

The Vicar Writes

Dear Friends

I'm writing on the day of the Royal Wedding, having watched, with nearly two billion other people, William and Catherine make their marriage vows and begin their married life together.

What came across to me, and to many others I'm sure, was the simplicity of the service, that for all the pageant and pomp, it focussed in on the couple themselves and showed that William and Catherine were no different to the many other couples that will be getting married this year, and to the many of us who have made those vows in the past. It felt too like a family occasion, not the sort of idealized family that some have portrayed the Royals to be, but one with the ups and downs of normal family life. The House of Windsor has had its problems but here was a moment of celebration and it seemed as if the nation found itself celebrating too, perhaps taking some people by surprise.

We live in a society which often has cynicism as a default setting - we put little trust in authority figures and tend to see individuals as floating against the tide, battered by the rest of society.

When the Bishop of London spoke in his sermon about growing spiritually by reaching out to others, he made a very telling point. For in speaking to bride and bridegroom, he spoke to the millions watching as well, reminding us about the need to relate to people beyond our own small circle, and that in reaching out, we ourselves will benefit, and grow.

The Christian faith has always stressed that spirituality goes beyond the individual, that the relationship between God and the human being is vital, and from that relationship flows our relationships with others. Christianity is about community, taken from the Trinity, God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and seen in our life as a church, within the parish and within the wider world. The Royal Wedding saw for many people the opportunity to meet others in the community, in street parties and other events, sometimes who they had never spoken to before.

As we give thanks for the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and wish them well for their future life together, perhaps in a small way their wedding may be for us all an encouragement to turn outwards towards the wider community

Mark

ST LUKE'S AWAY-GIVING

St Luke's Give-as-you-go scheme

In April £152.25 was collected for Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service

THE CHARITY FOR MAY IS

Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy

The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy gives financial help to serving clergy of the Anglican Communion and to Anglican clergy missionaries, and to their families. It can also assist clergy in retirement, their widows and widowers, their separated or divorced spouses and dependent children up to the age of 25. In certain circumstances help can be given to unmarried elderly daughters of such clergy. In addition assistance such as book grants may be given to ordinands in training.

Assistance is given to fill a wide range of needs. Unexpected costs such as bereavement expenses, medical treatment or mobility aids not covered by the NHS, emergency house repairs and help with nursing home fees following an illness, are examples of help provided. Other grants contribute towards costs of, for instance, converting one's car for disabled use, clothing for children, heating expenses and counselling such as debt and marriage guidance counselling. In certain cases help can be given towards debt reduction.

Grants can be given towards holiday expenses and also for "house sitters" if the parish concerned is considered unsafe to leave a house empty while on holiday. Grants can be considered towards the cost of financial management courses if considered advantageous by an applicant's bishop or archdeacon. A major area of giving is towards educational expenses, often such a burden on modest clergy salaries. This includes help with school fees, clothing, university costs and general educational expenses, for instance school trips, music tuition and instruments, and travel to school.

In all some 900/1000 grants are given annually, from £50 or so up with an average of about £1000.

The Corporation has been assisting clergy and their families for over 350 years having been founded in 1655 by a group of merchants in the City of London and clergymen, who were all sons of clergy. During the Commonwealth persecution of clergy who had remained loyal to the Crown was widespread. Many who had been deprived of their livings were destitute and the objective of the founders was to help them and their families. After the Restoration a Royal Charter was granted by Charles II in 1678. The Corporation's first President was John Dolben, Bishop of Rochester.

The Corporation's first fundraising event was a service in (pre-Fire of London) St Paul's Cathedral, followed by a dinner in Merchant Taylors' Hall. The service and dinner became a regular event and continue to this day as the Corporation's annual Festival.

The work of the Corporation is as important as ever and donations and legacies form a vital part of its income, so please give generously on May 15th for the benefit of the Church's clergy and their families.

John Hardy

Tea with the Cloustons

As you will recall the congregation of St. Luke's Parish Church provide prayer and financial support to the Clouston family in their work via CMS.

As the link person with them and CMS on behalf of St. Luke's I have maintained a good relationship from the beginning, so they have always had an open invitation for me to 'pop in for tea' when I am next in their area. A couple of weekends ago I was indeed in their area and I had tea with them.

