



From the Rector's study

I wonder if you recognise this?

*The happy birds Te Deum sing, 'Tis Mary's month of May;
Her smile turns winter into spring, And darkness into day;
And there's a fragrance in the air, The bells their music make,
And O the world is bright and fair, And all for Mary's sake.*

*Where'er we seek the holy Child, At every sacred spot,
We meet the Mother undefiled; Who shun her seek him not:*

*At cloistered Nazareth we see, At haunted Bethlehem,
The throne of Jesus, Mary's knee, Her smile, his diadem.
The Daughter, Mother, Spouse of God, None silence her appeal
Who long to tread where Jesus trod, What Jesus felt to feel.
O, Virgin-born, from thee we learn To love thy Mother dear;
Her teach us duly to discern, And rightly to revere.*

*To love the Mother, people say, Is to defraud the Son;
For them, alas, there dawns no May, Until their hearts are won:
Then, when their hearts begin to burn, Ah, then, to Jesus true,
And loving whom he loves, they learn To love Saint Mary too.
How many are the thoughts that throng On faithful souls to-day!*

*All year we sing our Lady's song, 'Tis still the song of May:
Magnificat! O may we feel That rapture more and more;
And chiefly, Lord, what time we kneel Thine altar-throne before.
'Tis then, when at thy feet we pray, We share our Lady's mirth;
Her joy we know who hail to-day Thy Eucharistic birth;
That trembling joy to Mary sent, Ah, Christians know it well,
With whom in his dear sacrament Their Saviour deigns to dwell.*

*Yes, Mary's month has come again, The merry month of May;
And sufferers forget their pain, And sorrows flee away,
And joys return, the hearts whose moan Was desolate erewhile
Are blithe and gay, once more they own The charm of Mary's smile.*

*Thy Son our Brother is, and we, Whatever may betide,
A Mother, Mary, have in thee, A guardian and a guide;
Thy smiles a tale of gladness tell No words can ever say?
If but, like thee, we love him well, The year will all be May.*

*All hail! An angel spake the words We lovingly repeat;
The song-notes of the singing birds They are not half so sweet:
This is a music that endures, It cannot pass away,
For Mary's children it ensures A never-ending May.*



*"Madonna of Bruges"
by Michelangelo,
V&A collection.
Image from Wikipedia*





Detail of Reredos textile from our Lady Chapel, photo by Catherine Ferguson



The first miracle at Cana, detail of a window at St Nicolas'



*photo from
www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk*

A beautiful poem or hymn for the beginning of May, but it appeals to me far beyond Mary's month. It speaks of the promise of summer and salvation. Just as the colours reappear from mother nature, so we give due honour to our Blessed Mother Mary. In our tradition, devotion to the Blessed Mother comes as part of who we are and what we believe. It can jolt some and requires something of an explanation - what is the fascination with Mary when we can communicate with our Lord directly in prayer? The truth is that here in England, often referred to as the dowry of Our Lady, there has been a long history of devotion to Mary - her guidance to the child Christ, she who would teach Our Lord His prayers and wipe his sticky hands would also hold his lifeless body on Golgotha. She it is who instigates the first miracle at Cana in Galilee. She it is from the time of the earliest church who stood as the Chief Apostle and was given the title 'Mother' to the Apostles by Christ from the Cross. Since neither death nor any other power in this universe can separate us from the love of Almighty God, so our prayers on this side of mortality reflect our eternity and it is from heaven that Blessed Mary is able to hear our prayers and intercede for us, just as she did on earth.

Each year we are able to visit as pilgrims, to Walsingham in Mary's own month of May. If you didn't make it this year, perhaps make it next?

Walsingham is a reflection of the holiness of our church which is a cell community of the Holy House. It is a place of space, holiness and peace and this is what I am hoping Will Todd will be able to reflect in the piece we have commissioned him to compose for our Patronal Festival in December.

