

# GRAPEVINE



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## Mustard Seed Vision

***“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. Romans 12:3***

I have noticed a wonderful thing happening in our church. There is this way of living that is evidenced in the ministry that takes place in our services. It is evidenced by people consciously walking in faith.

We are called into a living faith and founded in a sure faith, we are reminded of our faith on a day to day basis in prayer with each other. We are encouraged in faith through teaching, prayer and worship. And we are practising faith in daring to dream big, recognising a need and pursuing it. A year ago The Life Service launched in a time when people were not coming to church because of Covid. Look at how it has become a place of testimony, teaching, Baptism, worship and most importantly, faithful prayer.

And then there is Spark in the Park. Are we doing this ministry out of habit, or because there is a surplus of love that has built up over two years of inaction, a desire to bring compassion, hope, relief, joy, laughter and a sense of cohesion back into our local community? Being generous in love in such a public way is risky, we must commit in financial terms, in giving up our time and our energy in



both planning, leadership, prayer and organisation in great detail. We need to have faith that God is calling us to bring Good News to the community.

Our Jubilee Celebrations started as the mustard seed vision of one person, Mushi, and became through the endeavours and labour of many, a tree that gave shelter to many birds in the community, it drew in over a thousand children and the celebration on Jubilee Sunday gave people an experience of Church that engendered warmth and respect for the work of this place of worship.

The faithful running of so many activities, Youth Ministry, Open Door, Lamplighters, TOFF's and many more are evidence that faith is active in being prepared to plough, plant, water and harvest when all looks barren and desolate after the pandemic woes.

Faith in our church is active, it is not just believing, it is action and purpose, it is engaging positively with life and doing our part, not to be noticed, but to bring people's attention to someone special, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour who has given us such hope and purpose.

As the verse from Romans shows, we need to be sober and humble, giving thanks to God for the great blessings he continually bestows on us. We rejoice in the goodness of God and celebrate that through faith, He is revealed to the world in the actions of our living out our faith.

May God bless us in our faithfulness and restore his Kingdom in our community. Amen.

Gordon

**Rev Gordon MacBean**

## St John's News

So, my conclusion to the Apr/May St John's News was 'on into Summer, Spark and much else', and so it is proving to be! The key June memory for most of us will surely be the wonderful St John's Jubilee events culminating in the Sunday Parade and other celebrations. I did manage to welcome school children coming to the exhibition in the week leading up to the big Sunday, but courtesy of Covid missed the Parade Service, afternoon concert, tree planting, hat parade and cream tea. Those who had the good sense not to have Covid over that lovely weekend have shared their personal accounts where Ken and I just have lovely pictures and, 'sorry you missed it' messages!

AND, if you haven't yet done so, do make a point of looking at the lovely Memorial garden with its new bench, that Keith

Mackley is developing to the left of the car park.

It has been lovely to welcome Alice Tumusiime (from Rukungiri school, one of our Mission partners, for whom we pray regularly), on three different July Sundays, giving her the opportunity to speak at the 4pm service, the 10.30am service and have informal chats with people during a 'Bring and Share' picnic lunch. As I write she should just be arriving home in Uganda. (Update...she is safely there!)

On July 17th Tracey Ebury was baptised at the 4pm service while Sammi Strong reaffirmed her Baptism vows, a wonderful service by all accounts.

Church family life is never static and since I last wrote we have surrounded Wendy Cole and her daughter-in-law Trish with love and prayers following Jonathan's death on 28th June.

Monica Harvey's Memorial service was a lovely opportunity to celebrate a life well lived in relationship with God, family and friends.

Our love, prayers and congratulations to Sanai and Joshua Dan-Ikhide who were married on May 27th and Amy (nee Kirkpatrick) and Ryan Day who were married on 1st June.

Many congratulations to Eileen and Tony Dowsett who have just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

We are delighted with the news of two new babies, born on the same day, July 16th!! Phil, Lauren, Grace and Bev Beaumont, have welcomed Caleb, and Peter, Dawn and Mary have welcomed Sophie Rose. We welcome these lovely babies too, praying for both families in these early, exhausting, wonderful days.

By the time you read this Spark 2022 will be over and the Canal Holiday and other great Christian holidays about to happen, as well as many of us enjoying a break from routine, but, let's not have a holiday from our relationship with God!!! Until October, and ... Harvest!

**Estelle Woodcock**

# The Leprosy Mission 2022

On World Leprosy Day on the last Sunday of January this year, the Lamplighter group brought news to the morning service of an appeal to build a new research centre at Anandaban Hospital in Nepal. Thousands of pounds from both the Lamplighters and the church have been raised. Thank you .

