To our Benefice Friends

You should be receiving this newsletter on Holy Saturday. We hope that the long weekend allows you some extra time to rest, relax and enjoy celebrating the Good News of Easter with friends and family. For those now on the Easter break from school and college we hope that the weather will be kind. For those visiting or hosting visitors we wish you safe travels and good fellowship with one another.

**Easter Day services (31st March)**

0800 Easter Holy Communion at St Peter’s Fordcombe. Led by Rev’d Lisa

1000 Sung Holy Communion at St Mary’s, Chiddingstone (Allergy warning: please note there is a display of lilies in church). Led by Rev’d Lindsay.

1000 Family Communion in St John the Baptist, Penshurst. There will be an Easter Egg hunt and craft activities for children. Led by Rev’d Lisa.

**Next Sunday (7th April)**

1000 Sung Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Penshurst Led by Rev’d Lindsay.

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Holy Week in the churches has been busy and varied. Palm Sunday saw two contrasting services. A walk of witness behind two donkeys was followed by an All Age Morning prayer service at St Luke’s. A more solemn Eucharist service in the evening at 6pm included a dramatized reading of the Passion narrative. Maundy Thursday St John’s hosted a Tenebrae service and on Good Friday there were reflective services where the congregation prayed through The Stations of The Cross.

Our churches are of course hubs for school activities. St Peter’s and St Mary’s both hosted whole school Easter services. St Mary’s also hosted a rather magnificent Easter bonnet parade which was taken indoors to avoid the inclement weather. On Good Friday a small group of families met and walked carrying crosses across the countryside to St Johns as a second walk of witness in the benefice.

On Maundy Thursday morning, Revs Lindsay and Lisa attended the Chrism Eucharist at Rochester Cathedral. At this service the Holy Oils used in the parish for the year ahead are blessed and distributed and clergy renew their ordination vows and are offered anointing and prayer for renewal. This service is chance to pause in the busyness of Holy Week and be ministered to. Bishop Jonathan’s sermon spoke of the difficulties of ministering in times of change and uncertainty and of our need to be still and let God’s voice be heard. The text of the Bishop’s Address can be found here: [rochester.anglican.org/news/diocesan-family-gathers-for-chrism-service.php](https://rochester.anglican.org/news/diocesan-family-gathers-for-chrism-service.php)

Our churches have for centuries held communities in their best and worst times. The funeral of Emma Welch on Wednesday saw several hundred family and friends gathered in Chiddingstone Village. Emma was led to St Mary’s Church by her beloved pony; all guests were greeted with beautiful hunting hounds and Emma’s final journey from church was heralded by hunting horns. Emma’s many gifts of character and achievements were celebrated and she was given a send off that we hope she would have enjoyed. Please continue to hold Jim, Sterling and Tennyson in your prayers. We also pray for the family of Pamela Hazeldine from Penshurst. Pamela died recently at the age of 89 and her funeral is planned for 12 noon on Friday 12th April at The Kent and Sussex Crematorium.

**From our memorial book**

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| **31-Mar** | Molly Langridge |
| **01-Apr** | Grace Winter |
| **02-Apr** |  |
| **03-Apr** | Ethel Dorothy Hardcastle |
| **04-Apr** |  |
| **05-Apr** | Donald Grayland |
| **06-Apr** | Yoko Miyagawa Donald |
| **07-Apr** | Alfred Edward Broad Julie Felicity Pickering |
| **08-Apr** | Alice Rose Huntley Roger Britten |
| **09-Apr** |  |
| **10-Apr** | Marjorie M Cox |
| **11-Apr** | Emily Martin Eleanor (Barbara) Avery |

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

This newsletter will be taking a break next week but will return on Saturday April 13th. There will be several interim mailings with details of our annual church meetings, how to stand for office, how to vote other important documentation needed before our three residual PCC meetings on April 10th and our bigger APCM on Sunday 14th. Please keep an eye out for these.

With every blessing for the Easter Season

Lisa and Lindsay