

# Keeping Contact

## The Benefice of Faversham

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2022



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### Revd. Simon writes

#### **Celebrating God's presence in Word and Sacrament.**

In the Eucharist we believe that God is present in the reading of scripture and in the presence of bread and wine which represent Christ's sacrifice and instruction to do this in remembrance of Him. The theology of the 'real' presence of Christ in the Eucharist has caused much debate between theologians and Christian denominations, something I don't intend to discuss in detail today. What is more readily agreed is the central presence of 'the Word of God'. This term is used nearly 400 times in the Old Testament to refer to a communication from God. The Word of God is something that is active and transformative. Think about how the 'Word of God' said 'Let there be light'. The creation process began by God's word. However we understand the process of creation, as Christians we believe that in the beginning it was God who created. Recently we have returned in some of our churches to using the Psalms more regularly for our Sunday service. The Psalms are a hymn

book of 150 sacred words for music directed to God. For the psalmist the Law is the Word of God, revealing his standards of justice, holiness, and purity. The Word of God sets an example of how we should order or arrange our lives to God's will.

As we turn to the Word in the New Testament, we have Luke's Gospel saying that the word of God came to John in the wilderness. Here we can see the link between the Old and New Testaments with God's Word being channeled by the prophets.

In Colossians 3.16 the apostle Paul urges the Christians at Colosse and all who read the scripture today to 'let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Words spoken have consequences, they matter. This Christmas past as we hear every Christmas, The Word of God reveals the person of Jesus Christ, John 1.1-5.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has

(Continued on page 2)

## Revd. Simon writes

been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

In Jesus we have God present in our earthly lives explaining and teaching God's purpose for us and his reason for coming to us. In the powerful telling of Jesus going into the synagogue in Nazareth, Luke 4.16 ' he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom' we hear Jesus reading the Word of God.

He stood up to read, 17and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*18'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' 20And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue*

*were fixed on him. 21Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'*

That brings us to the power of the Holy Spirit at play when we read God's Word. Every time we read the bible the Holy Spirit is in action with the reader and the word becomes alive. Generation by generation the Word opens hearts and minds to God's truth and inspires people to respond to God's call wherever the word of God leads. In Hebrews 4.12 we read that the Word of God is living and active. Clearly when we worship together, and God's word is read aloud the Holy Spirit is at work. 1 Thessalonians 4.12 It is 'at work in you believers'.

When you next pick up the bible and read or go into church and listen to the word, we celebrate God's presence but also his action in the word that transforms and brings us alive.

Yours in Christ

Simon.

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Come and Sing!

Candlemas Evensong and Supper

Parish Church of St Mary of Charity

Sunday 6 February

4pm	Rehearsal
5pm	Evensong
6pm	Light supper

Canticles: Walmisley in D minor

Anthem: Zadok the Priest

Evensong is back and better than ever! If you're a singer, please join us at 4pm to rehearse. If you're not a singer, please join us at 5pm for a beautiful traditional evensong followed by a light supper.

All welcome!

## Services in February - The Benefice of Faversham

Date	Sun 30 Jan	Sun 06 Feb	Sun 13 Feb	Sun 20 Feb	Sun 27 Feb	Wed 02 Mar	Wed 02 Mar	
Church	Epiphany	4th Sunday before Lent	3rd Sunday before Lent	2nd Sunday before Lent	Sunday next before Lent	Ash Wednesday	Ash Wednesday	
						10:30	19:30	
Davington St M Mag	10:00	Benefice Service @ StMoC	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Prayer	0	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes
Faversham St MoC	10:00	Benefice Service + Rose	All Age Worship	Eucharist	Family Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes
Ospringe StP & StP	11:00	Benefice Service @ StMoC	Eucharist	Morning Praise	Eucharist	Morning Praise	0	Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes
Preston St Cat	10:00	Benefice Service @ StMoC	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Prayer	Eucharist	0	Eucharist Imposition of Ashes

# CALENDAR OF PRAYER

CHANGED LIVES  CHANGING LIVES



Dear Friends,

The latest version of the calendar of prayer is now available

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/strategy/prayer/prayer-resources/calendar-of-prayer/>

Primrose Northrop, Calendar of Prayer co-ordinator, [pnorthrop@diocant.org](mailto:pnorthrop@diocant.org),

## Joy

### The True Depths of Joy

'O be joyful in the Lord all the earth'...so begins Psalm 100. However, joy seems to be in short supply right now. At the time of writing, the constant updates on Covid not to mention Cricket and our failure to win the Ashes series 'down under', spread more cloud than sunshine.

So where in the words of a BCP Collect 'are true joys to be found'?

