





#### In this edition

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# **Keeping C@nnected**

#### The Benefice of Faversham

Volume 1, Issue 4

#### August 2020

#### From Revd. Dan Corcoran, our Community & Mission Priest

Isn't it great to discover good news when surrounded by tough times? Sometimes it's not easy to appreciate good news during stressful times. It's easy to miss it completely when headlines focus on bad news.

I'm writing this on the day we celebrate St Mary Magdalene, a Saint that the lovely Davington Church is named after.
St Mary was from Magdala, a Galilean fishing port. Like any saint, Mary would be surprised to discover she is a saint and very surprised that her Jesustransformation story has encouraged many broken lives. Through these difficult times, let these five facts about how Jesus transformed Mary's life encourage you.

- Mary Magdalene was the first to find Jesus' tomb empty on the first Easter morning. Fellow disciples came and left, but Mary stayed and explained to some angels that she didn't know where Jesus's body had been taken. She turned and presumed Jesus to be the local Gardener and asked him if he'd taken Jesus' body away. Are we ever gripped by our own reasoning that we miss God's reality?
- Was Mary completely wrong about Jesus being the Gardener? Jesus is restoring the world damaged after the Garden of Eden episode went tragically wrong. So with Eden in need of a Gardener's TLC Mary's was onto something about the risen Jesus being the Gardener rejuvenating and redeeming life. What is in our own back yard of life that Jesus

- the Gardener could redeem, nurture and heal with a touch of his Miracle-Grow? Ask him! Nothing is beyond his resurrection power.
- So, Mary was the first person to meet the risen Jesus and this encounter was the fulfilment of Mary's dreams – once she recognised him! Jesus still fulfils dreams today.
- Mary recognised Jesus when he called her name. While we are so used to being known by our phone number, email address, bank card and feeling relatively anonymous among our 7.6 billion neighbours, God refreshingly knows us and calls us by name.
- Mary was called by name and appointed by Jesus to be his first minister of the best news in the world! The disciple with possibly the lowest self-esteem was the one first commissioned to announce that Jesus was alive having disarmed the sting of death by transforming it into eternal life.
- We can easily find ourselves down in the pits of low selfesteem believing we're worthless, meaningless, random accidents of nature. Instead, hear God calling your name because you're loved and crucial in his plan.

There are other points we could make about St Mary Magdalene, but how ever we feel in difficult times, I pray we'll not miss God's good news in our lives.

Blessings to you all.

Dan

Important news
about worship
services in the
Benefice

#### Service Plans for the Benefice

There have been a number of questions raised over church services in the Benefice. As we prepared to reopen churches at the beginning of July we were planning unsighted of Government and National Church guidelines until very late in the day.

A good number of other churches made the decision not to open until the beginning of September. Thanks to Wardens who have invested a large amount of time in preparing pages of health and safety assessments required by National church guidance to ensure safe limited opening. My guiding principal is both safety and accessibility. The online services allow the greatest access to the most number of parishioners and thanks to Dan and others hard work will continue. A communion

service at 10am once a month in each church has been arrange and provided for. On the alternative Sundays lay led morning prayer where requested has been offered in some but not all churches. As previously stated online remain the focus as we feel our way forward in these uncertain times. The hope of returning to a greater degree of normality in September at this stage only remains a hope but we will be guided by National church advice and maintaining online services and monthly communions in each church.

Finally a personal note of thanks to the volunteers who worked so hard to clean the four churches in preparation for reopening.

Yours in Christ Simon.

Keeping
Connected our
Benefice News

#### **Keeping Connected**

Well, another edition under our belt. Hopefully our reader is finding it interesting and informative.

We would encourage you to receive the electronic version—if you'd like some help to do that do ask.

Your editor is taking full advantage of technology with this edition being edited on a boat bobbing about in Plymouth harbour.

We have been so fortunate that Simon and Dan have been able to produce our on-line services.

#### This month.

This month we include some reflections from contributors across the age spectrum on what 'lock-down' has meant to them.

Also a new bit—"getting to know you"

#### Help?

Could anyone volunteer to prepare a couple of pages for the younger reader?

Please contact the Simon, Dan or the editor.

