

GRAPEVINE

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Grapevine Re-launch

Our prayer and meeting room project is finished and already being well used. Praise God for finances to complete it, for the excellent building team and Architect. We have been waiting so long... As Jackie Crocker would say 'God is Good'.

The first users were 19 men who gathered together in mutual support and prayer

after the tragic and sudden death of Owen Wellman. I see three needs for us as we explore how we will use our new facilities – we need to pray and live life together more, and we need to reach out to those who don't have Owen's assurance of salvation through Christ.

And thinking of reaching out I have to ask you to pray and consider how you will support Spark this year. If Spark is to continue we need extra commitment from St John's - certainly in the form of more volunteers and probably in extra finance as we are losing a long term supporter. We also need at least one more Church to come on board. Please pray, and consider your response as well. Dates if it goes ahead are 29th July to 2nd August. We will make a decision at the end of February.

May God bless you as you too choose this day to Serve the Lord.

Adam Foot, Vicar

Dear Friends,

As we re-launch Grapevine with a new team of editors I would like to thank the old team of Nicola and David who did a superb job and to wish the new editors Wendy, Mike and Natasha well as they take on this important task.

At the start of the year and new era for Grapevine I am drawn to my go to verse from the Old Testament... Joshua 24:15 "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."



St John's News

I believe Autumn 2018 at St John's will be remembered as a time of real change both to our building and hopefully to us, the former being, of course, the visible and tangible construction of our lovely Prayer room, upstairs room, accessible toilet and kitchenette, and the latter, a personal and whole church change as we all, yes children and teenagers as well as adults, learnt more about what it means to be Jesus Shaped People (JSP) and put into place necessary actions and reactions... two very real changes which should help the Kingdom of God to grow in us and Welling. (It's worth mentioning that although the church had ongoing visual evidence of the ongoing work, life in the church building continued as usual with Natasha and prayer groups only having to retreat to quieter realms from time to time!)

Other key autumn events included:-

- * The lovely CTiW concert at FCI church in which St John's took part
- * the Rukungiri Auction of Talents... a brilliant evening of fun, food, and Matt Hall's fantastic and hilarious skills as auctioneer, resulting in over £8000 raised to finance installation of hygienic toilets at the school
- * JSP shared breakfasts and lunch
- * The work mornings and ongoing work, ensuring church and grounds were pleasant, clean and safe
- * Maybe not an event but the seamless transfer of Inspire leadership from Sarah and David Foot to Linzi Golding, Mike Cosser and Simon Caddock
- * Remembrance and Memorial services
- * A relaxed and friendly Welcome Lunch
- * Christmas / December when people flocked through our doors and we pray met Jesus in a new way

Personal News

Since the Summer, Church family has had to say goodbye to firstly Roy Penny, then Chas Cole and most recently to Owen Wellman. We miss each one of these very lovely, special gentlemen and pray for their families, especially Norma, Wendy and Ruth as they go through painful adjustment to a new normal.

Despite being on the property committee, Owen never saw the completed Prayer Room but the very first occasion it was used was when, five days after his death, the men gathered to reflect, share, drink a pint and pray for his family in it.. He would have approved of that!

And so into 2019 .. what has God in store for us I wonder?
Till next time ...

Estelle Woodcock

Mission Partners Visit: The Tester Family

It was so lovely on Sunday 6th January to have a visit from Paul, Sarah, Sophia, Emily, Annabelle and Sarah's mum Marilyn. It's hard to believe that their last visit was 2 years ago but then you look at the girls and see just how much they have grown. Sarah and Paul shared their journey over the last two years with us. Kate interviewed Sarah and we got a lovely snapshot picture of their life in Peru and Paul spoke to us on discipleship and stepping out in Faith during both our services.

Many of us were lucky enough to enjoy lunch with the family at the vicarage after the morning service and it was lovely playing games with Emily and Sophia. I found out that the girls love swimming and Sophia is getting brilliant at Spanish. One thing that is evident to me after spending time with them during the past two visits is that God is always ready to challenge us and lead us into new things so He can do the immeasurably more than we can imagine through us. Listening to Paul talk about exploring his new role it



really demonstrated putting prayer first and relying on the Spirit. I think we can all agree it was a very inspiring visit and so lovely to see them all.