According to the Irish writer Silvester O'Flynn 'true joy of spirit is one of the surest signs of a life attuned to God's loving presence'. One Christian leader who seemed to exemplify this was the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Joy is among the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian (Galatians 5:22).

Its roots are therefore deep and not dependent on changing circumstances and passing moods. It is found in sharing friendship and fellowship with others. New Christians are keen to share their new found joy in having discovered God's love and grace, like the person who discovers hidden treasure in a field in one of Jesus' parables (Matthew 13:14).

Joy is infectious and overflows into worship and praise.

Being joyful also leads to fresh insight into God's creation. 'The soul is introduced to the beauty of God's world and the mystery of God reflected in nature's adornment and the rhythm of the seasons.' (O'Flynn).

Many of Jesus's parables were based on the observation of the natural world, from the mustard seed, the lilies of the field to the humble sparrow. Joy then can open the eye to the beauty of the common place.

Jesus said '*It is more blessed to give than to receive*'. It is in God's very nature to give and his generosity know no bounds. '*Every good and perfect gift is from above*' (James 1.17), and Peter reminds us that that we '*partake in the Divine*' (2 Peter 1:4). In Charles Dickens' a Christmas Carol', Ebenezer Scrooge is depicted as a wretched, miserable and mean character, lone and unloved, but the novel ends with a transformation and meanness is translated into generosity.

Finally, and seemingly perversely, the Christian can find joy in adversity. It is the testimony of many that joy often grows with suffering. This contrasts with superficial joy which can evaporate so quickly. One of the most upbeat and joyful of Paul's letters, Philippians, was written in prison. '*Rejoice in the Lord always*' he writes and '*again I say rejoice*' (Philippians 4:4). Jesus 's own life and death bear their own testimony to this for we read '*Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame*' (Hebrews 12:2).

Struan Dunn

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The Lectionary is an institution that indicates the readings that should be used in services on any day of the year—especially Sundays and other Feast Days.

One of the wonders of the Lectionary is its seemingly random collectiveness. That is that the creators of this work have discerned some theme through the readings to inform and feed our spiritual needs.

Recently at St Peter & St Paul it has led to a succession of sermons, by different speakers that have embraced the topic of joy.

Struan was one of those and he was invited to offer these thoughts for our readers.

## Dan, writes

**People need to see God's Kingdom hope** before responding to God.

Good news, healed broken hearts, freedom for captives, restored vision, relief from burdens, justice for the oppressed, God's favour – this is God's Kingdom stuff.

Jesus, while reading Isaiah's words written about 600 years before, said God's Spirit is anointing him to do these things. This was truly God's Words made flesh. Jesus commissions us also to do similar in the Spirit's power.

Who do you know needing good news, heart-healing, freedom, restored vision, relief from burdens, justice and the **knowledge of God's favour?**

We have lots happening in Faversham so people can see Jesus transforming bad news into good news, broken hearts into healed hearts, captivity into freedom, lack of vision into new hope and life's treadmill of despair into new purpose. Not confined to our weekly services in church, God is active stuff through our service to him and those around us in real life.

Our 72 bus and Gem trailer provides welcome, games, hospitality and conversation at Faversham Rec every Friday and Davington Rec every Sunday. We work with Rev Peter Newell and Selling and Sheldwich schools providing after-school clubs there too. We will also be visiting Bensted Grove, Love Lane and Millfield later this year.

Jesus taught us to go the second mile, so The Faversham GEMs Awards celebrate Under 19s who Go Extra Miles. Anyone can nominate before 28th February (favershamgems.org). Who will you nominate?

The Children's Society will be conducting their Wellbeing Survey across East Swale and the resulting Good Childhood report will help local agencies and organisations support local children and young people now and into the future.

It's a privilege to connect with Faversham's schools through regular assemblies, a film club looking at life from a Christian viewpoint and at chatting to pupils at lunchtimes in terms of their wellbeing. Big thanks to those involved in Experience Christmas. We're offering the equally engaging, moving and memorable Experience Easter to our primary schools to explore the Easter story.

After a successful Singalong Christmas, we're already rehearsing for Singalong Easter on Saturdays at 6.00pm planning to perform on Holy Saturday.

Let's Feast enabled 8 children and young people to explore God, baptism, communion, confirmation and God's plan last November. We plan to continue in February with a growing number of children and young people.

We had our first Saturday Dreaming Kingdom Dreams event last November and each church was well represented as we dwelt in Scripture and explored what God is saying about his priorities for our mission and ministry in Faversham.

Thank you for how you enable others to see God's Kingdom in action and respond to God, especially as we approach Lent and Easter – the greatest hope-filled event in human history.

Dan Corcoran  
Mission Priest

## GEM Awards—nominations sought



Who will you nominate?