## **Keeping Connected**The Benefice of Faversham

#### Service Pattern at St Mary of Charity

Here are the service pattern for St Mary of Charity which started this Sunday 12th July.

The service pattern is: 10 am each Sunday

- † 1st Sunday—All Age Worship
- † 2nd Sunday—Holy Communion
- † 3rd Sunday— Morning Worship
- † 4th Sunday— Morning Worship

Arrangements for the 5th Sunday to be discussed across
Benefice, details will be circulated.

#### Please observe the "Book in"

**process**— this is essential for track and trace, just let us know if you are coming. You can do this either by email to

#### 4favershamchurches@gmail.com

or by phone to

01795 227202

Keeping
Encouraged
during
Lockdown

The Service

plan for St Mary

of Charity.

Note the

book-in

arrangements!

#### Some Sources of encouragement and help during lock down



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

#### Faversham Umbrella

https://en-gb.facebook.com/ FavershamUmbrella/

Community Mental Health Charity - We are here for yo

Tel: 01795 229143

#### St Peter & St Paul Zoom Home Group



Like to know more then contact Nicola Batey or email

BeneficeofFaversham+HomeGroupSPSP@gmail.com

#### Hope — Faversham

#### Youth Group - Years 7 to 13

We are taking a Summer break but will be back with the new term.

hope faversham youth @gmail.com



Equipping Churches to Support the Bereaved.

If you like to know how you can help a bereaved person or get help in your bereavement try this site.

https://www.lossandhope.org/

### Getting to know you

Each month a member of a different Church will answer 5 questions

A way of getting to know people across the Benefice.

#### Getting to know you

Hello, my name is Jane Wells. I am a member of St Peter & St Paul's, Ospringe in our Benefice of Faversham

# 1 How long have you been in Faversham, have you ever lived anywhere else?

I moved to Faversham with my parents in 1964 at the age of 4. I couldn't wait to leave when I was in my late teens and moved to London. I later moved to Reading. I returned to this

area with a young family in 1995, having decided it was a nice place, for all sorts of reasons, to bring up children!

#### 2 How did you come to your faith?

I think my parents were Christians but not actively so. It wasn't a 'religious' household to be brought up in. I became seriously ill at the age of 5. I had to spend 6 months mostly lying on my back. My paternal grandmother would bring her knitting and sit with me for hours and tell me about Jesus and God's love for me. and that even though I couldn't move around he was watching over me. I started to pray to this loving Father. Only short childish prayers, very often just 'Please God bless me and make me good'! I have honestly prayed every day since but for many years only that, not really thinking or understanding God's word and teaching. Then when I was in my late teens, I bumped into a group of people in Canterbury handing out leaflets 'For the glory of God'. This group taught me many things and we studied the Bible together and how we could live as Christians in the modern world. Eventually, they left England to travel and spread the Word further afield and I started training as a nurse. But that was the start of my faith. My pathway with Jesus hasn't been a sudden flash



and suddenly I'm all-knowing and have a miraculous revelation of the meaning of life! More like a slow plod! I will continue this journey until I go home always knowing I'm not alone and always hoping to achieve a better understanding.

### 3 What do you like most about your home church?

Ospringe Church family is a friendly, loving and caring congregation. The services

are a perfect blend of traditional and modern elements. The building itself is beautiful, set in picturesque, tranquil countryside. For me it holds many memories of people and events throughout my entire life.

### 4 What's your favourite hymn or chorus?

Hmmm......a difficult choice, I like lots of traditional hymns and many more 'modern' ones. I've opted for: older hymn – 'Lord of All Hopefulness' a modern choice is - 'Blessed be your name' written by Matt and Beth Redman in 2001

### 5 What is your favourite bit of the Bible and why?

Again a very difficult choice!! How do you pick just one passage?

John 11:25–26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.'

I have remembered these verses on many occasions when I've needed to remind myself of God's greatest promise. It has given me strength when I've needed it. The whole detailed account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus is a favourite.

Jane Wells

Reflections on COVID 19

A series of comments from various members of our Benefice Community.

#### COVID 19 and me

Helen Jeffries who sometimes plays the organ at St Mary of Charity has been in the choir since 1996 ......

