting

Sunday 19th
6.00pm
TYG (The Youth Group)

Sunday 19th 6.00pm TYG (The Youth Group)
Thursday 23rd 3.00pm Friendship Teas resume

October

Saturday 2nd 9.30am PCCs of all 4 churches meet at HT

Sunday 3rd 10.00am Harvest Festival

Monday 4th 10.00am Leverstock Green School Harvest Festival in church

7.30pm Baptism information evening

November

Sunday 7th 3.00pm Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance

Wednesday 10th 7.30pm Parochial Church Council meeting

Thursday 11th 11.00am Remembrance Day

Sunday 14th 10.55am Act of Remembrance at War Memorial Sunday 21st 6.30pm Deanery Confirmation Service

ALL SAINTS, KINGS LANGLEY - PARISH DIARY

Church open daily 9.30am - 5.00pm

Sundays 9.30am Family Eucharist and Saints on Sunday (3rd Sunday All Age Eucharist no Saints on Sunday)

3rd Sunday

8.00am
Said Eucharist (Traditional language)
1st Sunday

11.15am
Said Eucharist (Traditional language)
Church in the Wild - Informal outdoor service

Tuesdays - Fridays 8.30am Morning prayer

Tuesdays 11.00am Holy Communion at Friars Mead (usually last Tuesday of the month)

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.00pm Kings Langley Community Choir rehearsal (church)

Wednesdays 10.00am - 11.30am Tiny Tots (Term Time only in the hall)

7.45pm Bell Ringing Practice

3rd Thursday 11.30am Holy Communion at Friars Mead (usually 3rd Thursday)
Thursdays 7.00pm All Saints Men's Group (Usually 3rd Thursday, time varies)

Contact Brian McAdam: 07796 131 291

Fridays 6.30pm Adult Choir Practice

Saturdays 11.00am Bell Ringing Practice (except 3rd Saturday)

3rd Saturday 9.00am - 12noon All Saints stall at the Local Produce Market in the Village Garden

IMPORTANT: FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE AND WEEKLY SHEETS SOME SERVICES MAY BE ON LINE AND SOME ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED

ALL SAINTS, KINGS LANGLEY - SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sep	tem	ber
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Sunday 5th
Saturday 11th
9.00am - 5.00pm
10.00am
2.30pm
No church in the wild
Historic Churches Bike and Hike (see page 20)
Pastoral Forum (Hall)
Baptism Team Meeting and Preparation (Hall)

Sunday 19th

Saturday 25th

Sunday 26th

8.00am

Monthly 8am Communion begins (BCP)

Reordering Consultation Exhibition (see page 8)

Reordering Consultation Exhibition (see page 8)

Exhibition available to view until 1st October

October

Saturday 2nd Wedding: Matthew Ross and Carol Bayliss Sunday 3rd 12.30pm - 4.00pm Harvest Festival Fun Day (see page 11)

9.30am Family Eucharist
11.15am Church in the Wild
5.00pm Choral Evensong
10.00am Pastoral Forum (Hall)

Tuesday 26th 7.30pm Confirmation and Dedication of Lady Chapel Altar Frontal with Bishop Alan

Sunday 31st 9.30am All Saints Sunday, Patronal Festival Eucharist

2.00pm - 4.00pm All Souls reflective space 'drop in'

November

Saturday 9th

Saturday 6th 10.00am Baptism Team Meeting and Preparation (Hall)

Saturday 13th 10.00am Pastoral Forum (Hall)

Sunday 14th 9.30am Family Eucharist with Act of Remembrance

3.00pm Remembrance Service

Saturday 27th 4.00 - 7.00pm 'Let there be light' candlelit church

7.30pm Thomas Isherwood recital

Advance notice Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th December Christmas Tree Festival - timings TBC

ST. BENEDICT'S, BENNETT'S END - ALL SERVICES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

September

Sunday 5th 10.00am No service in church - Zoom from St Mary's

Sunday 12th 10.00am Join with St Mary's for the 150th Celebration Holy Communion with Bishop Alan

Tuesday 14th 1.30 - 3.00pm Art Club starts up again in hall (fortnightly)

7.15pm PCC Meeting

Wednesday 15th 7.15pm Sitting Room Singers Concert (see page 20)

Sunday 19th 10.00am Harvest Festival Holy Communion with Rev'd Richard Howlett

Sunday 26th 10.00am Morning Prayer with Dr Bob Day Tuesday 28th 1.30 - 3.00pm Art Club in hall **(fortnightly)**