As we enjoy something of a quieter, warmer few months, I pray that you might grow more in the loving arms of Mary, to know her power to pray with and for you and perhaps ponder buying a Rosary, saying your prayers with it and coming to our Rosary group, the Walsingham cell or even popping into church over the summer to light a candle. **Fr Neil**

For details and variations please see weekly Pews News.

Praying the Rosary

11 June at 7:30pm

The next **Walsingham Cell Mass** will be in September.

Meditation 8am on the **2nd Tuesday** of each month; **9 June, 14 July. No meeting in August.**

The Weekly pattern of services

Wednesday - Friday Morning Prayer, 10am in the Lady Chapel

1st Wednesday of the Month Mass, 12noon in the Lady Chapel

Friday Mass, 11am in St George's Chapel

Sunday 8:30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10am Parish Mass with Junior Church



PILGRIM PLACES, HOLY LIVES

Travel through places made holy by faithful lives and uncover fresh light for your journey with God.

Find out more and order the new reflections booklet via cofe.io/Pilgrimage

⊕ THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A 4-week course on Fridays from 12th June, 12 noon and repeated at 7pm, each for an hour, based upon this Church of England resource which explores eight places important in the spread of Christianity in England, and the stories of the saints who lived there. Sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. For more information on the course, please talk to **Fr Neil, Jill or David Greenwood**.

An accompanying booklet gives a daily Bible reading, prayer, short reflection **and** suggested action or reflective question should you also wish to follow it at home; it can be purchased through this link at £3.99: <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9781781405550/pilgrim-places-holy-lives-single-copy>.

And watch this space for a parish pilgrimage to the North East in 2027...

We are planning one which will follow the paths of saints from York, through Whitby and Durham to Lindisfarne (Holy Island). Likely dates will be over 5 or 6 days during the **May half term in 2027** with transport by minibus or coach, and an opportunity for those who wish to walk from the mainland across to the island. We are still at early planning stages, but if you would like to know more or express interest, please talk with **Fr Neil, Cath or Jill**.



Summer Anniversary Events

June

Thursday 4th *Corpus Christi* Fr Victor Stock (former Dean of Guildford Cathedral) to preach

Saturday 20th *Midsummer Dinner with comedian Paul Kerensa*,
Tickets on sale now from the office

July Saturday 4th *Summer Fayre*



Alcohol A preacher completing a temperance sermon proclaimed with great expression, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." Finally he said, "And if I had all the whisky in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down.

The song ledge then stood up cautiously and announced, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn 365: 'Shall we gather at the river?'"

sent for our delight by **John Varney**



150th Anniversary Musical Commission

by **Jonathan Neil-Smith**



St Nicolas, Guildford will

forever hold a special place in the annals of church music through the extraordinary endeavours of its former Rector, John Monsall, who wrote many hymns, including 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (which is literally sung throughout the English-speaking world at Epiphanytide). Monsell sadly died from injuries incurred from falling off the building site of our present church in 1875, so it is particularly appropriate that a new setting of Psalm 96 (on which Monsell's famous hymn was based) should be commissioned to mark our 150th anniversary.

It is very exciting that Will Todd, an internationally renowned composer who lives locally, has been selected to compose this new piece as part of our anniversary celebrations. Will is a remarkable musician whom I've been privileged to know for over 20 years. I will never forget his commitment to fostering youth engagement in church worship: having attended the Premiere of his Requiem in St John's Smith Square on a Saturday evening, he was accompanying the rehearsal of a youth choir (which included my daughter) for Morning Worship in St Mary's at 0900 the following morning! His many works include his famous 'Mass in Blue', an anthem for the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee service in St Paul's, and an opera version of Alice in Wonderland. His pieces are very tuneful - try 'The Lord is my Shepherd' on YouTube - and I am in no doubt that his setting of Psalm 96 will prove to be a worthy tribute to our anniversary (and potentially spread the renown of St Nic's in the musical world).

I do encourage you to support this great initiative and help leave a lasting memorial to our 150th anniversary, inspiring future generations to 'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.'