Now the term 'popping in' is one of those English expressions, which really can hide rather complicated rational and active purpose than is obvious in its simplicity. We do love to play with our words we English, much to the bafflement of many a foreigner, we are the masters of understatement, innuendo and a whole lot more, but we know what we mean don't we?

I am saying this because the Clouston family live in Bangalore, South India. So 'popping in for tea' was a little more complicated than if they lived in the Sevenoaks area. I happened to be on my way to Andhra Pradesh, to a village called Kirlampudi to attend an AGM of a charitable trust as a Trustee, so it was an opportune time for me to visit Eric & Rhena, Kitty & Sam.

I arrived in Bangalore on Saturday the 2nd of April, (a historic day in the history of India, the Vicar might know why) being met by Eric & Kitty at the airport and driving back to the TAFTEE office in Kacharakanhalli district. They live in a pleasant apartment above the office. TAFTEE provides a successful home study bible education program up to degree level, it has been well used in many other parts of the world and began in South America in the 1960's. The program is translated into many different local languages. Eric gave me a copy in English and Telugu, which is the main language of the part of India where I work.

The Cloustons are in fine fettle, they have been in Bangalore for just over two years or so and are due to return on furlough this year, as this is a requirement of working with CMS. They have a good network of friends in the area; Rhena is Indian and therefore has relatives in the area also. Kitty & Sam are doing well at school and also have their own friends, although Sam still does not get on very well with spicy foods. (Well you either do or you don't, not everyone's cup of tea is it?) We had some very good fellowship and prayer time together, positive and helpful discussions about various aspects of ministry and mission, a very precious time. The work of TAFTEE is impressive and it enables people who would not normally be able to achieve the level of theological education they aspire to. They appreciated the kind greetings and the cards sent to them on behalf of St. Luke's and in particular the hand drawn cards sent to Kitty & Sam by our own Sunday school group.

Now to the day of history; 2nd of April India beats Sri-Lanka at cricket! It is surprising how sport can unify a nation, and in particular such a diverse country and in some parts divided nation as India. On Saturday evening we visited relatives of Rhena in their home some miles outside Bangalore for a meal and get together. On arrival everyone there was glued to the TV watching the match live, you could hear other families in their homes nearby also watching and cheering. This was about 5 pm. We left to go back to the Clouston's home a few hours later, match still in progress, but very close. I needed to go to bed and sleep. Rhena said "don't worry, you will know who won the match by the fireworks, probably around 11 pm."

Well true to her word, around 11 pm I was awoken by shouts of jubilation & suddenly as if co-ordinated some 2 million plus Indian families lit their fireworks at the same time, it was 'loud'. Now firework lighting in India is not like ours where we daintily light one after the other, they buy several boxes, tie each box of fireworks together add some sort of fuse, light it

and run as fast as possible to a 'safe' distance! There was an old ex army chap next door who decided to play his bugle, but I think had had too much local hooch, and could hardly get a wheezy 'parp', which on each attempt at a note just died off in a rather asthmatic manner. I think he slept where he fell after that. All good fun.

Sunday I attended Kothanur Church of South India with the Cloustons, which is after the Anglican style of communion & worship, although my note was it is nearer the Lutheran order of service and later Eric said that is true as the Lutherans had a strong historical relationship in that area. I left on the Monday morning flying north via Chennai. All agreed that it was a good visit & the tea was enjoyable.

They appreciate our prayers very much and ask us to continue to pray for them; for Eric in his work with TAFTEE, for Rhena as she continues to quietly but effectively share the gospel with her non-Christian neighbours and contacts. For Kitty and Sam as they attend the International school coping with life in India as children. For their preparations & plans to return to the U.K. for their furlough period.

Martin Fryatt.

Walking the Malverns

Mark and I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us for the sponsored walk. We really appreciated your very kind generosity and also your words of encouragement. We were very fortunate with the weather and were able to do the walk in pretty much perfect weather conditions.