Wednesday 29th 7.30pm Songs of Praise and farewell to Richard and Katherine

October

Sunday 3rd 10.00am No service in church - Zoom from St Mary's
Sunday 10th 10.00am Holy Communion with Archdeacon Jane Mainwaring
Sunday 17th 10.00am No service in church - Zoom from St Mary's
Sunday 24th 10.00am Holy Communion with Father James McDonald
Sunday 31st 10.00am No service in church - Zoom from St Mary's

TBC Service to commemorate the departed led by Dr Bob Day

November

Sunday 7th 10.00am Holy Communion with Rev'd Lizzie Hood

Wednesday 10th 7.15pm PCC meeting

Sunday 14th 10.00am Remembrance - no service in church - Zoom from St Mary's Sunday 21st 10.00am Christ the King - Holy Communion with Rev'd Jos Perris Sunday 28th 10.00am No service in church - Zoom from St Mary's

ST. MARY'S, APSLEY END - ALL SERVICES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

September		
Sunday 5th	8.00am	Said Eucharist (Traditional language)
,	10.00am	Holy Communion with Rev'd David Lawson
Monday 6th	7.00pm	PCĆ meeting
Saturday 11th - Sunda	ay 12th	St Mary's 150th Celebrations (see page 13)
Saturday 11th	4.00pm	Evening Prayer
Sunday 12th	10.00am	Holy Communion with Bishop Alan and blessing of the refurbished refectory
	4.00pm	Evening Prayer
Tuesday 14th	TBC	Buzzy Bees resumes for Autumn Term
Sunday 19th	10.00am	Morning Prayer led by Tim Bourne
Sunday 26th	10.00am	Harvest Festival Holy Communion with Rev'd Richard Howlett
Wednesday 29th	7.30pm	Songs of Praise and farewell to Richard and Katherine at St Benedict's
October		
Sunday 3rd	8.00am	Said Eucharist (Traditional language)
	10.00am	Holy Communion with Rev'd Geoff Lackey
Sunday 10th	10.00am	No service in church - Join with St Benedict's on Zoom
Sunday 17th	10.00am	Holy Communion with Rev'd Lizzie Hood
Sunday 24th	10.00am	No service in church - Join with St Benedict's on Zoom
Sunday 31st	10.00am	Holy Communion with Rev'd Geoff Lackey
	3.00pm	Service to commemorate the departed led by Rev'd Lizzie Hood
November		
Sunday 7th	8.00am	Said Eucharist (Traditional language)
	10.00am	No service in church - Join with St Benedict's on Zoom
Wednesday 10th	7.00pm	PCC meeting
Thursday 11th	TBC	Service of Remembrance at the Papermill led by Tim Bourne (more details to follow)
Sunday 14th	10.00am	Holy Communion with Father James McDonald
Saturday 20th	TBC	St Mary's Bazaar
Sunday 21st	10.00am	No service in church - Join with St Benedict's on Zoom
Sunday 28th	10.00am	Holy Communion with Rev'd Geoff Lackey

We go forward hopefully ...

s our lives continue to adapt to the release of earlier pandemic restrictions, we must consider what shape the future might take for us as individuals and as churches. It would be foolish just to take up the old 'normal' without consideration of our hopes for the future and the present needs of our parishioners and communities, because the experience of the last 18 months has changed us. This is a very rare opportunity to take stock and engage in some fresh thinking about our ministry and mission.

This is no less true for the Benefice as a whole. It's nearly 12 years now since the Benefice was formed and our vision determined, and that time has seen a great deal of changes in our parishes and in society. So the Team Council has decided to hold a session for all four of our PCCs on Saturday 2nd October to review our vision and 'direction of travel' for the next 5 years.

When that event was decided upon we did not know that Rev'd Richard Howlett would be retiring in September, so there will be even more changes ahead! A number of people have been asking about procedures for the vacancy so, while I don't want to jump the gun (Richard is still with us!), I will briefly outline the process.

In early October there will be an 'informal vacancy meeting' attended by the Bishop, Archdeacon, Rural Dean, Benefice ministry team and representatives of St Mary's and St Benedict's parishes. At this we will make arrangements for the running of the parishes during the 'interregnum' or vacancy.

We will then begin to put together a Parish Profile which gives information to applicants about the vacant post, our churches, the Deanery etc. Hopefully we will be ready to advertise in late January, with interviews in February or March. If an appointment is made, the successful candidate is likely to have to give 3 months notice in their present post, which takes us to mid summer 2022. That's the ideal scenario, but we cannot see into the future!

But that is all ahead of us, and as I write, Richard is still 'in harness' so let's continue to appreciate his presence as we prepare to celebrate and give thanks for his ministry among us at his farewell service on the feast of St Michael and All Angels on Wednesday 29th September at 7.30pm at St Benedict's.

Rev'd Lizzie Hood

Reordering All Saints

"Church in our community; community in our church"

With society opening up, at All Saints we're taking the next step in getting our reordering project off the ground!