In the Anglican Church, both Thomas More and John Fisher are commemorated on July 6th. They are recognized as "Saints and Heroes of the Christian Church," and are jointly commemorated on the anniversary of More's execution. This commemoration is a recognition of their martyrdom during the English Reformation, despite their opposition to it.

Saints & Heroes of the Reformation

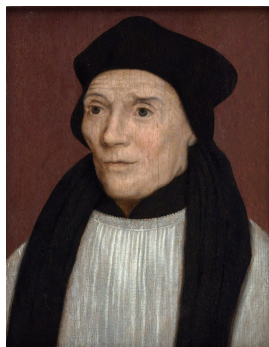
While they were executed for their Catholic beliefs during a time of religious upheaval in England, the Anglican Church acknowledges their steadfastness in conscience and willingness to die for their beliefs. It serves as a reminder of the complexities of the Reformation and the importance of religious freedom.

The theme is continued in Westminster Abbey with an inscription on the floor beside the tomb of Mary and Elizabeth:

"Remember before God all those who divided at the Reformation by different convictions laid down their lives for Christ and conscience sake." **Sally Lowe**



Thomas More,
7 February 1478 -
6 July 1535



John Fisher,
c.19 October 1469 -
22 June 1535, Wikipedia

A message from **Julia Wake**: *Dear Friends, thank you so much for your prayers of support on my long journey since breaking my hip in March at St Nicolas'. I am still experiencing problems having fallen again and cut the back of my head which has resulted in stitches and much pain when lying down in bed. I have met many lovely people at the nursing home who have all welcomed me. My ground floor room has a beautiful view of the vast grounds with trees and even the wildlife; the deer, the peacock who often comes and squawks at my window. Please may I ask for your continued prayers as I set off for home on 26 May.*

Pilgrimage



There are different kinds of pilgrimage. There is the daily path we tread, which navigates the joys, challenges and pains of life's surprises and 'daily bread', supported by prayer, worship and reflection and trodden with fellow pilgrims wherever we find ourselves, not just in church. Then there is the intentional pilgrimage or retreat, when we step outside the daily walk for a period, and risk what we might find of God and ourselves.

My first of this kind was to the Holy Land in 2023, followed a year later to Tuscany. I was anxious - confident in the leaders who were friends, but less so in meeting my fellow travellers - and how could jumping on and off a coach to visit sites possibly be more than a holiday? But I felt a compulsion to follow both, and was taken to places I couldn't have foreseen.

Last year, I walked part of the Camino. My husband Hugh had died just over a year before. I felt again that compulsion to follow this path, walking through my grief and being open to what next in my journey, and I knew I needed to do it alone. Being a person who needs and likes structure, I chose to let go of it and retreated from organised 'religion'. I was anxious of course - did I have the stamina, were the risks too great, where would I stay? But the anxieties melted as soon as I started walking.



I was ecstatic to be walking alone, with the freedom of being responsible for no one else but myself; and loved the minimalist existence. I had learned from a close friend and then from Hugh in his quiet companionship about how to relax in and savour the moment, whether it be in food, wine, book, river, people. I walked without planning ahead, noticing and absorbing the Atlantic coastline, the river, the people and curious about how people lived and why they were travelling. I enjoyed walking with pilgrims for a while and then parting comfortably; and the surprise 'angels' who appeared when I needed them, and then disappeared. As they say, 'the Way provided.'



As days passed, I began to feel Hugh's absence, or was it presence? He would never have walked with me but would have fully blessed me walking alone. To my surprise I felt him travelling with me, deep inside, watching; I could almost touch and smell his presence. This has stayed with me.

And I found glimpses of God, in the beauty of the earth, the power of the sun, the crashing of the Atlantic, the pilgrimage hostels and the chance meetings with fellow pilgrims. It did not answer my 'what next on my journey?' question, but I knew there would be a next. And when I arrived in Santiago de Compostela it felt as much of a beginning as an arrival.