Paul did leave us with a challenge to consider our personal mission and linked in 3 questions:

- * How are you abiding in Christ?
- * What is your role as God's co-worker?
- * How will you make disciples of Christ?

Lord Jesus I pray that these questions stay with us as we wish the family a safe journey home!

Sarah Coates

Church, where you'll never grow out of care.

As a care-experienced child, now adult, I know the value of welcome in a church, who are family, and indeed, the counter-cultural way I found welcome, purpose and home. I was 28 years old when I found out just exactly what the church's role is meant to be.

As I sit and write this it has been ten years since I invited Jesus into my life, and it might sound crazy, but it truly was and is the best thing I have ever done. What many didn't know at that point was the extent of the pain I carried, having experienced such a chaotic childhood. My childhood featured foster care, and this was a no-go area of exploration in my life. I'd grown up in and out of care, never experiencing love as you should, and tried many times to find love in all the wrong places.

When I aged out of the care system, I had no one and nowhere I was able to consider home. It was a very chaotic time in my life.

Thankfully, it was not long after that I started going out with, got engaged to, and then married a Christian. He did the church thing and I didn't. I sometimes went along and would listen to talks on love, acceptance and being you. I would sit there and in my mind I would respond: 'If You are love, why do I have scars? If You



home for good

are kind, why did I experience such trauma?' If... if... if...

Yet in the church I found something – not necessarily answers, but comfort. Not a removal of my history, but a chance for a future. Not a life without any problems, but a chance to live with hope and love and a place to belong.

Ten years on I continue to try and live in this way, and now I also have the privilege of seeking to bring this hope, love and belonging to others who are in the position I was. I work for the charity Home for Good and we are asking the Church to be part of the response to the needs of children who are in care today, by exploring fostering or adoption and by welcoming and supporting families who care for vulnerable children.

We want to ensure every child and young person has a safe and stable home where they are loved and nurtured. A place where they belong.

⁵ *A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.*

⁶ *God sets the lonely in families.*

Psalm 68:5-6

Find out more about Home for Good at homeforgood.org.uk or call our team on 0300 001 0995. Find out about our work in Tonbridge and across Kent at homeforgood.org.uk/kent

Together we can find a home for every child who needs one.

Billy-Jo O'Leary

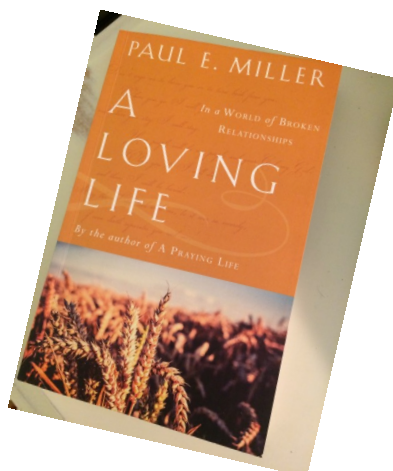
Book Reviews

365 pocket morning prayers

'Strength and joy to begin each day'
David R. Veerman

This delightful pocket sized book of prayers was a Christmas present from my ex-husband who is not (yet...I'm working on it) a Christian but who stepped into the CLC bookshop to find a suitable gift for me. He struck gold. A page for each day of the year gives you an easy-to-read prayer in everyday language based on a particular topic such as 'Letting go' or 'Faithful love'. Each prayer is followed by a biblical verse. I find it ideal for a morning dip before the day begins. I would carry it in my pocket but I might lose it so it sits on my desk as a daily reminder to begin each day with a prayer.

Also available from CLC Bookshop, Welling, is **A Loving Life (in a World of Broken Relationships)** by Paul E. Miller.



This book offers a "careful, thorough analysis of the book of Ruth", combining a "deep understanding of God's Word" with a "rich knowledge of human nature." Chapter 6 'Entering a Broken Heart' deals sensitively with bereavement, reminding us to "come as we are – all messed up – with our grief and our emotions." It deals with the lost art of lament : Naomi does not suppress her feelings but pours them out in a way that is alien to the Western world. Miller makes the point that listening to a lament is a "powerful way of loving someone who is suffering". It made me think. When we are with people who are grieving, perhaps just giving them the space to be themselves is more important than anything else?

Wendy Mackenzie-Ingle

Evangelist Conference An Evangelist?

"He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers..."

Not every evangelist stands on a stage, not every evangelist stands on a street corner.

