

Keeping Contact

The Benefice of Faversham

Volume 4, Issue 1

February 2023

Revd. Simon writes

I find it hard as I grow older not to become more cynical about various things within the world around me. Why are there long waits for health treatment, potholes seem to be getting worse, it is far too easy for this list to continue. Yet as I walked out of the Almshouse chapel from taking a monthly service this morning my heart was lifted by the sight of Cherry Blossom.

In a cold and often questioning world, nature continued in its uninterrupted cycle producing beauty in God's created order.

As Lent approaches we are preparing as a Benefice to gather resources for Lenten reflection which are included in this edition of Keeping Connected.

On a personal note, I will seek to refocus on the calling of Jesus, which is at the heart of all Christian pilgrimage through life. I pause to reflect on the calling of [Philip and Nathanael](#) in John 1. 43 – 51. As Nathanael asks "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Clearly another cynical individual, yet in meeting Jesus his life is transformed with light and hope. Together both Philip and Nathanael respond to the good news of Jesus, from where they are in the place Jesus finds them.

Lenten journey requires us to be honest and open with ourselves

and with Jesus, if we are to seek to draw closer to him who calls us by name.

In the Lectionary through Lent the main reading for the Epistle is from Paul's letter to the Romans. If you are overly busy or unable to venture out to join a group can I recommend: For Everyone, Bible Study Guides, Romans by Tom Wright. Published by SPCK. Alternatively, Dust and Glory is the Church of England's Lent campaign for 2023. Offering 40 daily reflections for Lent on faith, failure and forgiveness, it invites you to find God in the mess of everyday life. Each week it considers the idea of failure from a different angle and explores the difference God's redeeming work in Jesus makes to the struggles of life.

Find out more about the Dust and Glory campaign on the Church of England website.

However, you approach Lent, stop pause and be assured God wants to respond to your seeking him.

Yours in Christ

Simon.



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Services in February — The Benefice of Faversham

Church	Third Sunday before Lent 5 February	Second Sunday before Lent 12 February	Sunday next before Lent 19 February	Ash Wednesday 22 February	First Sunday in Lent 26 February
	Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 112; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Matthew 5:12-20	Genesis 1:1-2:3; Psalm 136; Romans 8:18-25; Matthew 6:25-34	Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:10; Matthew 6:1- 6, 16-21 or John 8:1	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1 -7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11
Davington					
10am	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist	10am Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Morning Prayer
Baptism:			2pm Baptism		
	4pm I wonder...	4pm I wonder...	4pm I wonder...		4pm I wonder...
Faversham					
10am	Morning Worship	Parish Eucharist	Family Eucharist	10am Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Parish Eucharist
Baptism:					
5pm	Choral Evensong				
Ospringe					
11am	Eucharist	Morning Praise	Eucharist	10.30am Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Morning Praise
Baptism:					
Preston					
10am	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Prayer	7.30pm Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Eucharist
Baptism:					
					5pm Taizé Service

Midweek services - all services at 10am

Date	Preston	Faversham
Wednesday, 1 February		Morning Prayer
Tuesday, 7 February	Eucharist	
Wednesday, 8 February		Morning Prayer
Tuesday, 14 February	Morning Prayer	
Wednesday, 15 February followed by Parish Lunch		Eucharist
Tuesday, 21 February (Shrove Tuesday)	Eucharist	
Wednesday, 22 February (Ash Wednesday)		Eucharist with imposition of Ashes
Tuesday, 28 February	Morning Prayer	

Services in March — The Benefice of Faversham

Church	Second Sunday in Lent 5 March	Third Sunday in Lent 12 March	Mothering Sunday 19 March	Fifth Sunday in Lent 26 March
	Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17	Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42	Exodus 2:1-10 or 1 Samuel 1:20-28; Psalm 34:11-20 or 127:1-4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 or Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:33-35 or John 19:25-27	Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45
Davington				
10am	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Prayer
Baptism:				
	4pm I wonder...	4pm I wonder...	4pm I wonder...	4pm I wonder...
Faversham				
10am	Morning Worship	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist
Baptism:				
5pm	Choral Evensong			
Ospringe				
11am	Eucharist	Morning Praise	Eucharist	Morning Praise
Baptism:				
Preston				
10am	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Prayer	Eucharist
Baptism:				

Midweek services - all services at 10am

Date	Preston	Faversham
Wednesday, 1 March		Morning Prayer
Tuesday, 7 March	Eucharist	
Wednesday, 8 March		Morning Prayer
Tuesday, 14 March	Morning Prayer	
Wednesday, 15 March <i>followed by Parish Lunch</i>		Eucharist
Tuesday, 21 March	Eucharist	
Wednesday, 22 March		Morning Prayer
Tuesday, 28 March	Morning Prayer	
Wednesday, 29 March		Eucharist

Rev. Dan writes,

After a very busy and engaging Autumn and Christmas in terms of benefice mission, thank you and well done for all you make happen to show God's Kingdom in action and his unstoppable love.