Your generosity means that a brand new Leprosy Research Centre will start to be built at the end of year. This will be a



place of medical miracles with the aim that... the injustice of leprosy can finally be defeated!! Jesus in the Gospels held out his hand to

heal the man with Leprosy and now in Jesus' name we share in the journey towards ending leprosy!! Praise God! Shakti who we heard about in January has had her prosthetic leg fitted at Anandaban and can't wait to go home to show her family she can walk again. One pioneering research taking place in the current ram shackled lab at Anandaban is trialling a smartphone camera to diagnose leprosy at home so sufferers in remote areas would access much faster treatment reducing the number of disabilities caused by late detected leprosy like Shakti's.

Our fund raising has also supported our dear Purulia hospital and the tireless dedicated hard work of the medical staff there continues. New breakthroughs from the research centre will also have a major impact on their fight against Leprosy. Thanks to your support during COVID 6,000 of India's most vulnerable people received their COVID jabs and TLM in India equipped isolation wards, saving many lives. The Lamplighter group of children continue to meet at the church hall every Friday at 6.10pm to have fun, fellowship and to raise money for The Leprosy Mission. We would love your children to join us. Message Jackie on 07796 264 309 for more information.



Our most recent fund raisers were the Jubilee event of displays, games and craft, attended by many church folk and friends and the Sunflower competition organised by Lucy, we eagerly await the results when we come back in September. Thank you for sponsoring a sunflower. Thank you also for donating to the Jubilee bench in the new Memory garden. As always a huge thankyou to the faithful group leaders, many helping now for decades and

Sylvia for counting all the money raised. Lamplighters has been part of St John's now for 56 years, new children and adult helpers are welcomed to help us fulfil our motto: 'To Light the Lamp of Love for those with Leprosy'. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Jackie and Keith Mackley**

## JOBS: Eileen & Tony Dowsett

Eileen and Tony both come from South London, Tony from the Elephant and Castle and Eileen from the Old Kent Road. The New Kent Road divided them, which is where they first met, in a Church Youth Club called the Crossways Mission. A friend of Eileen's who she worked with took her along one night when she was almost 16 and Tony was 19. It was raining so Tony offered them both a lift home. Eileen was escorted into the Sidecar and her friend onto the back of Tony's motorbike. Because of that, she thought it was her friend he liked, but he later told her that he didn't want Eileen to get wet. He has cared for her ever since.

Tony and Eileen both left school at 15 with no qualifications, although there were lots of jobs in the late 50s for unskilled young people – you learnt on the job. Tony worked as a Motorbike Messenger when they first met, and Eileen near London Bridge in the Metal Box Company making



cheque books for Barclays Bank. The pay wasn't good – then £3 a week. By the time you'd paid half to your mum and fares to work there was nothing left, so Eileen left and got a job in a local grocers shop at double the wage. It was a good community hub. Customers got their shopping 'on tick' and paid at the end of the week. Everyone had time for a chat, and home delivery was a young lad on a push bike with a big basket on the front. After about a year, Eileen got a job in Sainsbury's at Blackfriars (counter service) and learnt a number of skills including cutting a big cheese into portion sizes and dividing butter into ½ lb portions using wooden paddles (lb=pound weight).

Tony and Eileen decided to get married when she was 17 and he almost 21. They both got extra jobs to pay for their wedding, which cost £360. They rented two rooms in a house in Brixton in 1962 for £3.50 a week. Tony was working at Covent Garden delivering fruit and veg to hotels. In 1964 their first daughter Sharon was born and Mark followed the next year. In 1966 they moved to a rented flat in Camberwell, 3 rooms and their own toilet, a tin bath hung on the wall outside, although they went to the Public Baths for their weekly bath.

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# St John's Welling Family Photo



Welcome to our newest St John's Welling Family members Caleb Reuben and Sophie Rose who together share their mid July birthday.

Congratulations to Phil, Lauren & Grace and also to Pete, Dawn and Mary on the new additions to their families.

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When the children went to school, Eileen got a reception job in British Relay TV arranging repairs. Tony was working with a private car hire company for a while, then went into HGV driving long distance to Manchester and Birmingham. Around 1968 Eileen was diagnosed with a TB Spine (very unusual) and had to have surgery, recovering in a plaster bed for 11 months. Shortly after, they moved to Footscray into a new Council flat which was awarded to them on health grounds. It was so different from Inner London! Eileen started work on reception for an electrical contractor. Tony drove buses for a while then trained to be a Motor Mechanic, which he enjoyed.

In 1972 Julie was born and Claire in 1975. The family moved to Welling to a 3 bed Council house. Tony worked in Dartford repairing heavy goods vehicles, along with other part-time jobs. Eileen worked in the evenings in a youth club in Thamesmead while attending a part-time Youth Leaders course. When Claire started school, Eileen worked in an unemployment project in Plumstead during the day, set up by Greenwich Youth Service for young people not attending school, mostly young boys. The project was set up by Trinity Methodist Church, Plumstead which was easy access for young people living nearby and provided informal education along with sports and other recreations. They later provided a Girls' Club for young single parents and their children. Both projects were a great success.