Over its 800 year history, our predecessors adapted the building to meet the needs of their time and, in our listening to God, we believe the time is right for us to do the same: to help us grow an inclusive church of all ages and to share our faith, inviting, inspiring, welcoming and serving the wider community.

In winter 2020-21, the Reordering Committee conducted a consultation with the congregation which showed there is overwhelming support for reordering. Step one! The next thing to do was to consult the wider community but, with the New Year lockdown and continuing restrictions, we weren't able to go ahead with this in the way we wanted: a community exhibition. Happily, the relaxation of restrictions we are now enjoying means we can go ahead with this.



What can be achieved: the nave of St Philip and St James, Cheltenham. Light, flexible, and the architecture can be seen.



The current set up from the door - dark wooden barriers restrict use and dominate the architecture.

There will be an exhibition in All Saints from 24th September - 1st October, sharing more information regarding our proposals and there will be an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. The exhibition will be 'manned' on Saturday 25th 10am - 4pm and Sunday 26th 12noon - 4pm, with members of the reordering committee on hand to speak to and there will be drinks in the church hall. The exhibition will remain in place to view over the following week.

We would like to invite our friends from the other churches in our Team to come and find out more and to let us have any feedback on what we are trying to achieve: a better welcome, a more flexible and inspirational place for worship and prayer, and a more usable and better interpreted space for wider community use.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Fr. James McDonald

The secret allotment

s the growing threat posed by climate change and its impact upon the natural environment became apparent, Lizzie Hood and Adrian Whalley saw the need for our churches to address the issue urgently. A Benefice Enironment Team was therefore formed and has had fruitful discussions. It was agreed that a Benefice Environment Day focusing on care for our environment would bring our concerns to members of our churches and so August 15th was designated as Environment Sunday.

In the awareness that these matters were being tackled by a wide range of agencies across the country and worldwide, what could the churches contribute to these campaigns? This article describes an initiative which might be emulated elsewhere. Every little helps!

Tucked away behind a shop in a secret location in Kings Langley is what began its life as a Christian Aid allotment. The absentee owner of the plot offered it to our Christian Aid group for taming and cultivation. After a campaign involving eradicating a jungle of thistles, nettles, convulvulus and other assorted weeds, it was ready to produce fruit and vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, courgettes, pumpkins, beans, marrows, gooseberries, rhubarb and raspberries. In due course, cherry and plum saplings, purchased at the astronomical price of £1.76 each from Aldi, were planted and



are just beginning to bear fruit. Produce was offered for sale after services at All Saints and at the local butcher's shop. All cherries grown constituted the peppercorn rent (payable to me).

Substantial sums were generated for Christian Aid funds in this way. There was something satisfying in growing food by proxy for hungry families around the world - horticultural justice?

After several years, maintenance by one custodian became too much of a burden so the plot has been handed over to a local sustainable food group. A team of workers has developed it much more ambitiously by installing polytunnels and various fruit trees, all serviced by rain water stored in large tanks. The produce is sold at the monthly village market. All profits are used for the development of a much larger site nearby.

The benefits of this enterprise are obvious. There are no food miles and no carbon emissions and food transferred from soil to table within hours is so much tastier than food bought from shops; and the pandemic has brought home to us the mental health benefits of connecting with the natural world.



Perhaps there are small pockets of land in the Benefice which could be put to similar good use; or possibly an allotment which could be jointly managed?

Harold Taylor, All Saints

Young Christian Climate Change Network relay walk

The Young Christian Climate Change Network (YCCN) is a group of Christians who came together to campaign for action at the COP 26 conference in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November. As part of this they organised a relay walk from St Ives, where the G7 meeting was held, to Glasgow. The local leg was from St John's, Boxmoor, on 12th August, to High Street Baptist Church in Tring and I

met with them to chat about their aims and to wish them well. They are an inspired and committed group recognising the urgency of the issue and the importance of global action. This is very much a faith issue for them, relating their understanding of God as creator to our stewardship of the planet.

In the evening they came together with other Christians and those involved with justice and fair-trade issues in Tring at High Street Baptist Church to share their stories and pray together.

One story stood out for me when I met them along with other supporters at St John's. It was of a lady who knew the walkers were coming past her house and went out on the



doorstep to greet them. "I can't walk all the way with you," she said, "but I can walk to the end of the road." Her response said to me that we can't do everything, but we can do something.

One request from the walkers was that we each write to our MP, emphasising the importance of urgent action being taken to work to keep temperature rises below 1.5°C. If the world warms more than this threshold, millions more people in the most vulnerable communities around the globe will suffer from devastating droughts, storms, floods and other impacts of climate change. Please do what you can.