We started the walk at Worcester Cathedral and walked along the River Severn before things became a little more adventurous. Mark and I are not particularly experienced with Ordnance Survey maps, and so trying to follow public footpaths through farmland was not the easiest for us! However after meeting a friendly local, we were soon back on track and walking along a very long lane to get to Malvern. After walking roughly 13 miles, it was wonderful to get to Great Malvern and enjoy a cream tea without any feeling of guilt!!

The next day we knew would be the hardest. Mainly because the terrain was going to be harder as we climbed up and down the Malverns. All was good and we ascended the Worcestershire Beacon without too much huffing and puffing!! The problem was the descent! Mark and I are not keen walkers and do not have all the accessories that many of the walkers on the Malverns appear to have. The locals laugh at the hikers who look more like they are trekking the Himalayas than walking in the Midlands. A lady in the restaurant in Malvern told me how she can do it in stilettos!!

However, it is the trekkers with the paraphernalia who probably had the last laugh. Coming down one of the hills, which was very steep and very dry with loose gravel, Mark lost his footing and went down. However I am glad to report that he completed the last 2 miles in pain, hobbling and slowly to ensure that he finished. We then spent the rest of the trip in Great Malvern minor injuries!! One of the key reasons Mark was so keen to finish was due to the generosity of everyone from St Luke's. He really didn't want to let you down. He was also motivated by knowing that our walk was going to supply the beds in the dormitory of Queen Esther's. A sprained ankle really is nothing compared to being able to help out the girls in the school and the image of the girls being safe at night in their new boarding house really motivated us and especially Mark in those last two miles. So thank you so much for your kindness and making this a project really worth walking the extra mile for!

Clare Giles

What's Happening at St Luke's?

Book Group

The next book is "Dishonest to God - on keeping religion out of politics" by Mary Warnock, published by Continuum. Baroness Warnock is a philosopher and was for a number of years Mistress of Girton College Cambridge, also a well-known public figure in the world of ethics. The book looks at morality in a society largely indifferent to religion, and how religion and morality influence each other. Her views are very challenging to religion, and a lively discussion is guaranteed.

We'll be meeting to discuss the book on Friday 13th May at 1pm in the Parish Room

Everyone welcome.

Guest Preacher at St Luke's

We are very pleased to welcome Canon Giles Fraser from St Pauls Cathedral, broadcaster on Thought for the Day, writer in the Church Times and Director of the St Paul's Institute, linking the church and the City, at the 10.15 service on May 8th. He is a stimulating preacher, so it should be a good service.

Services in May

On May 15th at our 10.15 service Mark will be preaching on the subject of Vocation as that is Vocations Sunday

On May 22nd Martin Fryatt will be preaching on mission, linked to his visit to India and his weekend in Bangalore with the Cloustons.

On May 29th as a fifth Sunday we will be having matins - Revd Dennis Mihill, will be preaching and leading the service.

Book Sale

After the Service on 22nd May there will be a Book Sale in the Hall

Ascension Day

This year Ascension Day, when we remember Jesus returning to the Father, is on Thursday 2nd June. We will be having our usual 11am service as well as a Sung Eucharist at 8pm.

Compline

Compline will continue through May and this year takes its Summer break after the June 12th service.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK - May 15th to 21st 2011

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE COLLECTION

In recent years St Luke's has successfully organized a collection from over 500 houses in the Parish during the Christian Aid Week which have produced major financial contributions to Christian Aid. This nationally advertised event is nearly upon us and we would be very grateful if you would please add your name to the sheet - at the back of the church – against your preferred road. Let's make 2011 a record collection. Millions living in poverty benefit from the global lobbying power of Christian Aid and its support work in-the-field.

If you haven't volunteered before, please don't be daunted. You will be provided with instructions and tips about what to do. A good way to start is to persuade a (young) friend to volunteer with you and do it together. One person needs about an hour to distribute one Christian Aid Envelope to each of their chosen 20 to 40 houses. Then a few days later, you'll need two hours to knock on each door and ask the residents if they wanted to make a donation, collect their envelope, have a chat and say thanks!

All the materials you will need will be available at the back of church on Sunday May 15th.

Please contact Peter Ashwell (01732 461087 or 07970 106363) about this year's collection.

