To our Benefice Friends,

This week’s newsletter gives lots of information about services, and local and national events in church.

**Upcoming services**

**Sunday 17th March: Passion Sunday**

0800 Holy Communion at St John the Baptist’s Church;

 1000 Sung Holy Communion at St Luke’s Church

**Sunday 24th March: Palm Sunday**

1000 All Age Service for Palm Sunday (with Donkey), led by Forest Church, at St Luke’s Church

1800 Holy Communion with a Reading of the Passion Narrative at St John the Baptist’s Church

**Thursday 28th March: Maundy Thursday**

1030  [The Chrism Eucharist](https://rochesterworship.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/why-the-chrism-eucharist/) (President & Preacher: The Bishop of Tonbridge) at Rochester Cathedral

 *(This is a service to bless the oils we use for anointing, and the ministers of the Church, and you are warmly invited to attend.)*

1900 Tenebrae at St John the Baptist’s Church

 *(This is a service of readings and reflection, during which the lights are slowly dimmed, as we move from the Last Supper to Jesus Arrest in the Garden.)*

**Friday 29th March: Good Friday**

 0900 Morning Service at St Luke’s Church

 0945 Hot Cross Buns at St Luke’s Room

 1015 Walk of Witness from St Luke’s to St John the Baptist’s Church *(arriving c1130)*

 1400 An Hour at the Cross at St Peter’s Church

 *(from c.1410 St Mary’s will be open for prayer, with a priest present.)*

**Sunday 31st March: Easter Day**

 0800 Holy Communion at St Peter’s Church

 1000 Sung Holy Communion at St Mary’s Church

 1000 All Age Holy Communion at St John the Baptist’s Church

**News**

This week Rev’d Lisa has been very community focused. With four trustee meetings and visits to our three benefice schools to lead Collective Worship. The services linked Jesus’ attitudes and behaviours to each school’s key values. The children engaged well; each being left with the WWJD question. What would Jesus do?

In first century Israel there was no motorised transport; so how to bless a new school minibus is not mentioned in The Bible or taught at Theology College! So, with a little creative liturgy and Holy Water, the new Chiddingstone School Minibus was unveiled and blessed by Lisa on Wednesday afternoon. Prayers were offered for the safety and wellbeing of all who travel in the bus in the future.

**Forthcoming Meetings**

A reminder that the Annual Parish Meetings takes place in Chiddingstone Village Hall on 14th April straight after the morning service. In preparation for this we need to update the church electoral roll. Notices and paperwork will be available on church noticeboards and forms will be made available in hard copy or can be issued via the office on request. Please note that nominations to go onto the electoral roll must be submitted to us in hard copy form so that they can be validated. Please either post your forms to the Electoral Roll Officer (Tabitha Haysom) c/o The Rectory, Penshurst, TN11 8BN or hand in a sealed envelope addressed to her to one of the parish priests. We won’t open the envelopes but will keep them safe and pass to Tabitha to action.

Whilst you are free to add or remove your name from the electoral roll at any point in the year, the roll has to be checked, edited and then frozen two weeks before the APCM. The electoral roll must close 15 days before the APCM. Any amendments received after Holy Saturday (30th March 2024) cannot take effect until after the APCM. This paper, first issued last week, gives more information about the Annual Parish meetings and the various vacancies available. [Governance 2024 March update.docx](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21Akx7cTwsQV-BgockqtQbpnaZ10HHLw?e=dLMa9c)

**Life Events**

We have a number of Christenings coming up as the season turns. Please hold Theo, Lily, Toby, Connie-Rae, and their families in your prayers as they mark this important stage in the pilgrimage of their life. In a similar vein, you’ll have noticed we’ve started calling banns again, as the wedding season is about to begin. Please pray for our wedding couples as they, too, begin a new chapter together. Coming up, we’ve got banns to read this weekend for Rory and Hayley, and Deborah and Neil; while Rachel and William are being married by licence.

