

GRAPEVINE

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Twinning

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 NIV

Dear friend,

The Bible makes it clear that we please God when we care for those in need – and as individuals and as a church we make efforts to do so. I hope we are all being a bit more thoughtful about the way we impact the global poor by our shopping habits, and that we have an active plan about our charitable giving that supports organisations such as the International Justice Mission (IJM) and Tear Fund that actively seek to support and champion those who have little or nothing – even losing their freedom.

Do speak to Steve Webster about how you can get involved with IJM...

This harvest time I want to encourage you about a very simple thing you can do to act justly and love mercy – and in thinking about others walk humbly before God.

World Toilet Day, 19 November
Every year, on 19 November, it's World Toilet Day. It's a great opportunity to focus on toilets, and the health, happiness and dignity that come when a family get their first-ever loo, and women and girls no longer have to squat in the grass. *'It was really embarrassing when my friends would find me in the bush, squatting to go to the toilet. People would laugh at me at school the next day'*, says Monica. <https://www.toilettwinning.org/twin-your-church-toilets/>

We have twinned our toilets in the vicarage – and someone has twinned our new accessible toilet in church. It costs £60 and enables Tearfund to provide toilets in places where there are none.

What a privilege it is for us to have a new toilet in church – to have maybe 2 or 3 at home... I cannot imagine the horror of not



having what we consider to be a basic human right! Could you twin yours?

There are about 50 days to the 19th November – that's about 200 trips to the loo (a low guess!) which

makes sponsorship work out at 30p every time you flush! Be creative and give it a go. <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>

God bless you.

Adam Foot

St John's News

Well, that summer seems to have gone quickly but has left many lovely memories of special events and celebrations.

Spark in the Park, the seventeenth I think, enabled us to share a little of God's Kingdom values with our community and beyond. So many different families and groups found their way into Spark and loved what they experienced. My special memories include conversations with parents with autistic children who loved the lower numbers on the one wet day because it was less frenetic; the Wheelie gang: children in wheel chairs who were able to have special time on the inflatables, and a local after school club providing full day care during the holidays who were able to access a wealth of activities all free.

Later in August some of our young people, with gourmet cook Adam Foot and chief

Pastoral carer Kate Foot, were part of a local group that attended the last ever Soul Survivor. They returned with lovely stories of God at work in their lives and those of their friends.

Our Seaside August Sunday focus was challenging and fun as we looked at various seaside stories and found God challenging us again and again as we realised the Christian life is not an ocean cruise but rather lifelong commitment on a working ship!

If that all seems a little daunting, over 70 of us are attending the Everyday Supernatural Course, led by Steve Webster, in which we are learning about and having the opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to empower us for whatever He calls us to do.

The St John's family is never static and during August Linzi Golding was appointed as our Youth Leader and is already well into the work involved as well as voluntarily overseeing areas such as

Jesus kidz, previously done by Laura Webster (who is loving her new job!) One of Linzi's challenges is to ensure she has some time off so we await hearing her chosen day off which we will endeavour to respect!

During August Gordon MacBean completed his placement with us but we are so delighted to learn that he is joining us as Curate following his ordination next summer.

Just after Spark we had to say goodbye to our lovely Koru student Anna, as her gap year with CRIBS came to an end, but our link with Germany continues, as on August 31st Valerie arrived and is already going into schools with CRIBS and getting to know her new St John's family!

We were thrilled to hear of the safe arrival of a baby son to Jade and Paul Sowdon, grandson to Ruth Wellman, but saddened to learn that lovely Bill Covil has died.

So, till...can it be... December ..?!

Estelle Woodcock

SPARK 2019 Review

Zachary: "I think Spark in the Park is very enjoyable because families can come together from the whole borough and have the best time of their lives for a whole week at Spark, and I'm not forgetting my favourite bit of this year but it was getting to know so many new people because of our Spark Junior Team t-shirts. Even if they were old or young I would recommend it to every family in the Borough of Bexley."

Charlotte: "SPARK is a great opportunity for members of the Christian community to give back to the local community of Bexley. Ever since my family and I moved to Bexley, SPARK has been a highlight of the previous 12 years. This year was a very different experience for me as I was welcomed onto the SPARK executive team and to give my ideas and thoughts. I was given the opportunity to

be able to make slight changes and some bigger ones to make sure SPARK is accessible for everyone within our borough. One major change was our "Youth Tent"! 3Dub was asked if we had any ideas for SPARK and many of us agreed that a space for teens to chill out and ask questions about God would be a great asset to SPARK. Boaz Moody and I joined forces with Andrew Unger, youth leader from Avery Hill Christian Fellowship, and started to put our ideas into action. With this being the first year of the "Youth Tent", I believe that it couldn't have gone better. This was also the first year I was hosting SPARK over the microphone and I can't wait to do it again next year! I personally want to say thank you to everyone for praying for #SPARK2019 and hope to see you all next year for #SPARK2020.

