

GRAPEVINE

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The Truth Will Set You Free

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Dear Friends at St John's Welling and Erith
The last two Covid years have been an adventure that

most of us would not have chosen to undergo, and the last month even more so with the terrible atrocities being undertaken by President Putin in the Ukraine. My heart weeps for the mothers hiding in bunkers with their children, not knowing where their menfolk are or if they will ever see them again, and for the millions now displaced moving across Europe in an attempt to gain freedom.

It is hard to find hope in such gloomy times – but there is hope. Jesus Christ is the hope – the people of the Ukraine trust Him, and we are calling on Him daily and hourly to intervene to bring peace and justice.

We need to look for signs of hope, and we need to cling on to the truths of God's word. A sign of hope for St John's Erith is that 12+ people are going through Mark's

Gospel a chapter a day and have been gathering twice weekly to discuss it. That is the beginning of a new foundation. It adds to my confidence that the future for you is very bright and very secure. *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* I also find hope that 10 people (mostly from St John's Welling) have started the Growing Leaders course. We need to be constantly investing in people and their discipleship.



However, we approach the season of the biggest hope we have in the truth of Easter. We are Easter people who believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again to set us free from sin and death. *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Brothers and sisters stay close to the word of God, pray at all times, move in the power of His Spirit. Enjoy being Sons and Daughters of the risen King of Kings.

God's Blessings
Adam

Rev Adam Foot, Vicar St. John's Welling and Priest in Charge St. John's Erith

St John's News

"Till April and Spring" I said, signing off February's News roundup, little knowing that by the next Grapevine, world news, so long dominated by the Covid pandemic, would have been overtaken by live bulletins of a War in Ukraine... and then as I write, the wonderful news many of us have been praying for, the release and return home of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe..... So, grim lows but amazing highs! Life at St John's has not quite reached such heights and depths but there have been highs and lows. Highs include the lovely service for morning

World Leprosy Day which the Lamp-lighters helped lead and Bishop Simon Burton Jones' visit, and the spring Alpha Course. Many Congratulations to Kathy Walker who will have celebrated her 100th Birthday when you read this! We have continued to meet daily via zoom, to pray, with special Saturday sessions for Evergreen, the Church of England, and joining and being joined by Bexley Christians to pray for our Borough and most recently weekly after the Sunday Evening services, 'Prayer for Ukraine'. Our Church Hall is smart and safe with new doors and the car parking area and grounds are looking spruce and tidy following the recent Church Work

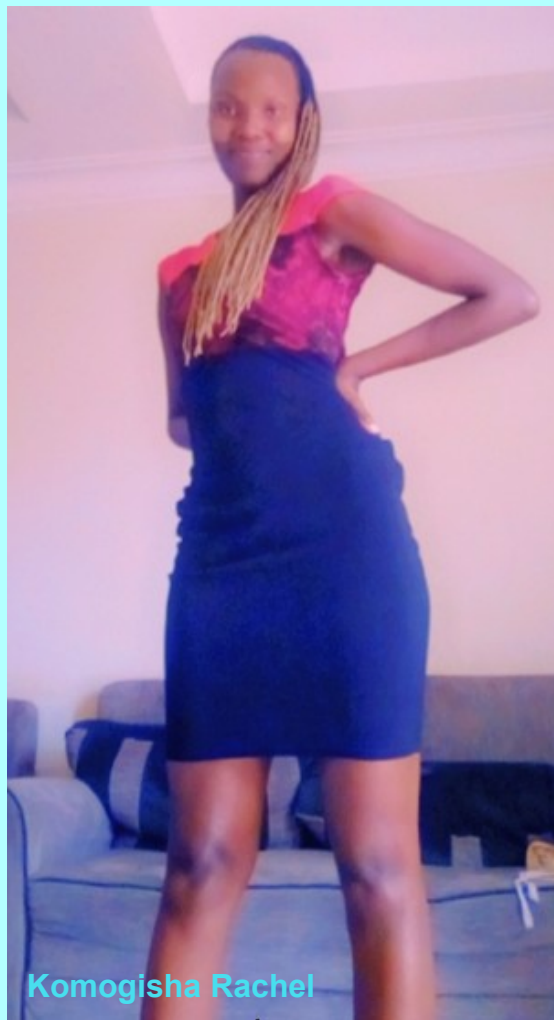
Lows Saying that final earthly goodbye is always hard and recently we have said goodbye to Peter Woods and Julie Diss. Our love and prayers go to Joan and family and Julie's family. The sermons and House Group studies this term are continuing to be challenging and important as we learn more about God's love, justice (Hosea) and our need for Salvation (Romans). So on towards Holy Week and Easter, Holiday Club, the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the new Bishop for Rochester and doubtless much more!
Till June
Estelle Woodcock

Rukungiri Update

The children have now returned to school after a very long lay off due to Covid. It has been difficult for some of them to settle back in. Some of the children, including 20 sponsored children, did not return for different reasons. Some of them moved to other towns with their parents and guardians. 11 of them were taken into another school which is a project run by Compassion. It is sad for those of us who have lost their sponsor children but good for them. Compassion sponsorship provides care until the child is 22 which also covers their secondary education so is much better for the child and less of a worry for the parents who cannot support their children through secondary education.