Choir Sings in Southwark Cathedral

After the great success of our visit to Rochester Cathedral to sing Evensong, the choir have been invited to sing Choral Evensong at Southwark Cathedral. We are singing on June 4th at 4pm and would like to encourage members of the congregation to come and join the congregation that afternoon.

The Cathedral is a short walk from London Bridge Station and is near a number of interesting places, including the world famous Borough Market.

So why not come up for the day and hear St Luke's Choir sing Evensong.

Lent Reading

During Lent a number of people have been reading Stephen Cherry's book "Barefoot Disciple" which was the Archbishop's Lent book. It would be good to discuss how we fared with the book, so on Wednesday 18th at 8pm you are invited to St Luke's House for a glass of wine and a chat about the book - if there are any specific queries or questions that you would like to put to Stephen Cherry, I'm happy to e-mail him and get some answers!

APCM

At our Easter Vestry Meeting, Ronald Adamson and Tim Pearce were elected as Churchwardens. At the Parochial Meeting John Hacker, John Hardy and Joy Pennells were elected to Deanery Synod for three years and Cindy Blythe, Xanthe Duffill and Mary Wright were elected to PCC for three years. Thanks were expressed to Rob Gaut, Adrian Maydom and Verity Scorey who stood down after their three year term.

At the meeting the accounts and reports were presented and received by those present. The reports including the Vicar's report are now available on our website but also from the Parish Office.

A special invitation

Our neighbours at No 3 Emily Jackson Close are inviting members of St Luke's to a tea party on Sunday May 15th from 4pm-5pm. Everyone is welcome, and they would be delighted to see anyone who can come along, as Leslie especially has no family and the people that he meets at St Luke's are very special to him.

Junior Church

There will be no Junior Church on the following Sundays in 2011:

29th May (Spring Bank Holiday)

26th June (Sevenoaks Festival Service)

***There will be no Junior Church during July and August,
returning on Sunday 11th September.***

Last year we were appealing for more children to join Junior Church and join they did! This year we are appealing for more adults to join the helpers' and leaders' rota. If you can help, please contact Janice Robertson

Food for thought on Friday

Our third discussion evening on Christianity has been moved from April 29th (when something rather important is happening in London) to Friday 17th June. Our speaker will be Revd Hugh Thomas, who spoke on St Luke's Day. Hugh is a barrister who has worked in the City for various financial firms, and since ordination has been honorary curate in Knockholt and Halstead as well as in one of the city churches.

The next Food for Thought will be on October 7th, when Jonathan Chaplin will lead a discussion on multi-culturalism

St Luke's Fellowship

Programme for 2010/2011

19th May—Visit to Lambeth Palace

30th June—Afternoon Tea at Haxted Mill

28th July—A visit to The Friars at Aylesford

25th August—a visit to Quebec House and Squerrys Court, Westerham

29th September—Planning Meeting

Visit to Lambeth Palace – Thursday 19th May. The price for this is £26 per person, to include coach and entry to the Palace. There are a few spaces left, so please book early with Ruth in the Parish Office to avoid disappointment.

Everyone is welcome to come to any of our meetings. Fellowship gives us the opportunity to meet together midweek, do come along to one of our trips or talks, more details will be published in future magazines

Sevenoaks Festival 2011 events at St Luke's



Wednesday 22nd June

At 12.30pm—Lunchtime Recital—Ingrid Cusido—Piano

At 8pm— celebrating 400 years of the Authorised Version of the Bible, actor & poet Lance Pierson will read from the text, soprano Belinda Yates & pianist Heather Chamberlain will perform music inspired by it, including pieces by Haydn and Handel among others. Lance has performed a number of times in Sevenoaks most recently with his talk on John Betjeman.

Sunday 26th June at 10.15am

The Sung Eucharist includes a motet by Haydn, among other sung items. Our preacher is a well known broadcaster, writer and lecturer, Ian Bradley. His sermon "In the Beginning was the word and then came the tune", celebrates 400 years of the Authorised Version and fifty years of BBC's Songs and Praise.