Charlotte & Zachary O'Leary

Jim: Cabbie to

It was Saturday 15th June 2019, I won't forget this date as it completely changed my life.

I was attending the Spiritual Away Day as part of the Alpha Course and our trip was to Holy Trinity in Penge. During the morning a lady who wasn't part of the Alpha course from either church asked to join us: her name was Marina. After a short while sitting next to me, she leant forward and told me "you have an emotional blockage and the church can help". I was taken aback at first and she swiftly followed up with "stop picking on yourself", after which she left our table.

I was confused as to why someone I'd never met could say something as direct. Prior to becoming a Christian I would have dismissed her comments as madness, but this was meant to be as she had a message for me.

THANK YOU

So my time at St John's starts with my Baptism as a baby, moves through Sunday School, Junior Church, Kings Own, Source (just) with a confirmation, a wedding to Steve, Rebecca and Beth's baptisms and sadly my parents' funerals thrown in. I really have been around for a while!

I have learnt so much from so many people and my life would be so much poorer without so many friends over so many years. THANK YOU everyone.

And being married to Steve has made my faith journey so much easier as I've seen God move powerfully in his life too. I am not sure anyone else would have been able to cope with my erratic hours, craft filled house or general mayhem – so thank you. And a huge thank you to Becca and Beth who have put up with and helped with so much over the years and thank you to everyone who helped them on their own faith journeys. My driving passion has always been for children and young people to have a personal relationship with Jesus throughout their lives and I have so much enjoyed being able to do that.

Hmm,.... best bits - introducing children to our God in assemblies, sharing God's love at Open Door, setting up Messy Church and seeing families meet Jesus together, the madness of Holiday Clubs, the extreme madness that is Spark. Youth Alpha courses and week-ends-away rate high on both the madness and the spiritual. It's been wonderful being part of so many children's faith journeys and walking alongside young people as they negotiate tough places in life with Jesus by their side. What more fulfilling role can there be in life?

Having said that, I know God has asked me to move on professionally and I pray that more children and young people will have a life-long faith as a result of my new role supporting other churches. I am sad that I have had to step back from serving at St John's but I will still be around.

I have always had such a great team and they are already stepping up and with Linzi taking on the youth work I know our children and young people are in safe hands. But raising them is the role of the whole church – so whether it's practically or in prayer please look after them.

Laura Webster



Mail Update

Dear St. John's church,

I'm happy to be home but it still feels a bit weird. When talking to people it's in German which feels awkward.

I miss working in your church and with the children (as well as at CRiBS). You have such lovely and amazing kids and an absolutely crazy and awesome children's worker.

Working in schools has just started for me. I'm doing some internships to gain experience for university.

Please can you pray for my internships and study? And also for my church? We don't have many families with children and we need more people generally. This year in England has made me stronger and braver in helping people, especially Christians.

Anna Dangelat

Toff's Family

Once again we have had lovely meetings with our Toff's family.

Sadly we have lost many friends but know that they rest happily in the arms of our Lord.

Our numbers are much the same as we have been blessed with new members.

We spent a great day out at Hastings this summer and were entertained wonderfully by Doug for our Snow in September meeting.

Evangelicab

When it came to "inviting the Holy Spirit in", I wasn't feeling it, I asked for prayer and still wasn't feeling it. Then someone else gave me prayer, at first nothing then I was asked a question, "am I involved in transport?" I said yes. The response came back, "God wants you to tell your passengers about him".

At that immediate point I broke down. I knew how I was to serve God. After this experience I went to the prayer room and lit 3 candles and prayed for my 2 brothers and younger sister that I miss so much. It was time to accept the loss and in that moment it happened again - I broke down. A mixture of happiness and sadness but liberating and no feeling of guilt. I thought this was the end of God's gift but it was only the warm up.

Marina was part of God's preparation, to ensure I was ready to listen and accept God's gift.

I didn't sleep much (1:15mins!!). Got up Sunday morning feeling fantastic and had to go for a jog, it was that Forest Gump feeling, I could've run forever. During the run I was asking The Father, how to do what He's asked me to do.

He answered my prayer immediately with precise instructions; business size card with "Lords Prayer" one side and on the reverse "God is Love" "God is good all the time & all the time God is good". No telephone numbers or addresses. I'm to give two cards, one for them and one for whoever they want to give a card to and God will show me who.

The name Evangelicab came from Wendy on Sunday morning after the Service.

I've been giving the cards to passengers and there's one journey that completely blew my mind! But that's a story for another day.

Jim Golding

Next month is our fish and chip lunch and of course we are planning for our carol service in December - everyone is welcome.

