

GRAPEVINE

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The Story Will Go On

A year ago as I write, we were looking forward to Baptisms taking place during the coming Life Service. The Sunday came and it was an amazing service but tinged with the awareness it was the last big service Adam would lead because the following Sunday was his and Kate's farewell.

The last picture in the photo book we gave Adam and Kate as they retired, was taken at that Baptism Life Service and the caption below it reads, **THE STORY WILL GO ON.**



As we reflect on this year, the story **has** gone on... with new people joining us for worship and coming to real faith in Jesus Christ, Our Kitchen has been refurbished and more.

I believe there are **key reasons** for this. Underpinning them all, is knowing that - it's God's Church not ours. He chooses to use us if, and as we let Him.

Letting Him, requires us being intentional about spending time

with God, and allowing Him to guide and impact our, decisions, behaviour and relationships. We know this doesn't just happen and In our Parish profile we said that everything we do at St Johns is soaked in prayer. We pray individually, in Church together, and those of us who can, meet daily on **zoom** Prayer where we start, not with a shopping list, but with **Praise**, focusing on and honouring and thanking the God who created us, sustains us, loves us, guides us, unites us and hears and answers our prayer.

- ♦ We then pray for **People**. On Mondays we always pray for all of you who are in your work places. If you have shared prayer needs, we pray for you, as well as for people we will never meet, in the News for those clearly needing God's presence in their lives
- ♦ We pray for **places, locally**, places where our Mission Partners are at work, places where there is war, trouble, and places where big decisions are being made
- ♦ We pray for **positives and potentials**, Fridays and Saturdays that includes, our Sunday worship, that God will empower those enabling worship, that He will bring new people. We pray for our Youth and Children's work, Alpha, Spark, our Meals together, Breakfasts and Curries, our future Vicar, that God will help us to be His **red dots** wherever and whatever we are doing and sometimes, wonderfully, the answer to a prayer we or others have been praying.
- ♦ As we pray we sense **where** God is working and then pray work with Him.
- ♦ And, as we do, **we will continue to see HIS STORY unfolding in Welling and our world.**

Estelle Woodcock

St John's News

Slowly but surely Autumn is looking like a distinct possibility as Summery moments are followed by chillier, damper times. Undeterred by the weather St John's is almost back in full swing after the Summer lull.

That said, August was a busy and challenging month too. Our morning sermon series was on **People Jesus Met** and the truth that He still meets with people and Our Life Service series reminded us of the practical consequences of living Life the Jesus Way

For the first time maybe ever, **Spark** was completely in August. Timing was one of a number of changes this year but God has not changed. For weeks many of us had been praying for His presence and Blessing to saturate every

aspect of the week and this is what we experienced. From the weather, to numbers attending, safety, the lack of difficult moments, the wonderful God spot input, (thank you CRIBs), we sensed God at work and Kingdom seeds being sown in many lives.

Barely had Spark finished than Linzi and Hannah took our Young people to **Limitless**, the Christian Youth Festival. God was definitely at work there too.

Before we leave Christian events, do talk to Jon and Julie about **Wildfires**... days of Christian teaching and Worship down in Sussex and Billy Jo and Dominic about **Big Church Days out**. More of us are hoping to attend these events next year,... you too maybe?

While Play group was enjoying their Summer break, the old Hall Kitchen was gutted and an awesome **New Kitchen installed**. The keys were handed over

just in time for Playgroup's opening for the new term. Special thanks to the Kitchen Refurb committee and Val Gompers who worked for many hours emptying the old kitchen of its contents and then finding them homes in the new kitchen!!

Family News

Exam results have arrived enabling our young people to start new life chapters. We pray for them.

Mushi has completed a year in Hospital, we continue to pray for him and visit

Bob Sargisson and Christian Smith are home from hospital but **Twink** is sadly back in Hospital following a fall.

We have been sad to hear, of the death of two long time members of St John's, **Olive McDonough and Anne Russell**. Can the next Grapevine be the November issue? I believe so!!

Enjoy the Autumn **Estelle Woodcock**

Hello St John's Church Family,
Some of you know I work for Home for Good & Safe Families we merged in 2024 almost a year ago now. We had an exciting night online on 16th September 2025 at 8pm. Look out on our website for the next one.

Why do we do what we do to raise awareness of the need for children in care? Because

- **39,000 entering care** This year in the UK around **39,154** children and young people will enter the care system. That is **107** children every day.
- **104,000 are away from home** There are around **104,368** children in the UK who are looked after away from home
- **Around the UK** Wales has the highest rate of looked after children away from home in the UK at **116 per 10,000** of the under 18 population. Scotland has a slightly lower rate at **94 per 10,000** while the rates in Northern Ireland and England are much lower at **92 per 10,000** and **70 per 10,000** respectively.
- **A need for homes** **69,877** children live with over **52,300** fostering households across the UK. (4) In 2023, there were **2210** children waiting for adoption in England and **237** children waiting for adoption in Wales.



Safe Families



Home for Good

We are committed to ensuring that every child who needs one finds a loving home. We achieve this by co-ordinating and resourcing a rapidly growing network of individuals, churches, and local movements across the UK. Together, we raise awareness of the needs of children and young people in care, inspire individuals to explore fostering, adoption, and supported lodgings, and equip churches to offer understanding and support.

Would you join in and find out what role you can play in ensuring children and families can flourish. Find out more <https://homeforgood.org.uk/>

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Jon and I went to the Wildfires Festival at the end of July. It is an awesome experience which takes you 'back to basics' on a campsite full of 6000 Christians

from all denominations and all ages from all over the country.