Monday 27th June

At 2.00pm— Sevenoaks Poetry Society—Poetry for Pleasure in St Luke's Hall

At 8pm— Ian Bradley, author of the Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan and 'Oh Joy, Oh Rapture! The Enduring Phenomenon of Gilbert and Sullivan', looks at the continuing influence of the Savoy Operas. especially at the role of W.S. Gilbert, who died a hundred years ago last month and his influence over the last century.

Wednesday 29th June at 12.30pm

Lunchtime Recital—Solefield School Chamber Choir directed by Helen Walker with piano accompaniment played by Nick Quinney

Bewsher Travel Awards

This year we made our first travel award in memory of Gwen Bewsher. The award was made to Catherine Hook, a former member of Junior Church, and daughter of Helen Hook who for many years looked after our crèche in church. Helen and Gwen worked together on costumes for the Junior Church nativity, so Catherine remembers Gwen. Catherine has just finished the first year of her geography degree at the University of Nottingham.

The award was made to Catherine for a trip to Tanzania, where she will be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and also looking at various projects run by the charity Childreach International. In her application, Catherine wrote about how she was looking forward to meeting the Tanzanians and learning more about their lives, as well as seeing the projects in action.

Catherine is travelling in June and will be coming to St Luke's on her return to tell us about her trip – so watch this space.

Details about the 2012 awards are available from Tim Pearce. It is great to have launched the scheme and we look forward to more applications in a year's time.

News from Sevenoaks Churches

Prayer for Sevenoaks meeting

The next CTSD prayer meeting is on Thursday 12th May at 12.30 at Sevenoaks Community Centre in Cramptons Road - everyone is welcome and any prayer requests for the district can be sent to alan.edwards454@o2.co.uk

Lent Lunches

The Northwest Fellowship lunches were once again a great success with services and a soup lunch held across the NWF churches each week during Lent.

This year we were collecting donations towards the work of Queen Esther School in Mpwapwa, and £450.75 was raised to buy bunk beds for the dormitory. Well done to everyone who came along and who contributed.

Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service

Our Open Public Meeting will be on 16th May at Vine Baptist Church and refreshments will be served from 7.30- 8.00. The meeting proper begins at 8pm our guest speaker will be Gareth Tuckwell, Chief Executive of Burrowswood Christian hospital and healing centre, a very good speaker and well worth listening to. We will also be hearing news about SCCS from Stephen Scott and Chris Striven, our treasurer, and an interview with Mary Wright, our clinical psychologist (and member of St Luke's).

Everyone welcome

Bookworm's Corner: a regular series of reviews of books recently added to St. Luke's Library. They have been chosen to cover a variety of Christian topics. Any opinions expressed are the writer's own.

You were warned last month that we had more books in the pipeline about the interaction of Christianity with politics! In March I had the privilege of attending an event at St. Paul's Cathedral organised by St. Paul's Institute and three international charities where four distinguished speakers chaired by a professional BBC Presenter gave their views and answered questions from the audience about how Christians should approach the problem of world poverty. All four seemed sincere believers, but they came from different backgrounds; and so while all were equally convinced of the reality and importance of the problem, they were by no means in complete agreement on how every aspect of it should be tackled. They had written relevant books, and I bought samples for our Library from the two speakers who most impressed me.

GOD & CAESAR: Personal Reflections on Politics and Religion. By Shirley Williams (Continuum, 2003).

Baroness Williams is a practising Catholic, but by no means a compliant one. Indeed having been a Cabinet Minister, founder of a political party, a Professor Emeritus of Government at Harvard, and a specialist spokesperson on International Affairs, she clearly believes she can look even a Pope in the eye and ask "why do you say that?!"

GRACE AND MORTGAGE: The Language of Faith and the Debt of the World. By Peter Selby (Darton Longman, 2009). Rt. Revd. Peter Selby is a former Anglican Bishop, a Fellow in Theology at Durham and President of the National Council for Independent Monitoring Boards. He has studied the causes and consequences of Third World debt in great detail.

They are both important books and, although somewhat depressing, well worth reading. Like all books put in our Library in recent years, they are not meant to tell us what we "ought" to think or what we "must" do. But they give reliable information about big ethical issues and can help us to make up our own minds.