More solemnly, we hold Emma Welch, whose funeral we will be hosting shortly, and her young family in our prayers. Pray, too, for those whose year’s mind falls at this time:

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| **17-Mar** | Joyce Trixie WattsMaud Perrin |
| **18-Mar** | Jack Freeman |
| **19-Mar** | Thomas Carroll |
| **20-Mar** | Robert H MinterAnn Wilkie |
| **21-Mar** |  |
| **22-Mar** | Henry James EverestAgnes Thomson EverestVictor Moran |
| **23-Mar** |  |

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

**Finances:**

Some people have raised concerns about the recent announcement of an investment fund created by the Church of England. Rev’d Lindsay has written a brief paper to explain how this fund will work and to reassure you that our own parish funds are an entirely separate entity. This can be accessed here:

[Church of England Investments and Parish Giving. Brief Paper.docx](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21Akx7cTwsQV-BgogC50v380VkkeDNww?e=v5h9s0)

Thank you to those of you who donate to the church electronically. We do not expect you to give twice but some people feel worried about not placing a donation in the collection plate. We will soon be introducing these cards in our churches, and if you would like to you will be invited to pop one of these cards in the collection bag:



**Safeguarding**

We’re looking forward to holding our first safeguarding training day this weekend. At 2pm at St John the Baptist’s we will be gathering all who would like to, or need to, do their safeguarding training, but are a little daunted by the prospect of doing it online. We’re really grateful to those who have already done their training and sent through their certificates. It’s really encouraging. We’ve set a deadline of the APCM for training to be completed, so that we can start the new administrative year on a firm footing. But why – I hear you ask (no really) – do we need to do this training if we’re not in a leadership role? Here are five reasons provided by [TES](https://www.educare.co.uk/ppc/safeguarding-training-the-top-5-benefits):

1. Learn who might be vulnerable

2. Recognising tell-tale signs of abuse and neglect

3. Improve our communication with one another

4. Increase trust in the Church

5. Enable us to respond well to disclosures of abuse or neglect.

We’ve all heard the stories in the news, from the [Peter Ball](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000dbjj) awfulness to the more recent [Soul Survivor](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/concerns-substantiated-mike-pilavachi-investigation) case. While it’s easy to assume that nothing like that could happen here, all of these cases have happened in somebody’s ‘here’. If we want to be confident in our ability to look after everyone who comes through our doors, we need a ‘herd immunity’ approach to safeguarding, in which as many of us are trained as possible. Do please, whether you are visible in our ministry or not, have a look at the [training offered](https://www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-modules/#basic). It is really very good.

Best wishes for the week ahead,

Lisa & Lindsay

**Useful links:**

[Governance 2024 March update.docx](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21Akx7cTwsQV-BgockqtQbpnaZ10HHLw?e=fp4Raq)

[Safeguarding training](https://www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-modules/#basic)

[Church of England Investments and Parish Giving. Brief Paper.docx](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21Akx7cTwsQV-BgogC50v380VkkeDNww?e=v5h9s0)

**Learning and growing:**

*Some upcoming courses and events in the wider diocese -*

**An Introduction to Christian Meditation**

**Saturday 23rd March 2024 10am - 3pm**

at St Benedict’s Centre, West Malling ME196JX

For more information, see the [Diocesan website](https://www.rochester.anglican.org/events-and-training/spirituality-events/).

**'Let's end poverty' webinar**

**23 April (5.30pm to 6pm)** hosted by Bishop Simon, aimed at people who want to take practical steps towards a better vision for the UK’s poor. [Register to find out more](https://anglican.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0b375b1912f2d9f546f580f63&id=1b38b38484&e=3da6802864).

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| **PLANS TO MARK WOMEN'S MINISTRY**- This year is the 30th anniversary of the first women in the Church of England to be ordained as priests. To mark this special occasion, and to give thanks for all women’s ministry, a service of Evensong is being planned for **Sunday 30 June**, at Rochester Cathedral. More details will be shared soon, however, in the meantime, please do save the date.  |

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](https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/high-weald-churches-tonbridge/) via the www.parishgiving.org.uk website (we’d be very grateful).

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