However what does she do for a day job..... She works at the Department

of Health and Social Care (DHSC) where she has been working on the response to coronavirus since January.

Among other things, DHSC is responsible for collecting all the information on how many coronavirus cases there have been, how many tests for coronavirus have been done and, of course, the very sad figures of how many people have died and in what setting (hospital, care home, or in



the community). If you've ever watched the daily press conferences, then some of the numbers you've heard quoted have come from DHSC.

It's very strange working on collecting and publishing such serious data - each

one of those statistics is someone's loved one, but you just can't afford to think about that too much or you'd never get the work done. It's been an intense few months and being able to keep in touch with St Mary of Charity via Facebook chats with choir friends as well as the weekly services on YouTube has been great.

Helen Jeffries

#### Reflections from some of our younger members

Some younger members from St Catherine's have shared their thoughts about what the lock-down has meant to them. Also how they have 'coped'

- During lockdown I couldn't meet up with friends, a phone is a way to contact them and support each other. Friends can be there and it's about trusting each other.
- \* I ended up back at home from University, so it's been my old friends that I have seen, not those from Uni.
- Meeting with the family on Zoom, you can get closer to them.
- \* Everyone has more time to chat \* and meet.
- Many people have had to adjust to more difficult ways of working.
- \* Cycling and having the time to exercise is inspiring.
- I preferred it being quieter outside.

- People are kinder than you think, it goes beyond thinking about neighbours.
- All being stuck in the house together; it's been important to give each other space.
- \* Black Lives Matter teaches us to respect other's wishes. Social distancing teaches us patience, waiting for a haircut does this too.
- My mum's hair looks lovely. No further comment.
- We can focus on the smaller things in life and notice things in the house that need care and attention.
- Careful or you'll end up doing all the chores!
- Nature, we shouldn't abuse what we have and we should respect the things that God has given us.
- I know how important having a garden is now.

## **Keeping Connected**The Benefice of Faversham

A Senior
member of our
Benefice reflects
on his lockdown
experience

#### The Sound of Silence

'Hello darkness, my old friend'.....so the haunting ballad begins. Remember that? 'The Sound of Silence' by Simon and Garfunkel goes way back in the 1960's? Strange title though. Sounds and silence appear odd bed fellows. Can they ever be complementary?

For me, these past few months of 'lock down' have been a mixed blessing. My movements have been necessarily very limited, venturing outside the home just once a day for exercise, though rules are being relaxed as I write. However I've learnt over this period that sounds and silence can be partners, not opposites.

Silence far from being a deprivation is a gift of God. It opens a gate allowing God to speak to us through the sounds of nature. I've enjoyed the rich harmonies of birdsong, something from which the composer Messiaen found inspiration. Then there is the sound of the wind rustling through the trees, and the gentle whisper of the sea lapping the shoreline. While we keep silence, God speaks through the wonder of His Creation. As the Psalmist writes 'The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies above proclaim his handiwork' (Psalm 19.1). Supremely, God speaks through His Word, the Bible. The Rule of St Benedict, lays great emphasis on the need of silence so that we can be receptive

and allow God's Word to penetrate our inner sanctuary. The Psalmist again 'For alone my soul waits in silence....' (Psalm 62.1).

If Covid 19 has deepened the value of silence, the other lesson has been the sharp reminder of our mortality. It has claimed so many lives, not least those of our health workers. Peter was a paramedic who died of the virus on his 52nd Birthday. He leaves a widow, Helen, and three grown up children, one who has just qualified as a doctor. Helen grew up in one of my former parishes, a gifted musician as Peter was. In his address to honour Peter's memory, Rico Tice of All Souls Langham Place posed this question as a kind of spiritual health check 'Do you think you are still in control of tomorrow?' Jesus often warned about the danger of presumption, reminding us that all life is a gift not a given. Through his death and resurrection however, he promises to lead us through that gate and to share in his resurrection life. Christopher Jamison, the Abbot of Worth Abbey writes in his book 'Finding Sanctuary', 'Death is the ultimate stripping away and the ultimate encounter with God'.