So as you can see we have a varied and happy time at Toffs.

We might be getting older and slower but we are still very much young at heart and we can party with the best of them.

God bless you all from the Toff's family.

Yvonne Kaul

Soul Survivor

For as long as I can remember Soul Survivor has been a part of 3Dub's Summer Plan and for the past 4 years I have been privileged to travel, worship and grow with other youth. I'm sure I can speak on behalf of the 65 of us this year and say that we are so upset that this past summer event was the last one there will ever be. But looking to the future we are so excited to see where God would like to go over the years to come.

The first year I went to SS was in 2016, where only a small group of us from 3Dub went and it was lovely because I was able to talk and hang out with everyone that I would be seeing almost once a week for the next few years.



However, from 2017 a big change happened. 3Dub, Trinity's YP, BCLC's Youth and Belvedere Baptist Church's Youth have collaborated to create one huge youth community when at SS. This was the start of something bigger happening when we got home from our amazing God filled week away. New friendships were made, and relationships were tightened between the youth of the community within Bexley.

Everyone was determined to carry on building on the friendships formed and with the help of our amazing youth leaders, so much has happened to get the youth together during the year. If socials and events like Youth Alpha and TBY have come out of the amazing work and influence of coming together over one week in the summer, imagine what we could do if everyone worked together and influenced each other within church?

Charlotte O'Leary



combines everything I have ever loved – young people, languages, teaching and words. I give thanks every day for my good fortune in finding this job at the right time in my life. The new role gave me the opportunity to do a one year post-graduate diploma in Bilingualism in Education at the University of Birmingham which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Poetry has always played a big part in my life and once I had finished the diploma I also applied to Roehampton University to do an MA in Creative Writing. I studied part-time while working full-time and graduated in January this year.

As for unfulfilled hopes and dreams, I would love to do a solitary, silent retreat and live in the countryside. I find towns stressful and I don't know what I would do without my garden. I try to spend as much time as possible in nature as it seems to me to be the greatest expression of God's power and wonder. My idea of bliss is a day outside and an evening by a log fire, reading or writing.

St John's is an important part of my life too and links to my need for spiritual ones as well as secular ones! The Bible is a terrific source of poetry.

Wendy Mackenzie
(commissioned by Kate Foot)



Jobs: Wendy Mackenzie

When I left school at 18, all I knew was that I wanted to study languages as they were the subjects that had brought me most joy! I found words great fun. I did my degree in French and Spanish at Westfield College, University of London and this included spending a year in Spain where I lived in a hall of residence run by nuns. I still regard this experience as the most exciting, interesting and formative year of my life. There is something about being immersed in the culture of another country that expands your view of the world and the people in it.

After uni, I had no idea what I wanted to do and found a job in publishing using my languages. I worked there for 8 years before deciding that I was bored and left to train as a teacher. Before long, I had met my future husband and was married with a baby girl : my beautiful Ellis. I continued to teach adults part-time and then returned to secondary MFL teaching for a further 4 years.

Despite my love of languages, teaching didn't really suit my personality so in 2008 I set off to look for a third career! I settled on counselling – something which had always fascinated me - and I embarked on a three year training course at Inter-Psyche

in Dartford. At the same time I saw a part-time job advertised at Dartford Grammar School for Girls working as a TA in the English Department. I have been there ever since! My role has expanded to include working as EAL co-ordinator which

See you soon

Abby and I are incredibly excited to be starting a new chapter in our lives in Sevenoaks, but what we are leaving behind in St John's means a great deal to us and we will miss you all greatly.

I've heard it said in jest; "if you find the perfect church, don't join it, 'cause you'll mess it up." But luckily we won't be searching for a 'perfect' church in Sevenoaks, nor a carbon copy of St John's, as tempting as that may be.

We are looking for somewhere that's right for us in this season of our lives, where God has stuff planned for us, and we'd really appreciate your prayer that we will find it.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank you all; and we have a lot to thank you for: Many of you taught me a lot of all I know about our God:

° Many of you put up with me as I toddled around your housegroup, probably banging toys around or crying through your study.



- ° Many of you taught me Sunday school stories or led groups and events through which I would ultimately find a relationship with God.
- ° Many of you welcomed and befriended Abby when we started dating.
- ° Many of you were at our wedding and have continued to support us throughout our marriage.
- ° Many of you prayed and supported us when Abby found out she had cancer and many of you celebrated and gave thanks with us when she came out the other side cancer free.

In church we don't just do services together; we do life together. And that doesn't end here; we'll be around and check in from time to time.

But it does make it really hard to say 'goodbye' to a church family I've spent 30 of my 31 years with; so I won't. I'll say "see you soon"; because we will. And "God Bless"; because He will.

Dave and Abby Still