And so to the parish pilgrimage to Rome last February. I said 'yes' early on, though not without anxiety - as a relative newbie at St Nic's, who would be my fellow pilgrims, would they accept me, would I fit in?





We visited some wonderful places of worship and the catacombs, some of which made me draw breath with awe at their space, light and beauty, and I learned more about the foundations of the church, as well as the strength of walking together.

Most special were the times spent 'breaking bread' over the meal table and in the chapel at the beautiful Palazzola. Much laughter, stories told, trust grown, 'thin places' and acceptance as we journeyed together. A very special time.

Every pilgrimage has surprised me and taught me that fellow pilgrims are part of the joy and excitement, each with their own reasons for travelling. In their companionship I have learned things about myself, and more about why community matters. Every pilgrimage has changed me and nudged me along the daily pilgrimage of faith which we all tread. Rome was no exception - thank you, fellow pilgrims!



Wendy Gabriel's



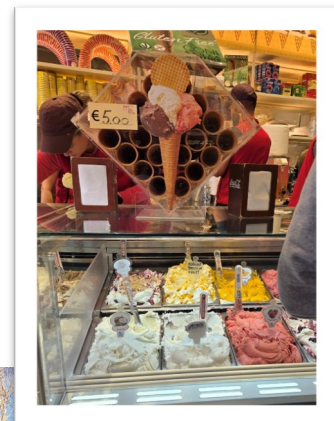
Pilgrimage to Rome

Our recent pilgrimage to Rome was such a memorable and enriching experience. We visited so many remarkable places of faith and history. The

Pantheon was breathtaking with its oculus in the dome linking the temple to the heavens and acting as a sundial with rain draining through the holes in the floor. It gave us a powerful sense of the grandeur of ancient Rome and centuries of history. My other main highlight was the incredibly beautiful and magnificent St Peter's Basilica built over the tomb of St Peter himself. We also enjoyed the sights of the Trevi Fountain whilst enjoying an authentic Italian gelato. Another memorable moment that added such fun to the pilgrimage experience.

We stayed in a former monastery where we enjoyed wonderful hospitality with delicious Italian cooked meals each evening after our busy days of sightseeing and prayer. Giorgio, our guide, was excellent and he had a wealth of knowledge.

Special thanks must also go to Fr Neil who organised everything so beautifully with an excellent itinerary making it a very special and rewarding pilgrimage experience for us all.



Matter matters by Donald Thompson

This was my second visit to Rome, but my first pilgrimage. We saw the magnificent remains of Imperial Rome of course, but for me the fellowship of sharing Christian Rome's holy places with friends from St Nics, and further afield, was a moving experience. One of my highlights was the peace and fellowship of sharing worship led by Fr Neil in the chapel of our home for the week, the Villa Palazzola (1). Our time in Rome included Ash Wednesday and it was wonderful to begin the Lenten journey together on pilgrimage. Catherine had prepared the ashes before we travelled.

Praying before the traditional tombs of the Saints and martyrs of the faith, including St Sebastian, and the Apostles Paul and Peter were very special moments for me. Every day in Rome I felt connected to the earliest days of the Church and our first brothers and sisters in the faith. A few of my personal highlights are outlined below.

On Tuesday, we visited St Clements Basilica. This church has links to one of the earliest Popes, St Clement who, according to St Irenaeus, was a contemporary of SS Peter & Paul. Origen suggests he was the 'fellow labourer' mentioned by St Paul in the letter to the Philippians. Exploring this amazing basilica, we are led from the present twelfth century church, downwards to the fourth century building (mentioned by St Jerome) and below that the remains of the first century buildings, which include a small Mithraic temple.

In the fourth century level we saw many wonderful frescos including this Madonna & Child (c: 6th century). Notice that Our Lady appears much more mature than more contemporary images and it's fascinating to see how conceptions of the key figures of our faith have evolved. Probably guided by Gospel texts, art and Church iconography has tended to portray Our Lady as a very young woman, but this fresco seems to show her as the stern Queen of Heaven! The guidebook suggests that this may originally have been a contemporary fresco of the Empress Theodora (d.548), wife of the Emperor Justinian.