Struan H Dunn

#### Fond memories of Faversham and St Mary of Charity

Some memories of Faversham and St Mary of Charity

These days,
Julian is our
Diocesan
Secretary

I have very fond memories of the years in which I was a member of the choir at St Mary of Charity. I joined when I was 8 when the choirmaster came round to my class at the church school and asked for volunteers. I've no idea why I put my hand up because I had never really sung before but I can only attribute this to being a nudge from God - and not the only time in my life! We used to sing at all sorts of services and I was paid 1d for every service that I attended- often traveling to other churches in Ospringe Deanery. Weddings and funerals were always a delight to sing at especially as we were paid 2/6d - around 12.5p in today's money. I won several book prizes for getting the most attendances each month - most of which I still have. There was a vouth club for the church choir which later became a youth club for all the church and we used to meet in the old tin church (St

Saviours) in East Street. There was a great fellowship amongst the boys and I remember many of their names to this day. I was gradually given more responsibility and became the crucifer for many years and I was also asked to become a server and enjoyed the responsibility of that role. I have many funny stories of my time in the choir but more very fond memories. Not least because through my association with the church I met and fell in love with the person who became my wife - Hilary Turner. We now have 3 lovely children and (nearly) 5 grandchildren. But above all I have been given a wonderful Christ centred faith that nourishes and sustains me day by day and the roots of that faith are in my time at St Mary of Charity.

It will always have a very special place in my heart!

Julian Hills



# The Benefice of Faversham Keeping in touch:



#### facebook:

St Catherine, Preston-next-Faversham: St Mary Magdalene / St Lawrence, Davington: St Mary of Charity, Faversham:

St Peter and St Paul, Ospringe: Faversham Benefice:

4favstc 4favstmml 4favstmoc 4favstpp 4favchurches

You Tube: Faversham Benefice

Email:

4favershamchurches@gmail.com

C

**Telephone:** 01795 532592

Bless you all!

#### **Keeping Connected**

#### The Benefice of Faversham

As Christians we can be tempted or misled into labelling something we want or desire to do as Gods way.

#### Doing the right thing?

We often find ourselves trying to make decisions about life matters and wanting to take such decisions in the light of Gospel values. As Christians we can be tempted or misled into labelling something we want or desire to do as Gods way. Here we find ourselves guided possibly by our own ego rather than by the Holy Spirit. How can we differentiate between the two?

Clearly prayer is the answer but importantly prayer in a group rather than simply alone. Here we can pray with people who can also seek to discern Gods will and help ourselves not being misled by our own self. A spiritual director or guide may be someone who does not know us who can ask the difficult questions about our motivations, is it self we are following or Gods call?

Reading the bible in a group may leave us pondering over a passage or phrase, yet again we need to be careful not to manipulate God's Word to fit in with our desires. Hence the importance of reading scripture with others and trying to be part of a group who will challenge rather than simply affirm.

Even following all the above, we can still be left feeling unsure. The following passage is from Thomas Merton which on occasion I have found helpful. Yet at times it is still a hard process discerning Gods will over our own self. If any of you are grappling with hard decisions, please ask for prayer and I am always happy to meet and pray with individuals. Now back to Merton.

With prayers and blessing. Revd. Simon.

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton

**Summer Camps** 

The Benefice of Faversham On-line Holiday Club



Whilst we can't meet in church this year there will still be Holiday Club the only difference is it will be Online.

### From Monday 17 to Friday21st August

Featuring all of the usual, songs, craft, magic, sketch, teaching, crazy dancing and much more.

All that we can't provide is the squash and biscuits!

And we would love you to join in! We want to hear from you what you like about holiday club. Please record us a message telling us what you like the most about Holiday Club and send it to Martin.

More details to follow soon!

#### Singalong

What people are saying

Dan leads
Singalong
brilliantly and
will always work
with you to help
you feel
comfortable,
whatever your
level of singing!"
Katy B.

Singalong has great songs, and Dan's enthusiasm makes it so much fun Meg B.

"You're loved and crucial in God's plan"

(https:// www.youarecru cial.org/)

#### Singalong—what's that?

Well it was all started in 2011 by Dan Corcoran, he joined the Benefice of Faversham as our .Community and Mission Priest in September 2019. But Singalong has been tells God's stories of love, faith and hope in the Bible's accounts. From Christmas, Easter accounts as well as through Jesus' parables and miracles.