December's *Experience Christmas* was very well received involving 230 primary pupils across six of our local schools. It's very engaging and moving for pupils, staff and volunteers as it immerses all those involved in the Christmas story. We're now planning to deliver the very similar *Experience Easter* for March. If you'd like to be involved, please do let me know.

Singalong Christmas was a great success with some regulars and new people in the cast and audience. The rehearsals are very often described as being more than just rehearsals - high points in the week - which are missed between Singalong seasons. We aim to start rehearsing for *Singalong Easter* on Saturday 25th February aiming to perform this on Holy Saturday.

In October we launched a new weekly benefice service called i.wonder. Based at Davington Church on Sundays at 4.00pm i.wonder provides a space for children, young people and adults to worship God, grow faith and explore discipleship all together through art, craft, discussion, drama, prayer, songs, cakes and games. There are no separate groups for certain ages and we follow the same themes as we explore in the morning services. Some are used to church, but some are very new to the whole church experience. My thanks to the team and congregation for their energy and creativity.

Our Gem youth trailer has been regularly out and about through the Autumn engaging children and young people in activities and conversation at Bensted Grove on Tuesday afternoons, Davington Top Park on Wednesday afternoons and at either Selling or Sheldwich on Friday afternoons. With Vibe (BrogdaleCIC's youth organisation) we've introduced an early evening Market Square provision on Fridays followed by our usual visit to Faversham Rec from 7.00-9.00pm. We've also been delivering activities in other areas in Faversham during this early evening session this year. We'll be at Faversham Market on Saturday 11th February.



Banners advertising Faversham Gems Awards are up around Faversham. Last year we celebrated over 90 children and young people who have Gone Extra Miles and have made life sparkle, celebrating where people have given of themselves, their gifts and talents, their time, energy and kindness to benefit others. This is the going-the-second-mile stuff that Jesus encourages that makes life good. So who do you know between 5-19 who you could nominate at favershamgems.org?

As well as all our weekly engagement with pupils and staff in our local schools and other wonderful activities in the benefice thanks for all that is happening to communicate God's unstoppable love for everyone through words and actions.

About Lent

On 22nd February we will celebrate Ash Wednesday. For Christians Ash Wednesday begins the six week period known as Lent. This leads up to Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Lent is a 40-day season marked by repentance, fasting and reflection. The 40-days **reflect Christ's time in the wilderness, where he fasted and was tempted by Satan but robustly resisted.**

There is no mention of Ash Wednesday in the Bible. But there is a tradition of donning ashes as a sign of penitence that predates Jesus. For example we read In the Old Testament, in the book of Jonah that eventually the people of Nineveh repented and showed that by fasting and wearing sackcloth and ashes, and there are other references to this kind of showing of repentance in other Old Testament books among them, Isaiah, Job Esther and Jeremiah.

So on Ash Wednesday we begin by going into Church to repent of our sins and show this by having an ash cross placed on our forehead as a reminder.

The days that follow traditionally are days of fasting, of giving up pleasures of all kinds as penance, for those sins.

When we are asked we are giving up for Lent we often list alcohol, chocolate, cakes and the like? But do these really help us to understand Jesus' example of resisting temptation, when many of us so easily give up and are tempted once again to indulge?

We are all tempted, perhaps daily, to do something we know we shouldn't. It might be something minor like eating some one's last chocolate or hiding something from someone. What about those little white lies which trip off the tongue so easily? Or it may be something more serious, something we might do without even thinking but which has really upset some-one else, put them down or in a difficult position.

We all make wrong decisions. So how do we deal with those things when we realise we've made a mistake, or perhaps the bigger question is how do we stop ourselves from doing them all together?

Well, each period of Lent gives us the opportunity to set aside a time to focus on how Christ dealt with those things in his life. His ministry and sacrifice.