On Wednesday we visited the Basilica and Catacombs of St Sebastian, an experience that I shall never forget. It lies adjacent to the Appian Way. The current Basilica (15th – 18th Century) lies above previous buildings and the visitor can then descend to lower levels to the Catacomb (third century) that was in use when the martyrs Sebastian & Eutichius were executed in the persecutions of Diocletian. St Sebastian was buried here and we walked past the site of his original resting place. His remains were moved several times but returned by Pope Honorius III in 1218. His relics were placed under the current Altar and are enclosed by a moving statue showing the Saint pierced by the arrows of his martyrdom (3).



1. Villa Palazzola Chapel: Our daily place of worship.



2. Basilica of San Clemente: 4th century: Madonna & Child fresco





4. Graffiti invoking SS Peter & Paul:
Catacomb of St Sebastian (Source: Romepedia)



5. St Pauls, without the Walls: Apse: Christ the
Pantocrator with SS Paul, Peter, Luke & Andrew.



6. The tomb of St Paul

Understandably, but unfortunately, we were not allowed to take photographs in the Catacomb itself. We descended to a series of tunnels in which were hundreds of alcoves for the remains of the Roman dead and some astonishing Roman family mausoleums, richly decorated. There are also third-century Christian burial chambers with Christian symbols and the acrostic **ITXΘYC** which means FISH, with a cross (T) between the letters. The meaning is Jesus Christ, Son of God. I found the sense of fellowship with our earliest Christian brothers and sisters incredibly powerful in these catacombs, especially the evidence of veneration of St Peter and St Paul themselves. Inscribed invocations to the principal Apostles (4) by ordinary Christians like us, but from the third century deeply moved me.

It is thought that the remains of St Peter and St Paul were brought to this site during the persecution of Valerian around 258 AD and were venerated here for a period. Both apostles were martyred in Rome. The importance of relics and the Incarnational basis of our faith was very powerful for me. We travelled from the Catacomb of St Sebastian to the great Papal Basilica of St Pauls outside the Walls, where King Charles recently prayed with Pope Leo XIV. The original Basilica was inaugurated by Constantine to contain the tomb of St Paul. The second, larger basilica was largely destroyed by fire in 1823. A rebuild of similar dimensions was completed in 1854. There are still many original frescos and features in today's amazing basilica including mosaic portraits of all the Popes. The magnificent 'Christ the Pantocrator' mosaic in the Apse is from the 13th century and is awe-inspiring. The figure of Pope Honorius III, who commissioned the mosaic, is included as the tiny figure in white prostrate at Christ's right foot!

Several of our group, including me, took the opportunity to pray at the tomb of St Paul beneath the Papal Altar (6). The sarcophagus, said to contain the remains of the Apostle, is visible behind the grill and is the place where Constantine had the first Altar built. Whether the remains are those of St Paul is an open question, although there is strong evidence to support that view. However, as I prayed there, I felt close to the writer of the New Testament epistles, prince of the Apostles and his message. Perhaps that is the real



value of contact with holy remains or relics of the saints. Matter matters as St John of Damascus said. Leo the Great, preaching on the Feast of SS Peter & Paul said of Peter & Paul: “ these two who have been raised to so high a place in the Church that they are like the twin light of the eyes within the body whose head is Christ”.

In the courtyard of St Pauls outside the Walls was a modern sculpture that for me helped to encapsulate a critical lesson, for a twenty first century Christian, of all that we saw in Rome (7).



7. Sculpture: Matthew 25:36 “I was in prison and you visited me” (Timothy Schmalz)



David Greenwood commends Rome’s
Basilica of San Clemente

During our recent pilgrimage to Rome, we went to the Basilica of San Clemente, close to the Colosseum.