Paul Tucker, Chair Christian Aid in Kings Langley

All Saints green gym team tackle those ever growing weeds





r. James (top right) said a prayer for dry weather when 89% chance of rain was forecast and, as a result, our team of 12 enjoyed dry weather as we tackled the whole area approaching the church. The improvement was so noticeable that the transformation was remarked upon by members of the congregation next morning, Richard Ashman, who coordinated the team, has asked them to be ready to repeat in a month's time, which we hope will be the last for a few months.

Words: Sheila Ashman; Photos: Phillip China, All Saints











Bug Hotel comes to All Saints!

or the past few months, Fr. James has been holding an increasingly successful outdoor church service called 'Church in the Wild'. Held after the main 9.30am service on the first Sunday of the month, CITW is regularly attended by a number of young families who are attracted by an alternative way of 'doing church'!

The 4th July service was on the theme of Creation and looking after God's World, so Fr. James came up with the idea of building a bug hotel in the wilder part of the churchyard before handing the project over to the Outdoor Fabric Team to organise! This we did with the invaluable assistance of Paul Hier, Village Warden, who had recently constructed a deluxe version in the Village Garden. Parents and children also played a major part in the building work as shown in the accompanying photos.



The Men's Group were involved in the August CITW service by manning the barbacue which had a very healthy attendance of around 20 mums, dads and children.

Brian McAdam, All Saints

All Saints fete

r. James and Kings Langley resident Jacqueline Hubble, organised a very successful fete on Saturday 7th August which was held in the church, the churchyard and the village garden. 30 stall holders representing local businesses were present with refreshments provided by Ingrid Allen and her team in the church hall. The weather was kind to us for most of the day which was just as well as one of the most popular attractions was Fr. James in the stocks having wet sponges and buckets of water thrown at him! Well, he did volunteer and I do have his verbal commitment to repeat the experience next year!





Fortified by copious supplies of Pimms supplied by Brian and Jill (who else!) who were manning the Pimms stall, James was in the stocks on three occasions during the afternoon.

All Saints was also well represented by a clothes swap stall, a treasure hunt and a cakes and jam stall. Other entertainment was provided by the Kings Langley Community Choir performing in two sets during the afternoon.

Financially, the day was a triumph for us with an impressive £1,700 raised, including a generous donation from the Saracens Head!

Brian McAdam, All Saints

All Saints strawberry tea



We had a fun afternoon back in June when members and friends of All Saints Church got together via Zoom to share a few hours in each others' company over a Strawberry afternoon tea while raising funds for the church.

Ingrid Allen, All Saints



Little Princess Trust

'm donating at least 16 inches of my hair at the end of September in aid of the Little Princess Trust, a charity that makes wigs for children going through hair loss due to cancer treatment. It has grown quite a bit during lockdown!

I usually help out at Buzzy Bees at St Mary's but am unable to join them when it returns next month as I'm expecting my first child in November. This felt like a nice way to 'give something back' in a different way :) My donation page on Just Giving is: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/amandalockdownlocks

Amanda Badger, St Mary's



Beauty and Wonder

y photos date from just before the first lockdown in Scotland in February 2020 and this year in Wales, Dorset and Cornwall. Whether walking around Hemel or away, I'm constantly reminded of the beauty of our country and the wonder of creation.

Lillian Hepwood, St Mary's



Situated in Glen Nevis near Fort William, with its single drop of 120 metres, the spectacular Steall Waterfall is the second highest waterfall in both Scotland and the UK and is featured in later Harry Potter films.



Once a busy harbour town in North Wales with a thriving shipbuilding industry at the seaward end of the Ffestiniog Railway, Porthmadog was an important hub for the slate industry from which slate was shipped across the world.



A natural limestone arch on the Jurassic Coast near Lulworth in Dorset, Durdle Door stands some 60 metres above sea level separating Durdle Door from Man O' War Bay. An iconic feature of the Jurassic coast, it attracts hordes of visitors able to find ammonites and belemnites nearby.



In an area featured in the historical drama television series Poldark, Botallack is a submarine tin mine in Cornwall with shafts reaching a depth of 570 metres extending nearly half a mile out to sea. It produced 14,500 tonnes of tin, 20,000 tonnes of copper ore and 1,500 tonnes of refined arsenic.

150th Celebrations at St Mary's

n important milestone in the life of St Mary's Church was marked on 31 August 2021. That day, 150 years ago in 1871, the newly built church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Rochester with a service that started at 11.45am and continued until shortly before 3pm!

To mark this event we will be holding a special '150' Celebration Weekend; some of the highlights are listed below. We hope you may be able to come along and celebrate with us.