Nominations: 01.01.22 - 28.02.22  
[favershamgems.org](http://favershamgems.org)

Celebrate children and young people who **go extra miles** and **make life sparkle**

A Faversham Children's and Youth Network initiative

## HOPE Faversham Youth



[hope.faversham\\_youth](https://www.instagram.com/hope.faversham_youth)

[hopefavershamyouth@gmail.com](mailto:hopefavershamyouth@gmail.com)

HOPE FAVERSHAM YOUTH

for Year 7 and above, meet Wednesday evenings 19:00 – 20:30

at the Baptist Church, St Mary's Road.

We have been ongoing for 4 years now, and are very grateful to The Baptist Church for allowing us to have the whole building each time. We share a meal together to start, which is kindly provided by church members. Then we have games and a talk followed by discussion. We regularly have between 8 -10 young people each week.

The topic for this term is 'The World', focussing on refugees, and studying the book of Ruth. We have invited a couple of guest speakers including Domenica Pecoraro who is the Kent Refugee Project Officer.

Please continue to pray for us as we share the hope of Jesus to bring life giving change.

Sarah Williams

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Jenkins and I am Director of Music at St Catherine's Church in the Benefice of Faversham.

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

I have lived in Faversham for about 42 years but I was brought up in Gillingham, Kent where my father, Canon Donald Mills, was the incumbent at St Barnabas Church for over 25 years. Growing up in a vicarage meant that I was fully immersed in everything to do with the church, including singing in the choir and learning to play the organ, from a very young age. It was here that the seeds were sown for my future career in music. I studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and after graduating remained in London for several years pursuing a career both teaching and singing. I moved to Faversham to take up the position of Head of Music at the Lady Capel School for Girls which eventually combined with Faversham Boys' School to become the Abbey School. I lived in Bramley Avenue so St Catherine was my nearest church. It was here that I met Dennis and we were married at St Catherine in 1984. When my parents retired they decided to move to Faversham and soon became involved with St Catherine's Church as well with my father covering services when required.



2. How did you come to your faith?

This is an easy question to answer as faith has always with me and always will so there's nothing more I can say.

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

I like the fact that St Catherine's Church is such a happy and welcoming place. I am very fortunate to have a group of committed and loyal singers in the choir and, together with our organist Keith Moxon, we aim to enhance the worship during services. I particularly enjoy our more traditional style of worship including the incense.

4. What's your favourite hymn or chorus?

I particularly like joyous hymns such as 'Christ triumphant, ever reigning' but my favourite has to be 'All my hope on God is founded' with its magnificent music written by Herbert Howells. For me it sums up what faith is all about.

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

The parts of the Bible I most enjoy are those which deal with the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ on the Cross.

As a musician I enjoy the wonderful music that has been written on this theme including the Passions by J. S. Bach. One example is Isaiah 53, verse 3, 'He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' These words were set by Handel in 'Messiah' Part 2 as an alto aria which I have sung on many occasions. The way Handel sets these poignant words brings home to me the suffering Christ had to endure.

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## The Diocesan Briefing

You can keep up to date with everything that is happening in the Diocese on the link below.

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/our-life/news-events/news/get-the-latest-news.php>

It provides links to all sorts of stuff that is going on in the diocese and worth checking out from time to time.

## Refugee

Every year at Christmas we give and receive presents. There is a real joy in choosing and receiving presents. Not always easy to choose a gift for someone who has so much in today's world. This year to my sheer delight I received a lovely book of sonnets which I will dip into throughout the year.

'Sounding the Seasons' by Malcolm Guite contains 70 sonnets for the Christian year.

In a year when we have been bombarded with such horrendous images of war and its human consequences the following struck a chord in me:

### Refugee

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,  
Or cosy in a crib beside a font,  
But he is with a million displaced people  
On the long road of weariness and want.  
For even as we sing our final carol  
His family is up and on the road,  
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,  
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.  
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower,  
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,  
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,  
And death squads spread their curse across the world.  
But every Herod dies, and comes alone  
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.

Many other thought provoking and encouraging sonnets to enjoy which can help me reconnect with what God's gift of Jesus means for me and his creation.

*Patrick Mulcahy*



## Window—St Mary Magdalene at Davington

*St Mary Magdalene at Davington has a minor new addition which may encourage visitors to seek out its splendid window of St John the Baptist.*

*The window is located in the north wall but was lost to general view when it was enclosed in the church's new WC.*

*A photograph of the window, which was restored in 2003, has been placed in the kitchen and refreshment area, with the plaque that commemorates its unveiling on the 850th anniversary of the founding of Davington*



## Help at The Abbey School



The Abbey School would like some volunteers to listen to Year 7 and 8 students read in the library, anytime between 9.30am and 2.00pm.