A number of our sponsored children have moved onto secondary school, with one girl called Komogisha Rachel, going onto Makerere, the best university in Uganda, winning a government scholarship for her sporting prowess. She has been selected for the Uganda National Netball Team. She is about 10ft tall!!! (slight exaggeration on behalf of the author).

Believe it or not, there are still issues with planning permission for the toilets, some 3 years later! The Director of the School (John)



is pushing their land registry to finish the paperwork so they can start the work during the Easter Holidays. The materials are already on site. Don't hold your breath though. We are planning to go out in October this year (Covid permitting) so hopefully, they will be completed by then. Please pray for them. The water pump is broken beyond repair and they are currently buying water from the local area to provide water to the school but it is not sustainable. They are hoping to buy a new solar pump which is 19,000,000 Ugandan Shillings (around £4K).

Alice, John and the whole Rukungiri family, send their love and thank you all for your support and prayers and are all praying that the Lord will continue to bless us in abundance.

Sue Read

Jobs: Wendy Perfect

I met with Wendy Perfect after being intrigued about what had led her to become a Local Councillor. When she first joined St John's, she was working at Thomas Tallis, a secondary school in Greenwich Borough, as an Education Assistant, mainly supporting children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the Maths Department. Tallis is a school with good provision for children with SEN, having lots of children with autism, a deaf unit, and children across the educational spectrum. Wendy is a fan of comprehensive education.

Wendy left this role in August 2018 as she had been elected as a Local Councillor in Northumberland Heath the previous May. Her role mainly consists of mediating between residents and Bexley Council on issues such as waste and recycling, fly tipping, traffic and parking, homelessness & housing.

She believes fervently in social housing. "There have always been people who can't afford to buy their own home. People, particularly with children, need good housing. Most of Bexley's social housing stock was sold to housing associations and occupants who could afford to buy their council house at a discounted rate.

to build more homes, which is a major reason for the housing crisis in Bexley and across Britain. In Bexley we have over a thousand families living in temporary accommodation, often outside the



borough, away from their support networks". Wendy is particularly concerned about the accommodation care leavers are being offered and whether on a low income they can make it feel like home, and that they can feel safe, "especially

as we know they experience loneliness and anxiety. Furthermore, we know this group will be disproportionately hit by the 'cost of living crisis' here in Britain".

Wendy was brought up as Roman Catholic and it was drummed into her from an early age that it was your duty to look after people who were less fortunate than yourself, and growing up one of her role models was Mother Teresa. "I don't think the level of homelessness is acceptable or inevitable in this country, I think poverty, particularly child poverty, is way too high and our education system exacerbates the differences between those who have, and those who haven't."

Wendy grew up in the Thatcher era when people's political views were polarised, and consequently, she was politically aware from a young age. She feels very lucky to have had the opportunity to serve, "it's a great privilege". She also feels very fortunate to have worked at Charlton Athletic Football Club, the team she supports, for twenty years, especially as during that time they were in the Premier League for seven years.

Wendy's life has also included some mental health work. Like many families, hers has been blighted by mental health. Her mother has suffered with clinical

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New Wine Leaders

As you'll read on the last page, we are affiliated with the New Wine Leaders Network, part of New Wine as in the United holidays in July/August. There are regional networks all over England, and ours meets in Tunbridge Wells every two months, which a number of us attend. There is also an annual 48 hour conference over 3 days, biennially in Harrogate and in 4 regional venues in-between. This year we were Ken, Estelle, Jim Charles from St Peter's, Miriam, Adam and myself. For Jim, Ken and Estelle it was their first



Kate Foot

(Continued from page 2)

depression and her brother died at the age of 46 from alcoholism. Wendy says, "I'm a Mental Health Act Manager for three NHS Trusts and we review the evidence of patients who have been sectioned. This is very important work as some patients' liberties have been taken away because they are ill, many have not committed a criminal offence, and therefore checks and balances need to be made. I feel very humble when I meet patients and I will always do my best to treat them with respect whatever the reason for them being in hospital, and some have committed the most heinous of crimes whilst they have been unwell. It's important to me that they get a fair hearing."

Wendy's working life is secondary to her family life and she's been married to Steve for nearly 35 years and they have two adult children, Emily and Tom. Wendy also finds time to look after her grand-daughter two days a week, aged 3, and you will sometimes see them together on Sunday mornings in St John's. Her Christian background and her faith clearly have a massive impact on what she does and the way she does it. So much has come from her upbringing.