Saturday 11th September 10am – 3.30pm

- Barbecue 1pm 2.30pm.
- Quiz
- Raffle
- Music
- Popup stalls
- Refreshments
- Pictures and slide show
- Games in the churchyard
- Church registers and diaries



Sunday 12th September 10am - 4.00pm

- 10am Eucharist Service led by the Bishop of St Albans followed by special cake and drinks and blessing of the redecorated Refectory by Bishop Alan.
- 1pm: in the churchyard bring your own picnic lunch (weather permitting).
- 2 3pm: in the churchyard
 - Quiz
 - Raffle
 - Games
 - Popup stalls
 - I opup stalis
 - Refreshments
 - 2 3pm: in church
 - Registers and diaries
 - Pictures and slide show
 - 3.30pm: Raffle drawn
 - 4.00pm: Evening Prayer

See you there - hopefully!

Peter Bladon, St Mary's



Come and meet local artists, watch a demonstration, take part in a workshop and enjoy real art in Hemel!

Katharine Harper, from St Mary's, along with around 15 other local artists, will be taking part in Herts Open Studios at **The Dacorum Creatives Art Hub**, a wonderful gallery space in the Marlowes.

Every day, there will be demos and workshops from a variety of different artists – something for everyone!

Katharine will be exhibiting fine art, impressionist photography, as well as demonstrating weavings inspired by local walks, incorporating foraged materials (Sat 18th & Wed 6th) and running watercolour and sketching workshops (21st, 8th 10th)

For more details email:

Anna Schofield (Curator) <u>annasfunkyart@gmail.co.uk</u>
Katharine Harper <u>KatharineHarper23@gmail.com</u>
Or visit HertsVisualArts to find more artists & studios taking part https://www.hvaf.org.uk/open-studios

The bells of St Mary's

n Monday 23rd March 2020, St Mary's bells were rung down to follow government instructions concerning isolation because of the pandemic. Little did we realise how long they would remain silent! Apart from tolling to mark the National Day of Reflection on 18th March, a year after the start of the pandemic, the Gill family ringing the 'front three' for Easter, and ringing half-muffled for Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh on 9th April, they remained silent until Monday 7th June 2021 when six St Mary's ringers, including me, returned to the tower to practice.

What did we get up to in the meantime? After a while to take stock, we kept in touch using Zoom meetings which included monthly District meetings. Some brilliant folk from Boston Massachusetts came up with Ringing Room, a virtual bell tower available to ringers around the world enabling us to 'ring' with people from Australia and the USA at the same time. Local virtual towers and weekly practices were soon set up.

I started to learn bellringing to be part of the Ringing Remembers campaign commemorating the end of the First World War and had the honour of ringing on Remembrance Sunday 11 November 2018. Being a relative newbie to ringing, I felt I progressed quite well in a virtual tower with different methods and the ability to ring with more than six bells while only exercising one finger!

As things began to open up to real bell ringing, in keeping with the government guidelines, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers issued regular updates during the pandemic. While aware that everyone says it's like riding a bike, which for



anyone who knows me I do very often, I was concerned I'd forgotten how to ring real bells and was surprised that I actually managed to remember how to ring.

The established ringers at Apsley have been very patient with me because ringing real bells is much harder than ringing in a virtual tower - controlling them while managing to stay in the correct place and not 'hit' other bells. As only six of the team were initially allowed in the tower I rather restricted the repertoire! Rules have changed so, as things have relaxed, we can have up to ten in the tower with windows and doors open and a wider range of methods for the more experienced ringers. It has been great to be back and I know that the sound of the bells brings a great deal of pleasure to so many.

Do please get in touch (rivetts@aol.com) if you're interested in learning more about the bells - one of the team will be happy to show you the ropes in a safe way!

Susan Rivett, St Mary's

Benefice of Langelei Environmental Team

ood waste is a big issue. If it was a country, it would rank as the world's third biggest contributor to greenhouse emissions. This summer has been very difficult for our farmers with extreme heat, downpours and flash floods, events due to climate change that have a massive impact.

Home grown fruit and vegetables bought at markets and farm shops are an ideal option but some companies, including Oddbox, are dedicated to reducing food waste and carbon emissions. By going direct to farmers to find out what's in season and what they have too much of, they reduce what's chucked away. Better for the planet and better for our plates.

Boxed fresh fruit and vegetable are delivered to your door overnight to reduce emissions. Your box will contain fruit and veg in season, either surplus to or rejected by supermarkets because their size and shape don't conform - like wonky carrots, bent cucumbers and dinky apples too small to sell.



You have the option to omit items you don't want. They deliver weekly or fortnightly and supply small, medium or large boxes of veg, fruit, or a mix of both. Perfect for any size family.

