

## To our Benefice Friends,

Greetings to you all from Revs Lisa and Lindsay. It has been lovely catching up with so many of you since the return from the Christmas break. The schools are positively buzzing with energy and lots of work is afoot across the benefice setting up services and events for the year ahead. You will, we hope, be pleased to know that Lindsay is back in harness, but on light duties, so the January slimmed down service plan will continue for now.



St John the Baptist Church, Penshurst  
St Peter's Church, Fordcombe  
St Mary the Virgin Church, Chiddingstone  
St Luke's Church, Chiddingstone Causeway

## SERVICES:

**Our services this week are as follows:**

### On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January

**Fordcombe 1000. A Joint Benefice Sung Holy Communion at St Peter's** Refreshments will be served afterwards.

### **Forest Church 4pm. Penshurst.**

**We will be moving indoors into St John the Baptist church.** The activities and service last approximately 45 minutes and are particularly suitable for children. However, age is no bar to attending or enjoying this informal act of worship. This month we are celebrating the Forty Days of Christmas with stories, crafts, songs, and prayers. Refreshments will be available and we will even put the heating on!

### Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January

### **1130 am. St Luke's Chid Causeway.**

**The Benefice will come together to celebrate the life of Carol Benton.** Carol was a loyal church member working latterly as a Pastoral Assistant. Our sympathies and prayers continue for Carol's family. She will be much missed in the local community she served for many decades.

## GOVERNANCE

Our Joint Council (JC) meets on Thursday evening in St Luke's Parish Rooms. The role of the JC is to govern the whole benefice. The work of three previous PCC committees has been gradually merged into one body. There are many efficiencies particularly in terms of time, budgeting, purchasing and service planning from this model of governance. Some positions on the existing JC will fall vacant at the APCM and we would be very interested to hear from you if you would like to become more involved in this aspect of parish life. There are many and varied roles on offer.

The JC currently comprises Rev'd Lisa (Chair) and Rev'd Lindsay. Local views are represented through a Church Warden from each parish. These are Karen Franklin in Penshurst, Paul Allen in The Chids, and Angela Ventin in Fordcombe. Working across the parishes are Matthew Stevens as Operations Manager; Bob Golds as The Buildings Rep and Karen Franklin as the Mission and Worship lead. The position of the Benefice Treasurer is currently vacant although our systems are being beautifully managed by volunteers under the expert leadership of Barry Lewis and some very natty software. Could God be calling you to be our new treasurer? Please pray about this!

## WEBSITE

We are pleased to announce the soft launch of a benefice website - <https://www.highwealdchurches.org.uk/>

As anyone who has been involved in building a website will know, developing a whole site from scratch is a Herculean task. You will notice that the pages of the website are still a little rough around the edges, so we're not widely promoting the site just yet. If any of you feel like proofreading our pages or letting us know of any errors, or can offer *kind* feedback, please email either Lindsay or Tracy our administrator.

## LITURGY

We hope that you are enjoying the Christmas season service booklet which we will be using until Candlemas on February 2nd. Candlemas marks the turning point in the year when the Church turns from Bethlehem and the festivals of Incarnation (Christmas and Epiphany) and starts to look towards Jerusalem and the seasons of Lent and Easter. This service booklet is very similar to what you're used to, but with extra emphasis on light and the incarnation. In early February we will then share two weeks of our Ordinary time booklet.

Once Lent begins we will swap back to the liturgy written for Advent and Lent. The liturgy uses Common Worship Order Two which means that the service is structured like a traditional BCP prayer book service but uses modern language rather than that written in 1662. This liturgy is penitential in tone. We received helpful feedback on these booklets during the recent season of Advent and we will use comments from both the Advent and Lent seasons to help us devise a second draft.

## FEBRUARY 14<sup>th</sup>

Unusually this year Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. This may mean that we may well be giving up chocolate while at the same time sharing it with our Valentine! – To mark this unusual clash, we are hoping to hold two services that evening, so that we're not trying to do both at once: watch this space for details.

## UPCOMING BAPTISM

We're looking forward to Christening Leonora Beare later this month. Please hold her and her family in your prayers as they prepare for this important day.

**FROM OUR MEMORIAL BOOK**, we remember with thanksgiving:

<b>14-Jan</b>	Frederick Aylward Dorothy Mary Lucas
<b>15-Jan</b>	
<b>16-Jan</b>	
<b>17-Jan</b>	Michael Loftus Tottenham
<b>18-Jan</b>	Robert (Bob) Ashbee William Henry Lancefield Betty Collings Carroll

<b>19-Jan</b>	Lilian (Pixie) M McCooley Philip Robert Everest Bernard Stewart
<b>20-Jan</b>	Winifred Martha Huntley
<b>21-Jan</b>	Betty Raymond

*Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

### **SERVICES LATER THIS MONTH:**

#### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

10am: United Benefice Sung Holy Communion at St Luke's Chiddingtone Causeway  
5pm: United Benefice All Age Service Fordcombe Village Hall

#### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January**

10.00am: United Benefice Sung Holy Communion at St John the Baptist Church  
Penshurst  
6pm: United Benefice Compline at St Mary the Virgin Church in the Chapel.

### **LEARNING AND GROWING**

*Some upcoming courses in the wider diocese -*

**Steps to lip reading in church**, a four week Bible lip reading course. The course will teach some basic lip reading shapes from a biblical theme each week and give strategies for supporting communication.

The course is free, and on Zoom, but donations to the Anna chaplaincy are gratefully received.

**Mondays Jan 15, 22, 29 and February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2-3pm on Zoom.**

To book contact [judi.pettman@gmail.com](mailto:judi.pettman@gmail.com)

#### **“In the beginning was the Word...”**

A Quiet Day with space to prayerfully experiment with words and ways of writing.

**Saturday 3 February 2024 10am - 3pm**

at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling ME196JX

For more information, see the [Diocesan website](#).

#### **A Quiet Day in Lent with space to prayerfully reflect on key moments in Jesus' ministry**

**Saturday 24 February 2024 10am - 3pm**

For more information, see the [Diocesan website](#).

#### **An Introduction to Christian Meditation**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 10am - 3pm**

at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling ME196JX

For more information, see the [Diocesan website](#).

**It's your Calling.** It's Your Calling is aimed at those exploring where God may be calling and looks at our journey and the gifts that God has given us, as well as the Biblical understanding of vocation. The day gives an opportunity to meet others on a similar quest and to take time to think where God could be calling.

**24<sup>th</sup> February, St Andrew's Church Paddock Wood**

*You will need your incumbent's approval to attend this event. Please download and complete the booking form that you will receive a link to in your confirmation email. You should return it to the address given at least one week before the event.*

If you know anyone who would like to be added to our weekly mailing, do [let us know](#) (and similarly let us know if you'd like to come off, though we'd be sad to see you go). If you'd like to contribute to the work of the benefice, you can go to our [parish giving page](#) via the [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk) website (we'd be very grateful).

Best wishes,  
Lisa & Lindsay