So why not give a little time each day or perhaps simply each week of Lent to thinking and praying about how you might resist your temptations? Reflect on how you might develop your relationship with our Lord in preparation for the time when we meet him on the road into Jerusalem on his way to the cross and beyond?

Reverend Sharran Ireland

Parish Lunch at St Mary of Charity

Parish Lunches:

February's parish lunch will be at noon on Wednesday, 15 February. The sign-up sheet is at the back of the church for anyone wishing to join us!

A benediction

A Franciscan Benediction (Attributed to the earliest followers of St Francis)

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen

Little Fishes

Little Fishes returned in June 2022 at St Mary of Charity and it has been lovely to welcome the children and their parents and carers back. **We've been very pleased with the reaction**, the children enjoy playing with the toys, the craft activity, story, singing, and snacks. Adults have especially been glad of the tea/coffee and biscuits in this cold weather.

We would like to ask anyone using the South Transept to put the chairs back afterwards if possible - the helpers are not as young as they were!

The toys are available to be used by anyone visiting the church but if they can be returned to the cupboards where they are kept, it helps us to keep them clean for the Little Fishes to use.

We are always happy to welcome new members and helpers. If you think you might be interested, please come along on a Thursday morning, during term time, between 10 and 11.30am to find out more.

Sandy Eason

The Kent Chamber Choir

What Sweeter Music

A concert of both sacred and secular music at
St Catherine's Church
Preston Lane, Preston-next-Faversham, ME13 8LG
Saturday 11th March 2023, 7.30pm

Frank McConnell - guitar

Alan Vincent - conductor

Admission: Adults £12, Children & Students £5

Proceeds will go to the Church Organ Fund

Patrons: Dame Emma Kirkby
Harry Christophers CBE

Music Director: Alan Vincent

www.kentchamberchoir.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1069391

Reflecting on Christmas

Simon asked questions during his sermon after Christmas.

What do we do now that the Nativities are put away, the decorations have all gone?

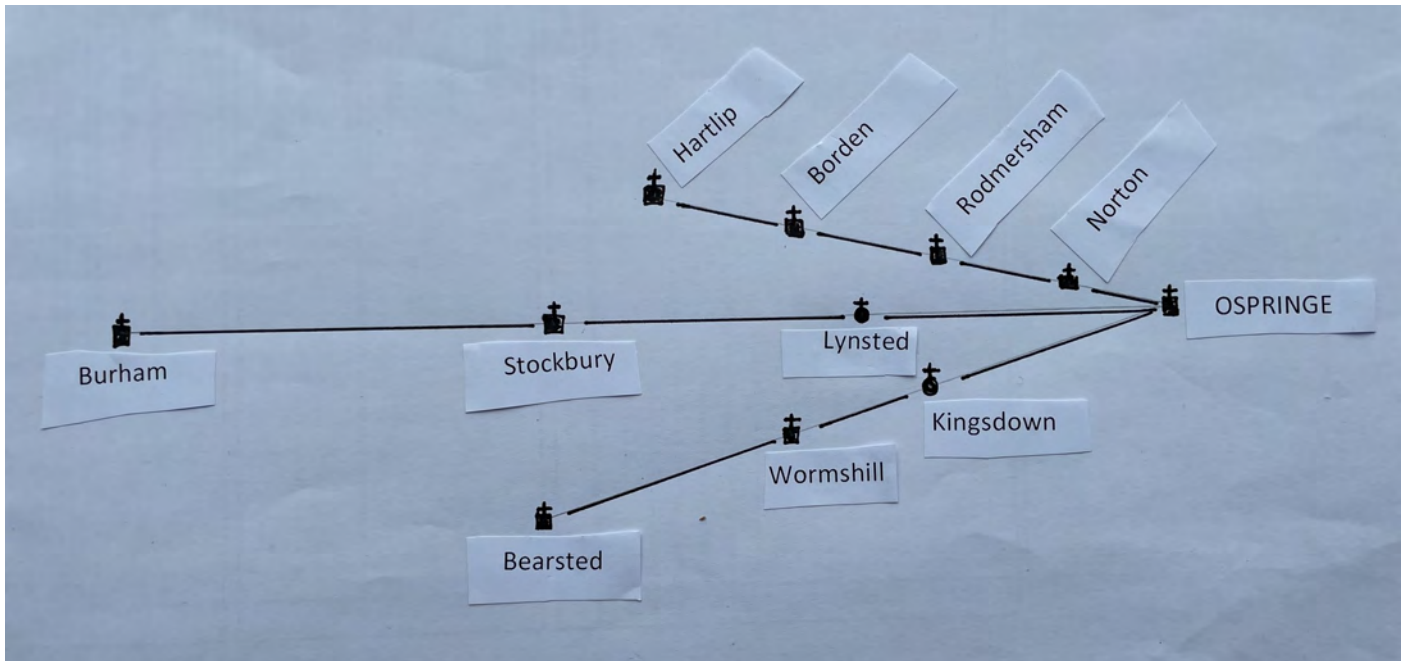
What is there to remind us that God became human in Jesus and was born in a time and space?