Using recent popular music and melodies people of all ages find the entire process to be a profound experience.

Here are some comments by people who have been a part of this journey.....

By the beginning of November Dan had people rehearsing fast and furiously for a Singalong Christmas performance. This was amazing we knew the wonderful Christmas and Easter stories and the parables, but telling of them, with silhouettes behind the screen, the lights, puppets, all ages singing together encouraged and affirmed (whether we felt we could sing or not)!... the stories came alive, showing God's love in so many different ways. All this whilst we truly enjoyed the sharing of God's message as we were drawn in with each other. So, so, uplifting... Miranda F.

Singalong allows us to connect with the truths we know in a new way as well as building a fantastic sense of fellowship with people we might otherwise never have got to know. It also helps to present the gospel in a

new and fresh way, encouraging others to see and understand God's story for themselves in a non-threatening but clear way. I do a lot of singing and acting (no secret there!), but playing Jesus in Singalong Easter really helped me to "get inside" the Easter story and see things that I had never seen or considered before. **David B.** 

Singalong is uplifting and through the songs it puts you in the story and makes you think how they would have been feeling. It makes you feel closer to it all.

Singalong has always been a unique way of reaching out to people through the power of song. Over the years I have heard people say that even when they have no interest in religion or going to church there's something about Singalong that draws them in and they just get it. I think that's just amazing and is why I love it so much" **Catherine S.** 

Singalong is an awesome way of sharing the gospel. The music, lights, puppets and fun appeal to all. The message of Jesus' love is there, within easy reach, whatever your previous faith experiences. Through Singalong I have felt so personally connected with Jesus's story. Dan leads Singalong brilliantly and will always work with you to help you feel comfortable, whatever your level of singing!" **Katy B.** 

What's going on at

HOPE

**FAVERSHAM** 

YOUTH

this month

A reflection on the COVID crisis and how the selfless service of some people resonates with historical events

#### HOPE FAVERSHAM YOUTH for Year 7 and above

As the pandemic restrictions have been lifted we have loved being able to meet in real life groups of six, two leaders and four young people. Some have met at the Recreation Ground, one group went paddle-boarding and one went for a walk at the beach. It has been great for us to have fun being with them, and for them to see each other again too. We



Our weekly Wednesday night Zoom meetings have now finished for the summer, and we will see what the future holds together. One of our young people is going to university and another having a gap

year.

Please be praying for us all, for the young people as they cope with having far less contact with their friends, for their schooling and exam results, and for the leaders for wisdom.

Sarah Williams

#### Selflessness:

The recent devotion of front-line workers during the Covid 19 crisis combines with two momentous anniversaries epitomising devotion and service beyond the call of duty. These are the 75th anniversary of VE day and the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth.

have welcomed some Year 6 as

they prepare to move to Secondary School.

Nightingale, considered the founder of modern nursing, rose to prominence during the Crimean War, as a manager and trainer of nurses. Her nightly devotion, tending wounded soldiers earnt the nickname the 'Lady with the Lamp'.

The Crimean War, the Second World War, the Covid 19 crisis; three different periods, each marked by acts of selflessness.

As Covid 19 started to bite around the time of Holy Week, with health workers, numbering prominently among the victims, I

saw a similarity between their devotion and Jesus travelling into Jerusalem knowing his fate. Likewise, those serving during major conflicts with limited chances of survival.

Some may argue they were only doing their duty, but they did, so despite the risks.

Devout Christian Nightingale, believed true religion manifested itself in love and care for others, her devotion to duty, driven by equally intense devotion to Christ.

Whilst no doubt, many front-line workers, and those serving in wartime, would not consider themselves Christian, their actions are undoubtedly acts of loving their neighbour as themselves.

Neighbourly acts have been common place throughout, BBC's Countryfile featured a

#### **Keeping Connected**

#### The Benefice of Faversham

#### Selflessness: cont.

small Dorset village where the locals joined forces to help the needy. As well as food parcels to the elderly, they also provided residents of a nearby Romany campsite, previously viewed as outsiders, while the parish church's flower arrangers made a weekly posy for a local Covid19 nurse.

My Father, told me he was glad he'd lived throughout World War 2, because it was the only time he'd experienced true togetherness. The response to the Coronavirus Crisis, was similar.