[Note: The opinions expressed in this article are those of the interviewee, and don't necessarily reflect the views held by all members of St John's Church.]

time. The last Harrogate visit was in March 2020, just before the first lockdown, when I remember thinking "I wonder if this virus can travel through the ventilation system". Thankfully we didn't catch Covid then, cases were still pretty low, and we knew so little about it then.

One of the things which stuck in our minds after one meeting was "doubling our prayer time". What a challenge this was.

We were also reminded that God has His own agenda, and this is not always the same as ours, in fact ours are paltry beside His. On one occasion one of us had a shock that felt like a gentle rebuke about the way s/he was praying for a situation to be resolved, when God said "What if I have a whole different way of dealing with it, what then?" "I was never more shocked, as it would have an effect on the whole world if/when that happened."



We enjoyed a lovely meal out on the first night, together with Andy and Margaret, and some of us a delightful trip to Betty's (everyone who visits Harrogate goes to Betty's Tea Rooms) in a lovely spa town with great accommodation. Other leaders can join the network. It's generally midweek with local meetings on Monday mornings, and the conferences are Tues-Thurs in March.

Kate Foot

Save the Dates:



<https://www.facebook.com/SPARKBexley/>

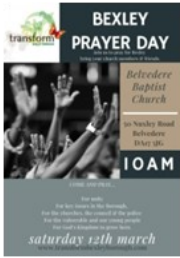
Save the dates July 25th to July 29th so SPARK IN THE PARK fits in with your summer holiday! Team registrations will begin in April. If you haven't joined the SPARK team, you haven't really lived yet!



<http://www.bexleyfestival.co.uk/>

Sat 18 – Sun 19 June 2022

Transform Bexley Borough



Transform Bexley Borough (TBB) - Churches uniting for the transformation of Bexley Borough through sharing the message of God's love in prayer, action, mission and partnership with others.

ber of Churches Together in England (www.cte.org.uk) - the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range



enlarging, the number of churches who are networking with us is growing, and it has recently begun to form hubs in different areas of ministry: Prayer, Leadership, Evangelism, Youth (which pre-existed TBB) and Communications. We at St John's, Welling are represented in some way in all of these hubs. We have begun to meet together across

As a Church, St John's Welling is networked in several ways with other churches. It is part of the Diocese of Rochester (www.rochester.anglican.org) and in the Deanery of Erith (www.erith.org), it is a member of the Evangelical Alliance UK (www.eauk.org) -



of traditions to work together in unity and in the local Churches Together in Welling group. It also networks with Churches in Bexley as part of Transform Bexley Borough (TBB, www.transformbexleyborough.com), a much newer network of churches across Bexley (and a few beyond) who want to work together according to the strapline above.

TBB is moving up a gear. The team is



an evangelical Christian organisation based in the UK, founded in 1846 to promote evangelical Christian beliefs in government, media and society), and affiliated to New Wine England (www.new-wine.org) - a missional movement, dedicated to releasing Spirit-filled disciples through the local church and seeing Spirit-renewed churches change the nation). The whole Church of England is a mem-



the Borough with members and leaders of other churches for prayer and Leader Networking, and these pictures are of the first Networking meeting which took place in Bexleyheath in February this year. So that you know what I'm talking about when I mention TBB, this is it! On 12 March about 40 of us met from different churches for a Prayer Morning at Belvedere Baptist Church, which is leading to the re-establishment of Churches Together in Belvedere after some time.

Kate Foot

Prayer & Anointing with Oil



was his desire and intention to anoint anyone and everyone who felt called to ministry before the Lord. + Simon was so clear in his teaching

in that everyone is called to ministry in the shape that God has given them, whether at work, at home, caring for others, teaching, doing your trade as a plumber or heating engineer (Jon Stedman is a fantastic witness to Jesus) and much more. Our Bishop invited people to come and be prayed for by name and anointed in the service of God, because the Church needs to be active, praying, and intentional in its ministry.

One thing about our Church of England is the realisation that ministry is not only to be found in the hands of ordained ministers, namely Revd Canon Adam Foot and Revd Gordon MacBean. This misconception is something that needs to be actively refuted and thankfully at St John's we have an active lay ministry team that is trained, competent, spirit filled and recognised as being effective. Training is necessary, but importantly, so is recognition of abilities.

On the 6th of February we had a long-planned visit from Bishop Simon for him to preach and celebrate the Holy Communion with us. Wonderfully he also informed us that it

His sermon was on Jesus stilling the storm on the lake, with the disciples waking Jesus up in fear for their lives. "Where is your faith?" they are asked. Now that is a tough question and rightly so, Jesus did tell them they were going to the other side. Recognising that our faith needs sustenance, engagement with community, with communion in worship, teaching and prayer is vital to staying relevant and effective. May this anointing be the start of a more focussed and intentional ministry in our workspace, our home space and our wider community to the glory of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of heaven.

Rev Gordon MacBean