If you feel called to do the work of an evangelist, come to the Evangelists' Conference next year.

The Conference

Each January, over 200 evangelists gather for an opportunity to network and leave recommissioned for the year.

Take time to stop, reposition and reflect.

Hosted by J. John and Andy Economides the next conference starts on Tuesday 7th January and concludes on Thursday 9th January 2020.

Dominic, Billy-Jo and myself attended the Evangelists' conference at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel from 7th to 10th January, and returned challenged, inspired by the speakers and the Holy Spirit who dwelt among the 220 participants frequently. J John and his wife Killy were the hosts, together with their friend Andy Economides.

Rico Tice from All Souls Langham Place, challenged us by using Joshua Chapter 7 (sin and being found out) apparently much used by Billy Graham, and in his memory. His second session was from Psalm 119 v 33, and talked about our idols, secret things we put before Christianity, such as sport or careers. Scary stuff.

Samuel Rodriguez was simply an awesome prophet and Bible interpreter. All the contributors' talks should be available on the Philo Trust site from Monday 21st January.

MCC

This was my 3rd year attending the Conference. It was an amazing time with Jesus. I have grown in my understanding, application and Evangelism meeting and learning about the many different ways to be Jesus in action and word because of my time at this conference.

Billy-Jo O'Leary

The Floor: St John's Jubilee Hall

In 2018 a major flooring project was started and completed in the St John's Jubilee Hall.

Primarily funds were raised by a generous grant from the East Wickham & Welling War Memorial Trust and also a significant donation from St John's bowls club. Both for which St John's is most grateful.

Thanks also to those who worked on removal of the old floor which was a mammoth task.

The new floor is now being enjoyed by all.



Rukungiri Auction of Promises

Uganda 2018 posed a dilemma. Toilets used by the kids are unhygienic, pits are full, extremely smelly and kids often either fall or drop things down them. John got a quote and it came to £7700! How would we raise that? Our church family had already been extremely generous in supplying funds for the prayer room. Bev Jones suggested an auction which would raise funds but could also be part of our service to God. The idea was formulated and off we went! Bev's brother Matt is an established amateur charity auctioneer in his village and he was more than happy to come and do the same for us.



and pushed up the prices, some people almost bankrupted themselves buying up a number of lots, people gave up their time to attend and help on the night and others gave direct donations. A fantastic cake made by Sarah Coates' sister-in-law was one of the stars of the evening.

The main highlight was raising circa £11k. We would like to thank everyone on behalf of Rukungiri Primary School for taking the welfare of the children to heart and being so generous. We would also like to thank God for such a

What a fantastic response from our church family and others who volunteered their services

to auction on the night. We also cooked Ugandan fare (some might not call it that!!) as a taster of what you might expect if you visit. People were so generous with their gifts, with raffle prizes and the prices they paid for their lots. We had a great night. Matt was hilarious

fun evening and reminding us what true family does. The love I felt in the hall that night will live with me forever.

God bless

Sue x

Sue Read

Rukungiri Promises Fulfilled

On 8th December I held a Christmas biscuit making morning to fulfil a pledge made at the Rukungiri Toilets Auction. The bidder turned out to have bought the class for her daughter and friends so I had 3 junior school age girls and a mum sitting down for a 10am - 1pm session that Saturday morning. My aim was to do the three hours with a combination of biscuit dough making (shortbread and gingerbread), cutting, baking and decorating. All these stages need time in between for resting the dough, cooking and cooling so in true Blue Peter fashion I prepared some dough and cooked biscuits



ready to fill in the gaps. Each cook cut out a number in dough to add to their trays in the oven so everyone got their own biscuits back. A great time was had by all with the girls mastering a lot of rolling, baking, cutting and piping techniques and samples were enjoyed in the tea break. I appreciated the great help given by parents who had stayed to chat and drink coffee while the class was going on. Boxes of iced and plain biscuits together with spare dough were taken home and I calculate that we made well over 200 biscuits.

Kate Finney

They Shall Not Grow Old

In a moving tribute to those who lost their lives in the first world war, the congregation at St John's had the opportunity to place one hundred individual hand-crafted poppies onto the display at the front of church. The number of poppies represented the number of years since the end of the Great War and provided a poignant visual reminder of the time that has passed and the fact that the fallen are still remembered every year in the services of remembrance.



Wendy Mackenzie-Ingle