If you could give some time to this, please contact Librarian, Miss Evans: [levans@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk](mailto:levans@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk).

Volunteers will need to be DBS checked by the school.

# News from



The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, has thanked front line workers, parishes, and all who have made sacrifices to help protect one another from Covid-19, as England prepares to move away from 'plan B' restrictions on Thursday (25/01).



Bishop Sarah, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, was speaking as new advice was published by the Church of England ahead of Thursday's change of national rules.

She said: "When the first measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 were introduced in March 2020, few would have imagined that we would still be making adaptations to the way we live our lives – including our worship – almost two years on.

"People have made huge sacrifices to protect one another – not only those they know and love but strangers they might never meet. We've learnt again as society something of what it means to love our neighbour, as Jesus taught.

"The loneliness and isolation many have experienced; the impact on people's mental health; the lost jobs and failed businesses and strained relationships must not be overlooked.

"Yet, terrible as the toll from this virus has been, and continues to be, the actions people have taken have saved lives and prevented countless infections, with all the potential long-term consequences that could go with them.

"So as we can begin to look forward with cautious hope, we once again thank those who have done so much to protect us all - particularly our NHS, carers and other front line workers.

"I want to thank everyone who has made sacrifices for others. I think particularly of younger people who, though often least at risk, have sometimes given up the most.

"And I want especially to thank our clergy, parish volunteers and congregations for all you are doing - not simply to keep worship going, but to innovate with bold and remarkable new ways of doing so; reaching new people and, of course, serving your communities.

"As 'plan B' restrictions come to an end the future remains uncertain and we must continue to be cautious. In our churches government rules have been eased but I would still encourage congregations to consider what mitigation can best protect others.

"As we look now towards spring and the vivid demonstration of new life it offers us, my prayer is that we won't forget what we've learnt; that we take this opportunity to thank others and that we look with hope to the future."

## From the “back bedroom” .....

Well, here we are, it's 2022. Who would have thought it after all the things we have been through recently.

We have reached our third edition in the publication series.

Back in the age of coal fires and the 3 day week, about 1973, I joined a pension scheme. The reams of paper that arrived, by post told me that I would be able to retire in 2012.

It was difficult to embrace that concept. At the time it was an achievement to get to the end of the month without a letter from my bank manager.

But I really did not realise just how lucky I was and how easy my life was. I had no student debt and the “property ladder” did not exist. I have become more accepting of my lot and realizing that I have generally had a pretty good go at life.

This leads to the Joy thing.

I am a glass too small type. Eeyore is my role model, recently I have found him a bit too optimistic at times.

Anyway, in a “talk” at St P&P the speaker likened Joy to a well that is within us.

Do we need a bucket on a rope in order to draw from this well? Or is our joy overflowing?

Me? Well there are many times when the rope is a bit short for the bucket to actually reach the Joy in my well.

All this to say that I'm trying to build the Joy in my life! In this New and rather different Year I encourage you to pursue that wonderful Fruit of the Spirit— Joy.

Rocyn

## Churches Together in Faversham

As we all know planning during the pandemic is difficult! But decisions have to be made. It has been decided by the Executive Committee of CTIF that there will be

NO Lent Lunches this year.

We still hope to hold the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, 15th April. Planning started on the premise that the walk would start from St Mary of Charity and no road closures would be needed. (The group would be ‘batched’ to cross via the Crescent Road crossing.)

The walk is to be silent as usual, with the cross erected in the Market Place and a simple prayer – with no big gathering or singing. Plans are to be finalised at the beginning of March.

Instead of an Easter card we are planning a newspaper advertisement and social media posts of Easter Services at our churches in the town.

It was decided to defer any Unity event until 2023 as Pentecost this year coincides with the weekend of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Do join the group that meets to pray for our town on Saturday mornings 09:00-09:45 in person at the Baptist Church.

Sarah Williams



## 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 service in any of the Benefice Churches.

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

\* [FavershamChurches@gmail.com](mailto:FavershamChurches@gmail.com)

\* 0179 553 0553

### Contacts for individual churches in the Benefice of Faversham

St Catherine, Preston next Faversham		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/4favstc">fb.me/4favstc</a>
Wardens	Hillary Tulett Rodney Foord	
St Mary Magdalene w St Lawrence, Davington		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/4favstmml">fb.me/4favstmml</a>
Wardens	Maureen Gregory Frances Worthington* Iris Neel*	
St Mary of Charity, Faversham		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/4favstmoc">fb.me/4favstmoc</a>
Wardens	Miranda Ford	
St Peter & St Paul, Ospringe		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/4favstpp">fb.me/4favstpp</a>
Wardens	Phil Larter Patrick Mulcahy Jane Wells*	

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 Church Warden.

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\* Assistant Warden