Even for Rome, it presents an astonishing layering of archaeology. The structure is a three-tiered complex of buildings: the present basilica built just before the year 1100 during the height of the Middle Ages; beneath the present basilica is a 4th-century basilica that had been converted out of the home of a Roman nobleman, part of which had in the 1st century briefly served as an early church, and the basement of which had in the 2nd century briefly served as a mithraeum, a temple dedicated to the god Mithras.

One of the largest collections of early medieval wall-painting to have survived in the city of Rome is to be found in the lower church of San Clemente. These paintings were abandoned and forgotten for hundreds of years until, in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were brought to light by excavations undertaken by Fr Joseph Mullooly. Originally, the walls of San Clemente appear to have been completely covered in fresco. In many places only fragments of the original decoration remain, but some frescos, especially those painted in the 11th century, shortly before the lower church was abandoned, are wonderfully preserved.





*Photo Vatican Media, taken from
www.archbishopofcanterbury.org*

The Archbishop of Canterbury visits Rome by **Jon Hebditch**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has met and prayed with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV in Rome amid ongoing dialogue between the Anglican communion and Roman Catholic church.

Archbishop Sarah Mullally visited the Pope at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican on Monday, April 27 where the pair talked and exchanged gifts. The Archbishop had been on a four-day pilgrimage to Rome aimed at strengthening relations between the two historic Christian traditions.

The Anglican Communion News Service reports Archbishop Sarah was joined at the papal audience by the Most Revd Richard Moth, Archbishop of Westminster; the Rt Revd Anthony Ball, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome; the Revd Dr Matthias Grebe, National Adviser for Ecumenical Relations; and Canon Margaret Cave, Director for Episcopal Ministry.

In her address to Pope Leo, Archbishop Sarah said: “In the face of inhuman violence, deep division, and rapid societal change, we must keep telling a more hopeful story: that every human life has infinite value because we are precious children of God; that the human family is called to live as sisters and brothers; that we must therefore work together for the common good – always building bridges, never walls.’

She gave thanks for Pope Leo saying: “Your Holiness, you have spoken powerfully about the many injustices in our world today, but you have spoken even more powerfully about hope.”

Following her audience, Archbishop Sarah joined the Pope at a service of daytime prayer in the Chapel of Urban VIII. The Pope presided at the office, and the Pope and Archbishop said the grace together.

In his address to Archbishop Sarah, Pope Leo XIV said the visit: “...brings to mind the memorable encounter between Saint Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey sixty years ago, the anniversary of which you marked with Cardinal Koch in Canterbury Cathedral on the morning after your installation. Since then, Archbishops of Canterbury and Bishops of Rome have continued to meet to pray together, and I am glad that we are continuing this tradition today.’

“As my beloved predecessor, Pope Francis, said to the Primates of the Anglican Communion in 2024, ‘it would be a scandal if, due to our divisions, we did not fulfil our common vocation to make Christ known’. For my part, I add that it would also be a scandal if we did not continue to work towards overcoming our differences, no matter how intractable they may appear.

“As we continue to journey together in friendship and dialogue, let us pray that the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord breathed on the disciples on the evening after his resurrection, will guide our steps as we prayerfully and humbly seek the unity which is the Lord’s will for all his disciples.”

*Archbishop of Canterbury prays with
Pope Leo XIV. Photo Vatican Media
from www.archbishopofcanterbury.org*



Meeting the Archbishop in Rome

by **Peter and Pauline Oldroyd**



On Sunday 26th April, the day prior to Archbishop Sarah Mullally’s audience with the Pope in the Vatican, we too experienced a memorable encounter.

Whilst visiting our son in Rome, we were staying just around the corner from All Saints, the only Anglican Church in Rome. Attending Mass and reading the Order of Service, we noted that there were to be three baptisms that morning. Imagine our surprise on reading that The Most Reverend Sarah Mullally, Archbishop of Canterbury, was to preside at this service.