I recently found these words from Afro-American theologian *Howard Thurman* (1899 to 1981) which challenge us to think about what that work is:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Patrick Mulcahy

Ospringe Church and ley lines.



I was reading an old copy of *Bygone Kent* when an article 'Leys and Church alignments in East Kent' caught my eye. The author, a D. Burrige claimed the existence of a series of ley lines in East Kent using Church locations. Burrige concluded by suggesting other lines in Kent were waiting to be discovered. So, taking this cue I consulted my Ordnance Survey map number 178 with ruler to hand to see if our part of Kent might feature.

Well blow me down! I quickly discovered three potential lines using Churches:

1. Hartlip – Borden – Rodmersham – Norton.
2. Burham – Stockbury – Lynsted.
3. Bearsted – Wormshill – Kingsdown.

All three lines were virtually straight. But most exciting of all however, was that all three lines converged on Ospringe Church. Had I stumbled on a significant discovery?

Going back into the mists of time, did Ospringe Church have some long-forgotten importance within this part of Kent? It was time to research further into Ley Lines and their significance.

It seemed the existence of Ley Lines was first discovered in the 1920s when a Mr Alfred Watkins put forward the theory that ancient monuments and Churches were often laid out along straight lines which stretched for miles across the countryside. They served as a guide and benefit to travelling traders.

I dismissed this last bit as false.

As a former long-distance hiker I knew only too well it is impossible to walk in a straight line across England for any sort of distance. There are simply too many natural hazards to negotiate, like mountains, bogs, rivers to cross, lakes, impenetrable forests.

(Continued on page 9)

Ley lines continued

(Continued from page 8)

When encountering any of these, the walker simply goes round these meaning his linear walk route from A to B swerves to the left and right. The 'straight line' route just doesn't normally happen

Out of my fifteen long distance hikes, I can only recollect one stretch of straight track and that was the Peddars Way in Norfolk. And yes I know the Romans built straight roads and tracks, but these were built by the Romans for their purposes and didn't utilise existing ancient monuments to mark out their route.

At the time, the Watkins theory had plenty of critics and was then largely forgotten, only to be revived in the 1960s when an astonishing new theory was put forward by the counter cultural Earth Mysteries movement. They argued leys were established by pre-historic communities to guide alien space craft. Wow! So, stand by to welcome U.F.Os. in the meadow next to Ospringe Church.

Normally I've always been a bit of a sceptic on this sort of thing, and yet you couldn't argue against the existence of the three lines of Churches I'd plotted. It was worth remembering also that many Church sites were built on ancient sacred sites. So, something in the spaceship guidance theory?

It was further research however that settled things for me. Mathematical experts pointed out that identifying straight lines of things on a map are predictable, provided there are enough of them. Round-a-bouts, golf courses, caravan sites could all probably be found in straight lines if you looked hard enough.

Critics had discovered straight lines of telephone boxes, pizza restaurants, and closed Woolworth stores amongst others. I put this to the test and consulted my historical map of Kent railways. Sure enough, I quickly found a straight line of stations:

Leysdown – Faversham – Ashford – Appledore.

I concluded Ley Lines are a classic case of red herrings in historical search. Yes, they exist on maps if you care to look but they have no meaning or significance. Nevertheless, I will still glance across to the meadow at Ospringe once in a while for a possible U.F.O. sighting just in case!

Roger Bennett

Bibliography

Bygone Kent Volume 1 number 4 'Leys and Church alignments in East Kent' by D. Burrige.

Ordnance Survey 'Landranger' map 178.

Wikipedia and other web sites.

