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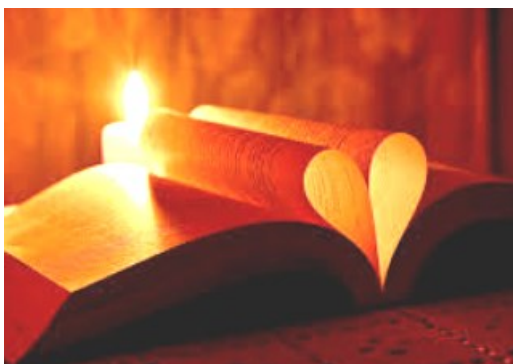
Waiting with Hope: Blessings in the in-Between

For any of us, waiting is rarely easy. As a parish, we find ourselves in a fairly long season of transition as we continue to pray and prepare for a new vicar. It can be tempting to see this time mainly as a gap to be endured, a pause between what was and what will be. Yet throughout Scripture, waiting is rarely passive. It is often the space where God does some of His most transformative work.

The Israelites waited in the wilderness and learned to depend on God daily. The disciples waited in the upper room and received the Holy Spirit. Mary waited for the birth of Christ, treasuring God's promises in her heart. Waiting is not wasted time when God is in it.

During this interregnum, we have already seen blessings emerging. We have witnessed members of the con-

gregation step forward with fresh courage and willingness to serve. People have taken on new roles, discovered gifts they didn't realise they had, and



supported one another in practical and prayerful ways. Some of us may be tired, but we continue faithfully to serve God. We have listened to a variety of preachers and voices, broadening our

perspective and deepening our faith. Our PCC, wardens, ministry team and volunteers have worked faithfully to sustain and strengthen the life of the church. In many ways, this season has reminded us that the church is not built on one person, but on Christ and the shared ministry of His people.

As we wait, we continue to pray for the person God is calling to join us. But we also give thanks for what God is doing here and now. May this time shape us into a more prayerful, united, and expectant church, ready to welcome and partner with our new vicar when the time comes.

Waiting is not a holding pattern – it is preparation. May we wait with hope and expectation and not impatience!

Sue Read
St John's Welling

St John's News

"Personally I don't rate November 2002 very highly. I'm not used to being unwell and am finding a few days of definite being under the weather a real eye-opener as well as making me very appreciative of good health"... Amazingly I wrote the paragraph above, 23 years ago and not a lot has changed (well, except the age of the writer!)

So, looking back, it was wonderful to join with **St Peters and Bishop Ridley Church** for the **Confirmation** on Sept 21st when we were able to support **Leon Gordon, Jodie Fitzsimons and Anaya and Kyron Morfett**. Bishop Jonathan's powerful sermon left us in no doubt as to what it means to become a Christian and follow Jesus.

We bade **September** goodbye at St John's celebrating Harvest followed by a **lunch celebrating our new Kitchen!**

These longer times together, including the ladies and men's' Breakfasts, and men's' Curry nights are just so good as we can chat at length enabling new friendships to start and others to deepen.

Our **Morning Autumn sermon series** on Psalms has been helpful and relevant as has The Life Service series.

Both our visiting clergy, **Alan Howe** in October and **Vince Short** in November have followed the Psalms series and we have greatly appreciated their drawing on personal experience in their sermons.

The **Autumn Alpha Group** has been meeting since September growing in both Friendship and Fellowship.

Since October started, **The Life Service**, has welcomed **David Snow** and **Stephen Broadie** to speak as well as having over 100 at **Lights@Life** after a really well attended Life Service on Nov 3rd.

Our **Remembrance Day** Parade Service at which Jon Stedman preached his debut morning sermon, was both dignified and challenging.

The Evening **Memorial Service** was greatly appreciated by bereaved families. They were welcomed, comforted and challenged as Mark Koening shared Christian Hope and Comfort.