Make a difference to our planet and try www.oddbox.co.uk

Cathy Ayling, Benefice of Langelei Environmental Team

Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

AP is a national organisation mostly known for its amazing success in helping people work their way out of debt.

However, it is less well known for its other activities. One is The CAP Money Course with which I volunteer in Hemel Hempstead.

The Money Course is for people at any (or no) level of financial organisation and aims to teach a way of living within your own personal budget.

We give you tools to help you work out your budget (ie how much money you have coming in and going out each month) and teach you a system of managing your finances which will enable you to live within budget.

Tailored to your needs, the courses are free, fun and interactive. They are usually run over 3 weekly sessions of about 2 hours each week.

We have 2 courses scheduled for the autumn of 2021, one will be face to face and held in Liberty Tea Rooms and the other will be on Zoom. There are around 8 spaces on each course so if you are interested please follow the instructions on the advert below to secure your place.

If, however, you are interested but can't make it to either, please contact me, Janet Wright, so that we know your

needs and can try to tailor something to you for next time. It would be good to hear from you!

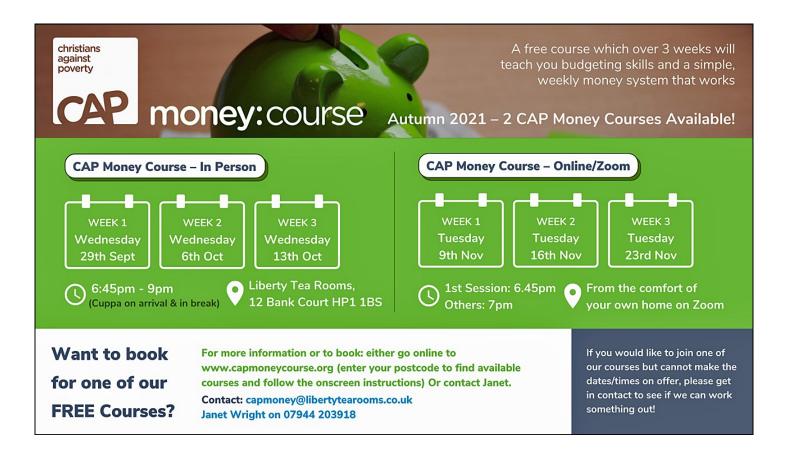
CAP Hemel Hempstead is also involved in teaching 'Life Skills' using a well-tested course, but its main work is as a Debt Coaching centre. We have 5 trained local Debt Coaches so, if you have debt worries, please, please phone the freephone number, 0800 328 0006. You will get through to our head office in Bradford. People there are professional and friendly and understand just how frightening it is to be in this position.

They will take some basic details from you and, if appropriate, will assign you to one of our local Debt Coaches who will arrange to meet you for about 3 visits to work out the full details of your situation. They will also introduce you to a 'Befriender' who will be available to support you in various ways during this journey.

The Debt Coach then submits all your information to head office to work out one or more recommendations for your route out of debt. Head Office will then support you to get it sorted.

CAP is a remarkable organisation which, despite its name, is happy to support people of all creeds or none. For more information see https://capuk.org

Janet Wright, St Mary's



Community Action Dacorum (CAD) offers help to Benefice members



Colin Gage (left) and Simon Aulton with the Queen's Award

"We're very proud to be leading this programme to provide digital solutions for health problems across Hertfordshire thereby making life better for residents across the borough and beyond, and we are pleased to be able to share it with those in the Benefice of Langelei who might find it helpful."



A Digital Champion explains the workings of a newly provided laptop.

emel based charity Community Action Dacorum (CAD) gained the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2019 for providing services to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals and community groups, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Colin Gage, CAD's Chair of the Board of Trustees, a member of Holy Trinity PCC and Diocesan Board of Finance, has offered the organisation's services to help with the Benefice's emergence from lockdown and pressures arising from ministerial vacancy.

Aimed at those affected by lack of technological facilities, knowledge and expertise which have become so important during the pandemic, Simon Aulton, Chief Executive Officer of CAD, believes *Staying Connected*, the charity's newly launched Digital Inclusion Project, can make a positive difference to the lives of people across the borough concerning communities, employability and wellbeing.

CAD's community and social responsibility team, Connect Dacorum, is leading on the *Staying Connected* programme. Funded by Capt. Sir Tom Moore and NHS Charities Together, the programme sets out to re-purpose equipment for those with no internet access. Digital Champions boost confidence in the use of IT equipment and provide guidance all the way from switching it on to using the software. Participants can have as

much or as little help as they require. Free online training packages are available to all.

Tim Anfilogoff, Head of Community Resilience for Herts CCGs, is aware how the global pandemic has changed the way we access healthcare and keep in touch with our families. We're very pleased to have helped CAD access NHS Charities Together funds to support this exciting project to tackle digital poverty across Hertfordshire.