Contemplating Easter

Contemplating Easter

Join us for an opportunity
for quiet reflection on what
Jesus' journey to the cross means for us.
At 7.00pm on Thursdays
March 2, 9, 15, 23 and 30,

The Church of
St Mary Magdalene
w St Laurence, Davington



Come and Sing!



Please join us for choral evensong

St Mary of Charity on 5 February at 5pm.

If you're a singer, please come at 3:45 for 4pm rehearsal. Do feel free to join us on the preceding Thursday at 7pm if you'd like some advance rehearsal;

To get a pdf of the music contact pattihickswhaley@yahoo.co.uk to let us know you are coming and what voice part you sing.

Robes and music (and new lights!) all provided.

The order of service is:

Introit: Teach me O Lord, Byrd

Preces & Responses: Smith

Psalm: 112. 1-9

Canticles: Short service, Byrd

Anthem: The spirit of the Lord, Elgar

Celebrating Christmas, again

The wonderful St Mary's lunch team (Tory Swain, Margy Perkins and Jennifer Holden) helped organise an Orthodox Christmas Eve supper for the Ukrainian community in Faversham -- about 80 people including their Faversham host families.

The supper was hosted by the Baptist Church, and supported by very generous donations from the Preston, Davington and Catholic Churches.

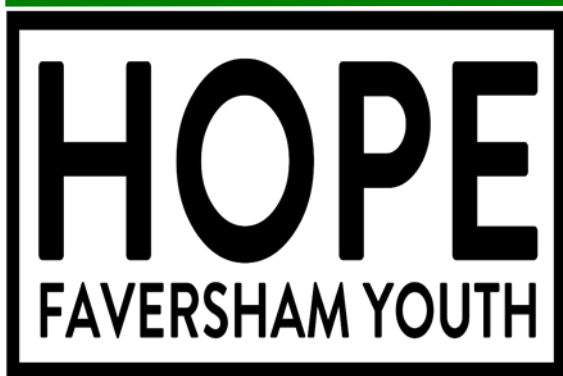


These provided little gifts and chocolates to all the children and their parents. And we had the most amazing St Nicholas!

Huge thanks to everyone who helped give our Ukrainian friends such a beautiful celebration.



Patti Whaley



Our Mission is to be a youth group that shows the hope of Jesus to bring life-giving change.

Wednesdays in term time
Baptist Church 19:00 – 20:30
Year 7 and above.

We continue to have Food, Fun and Fellowship and the group continues to grow, which is very exciting. We do make quite a lot of noise!! We have young people from the Baptist Church, Barton Church, the

Community Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and different Church of England churches.

Our teaching recently has been on Prayer using the 24/7 Origins course.

We are planning a weekend away in March with the Canterbury Barton group at Carroty Wood, near Tonbridge. 13 members have signed up to come, again it is exciting.

I am a leader on a CPAS Venture Knock 2 in August and hope some of our group will be able to come with me.

Please do continue to pray for us.

Sarah Williams

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Four Churches, One Benefice, One Town

Contact details for Benefice Clergy

Vicar	Rev Simon Rowlands	0179 553 0553 happyvicar@gmail.com
Community & Mission Priest	Rev Dan Corcoran	0796 333 2221 danchadc@gmail.com

Please contact the Administrator at the Benefice Office for information on baptisms, weddings, funerals or other services in any of the Benefice Churches.

Office hours Monday to Wednesday 09:00 - 14:00

* favershamchurches@gmail.com

* 01795 227600

Contacts for individual churches in the Benefice of Faversham

St Catherine, Preston-next-Faversham		fb.me/4favstc
Wardens	Hilary Tullet Rodney Foord	
St Mary Magdalene with St Lawrence, The Brents and Davington		fb.me/4favstmml
Wardens	Maureen Gregory Frances Worthington* Iris Neel*	
St Mary of Charity, Faversham		fb.me/4favstmoc
Wardens	Clive Southwell Kevin Swinney	
St Peter and St Paul, Ospringe		fb.me/4favstpp
Wardens	Patrick Mulcahy	



Keeping Contact is the News Sheet of the Benefice of Faversham.

It shares details of services, news and activities of the member churches of the Benefice of Faversham and around the town of Faversham.

It is available from your nearest Benefice Church or can be downloaded from various sites. If you would like to receive an electronic copy or a printed version, please contact your Churchwarden.

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* Assistant Warden