It's been a season of Farewells this side of Heaven with **Kwun Hui** losing her Dad, **Pete Smithers** his Dad, **Anne Hill** her sister, and most recently **Roy Harris, Liz and her sisters** losing Eva. Longer standing members of St Johns mourn the passing of Anne Russell, John Aldis, Olive Mc Donough and Jo Worthen.

So, by the time you read this it will be **Advent**, with Christmas Celebrations just round the corner. Let's be ready to share and Celebrate the REASON for the SEASON!

Estelle Woodcock

Rukungiri Update

place at the school. By the time you read this, our P7 pupils will have completed their PLE exams. Their results will determine which secondary schools they will be attending (if any).

Through your generous sponsorship and donations, we have been able to install a fresh water system at the school. This has saved both time and money, as there is no longer a need to light open fires to boil drinking water. New furniture for the teachers and reception area.

We are also grateful to the London Borough of Dagenham for the donation of musical instruments. These have now been shipped to the school, allowing the school band to enjoy improved equipment and a richer musical experience.



New Furniture

we made the difficult decision to increase the monthly sponsorship fee. We are grateful to those sponsors who have adjusted their giving to meet this change. Please note that the charity itself cannot increase the amount — sponsors must make the change directly through their bank.

Looking ahead, a team of seven of us will be travelling to the school in February 2026. We also hope to hold a Rukungiri presentation in church in January 2026.

The trustees would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your continued financial support and, most importantly, for your faithful prayers.

God bless,

Steve Read



Fresh Drinking Water



New Instruments

“Fun at the Organ Console” Concert

PLAY THE ORGAN 2025

To mark “Play the Organ Year 2025”, I suggested to the BDOCA (Bexley District Organists’ and Choirmasters’ Association), that a concert be organised to promote the organ in a hopefully engaging way.



Doug Snow and Charlie Warren

Hence the title shown above. St John’s Welling seemed a good venue as the inside of the organ is fairly accessible, so an opportunity to look inside could be offered. A BDOCA colleague agreed to partner with me so a

number of duets could be played — therefore the concert on Saturday 25th October was born. One hiccup on the way, my duet partner had to drop out for family reasons, but he found an excellent replacement, Charlie Warren from St George’s Church, Beckenham.

The doors opened at 2.00pm and the audience started arriving, some taking the opportunity to view inside the organ and/or look at trumpet pipes on the vestry roof. By the time the concert started at 2.30pm the audience totalled around eighty.

I started the concert with a Fanfare and the famous “Trumpet Voluntary” (Clarke). It was then followed by two organ/piano arrangements — the “Bridal Chorus” (Wagner) and “St Anthony Chorale” (Brahms) — the opening section concluded with an organ duet — “A Waltz in A flat” (Brahms), before I gave a short talk on how an organ works, with Charlie demonstrating.

To start the second section, Charlie played Dubois well-known “Toccata”

before a further organ duet - five contrasting variations on the hymn “Praise to the Lord the Almighty the King of creation” (the third variation involving just the feet — no hands). As contrast before the second talk (on organ stops and sounds) I enjoyed playing the “Prelude on the Londonderry Air”.

The final section of the concert started with a further organ/piano duet — an arrangement of Chopin’s “Fantasie-Impromptu”, followed by a fun piano duet arrangement of “Tea for Two”. The concert concluded with a lively organ duet arrangement of Sousa’s “The Stars and Stripes Forever”.

As an encore we played Widor’s “Toccata” — Charlie played the first five pages and I then I took over for the last five. I think a good time was had by all and a collection in the region of £300 was raised for The Leprosy Mission. My thanks go to my duet partner Charlie Warren.

Doug Snow



Behind the front of the organ



Inside the Organ Swell Box

Men's Breakfasts and Curry Nights

This article takes a look at the Saturday morning breakfasts and midweek evening curries that the men have together several times a year.

I organise the breakfasts (currently) at the Toby Carvery, Crook Log (buffet style, eat as much as you want) and Ken Woodcock organises the curry evenings at varying locations. For the last curry night, we ventured out of the usual Welling/Blackfen area and went to Sidcup where we enjoyed a good micro pub and then a good curry.

