



The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Westerham

www.westerhamparishchurch.org.uk

News from St Mary's: 17th to 23rd April 2022

Easter Day

5.45am Sunrise service: Gather in the churchyard before dawn for the lighting of the New Fire and discover again, the reality of the Empty Tomb and risen Christ as dawn spreads across the landscape. We finish in Church with the Pascal Proclamation and First Communion of Easter. This is a very special service, well worth the early start.



8.00am Communion: a said service in traditional language.

10.30am All Age Communion: Come, celebrate, Christ is Risen! Invite your friends and family! Join us at 10.00 for coffee and croissants, or just turn up at 10.30!

Everyone is welcome to every service, even if you've never been to church before.

Streamed services: Unfortunately, we're still unable to live stream our services or upload recordings to YouTube. We have now agreed the specifications for some of the changes we need to make, and hope to be back 'on air' soon. If you can't come to church in person, the national church's online service for Easter Sunday will be led by the Archbishop of York. There will also be an Easter Sunday Grace led by Archbishop Stephen, for people to pray in their homes. You can sign up for more details [here](#).

[Sunday Link](#) is available on the website and in church.

Look activity sheets are now available in church for the kids, with things to do and think about based on the Gospel of the day.

Next Sunday, 2nd of Easter

10.30am: Holy Communion, in modern language with hymns



Messy Church was a great success last week, with worshippers of all ages attending. The theme was, of course, Easter, with the creation of an impressive Easter garden in the south aisle. Come and see it, when you have an opportunity.

Last Wednesday morning, the John Fryth Room was a hive of activity as Yvonne Pomfret and Julie Radford of the Flower Guild led an **Easter Floral Wreath Making Workshop**. All the creations were colourful and very different. Thank you also to Kathleen for providing the refreshments.

The picture shows the wreath made by Heather O'Neill. We look forward to seeing more wonderful displays and arrangements at the Flower Festival planned for the Platinum Jubilee weekend.



This Week

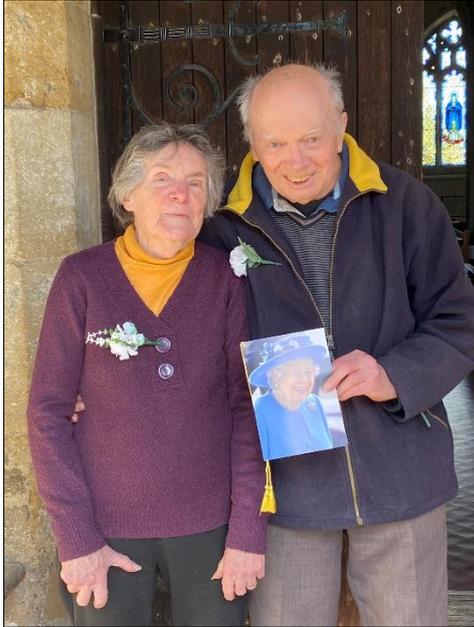
Tues – Sat, 9.00 - 9.30am: Morning Prayer. Usually in the Resurrection Chapel; a short service of prayer and readings to set you up for the day.

Tuesday: 10am – 12 noon: Coffee Time in the John Fryth Room. Come and enjoy friendly conversation over cake and other treats. It's all free, just make a contribution if you can afford to do so. *All welcome!*

Tuesday, 7.45pm: Bell ringing practice

Thursday, 7.00pm: Choir practice in the John Fryth Room

Please note that the **Parish Office will be closed** from lunchtime on Maundy Thursday, reopening on Wednesday 20 April.



Royal Congratulations: as part of the celebrations for their diamond wedding anniversary, Fred and Margaret also received a card from Her Majesty the Queen. Our photo shows them with the card in the church porch. Many congratulations to you both.

Ukraine

I know there is a deep yearning in people to offer a generous welcome to the victims of war and it is wonderful to see and hear of such open-heartedness. The key to interpreting what we might do, personally and together, is through prayer for discernment.

Bishop Simon Burton-Jones

Please continue to pray for all who have been affected by war. We have been donated a Ukrainian flag. This has been placed on the Resurrection Chapel altar as a reminder that no situation is beyond the reach of God and the promise of new life made manifest in the death and resurrection of Christ. You are invited to spend time in the chapel, praying about the war.

We have registered our interest with the [Sanctuary Foundation](#), in assisting with 'wrap around care' for refugees and their hosts. At least two people in the congregation have offered to be hosts, plus others in local churches and the wider community. **If you have registered an interest in being a host, or know somebody who has**, please let us know so that we can gauge the level and type of need locally. We won't be able to provide all the answers but if we begin to get an idea of how many people will be hosts, and hosted, we can think about what support we can offer, or help you to access.

Seeking Accommodation

If you have contact with Ukrainians seeking hosts, Sanctuary Foundation can help: <https://sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk/ukrainians>

Offering accommodation

- Read more about the Homes for Ukraine scheme here: <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>
- If you also register with the Sanctuary Foundation, they may be able to match you with somebody seeking accommodation: <https://sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk/#pledge>
- **Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees** already works with the local authority, finding accommodation for refugees from around the world, and needs landlords. **Do you own a vacant or underused self-contained property?** <https://www.sevenoakswelcomesrefugees.org/get-involved/landlords>.