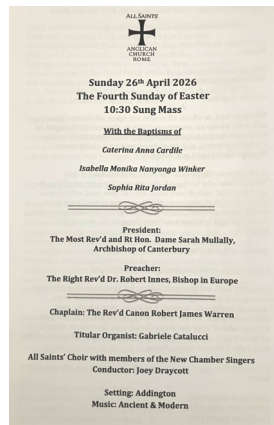
What a coincidence, we thought, that we should be right here, in this holy place, and at this precise moment in time. The Preacher was to be the Right Reverend Dr Robert Innes, Bishop in Europe, who himself has links with Guildford.

After the service, we were warmly invited to share lunch with the congregation, and to meet the Archbishop herself. We took the opportunity for a chat, and thanked her for coming to Bishop Andrew’s funeral service in our Cathedral. We talked about our Parish and she sent her prayers and best wishes to all at St Nicolas’.

Knowing that she was on a special pilgrimage, our parting words were “We are ALL Pilgrims.”

Her reply? “Absolutely!” and a very affirmative thumbs up! 

*We are travellers...not yet in our native land”
St. Augustine*



BOOK REVIEW **Discovering Christianity – A guide for the curious, Rowan Williams, SPCK, 2025**

This little book (87 pages) is for believers and non-believers alike. It doesn’t offer painting-by-numbers theology but is a wise and gentle exploration into the depths of what faith is about.

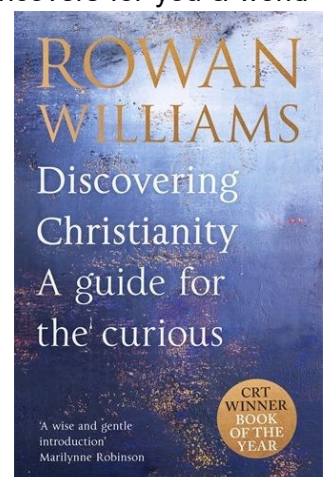
Some quotes from the book:

“Faith is most fully itself and most fully life-giving when it opens your eyes and uncovers for you a world larger than you ever thought.”

“Probably the most important Christian belief is that people are given the right to speak to God in exactly the same way that Jesus did, because the life, the power, the Spirit that filled Jesus is given to us also.”

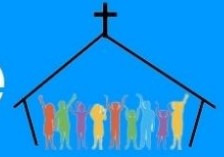
“The awkward truth is that the simple language of the Bible is very seldom as simple as some people would like it to be, and it will always push you into asking more and more big questions.”

“We all have ways of making sense of our world through the tools that our culture offers us. People’s minds work in particular ways in different historical environments, and we can’t simply transfer every category of one period or context or language to another.” **Sally Lowe**



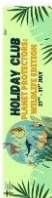


Mission Enabler update



One of the most important parts of our life together at St Nicolas is our ministry with children, young people, and families. It's easy to imagine this work is simply "fun and games", but at its heart it is discipleship, hospitality, and mission. These groups are often the very first doorway through which people encounter the love of God and the welcome of the church. Every craft, every conversation, every toastie, every moment of play is part of forming faith, building community, and helping people of all ages discover that they belong.

With that in mind, here are some exciting updates – and some invitations.



Holiday Club: Almost Fully Booked

Our summer Holiday Club is filling up fast, with only a few spaces left. It's wonderful to see such enthusiasm from families across Guildford, and we're looking forward to a joyful, creative week together.

Toastie Tuesdays: Fully Booked in One Hour!

This month, our bookings were snapped up within one hour, and we now have a waiting list. This shows just how valued this space is for local families.

Thanks to the brilliant parent helpers currently completing the recruitment process to join our wonderful, existing team, we hope to increase capacity soon and welcome more children. Their willingness to step forward is a real blessing.



Cafe Play - Volunteers Needed

Our Toddler and Baby Group continues to receive wonderful feedback. Parents often tell us it's their favourite group because of how welcomed, relaxed, and supported they feel.