A few years later, Eileen applied for a Youth and Community Course at Goldsmiths College. The two-year diploma course was aimed at (then) people from ethnic minority groups and women who had missed out on education. Most of the course was through placements and Sharon helped her with the written work.

By this time Tony had started his own business as a Mobile Mechanic, but in 1988, while Julie and Claire were in their mid-teens and Sharon and Mark were both off travelling, the family undertook a huge change. Eileen and Tony sold their house and Tony's business and emigrated to Australia, settling in Tasmania where Tony had family. Tony got a job for a Ford Main Dealer and Eileen worked in a group home for young people with severe disabilities. Tasmania was a beautiful place, and they met some lovely people, but Eileen was homesick and the girls didn't really settle, so they returned to England and bought a house in Bexleyheath.

Tony started work for Greenwich Council driving HGV motors, and Eileen worked for Bexley Social Services in the Rehabilitation Team. They stayed in these jobs until taking early retirement. As they retired, their son Mark unexpectedly became very ill with a pulmonary embolism and was medically retired from the Fire Service at 36, so around 2000, Tony and Eileen sold their house and moved to North Wales with Mark. Tony helped Mark renovate an old farmhouse where Mark lived with his partner and children. Eileen and Tony returned to England about a year later, but in the mean-time properties had shot up in price, and they bought a flat in Eltham, which was meant to be temporary 20 years ago, and are still there. Tony has found a new project to keep him busy: Men in Sheds ([www.mensheds.org.uk](http://www.mensheds.org.uk)), and they also do lots of childcare for their grandchildren. All the house moves have been unsettling at times. They started off in a one bed-roomed flat and finished up in a one bed-roomed flat 60 years later. Tony still has a motorbike and sidecar (not the original bike). Eileen is still kept in the sidecar. Tony has had over 30 jobs, Eileen about 15, and if I listed them all it would cover 3 editions!

**Kate Foot (with grateful thanks to Eileen for much of the text)**

# My Faith Journey: Lionel King

I want to start by saying, "God has been good to me in all the days of my life."

My parents came to England with me by ship from India shortly after the end of the wars with Nazi Germany and Japan and God enabled us to spend the rest of our lives together as a family in England and God supplied all of our needs. I was confirmed in the Church of England in my teenage years. I was told to examine myself with Psalm 51 before taking Holy Communion. This habit led me to be born again in Christ and to have an appetite for reading the Bible regularly. After leaving school I did National Service where I was given the opportunity to receive a long training to become a sergeant radar mechanic. After National Service God enabled me to get an engineering degree at university. Some time after leaving university God arranged for me to get a job that suited so many of my needs very well in the Civil Service as a civilian in the Ministry of Defence. In 1987 I was given early retirement for medical reasons. Through various circumstances God arranged for me to live in my present rented flat in 2006. I have been given so many benefits while living in this flat most especially by becoming part of the church family in St. John's Church. I rejoice in the Lord by being with my brothers and sisters in

Christ in the Zoom prayer meetings nearly every morning in my flat using modern technology devices given to me by Gordon MacBean and prepared for my use by Doug Snow. Doug



enables me to be a regular part of the Sunday evening church service by taking me there by car if he can and by asking someone else to take me if he cannot.

I want to close by saying "I must give thankful praise to God for all that He has given me in the past and I must put my trust in God for all my future circumstances (known and unknown) by seeking to be obedient to God through His enabling in all of one day at a time." May we seek to listen to and to obey the words of the voice of the Holy Spirit which He gives in our minds. The Holy Spirit is our best friend!

**Lionel King**

# A Jubilee Memory

When I look back to the Queen's seventieth year jubilee in early June 2022, I will remember wandering into loads of shops in Welling trying to persuade the shopkeepers to display the A4 poster we produced to advertise the exhibition at our Church. That was real fun, but even better was welcoming about a thousand primary school children into the Church to view a twelve minute film, and our displays in seven discrete areas, each dedicated to a decade of Her Majesty's reign. The children were all excited, but well behaved, and they needed to move quickly around to get the most from their class' allocated 45 minute slot. Our various Church team members worked like a well-oiled machine to attempt to offer all the children a safe, engaging and enlightening time. Our culminating weekend 10th to 12th June saw the Church open to community visitors, for the exhibition, the Lamplighters' event, and the finale of a open air concert, a tree planting, a thought for the day, an ice cream, and a fantastic cream tea. God blessed us with dry weather throughout the event, and feedback from the various visiting schools was positive, so a real win-win experience for all concerned, not least ourselves, and Jesus who we all sought to represent. We are all grateful to Her Majesty for her seventy years of hard work and willingness to smile and meet us, her citizens, and to do her best to be a great example of Christian leadership, to us all. So well done to Mushi, and the Jubilee Committee for all their planning and hard work, and to the St John's congregation who searched their homes to provide all the memorabilia of the decades gone by. Thanks be to God for seventy years of our wonderful Queen. Ma'am, we are not worthy, but you truly are.

**Mike Cossar**

