



stjohn's
welling
transforming life through Jesus Christ

GRAPEVINE

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A Golden Past; a Golden Future.

I hope you enjoyed the centenary exhibition. Looking back over old photos stirs many strong emotions, doesn't it? One of those emotions is gratitude. We are here because of what happened in the past. Thank you, God! Maybe there is a sadness as well for what and who we have lost. Another emotion is a sense of sobriety coupled with a sense of urgency: we realise time is short and the time we have now will never be repeated. There is also a sense of hope. The nation-wide consensus is that the church is getting new people who are young; we know that Bible sales have nearly doubled in the UK; we know that Christians now feel more able to confess their faith in our universities without ridicule. This gives us confidence that St John's will be passed on to new Christians! The future looks good!

Times of revival, irrespective of theology and faith, are historical phenomena. They cannot be denied. True revival, such as the Methodist Revival in the 18th Century, also profoundly affects society for the good. Culture is downstream of religion and, as Jesus said, we are "the

Looking at the 18th Century Revival in the UK, cultural strain and darkness



spread. It is happening to a small degree now. Let's pray and prepare for more still. May Jesus be lifted high and may His Kingdom come in Welling!

Rev Ian Jennings
Vicar, St. John's Welling

salt of the world": our presence changes the entire flavour or atmosphere of our locality. I personally believe that in this decade too UK institutions and culture will creak and groan in the next few years until they snap into different stronger shapes. Think of housing, energy costs, "care", the mental health pandemic, and global supply chains. Things cannot continue as they are now. Change will come. I am also genuinely expecting revival and an increasing number of hope-filled Christians to bring the UK into better times. Our mission is not so much to rescue people from a burning world, but to see God's Kingdom come to this world. The local church being God's chief method of community transformation! It starts with personal salvation and being filled with the Holy Spirit and then it

St John's News

If you have been in and around St John's over the last couple of months you will agree that life has been busy and if you were Douglas or a member of the **Centenary Celebrations Planning Committee**,...VERY Busy! More about that later and elsewhere in Grapevine.

It was almost the last day of May when Jim Charles, who had welcomed **Bayley and Charlotte** the very first evening they walked into Church, conducted their wedding.

It was a wonderful day of Celebration during which both Groom, Bayley and Best Man, James, directed our atten-

tion to Jesus and His love, which has come to be the focus of their lives. It was a beautiful, never to be forgotten day, for Bayley and Charlotte of course, but also those of us who have had the privilege of walking with them through the preceding 22 months, starting with an Autumn Alpha Course. Following the morning service on the first Sunday of June, we had a **Welcome lunch**,... primarily for the dozen or so people who have begun worshipping with us since last Summer, AND of course, Ian and Sue Jennings. For the first time we met in the Hall rather than a home, and about 100 of us gathered, sharing food and growing friendship.

The current **Alpha Course** has just finished. Friendships have grown and

our hope and prayers are, that before Christmas, we will need to diary in **another Welcome Lunch!**

The **Tuesday Morning Coffee Morning**, rebranded as **Café Lane**, has seen a steady stream of Newcomers appreciating the welcome, chance to grow new friendships and enjoy a mug of really good coffee. Thank you, **Jackie and Keith, Julie and Jon, and Cathy Claridge** for having a vision and then turning it into reality.

Ladies' Breakfasts and **Men's Curry nights** continue to enable longer times to relax and chat.

The lead up to the **Centenary weekend** highlighted the importance of ensuring our Church Grounds were ready for the many visitors we were

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to combat human trafficking, slavery, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence against the poor. In the UK, IJM focuses on raising awareness, advocating for policy changes, and supporting survivor aftercare services. One of the key components of IJM's work in the UK is raising awareness about the prevalence of human trafficking and modern slavery. They organise events, workshops, and campaigns to educate the public about the issue and encourage action to address it. By shining a light on these crimes, IJM hopes to inspire individuals, businesses, and policymakers to take a stand against human trafficking.

In addition to raising awareness, IJM advocates for changes in laws and policies to better protect vulnerable populations from exploitation. They work closely with government officials, law enforcement agencies, and other key stakeholders to push for stronger legislation and enforcement measures. By engaging in advocacy efforts, IJM aims to create a more hostile environment for traffickers and reduce the



likelihood of individuals being exploited.

Furthermore, IJM supports survivor aftercare services in the UK to provide holistic care for those who have been rescued from exploitation. This includes access to medical care, counselling, education, vocational training, and other resources to help survivors rebuild their lives and move forward from their traumatic experiences.

Overall, the IJM plays a vital role in the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. Through their awareness-raising, advocacy, and support services, IJM is working to

bring about lasting change and bring justice to those who have been victimised.

Ijmuk.org would like our support to contact our MPs to enact on legislation that make it a requirement for all devices sold in the UK to include on-device safeguards that can detect and prevent livestreams before it starts. Go online for further information about their work and other ways that you could help. Every person deserves to be safe from slavery and violence.

Terry Golding

St John's Welling, IJMUK Rep.

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expecting. The **Work morning** enabled much work to be done, including Michael Wood creating a lovely new flowerbed adjacent to the Centenary tree which was planted by the Bishop of Tonbridge following the Sunday Morning service. (The foxes loved the new flowerbed but had somewhat different plans for it. They were thwarted!). Douglas is writing an account of the wonderful Centenary weekend. He won't say, but we owe him enormous thanks for all the planning and hard work he put in over many months and weeks, supported by the planning committee.

There is every possibility our Hall will have new window installed very soon. We are so grateful for the wonderful grant received from the **East Wickham & Welling War Memorial Trust** enabling this necessary work to be done.