For example, Selby concentrates on what he calls the Two-Thirds World (the 64% who own only 4% of the world's wealth, half of whom have only \$2 or less per day to live on). He explains how the International Monetary Fund (whose original intentions were genuinely to give help) have in practice made matters worse by *lending* huge sums of money to incompetent and/or corrupt governments at commercial rates of interest, which they have been unable to repay; and then allowed them to borrow yet more under conditions which made repayment even more difficult. Those of us who have seen the problems at first-hand realise that to be effective, aid has to be *given*, and from the bottom-up (i.e. in appropriate quantities directly to those with actual specific needs), not top-down.

Perhaps the tone of Shirley Williams' contribution is best illustrated by direct quotation:

"The Pope is well aware of [the Church's obligation to the poor] and continues to preach against the material selfishness of the rich countries. He speaks with passion and conviction, scolding the former and empathising with the latter. But the 'structures of sin' remain, systems of landholding, taxation and public expenditure that consistently favour the rich. . . . The Church owes to its most needy children an alternative that addresses their desperation and is rooted in the teachings of the Gospel, an alternative that may not be based on a political revolution but most certainly requires a spiritual one."

Alan Wolfe.

Sarah's Gardening Column

We regularly hear about the need for clean water for birds, both to drink and bathe in. Our pond pump broke again last year, so we are trying to use natural methods to keep it clear (barley straw stuffed into old worn out stockings). As a result of having no water pump, the waterfall (a shell) much frequented in previous years by birds is now dry, no longer being filled by the pump. (As the shell was one foot from ground level this may be a benefit to the bird's survival as Tom and the many other cats who frequent the area were rather nearer to their prey than with the bird bath). We continue to have a pedestal bird bath, which can be rather wobbly, which I fill and clean as required. We noticed recently that the top was upside down in the flower bed; knocked off by a fox presumably (it is quite heavy). That morning our neighbour had noticed a very puzzled blackbird perching on the pedestal top (minus the bowl, which was upended in the flower bed) looking around in a very perplexed way! Within minutes of replacing and refilling it a blackbird was back doing his ablutions. Sometimes I see a queue of birds around the bath, taking turns in a very strict pecking order.

Gardeners often try to learn from previous year's experience, and Harry and I have tried to sow seeds later this year. However the beetroot planted in early April (a good month after the packet suggests) still seems stubborn to germinate, despite regular watering by Harry and the recent welcome sunshine and warmth. As usual the weeds seem to have no hesitation about germinating now.

Our patio had a much needed wash after the winter snow, and changed colour. However, perhaps I should have put the bulbs (grown on in pots in the greenhouse in first before Harry got the pressure washer out. It took me several sessions to slowly put them in; our soil is still very claggy and wet over winter, when we were first married I put many bulbs in and wondered where they had gone ...this way we lose far less to the damp.

Despite the aforesaid barley straw we have a bad attack of pond algae and our tadpoles can no longer be viewed (even with a pump before we have had a similar problem; we had to turn the pump off always in spring to prevent tadpoles having an untimely death). Some given to Oliver in a jar have grown tails and legs; in previous years attempts by other friends children have failed . The dahlia tubers over wintering in Harry's shed survived badly, so I have grown a few dahlia seeds, which whilst small at present (at least easier to protect until the danger of frosts are past) will soon grow and produce flowers later this year. Dahlias produced this way have produced excellent plants in the past and are substantially cheaper than buying 1 tuber (about £3, as apposed to 30 + seeds for £2!) The only draw back being that I can't choose the colour until they flower. I hope to mark the ones we want to keep and wrap them up better than last year!

Pumpkin competition

We are running the competition again this year; giving all of you budding gardeners/vegetable growers another chance to grow the biggest pumpkin! Plants will be available from late May at church from Harry and I (following last years very late frost which decimated the competition plants I have started them later this year). All ages are very welcome to enter, the more the merrier! £10 book token as 1st prize with prizes for runners up (2nd and 3rd places)

Sarah Rogers

Christian involvement in Eating disorders, Self harm and Confidence issues—Social Concern Open Meeting

Come and hear Jan Tait & Charlotte Ross share their vision for a facility in the South East to support people suffering from these serious life controlling issues.