It may be that the Benefice's pastoral care teams are aware of people living in 'digital poverty', or if you or anyone you know would benefit from this support, please contact your vicar or churchwardens who will put you in touch with our team.

All the equipment donated to the programme is digitally scrubbed and certified that all previous data has been destroyed. This is an opportunity for businesses to save money and improve their corporate social responsibility, and for Dacorum residents to pass on old IT equipment.

If you have equipment to donate or wish to volunteer to participate in the project, please contact us on: volunteer@communityactiondacorum.org.uk or by calling 01442 214734. We're particularly keen to hear from people who wish to become one of our Digital Champions.

Colin Gage, Holy Trinity



Of incense

The Anglican tradition has always placed great value on liturgy - movement, sound, colour, posture, smell, touch and taste - the participation of the whole self in worship. It recognises that human beings are more than minds.

That's why we actually eat (and drink) bread (and wine).

That's why we change the colour of our vestments for different seasons, decorate the place with flowers and light candles.

That's why we sometimes have processions, share the peace, make the sign of the cross, kneel, stand, face East or face each other.

That's why we sometimes use incense, and even when we don't there will be the smell of lilies, roses, freesias ...

Incense continues to be misunderstood by many Anglicans as 'catholic' - by which is presumably meant Roman Catholic, since the Anglican church is in fact part of the Catholic (universal) Church: 'we believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church'. Nor is incense pagan. If incense in church is pagan so are flowers, so are the folk tunes we sing our hymns to (lots of our more 'old fashioned' hymns). Intention is all important: we intend to use these symbols to embody and express our worship of the true and living God. Otherwise, we end up backed into a corner - no decoration, no church seasons, no singing and certainly no incense!

Incense is a Biblical symbol. It was one of the three gifts brought by the magi to the Christ child; God's presence is



described as cloud and smoke: on Mount Sinai, filling the newly completed Temple; in the psalms God rides among the storm clouds. The Psalmist also reminds us that incense symbolises our prayers rising to heaven. And the perfume symbolises the divine presence with us.

During worship incense is used in various ways. It may be carried through the people to show that God is

amongst us. It may be used to cense people and things to show they are special: the altar, the Gospel, the gifts, the people of God.

The traditional use of incense in England didn't stop at the Reformation and was rehabilitated in the 19th century. More recently, many church leaders felt the church needed to be simpler and more 'relatable', so all sorts of distinctive things, including incense, were dropped. But if we are to be authentically the Church that is a great mistake. We are meant to be different. We are meant to stand out for the values we live by and for the way we worship. We are meant to be holy.

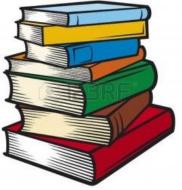
Holiness means standing up for the values of the kingdom and standing out from the crowd. It means becoming the new creation God calls us to be which looks, sounds, feels and even smells different to the world. Our worship is meant to draw our whole person into God's holy, different kingdom and, hopefully, to send us out to live that holy way – sometimes wreathed in incense!

Fr. James and Rev'd. Lizzie

Archives

'm sure many of you will be familiar with the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies library (HALS) housed in the Register Office block at County Hall in Hertford. A fantastic resource, amongst other things it houses church archives on behalf of the Diocese. Our service registers, PCC minutes and any other useful papers are deposited there.

Linda Cooke and I have recently parcelled up a large number of publications relating to the Parish of Chambersbury for deposit. I'd now like to make sure they have a full run of our Benefice Newsletter.



I've kept a complete set from January 2012 when I joined the Benefice, but have been unable to trace any previous editions.

Can anyone help, please? Are you sitting on any old copies from 2009 - 2012 that you could let me have to complete the archive? I would be very grateful, and content to know that they will be preserved for researchers in the future. My contact details are on page 3. Thanks.

Rev'd Lizzie Hood

8 o'clock services

s we've navigated our way through the pandemic and all the various stages of restrictions, we have so far been able to provide only one service on Sundays in all our churches. This has been due to cleaning requirements and the lack of volunteers to act as sidespeople, servers etc. while folk have been shielding.

The ministry team now feels we can resume 8 o'clock services for those who appreciate the traditional words of the Book of Common Prayer and the early time-slot.

Conscious that we are going into a vacancy, we need to consider a sustainable pattern so, from the beginning of September, we've decided to work as a team and offer a service at St Mary's on the 1st Sunday of the month, Holy Trinity on the 2nd and All Saints on the 3rd. We hope our small number of '8 o'clockers' will be willing to worship together wherever the service is held and will review the viability of these arrangements at the end of the year.