I was asked whether these are intended to be "Christian" events (eg an evangelistic aim or someone giving a talk). The answer is no; they are times when guys can get together, be themselves and build connections and friendships. Being themselves doesn't mean we forget that we are men of Christ or avoid talking about Jesus but most of it is just enjoying each others' company. We are a more effective church by being a collection of people who are not just Sunday acquaintances.

I was asked why we would choose to exclude women. I think the women who go to the ladies' breakfasts would agree that it's good for men to hang out together sometimes and talk about whatever we talk about in the same way (but different, if you see what I mean) that women get value out of hanging out together sometimes and talking about whatever they talk about. There are plenty of other occasions when we can all mix with each other as we should.



It's also a good opportunity for new men to get to know the church guys and also for a few friends who don't believe to hang out with friends whose common bond is Jesus.

Bob Morris

My Faith Journey: Pat Thomas

From an early age, my sister and I were sent to Sunday School, my parents didn't go to Church, but going to Sunday School was what children did in the 50s.

At School we had Christian Assemblies, and I loved singing the Hymns, I liked the words which made me think of a 'Father God' up there watching over us. And Jesus who loved children and was being kind.

When we were very young, my dad contracted TB and was sent away to recover in a sanitarium. He came home when I was about three, but we had to 'behave' and be quiet to allow Dad to rest.



As I grew up, I gradually developed a relationship with God, talking to Him when I went to bed, about my worries and fears.

In the 70s, I met Trevor, and we got married and came to live in Welling. Three years later we had our first child, Angela, who at six weeks was rushed to hospital with hydrocephalus. I found myself praying again for her recovery, but also asking 'why her?' She had a successful operation, but I forgot to thank God.

Angela was baptized at St John's, and then our son Andrew was born. Both children eventually went to St John's playgroup. run then by Doreen Pride, who persuaded me to bring the children to Sunday School, which I did.

Gradually, God was drawing us to Himself through St John's family. When the children went to Danson Primary School I became friendly with a number of mums who came to St John's and I was persuaded to do a 'Basics' course. I so enjoyed the course, reading the Bible and discussing all sorts of things, then Wow the Holy Spirit filled me.

There was no going back, I gave my life to Christ.

I was confirmed in 1986. I think my sister thought I'd lost them plot, but amazingly she came to faith at 65, and had a full immersion baptism.

Of course, my main desire was to bring Trevor to faith, but that's another story.

What I have learned through my faith journey is never give up praying, and to trust in the Lord with all your heart.



Remembrance Sunday Service

9th November 2025



This beautiful, and wonderful Service, held both at the War Memorial, outside, and immediately afterwards within St John the Evangelist Church, Welling, is best summarized in some of the words used within it.

Outside we prayed:

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do as I command you (John 15 13 - 14).

Today we gather together to remember before God and commend to His sure keeping those who have died for their country in time of war, those whom we knew; and whose memory we treasure, and



all who have died in the service of mankind and we now lay our wreaths in their memory.

We now lay our wreaths in memory of those who have died in the service of mankind.

The wreath from the congregation at St John's will be

laid first followed by those from members of our uniformed groups.

Inside we prayed:

We have come together this morning as part of the family of God to thank Him for the deliverance of our nation in time of war and danger, to remember with gratitude the courage and devotion of those who laid down their lives; to commend to God's care those who are suffering as the result of war, to pray for peace and justice in the world, and to renew our dedication to Him whose service is perfect freedom.

MCC

So do not fear, for I am with you;

do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will Strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Deuteronomy 31:8

I am holding you by your right hand—I, the Lord your God—and I say to you, Don't be afraid; I am here to help you.

Isaiah 41:13

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:28-29

GOD'S PROMISES

Kate Finney

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

'For I know the plans I have for you', declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart'

Jeremiah 29:11-13

'Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed' says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10