Thursday 12th May at 7.45 for 8.00pm start at the Vine Baptist Church, Park Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 3UP

With over 1,000,000 primarily young women struggling with these issues, many of us will have met them, will know them and be asking ourselves how can we help them to find hope, to be transformed, to break free?

Be inspired, encouraged & challenged.

Jan Tait's and Charlotte Ross' Vision To Help Young Women in our Community

Every single day, young women are struggling with eating disorders, self-harm, depression and the effects of such abuse. These women are in our community, in our churches, in our youth groups, and in our families. Over 1 million people currently have an eating disorder and the numbers are increasing annually. The group most affected are women aged 14-25.

Following a very personal call by God several years ago, we carry in our hearts a vision to establish a Christian-based residential home in the south for those struggling with these serious life controlling issues. The homes would provide the young woman with hope, transformation and an understanding of their true worth. As our maker, God is the only one that can bring about lasting healing through restoring a person to wholeness and giving them the ability to fulfil their destiny.

To this end, we are inviting like-minded people to meet with us to pray, train and prepare for this task which is daunting and enormous! There is no doubt that there is a desperate need to provide this type of support but we need faith, funds and a commitment from local churches and individuals in our area to rise up and work together to reach out to our community.

Should you wish to help Jan and Charlotte to realise their vision or, at this stage, just wish to learn more about them and their plans, please call Jan Tait on 07712 002689 or Charlotte Ross on 07709 103688.

News from the Deanery

As some of you will already know Canon Paul Francis, our very popular Rural Dean, is leaving Riverhead to be Vicar of St George's Beckenham. Paul is leaving on July 31st and we wish him well in his last few months in the Deanery and thank him for his great support over the years.

On May 12th Revd Carol Kitchener was licensed as Priest-in-charge of Underriver and Seal Chart.

Just before Easter Angus Macleay, the Vicar of St Nicks, suffered a very serious heart attack, and since then we've been praying for Angus and his family. Angus is progressing well and is very grateful for all the prayers and thoughts.

TOTS—Babies and Toddlers

To the strains of “If you're happy and you know it, say ‘bye-bye’” another session ends on a Monday (term time) morning. The action songs at the end of the 60 minutes in the Parish Room are one of the highlights and ensure everyone leaves on a happy note!

Starting at 10.15am, all who care for young children, be they parents, grandparents, minders or friends, meet old companions and make new ones while relaxing over a drink. The children get used to playing alongside others, under the watchful eye of parent or minder. There are books, jigsaws and crayons and small toys to enjoy, as well as a story, a prayer and a singalong! Entrance is free.

**TOTS begins again on 9th May.
Why not join us—it's great fun!
You will be very welcome!
Contact: Verity Scorey - 454854**

INTERCESSIONS—MAY

We pray for our parish and its people; bless them, and us. May we know Your presence and peace in our homes; fill them with Your love, and use them to Your glory.

This month we are asked to pray for:

1. Our link churches in Edge Hill, Pontoise and Harare
2. Local youth organisations
3. Our armed forces, especially those who have been injured
4. Food for those in areas of the world suffering from famine
5. All bishops and clergy, especially in the diocese of Rochester
6. People in Japan who are still suffering after the tsunami and nuclear problems
7. Students taking exams during the next few weeks
8. The work of the Red Cross organisation on World Red Cross Day
9. Tim and Ronald, our churchwardens
10. Those involved in pastoral care
11. Those who have lost loved ones: give them comfort and strength
12. Help that we may find greater faith
13. The work of the Samaritans
14. That leaders of war-torn countries will work for peace
15. The Corporation of Sons of the Clergy, this month's good cause
16. Christian Aid Week
17. Anyone known personally to you who is suffering from a serious illness
18. Those working in aid agencies helping in disaster areas
19. Mark and Clare
20. The North West Fellowship of Churches
21. All those in prison and their families
22. Nancy and Paul and the senior and junior choirs
23. Christians in countries where freedom of worship is difficult
24. Residents and staff of Emily Jackson House
25. Friends and neighbours
26. Those working for Sevenoaks Council and other local services
27. Ruth, our administrator
28. The homeless
29. For farmers on Rogation Sunday
30. For safe travel on this Bank Holiday Monday
31. Those living in the parish of St Luke's