Rev'd Lizzie Hood

Holy Trinity table top sale

really super time was had by all on 3rd July when we had a fundraising table top sale with a few other stalls including cakes, bottle tombola and children's games in the churchyard. Torrential rain had been forecast and it was touch and go whether to proceed but with a lot of prayer it stayed dry and not too hot. We raised nearly £600.

The very best thing about the whole event was that it was 'normal'! People were able to stand and chat to folk they hadn't seen for ages, to communicate, smile and laugh without wearing a mask, to natter and talk for ages, to mix in groups and to see friends. This made the whole experience a complete joy and was remarked upon repeatedly. It was truly a wonderful, refreshing community experience.

I would like to thank all the stall holders who took a table for supporting us and for all the volunteers for making it



such a happy occasion with the added benefit of raising much needed funds.

Gillian Redman, Holy Trinity

Childrens' summer holiday club

oly Trinity has been sharing the running of a summer holiday club for many years in partnership with two other churches - St Barnabas, Adeyfield and Adeyfield Free Church.

A couple of years ago, Expressions Academy came on board and took the lead in organising it while the three churches provided volunteers, promotional and prayer support.

This year's club was called Sea Legends and on three consecutive days we explored the stories of Noah, Moses and various watery stories concerning Jesus with games, crafts, story, discussion and prayer.



The club was held in the palatial surroundings of the new Adeyfield Free Church on Maylands, which would give any of us facilities envy(!) and which provided ample space for running around. A great time was had by all.

Pleshey - House of Retreat

Walk softly in the ways of God Listen gently to the voice of God Sit quietly in the love of God Pray humbly to the heart of God Act boldly in the strength of God Go forth in His name

leshey - the very name conjures happy thoughts for those of us who have been there. Home of the Chelmsford Diocesan Retreat House, it was established long ago, soaked in silence and in the prayers of those who have enjoyed the shelter it offers, away from the hubbub of the world.

Thirteen of us from Holy Trinity spent a weekend there with Lizzie leading us and Guy Buckler sharing with us his knowledge of the life of St. Francis. Our en-suite rooms were comfortable and the meals provided for us were excellent. After settling in we spent all our time in silence except when we were in the chapel for services.

Guy led us gently through a series of interesting talks about Francis, his life and his walk with God. We said Morning and Evening Prayer together and celebrated the Eucharist on Saturday and Sunday morning. These precious times were connected by a thread of silence in which there was a real sense of our unity in the body of Christ. When we soak ourselves in silence, we learned, the way in which we see things changes and we experience freedom to see beyond ourselves and the concerns of our lives.



Some of us posed for a photo while others took the opportunity for a last-minute walk.

We returned refreshed and ready to continue our pilgrimage in good heart after this special short break away from our everyday lives. Thanks be to God.

Barbara Batten, Holy Trinity

School leavers' service

The end of the summer term always sees the church packed for the Leverstock Green School leavers' service, with the whole school - pupils, staff, Governors and parents of year 6 in attendance. It's always a highly emotional event, with the leavers recounting the highs and lows of their time at primary school and thanking the teachers and support staff who have helped them along the way.

Covid really threw a spanner in the works! But we were determined that the children would not miss out on this memorable milestone. Last year we recorded the children in their classroom and me in church and edited together a video for them.



A year on and we are now much more used to live streaming - our weekly worship is streamed from the school hall to the classrooms. So, on Tuesday 20th July we arranged for the year 6s, their teachers, and one parent per child, to come to church for what looked very much like a 'normal' service. The class produced a lovely service which the rest of the school could watch from classrooms or from home.

There are always a few tears as they look back fondly on their time at our school, and I remind them that they too have made their mark and we won't forget

them. We wish them well at secondary school.

Rev'd Lizzie Hood

Wedding bells at Holy Trinity



e haven't had so many weddings in our churches during the pandemic, and it's a good many years since we've had a vicarage wedding in this Benefice, but on 24th July the bells rang out for the wedding of my daughter Ali to her boyfriend Richard.

They had decided on a very small, informal wedding, followed by two small



parties at the vicarage on the Saturday and Sunday. Storms were forecast but we were extremely fortunate with dry afternoons, which is just as well as we'd planned for garden parties with games.

The bride and groom broke with convention by walking to church together and, yes, I did marry



them - such a wonderful experience, though a bit of a tear jerker! Parishioners were so kind and supported in all sorts of ways, and some gathered to throw confetti afterwards. It was a very memorable, relaxed and joyful weekend.

Rev'd Lizzie Hood, Photos by Amanda Ward Photography.



website page (labelled CONCERT (£6+ please)) or contact Bob Day 01442 737 494 or bob.day@sky.com DONATIONS BY CASH OR CARD WELCOME