In a reflection on the first Sunday of Advent, I suggested the country had been experiencing a period of darkness, and a new Christian year was time to lay aside petty jealousies and grievances and do more to help our neighbours.

Certainly, I did not expect the

darkness to grow as it has, however, the acts of kindliness far exceeded my contemplations.

Whether this continues as the pandemic eases and the nation returns to some form of 'normality' remains to be seen. History, suggests that many will revert to type.

But it took Christ's death however, to turn so many away from their former selves and according to reports, on-line services viewings exceed considerably the numbers who worship regularly in church.

This another positive the church community must look to maintain, and we ask God's strength and guidance in doing so.

Graham Dorkins.

#### St Catherine's Sunday School

St Catherine's Sunday School has resumed in the schoolroom on Sunday mornings while morning prayer takes place in the church.

Those who come along are asked to book in; the guidance allows for no more than fifteen people including leaders.

Each family group has their own table to sit on, and we are focusing on work using the puppets, so that children can have one each, with no sharing of resources.

This also helps to differentiate it from our online 'Funday Club' which was based around craft activities.

Some of our teenagers have been instrumental in setting this up, helping to plan, direct and film the puppet shows.

Hopefully some clips of the puppets will make their way into the online service once we get the editing right! It has been wonderful to be able to meet, work and worship together again, after only seeing each other online for so long.

#### \*Funday Times

#### Coronavirus A book for children

https://nosycrowcoronavirus.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Coronavirus-ABookForChildren.pdf

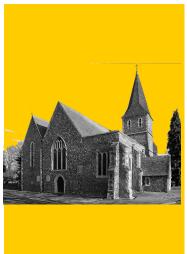
We found this on the internet and think that it might be a nice thing to share with children.

It is a well thought out little book by some well established children's writers, educationalists and scientists. You can down – load it as a pdf, read it on the screen or even print a copy.

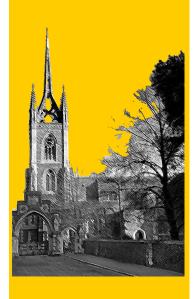
Please check the publisher's web site. They would like donations in lieu of payment.



\*Funday Times was the name adopted by the younger members at St Catherine's for their group. Seems a nice title for this lighter section. Thanks to everyone at St Catherine's











Four Churches One Town  Contact details for Benefice Clergy			
happyvicar@gmail.com			
BeneficeofFaversham+Vicar@gmail.com			
Community	Revd. Dan Corcoran	0796 333 2221	
<b>&amp;</b> .		danchadc@gmail.com	
Mission Priest		BeneficeofFaversham+Missioner@gmail.com	

Please contact the Administrator at the Benefice Office for information on Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or other services at any of the Benefice Churches.

- \* FavershamChurches@gmail.com
- \* BeneficeofFaversham+Admin@gmail.com
- \* 0179 553 0553
- During the Covid 19 epidemic the office is not manned, but your emails and calls will be responded to as quickly as possible.

Contacts for individual churches in the Benefice of Faversham			
St. Catherine, Preston next Faversham		fb.me/4favstc	
Wardens	Hilary Tulett		
	Rodney Foord	BeneficeofFaversham+wardenscp@gmail.com	
St. Mary Magdalene w St. Lawrence, Davington		fb.me/4favstmml	
Warden	Elizabeth Walsh	BeneficeofFaversham+wardensmm@gmail.com	
St. Mary of Charity, Faversham		fb.me/4favstmoc	
Warden	Miranda Ford	BeneficeofFaversham+wardensmoc@gmail.com	
St. Peter & St. Paul, Ospringe		fb.me/4favstpp	
Wardens	Phil Larter		
	Jason O'Hagan	BeneficeofFaversham+wardenspsp@gmail.com	

#### Keeping Connected—the news sheet

Keeping Connected is the news sheet of the Benefice of Faversham. It shares details of services, news and activities of the member churches in the Benefice and around the town of Faversham.

It is available free from your Church or downloaded from various sites.

Paper copies are available on request to your Church Warden.

Suitable items for inclusion in the magazine or the diary may be submitted to

BeneficeofFaversham+Contact@Gmail.com