We have had to say Goodbye to **Twink Upson** this side of Heaven. It has been so good to know that her last earthly months were happy ones.

Spark, the Youth time away at **Limitless** and **Big Church Day Out** are just round the corner and maybe, just maybe some cooler weather?

Until September!
Estelle Woodcock



**June 2026 BVSC Award Ceremony
featuring the recipient Tom Snow**

Centenary Celebrations



Well, the extended centenary weekend celebrations have passed and St John's church is now into its second century. I hope you agree with me that the celebrations have been both a blessed and an enjoyable time.

As chair of the Centenary Committee can I say a big thank you to all those involved in any way, both large and small, in helping to make the celebrations go well. For a number of people many hours were spent at church in the week prior to the celebrations, setting up etc.

It was a real joy to see the church packed for the special Sunday Parade service, with guests including the local MP, Councillors and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Bexley. The service included Prayers of Thanksgiving and a Testimony given by Bayley Towler. In his sermon Bishop Simon reminded us about how God has always used, in Biblical times, families to reveal His purpose, and how today He still uses individuals and families to disclose His purposes in today's world – this includes helping people "join up the dots" to discover or rediscover the Christian faith.



The Acer tree, which the Bishop formally planted after the service, will be a constant reminder of this weekend.

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My Faith Journey: Andre Hui

My wife Kwun and I have been part of the St John's family for eight years now. My faith journey began when I was 19 but looking back, God was at work long before.

I was born in Rustington, Littlehampton but lived with my grandparents in Hong Kong as a toddler. When I was ten, I had to take an entrance exam for a boarding school in Blackheath. Not knowing any English, I failed miserably. In 1974, our whole family moved back to England, staying briefly in Canterbury. I started at Blean Primary School where I was ushered into the 11+ exam. I failed that one too!

We all moved to Bexleyheath when my dad opened a Chinese takeaway on Pickford Lane: The Great Wall. I was placed in the lowest academic stream in Bexleyheath School - the E band. My dad found this hilarious, as it sounded impressive that I was studying "E" (sounds like 'medicine' in Chinese). I was given a



Gideon Bible which became a source of support. Over the years, I worked my way up to band A and was made house captain. I took a gap year to resit my A levels to get to university.

Around that time, my eldest sister came home from university and announced she'd accepted Christ. She mentioned her pastor was a former gangster! Naturally, the family was worried. But seeing how her life had changed, I decided to go to church with her. It wasn't long after that I gave my own life to Jesus.

I eventually made it to Queen Mary University to study Chemistry. My university years were a time of deep spiritual growth: I learned much about God and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I saw many friends come to know the Lord; today, they are all around the world faithfully serving Him. A master's degree in Manchester followed.

In 1988, a group of us from university attended Reinhard Bonnke's Fire Conference in Birmingham. It was the catalyst to starting an outreach to Chinese-speaking people working in take aways and restaurants in London. Glory to God, that step of faith has grown into several thriving congregations, where I had the privilege of serving for many years.

I worked as a material science research scientist for several years in Kidlington, fellowshipping during the week at St Aldates, Oxford but commuting back weekends to serve in London. When my dad passed away in 1992, I moved back to live with mum. I spent a year studying at the International Bible Institute of London and retrained as a software engineer.

Kwun and I married in 1997, settling in Welling, close to mum. God blessed us with two beautiful daughters who walk with Jesus. We served locally at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Thamesmead when the girls were little, returning for a season to serve as a family with brethren in London before God called us to serve Him in our local community with St John's.

Through all the twists and turns of our lives, we have learned firsthand that God is incredibly faithful, and He has always provided for us.

Centenary Celebrations continued,...

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The subsequent fun afternoon was a good time of fellowship and our younger members seemed to enjoy the Bouncy Castle!!



It was also pleasing that two sons of The Rev Peter Barton (the third vicar of St John's) made the journey back to the church on the Tuesday to attend the Centenary Communion Service and visit the exhibition.

Did you find the exhibition both informative and interesting? The aim was to give a snapshot of St John's over the one hundred years, including how the Lamp-lighter group has been a part of St John's history for the last sixty years. The Uniformed Organisations display also reminded us of our links with these groups for most of the century. And did you enjoy seeing the different styles of Wedding Dresses over the hundred years?

The Rev Peter Barton In my research, particularly at the Bexley Archive, I learnt much about the history of our church, and a new discovery was made. In the exhibition, you may have seen a picture from 1955 of the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday when it was located in what is now the vicarage front garden – although it was known that the memorial was moved from the front of the Iron Church to the front of St John's around 1930 – its precise location was uncertain. This photo fills in a piece of the missing jigsaw.

While the main centenary event is over, the centenary committee will be planning a number of other centenary events over the coming twelve months, culminating with a Garden Party in July 2027. We also plan to update the church history booklet, first issued in 1976 (Golden Jubilee) and revised in 1996 (Platinum Jubilee).



COUNCILLOR S.W. TINHAM, REPRESENTING THE MAYOR AT THE REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AT THE WELLING WAR MEMORIAL. 1955.



We thank God for vision He gave to the first vicar, Rev Frank Moore, to build the church, despite the many challenges. Each subsequent vicar has enriched our church in different ways, and we pray that the Holy



The Rev Frank Moore Spirit will guide Rev Ian Jennings (the eighth vicar) and those following on over the next one hundred years.



Doug Snow
Chair, Centenary Committee



From left to right **David Easton** (Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Bexley), **Louie French** (MP), **Bishop Simon**, **Rev Ian Jennings**, **Beverley Beaumont**