The Festival is organised by Pete Grieg of 24 / 7 prayers and Lectio 365 and his wife Sammy. He has a team comprising Tim and Rachel Hughes, Pete and Bee Hughes, Ken and Fiona Costa, Ness and Rich Wilson among others.

Guest speakers this year included Krish Kandiah and Bishop Graham Tomlin, Dr Katia Adams as well as others. The Bible teaching was excellent and tackled lots of current topics. There was a focus on the Quiet Revival and Gen Z (you can google those to find out more!).

Daily sessions included, Lectio 365 live, worship for everyone, main morning session. Wildfires Labs in the afternoon, main evening session, afterhours events and things going on for children and Youth throughout the day. There is also the Field of Fun for families with children and a coffee hub to sit and socialise with a book and gift store.

The event is amazing with fantastic music delivered by Gas Street Church and is a chance to encounter the Holy Spirit in a lively environment whilst still having opportunity for some quiet prayer space in the chapel near Wiston House.

We would thoroughly recommend it and if you want to go next year, you need to book early as they sold out this year.

Below is a link about the event and how to book: [Home - Wildfires Festival](#) We look forward to seeing you there next year !!!
Julie & Jon Stedman

A Tale of two Daves

I love Gavin and Stacey, and had followed their antics for many years before the recent concluding episode which was heartwarming and satisfying. I longed to visit Barry and to experience the locations of the show if possible via a trip on Dave's coaches.

And so it was with that ambition that Jenny and I booked a Friday 15th to Tuesday 19th stay in Cardiff, in August 2025, with a plan to visit Barry and learn more.

Just before we set off, I remembered that my old Secondary school mate Dave Evans lives in Cardiff, and I managed to detect his e-mail address, and I sent Dave an e-mail.

Dave responded the next day writing that he would be delighted to meet us for a coffee, but how about it being after a service at his Church, that Sunday?

We had no prior idea that Dave was an active Christian, and we delightedly agreed.

After a lovely GWR train ride from Paddington we arrived at our hotel, just opposite the walls of Cardiff Castle.

We took a bus to Barry Island on Saturday, and discovered that Dave's coaches did exist, but was booked only online and solidly full for our weekend and well beyond. However, on the Sunday 17th we attended St Michael's Church, Whitchurch Road, Cardiff, where we sat next to Dave, and had a lengthy catch-up chat with him, and said hello to his Vicar, Caroline.



Dave and I have been friends since we were eleven but had had few meetings since we both went to University. I believe God has woven our lives together in these later years. We both have experienced deficits that have propelled us to Christ. Please pray that our relationship as Christian brothers can bear much fruit for us both.

MCC

My Faith Journey: Bob Morris

The past before my decision- was that I received a Gideons bible at school in South Croydon, aged maybe 12. I read it twice before I was 16 and left it that one day I would need to decide whether this was unimportant or vitally important. Surely that was a seed planted.

The decision- Aged 39, I was looking to marry a second time. I had made a promise to God on that before and I didn't want to make such a promise again without investigating. So I investigated. I did a course at St John's, Sidcup where I



started attending, made my decision that it was all true, committed and I married Wendy. No regrets there.

That leads into **the present**- the journey has included attending an Alpha course and helping lead several more plus involvement with Dubsters (the 11-14 year olds), house groups, PCC, the Life Service, etc.

For the present, I have two verses that I see as core to how I aim to live (you can't summarise the bible in two verses, but anyway):

John 14:16- "Jesus answered "I am the way, the truth and the life". If I had a tattoo, that is what I would have on my arm. Through Jesus, my life has direction (the Way), purpose and meaning (the Truth) and I am more alive than before (the Life), plus I have the promise of life after death!

Matthew 6:33- "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things (ie your basic needs in life) will be given to you as well". Do what we can to be part of a society that is more like what Jesus explained and what Jesus will bring in fully in the future.

The future- more of *Matthew 6:33!*

Bob Morris



SPARK in the Park

4-8 August 2025

the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Thursday: the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and Friday: an Invitation to build a New Life in Christ. On Wednesday Melvyn and Doug put on a quiz night in the evening which was well attended and enjoyed.



Many thanks to John Masheder and the Spark Executive, the yellow shirted volunteers and many others, who contributed in cash, prayers and time to enable this Community event to happen. There were new self-owned marquees and tents, and wonderful slides on inflatables with health and safety being overseen by Sue Read.

Blessings to all the yellow shirts but especially to those who erected and dismantled the site, and those who slept out there, providing a security rota for a full twenty four hours for the five nights.

We featured a Craft tent (Hama beads were popular thanks to Val and Ray), a SEN tent, a Prayer tent, two Football pitches, one for Primary School children and one for those

over eleven and there was also Hockey and Volleyball available.



Every afternoon, the Hot Spot, featured a Biblical based drama, on Monday: the Creation, Tuesday: the Fall and God's love, Wednesday:

The weather was ideal, every day, and around a thousand people attended most days, enabling our meet and greet volunteers to have opportunities to introduce Jesus and the blessings entailed in relating with Him, to our guests, who took a total of 500 magazines and New Testaments from our 'Good News for Everyone' colleagues.

Spark was a blast for the twenty nine Churches (and CRiBs), who attended this year, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was awesome, inspiring and encouraging.

So well done and thanks, to one and all, as we reached out and attempted to pass on the baton of the Christian faith to our local families and friends.

MCC