Visit the **Ukraine** page on the Diocesan website: [Ukraine - How can I help?](#)

Physical Donations: There is a list in the church porch. *Please don't donate them here* but contact the person on the list.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

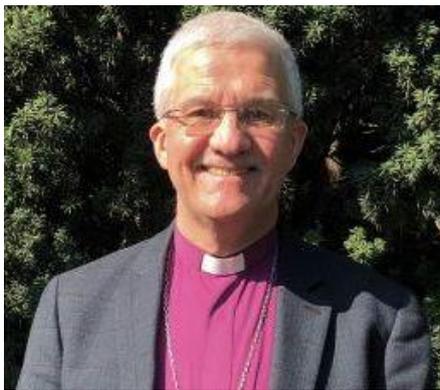
Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell



Donating money

- the [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) appeal is match-funded by the government (up to £20 million). Funds raised are being used by the Red Cross and other relief and refugee charities **If you don't use the internet, you can call 01204 770822 or 0300 023 0820**
- the [UNHCR Refugee Agency](#) emergency appeal to help to ensure that Ukrainians forced to flee their homes are sheltered and safe.

We are also holding a retiring collection for the Disasters Emergency Committee throughout Lent so, if you can't give online or over the phone, you can make a donation that way.



New Bishop of Rochester: It was announced by Downing Street last week, that the new Bishop of Rochester will be the Rt Rev Jonathan Gibbs. He is currently the Bishop of Huddersfield in the Diocese of Leeds and holds a national role in the Church of England as Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. He was revealed as the new Bishop of Rochester at Trinity Church of England School, Belvedere. While there, he had the chance to answer some of the students' questions and engage with them in a time of

prayer. Over the rest of the day, Bishop Jonathan met with some of the people and parishes of the Diocese, to learn more about the part churches and Christians are playing in transforming their communities for the better. [Read more about Bishop Jonathan and his announcement here.](#)



Our Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM) on Sunday 8th May

The revision for the Electoral Roll is now complete and we can move on to the next stage of our preparations for the APCM.

There are, in fact, two meetings:

Firstly, at the Annual Parishioners' Vestry Meeting, we elect the Churchwardens, who are leading lay members of the parish. Their ministry is very varied, according to their gifts, availability and the needs of the parish but, in essence, they co-operate with the clergy in the day-to-day running of the parish. They have various legal responsibilities regarding the building and churchyard.

David Booker is stepping down from this role after six years and we thank him for all the hard work he has done with Christina, particularly during the last couple of years, with not only a pandemic, but also an interregnum.

Secondly, at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting which follows immediately afterwards, those on the Electoral Roll can ask questions and comment on the church finances, building, the work of the church or any matter of concern to the parish and elect the people they want on the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Being on the PCC is a ministry in its own right because you share, with the clergy, in leading Christ's whole mission and ministry in this place.

This year we have six vacancies, each for three years - the terms of four members are coming to an end (they can stand for election again) and there are two members who are currently co-opted. Amber Crabtree-Cusick has stood down following her departure for university and we thank her for her hard work in the past few years.

In addition, we have one vacancy for Deanery Synod Representatives. Deanery Synods are the formal meetings of a Deanery, which focus on the mission and ministry in the area as well as providing a channel for the sharing of information, with presentations, discussions and debate of the issues that matter to your local worshipping communities. The Deanery Synod comprises both clergy and lay members.

Thank you to those who have undertaken these roles. The nomination forms for the roles of Churchwarden, PCC member or Deanery Synod Representative, along with the eligibility criteria are available from the Parish Office. Please pray about whether you could undertake these important leadership positions

Swift Boxes: The swift, swooping high above us, used to be an iconic feature of sunny summer evenings but, in recent years, their numbers have dropped dramatically. They are now a much rarer sight.

After a lot of work, led especially by Nigel and Bruce, with help from a number of other people locally and further afield, we're pleased to announce that we have been granted permission to instal nest boxes in some of the louvres in the belfry here at St Mary's. We'll keep you posted as the work progresses and, we hope and pray, it won't be too long before we see these wonderful birds coming and going over the churchyard.

Covid-19: As we learn to live with Covid, you may wish to consider wearing a face covering in church, in order to protect the people around you.

To protect you, for the time being the minister will continue to sanitise and be masked when distributing. Hand sanitiser is available at the entrance and on the front pew, if you would like to sanitise before receiving communion. The North Aisle is reserved for people who wish to ensure social distancing.

**Deadline for newsletter contributions:
1pm on Wednesday - thank you.**

Contact Us

**Revd David Fox-Branch:
Priest in Charge**

01959 563127

westerhamparishpriest@gmail.com

Rest day: Monday

Revd Wendy Harvey

07973 428683

wendyharvey@talktalk.net

**Sue Leather: Licensed Lay Minister
and Parish Safeguarding Officer**

Please contact via the Parish Office or
email:

westerhamparishsafeguarding@gmail.com

Parish Office

01959 561330

westerhamchurch@gmail.com

Open Mon-Fri, 9.00am - 1.00pm

*For weddings, funerals and baptisms,
please contact the Priest in Charge or Parish Office.
St Mary's is your church. Everybody is entitled to have their baptism and
funeral in the parish church where they live.*

Please 'like' us on [Facebook](#)
You can watch previous services on our [YouTube](#) channel