IN REMEMBRANCE: MAY

1st	Joan Flora Turk Florence Lily Woolway
2nd	Caroline Fulford-Smith
12th	Walter Frank Parish
19th	Florence Mary Dalley John Henry Richard Newey, QC
20th	Rhona Mary Pite
21st	Trevor Mervyn Daniel
22nd	Walter George Bailey
28th	Marjorie (Madge) Woodhams

Baptism

We welcome into the family of the Church

April 10th Nelly Violet Harris

Funerals

We have entrusted to God's merciful keeping

April 20th Norman Lardner(78)
at Kent and Sussex Crematorium.

OBITUARIES

Norman Lardner was a true good Samaritan. He spent the early part of his life in the Royal Navy serving on HMS Belfast, HMS London and HMS Mariner. After leaving the navy he worked for the AA as a patrolman on his motorbike, before joining the London Fire Brigade in the late 1950s initially in Shoreditch. He served with the LFB until retirement earning his good conduct medal. On retirement he supported the work of the Guide Dog Association in the local area, dog walking, taking dogs to the vet and serving as President of the local committee.

In 1955 he married Ruth who he had known since childhood, and theirs was a very long and very happy marriage.

Norman had a love of steam trains and also built a model railway in his garden, an incredible piece of work. An enjoyment of music- classical and military - was a lifelong interest, and a number of pieces were played at his funeral. He enjoyed the camaraderie of the shipmates in the Royal Naval Association, and was also a member of the 16mm railway group.

Norman died after a brave fight against cancer, and our thoughts are with Ruth at this time.

Thank You ...

Philip's Illness and Celebration Service.

Once again, I must thank all at t Luke's for the love, kindness and support you gave myself and my family, who incidentally, thought you were wonderful. Now they see why I love my church. Thank you also for all the compliments we received about the celebratory service for Philip, especially Gerri's Eulogy for her father.

May we together as a family, thank Mark for all his help and understanding, the churchwardens, the pall bearers, the readers, the organist, who taught Charles at Judd, the CD organiser, Frank, Nancy and her talented choir, the refreshments which were superb, and the florists who made the church shine and Ruth who printed out sheets having such patience as we changed and re-changed our service many times. We would also like to thank the funeral directors for their 'labour of love', and my friends and family who came from far and wide to attend the service.

May I end by telling you, of the last 'special' moments I had with Philip was when he opened his Bible by his bedside and showed me two prayers he kept inside.

One was from a friend—A Prayer for Philip:

Almighty God who has all of us in your hands, we pray that you will take special care of your servant Philip. May he know of your goodness, and promise, through Jesus Christ, that whatever befalls us in this life, a place awaits us when our work on earth is done. In Jesus' name. Amen.

And—my favourite:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year. "Give me a light that I might treat safely into the unknown". And he replied "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way

W Haskins, broadcast by King George VI to the nation in 1939 at the start of World War II

Poet's Corner:

Thoughts of summer meadows, birds trilling... it must be many people's favourite time of year. It certainly inspires Nigel Beeton...

Consider how the Lilies grow: Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34, 'Consider the lilies of the field...', is a favourite passage for many Christians, and inspired the following poem by Nigel Beeton, which can be sung to 'Bow Brickhill' (We Sing the Praise of Him who Died)

Consider how the lilies grow –
The floral joys of summer field!
No weavers strove to make them so –
No royal clothes have such appeal!

Observe the birds that fly and sing,
As they seek shelter, drink, or feed.
They do not reap, no stores they bring,
Yet God their maker meets their need!

Flowers and birds – their lives are short
Today they live, tomorrow gone.
Yet God Almighty gives them thought
And guides their flick'ring lives along.

So why do we, of greater worth
Seek to insure our lives with wealth?
Can fear increase our time on Earth?
Or worry buy us better health?

Let us then seek God's Kingdom first,
His righteousness our waking prayers.
He'll feed our hunger, quench our thirst,
And oversee tomorrow's cares.