However, some of our volunteers' availability is becoming more limited, and we would really value additional helpers, especially from the congregation. Your presence - even once a month - helps build the vital bridge between this group and the wider church. If you've ever wondered whether this might be a place you could serve, please do speak to me.

New Monthly Youth Group – Coming This Autumn

We are exploring the launch of a new monthly youth group at St Nics this autumn, with a focus on Bible study, discussion, and creating a safe space for young people to grow in faith. Before shaping the programme, we will be inviting our young people to a planning session so they can help design what this group will look like. We will also need volunteers who feel called to support and encourage our teenagers.



We have so many families attending our children's activities. For many people it's their first or only experience of church. None of these activities can happen without a team of amazing volunteers in place.

At the moment our team is very small and so we have had to cancel our next Messy Church event on 13th June.

It would be great if we could build up a team of volunteers who can help at our children, youth and families activities so that we can continue to run these activities. If you feel you can help in any capacity and would like to get involved, maybe even just once a month, please get in touch with Nicky Geraghty for more information.

For more information on our youth, children and families work, please contact Nicky Geraghty, missionenabler@saintnics.com



When you help out at Café Play, you walk away filled with pure joy! Jana



13th June
9am-11am

Messy Church

MESSY PLANET PROTECTORS: RE-CREATION EDITION

At St Nicolas Church, Bury Street, GU2 4AW

Join us for breakfast, followed by crafts that use recycled materials, finishing with a time of intergenerational worship. All are welcome as we continue our planet protectors journey.

This is a free event, no booking required.

Part of our Open Church event.

www.guildfordurc.org.uk
www.saintnics.com

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PLANET PROTECTORS: WILDLIFE EDITION

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www.guildfordurc.org.uk
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Nicky Geraghty
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www.saintnics.com





Dina Pandis, Head of School writes: We've made the most of the warmer weather by taking our learning outside wherever possible, and the children have absolutely loved it.

Year 2 have been true superheroes as they headed out onto the playground to practise identifying and using verbs. Learning verbs through active play really brought their learning to life and there was lots of brilliant teamwork and enthusiasm on display.

Year 1 have also been enjoying outdoor learning, heading outside for a fractions hunt in maths. Searching for and identifying fractions in the playground was a fantastic way to deepen their understanding, and the children were highly motivated to show what they knew.

Reception have had a very exciting time in their outdoor area, enjoying a "train ride" experience as part of their Terrific Transport topic. The children's imaginations were in full swing, and it was wonderful to see such rich role play and language development taking place!

Our Green Team have been especially busy over the last two weeks. They have been preparing a new pond ready for some tadpoles, and there has been lots of excitement as children have spotted tadpoles during playtimes. There is lots of careful observation and great discussion taking place on the playground! Looking after our environment is something the children feel passionate about, and it's lovely to see this in action. Green Team's next project is a moon garden. They shared their plans in a Collective Worship and they are running a stall today to help raise money for this exciting idea.



We are very proud of our new **Year 2 School Council**, who have been democratically elected by their peers. They are currently working on gathering pupil voice around Collective Worship, sharing what children already love and suggesting ideas for what we could add or change. They are speaking to their classmates and will bring these views to our next School Council meeting. This is an example of how we teach children that their voices matter.



Coming up **Sunday 14 June** School Sunday at Church
 Wednesday 22 July Leavers' Service 11am

Fizz and Friends at St Nicolas' church is a monthly ladies' social group - a chance to unwind, chat, and enjoy time together. We'd love to see you at our next meet-ups on **26 June** and **17 July**. For details, or to join our WhatsApp group, please get in touch with **Nicky**.

Beer and Banter is a St Nicolas' monthly social group for men. Meetings alternate between church and The Britannia pub. Summer meetings are on **27 June** and **25 July** and **29 August**. See **Fr Neil**.



"AI, Please create a picture of Jesus flipping over tables in the temple."

Anglican memes and humour



Milford and Brook School Of Dance



Classes in Ballet, Musical Theatre and Tap

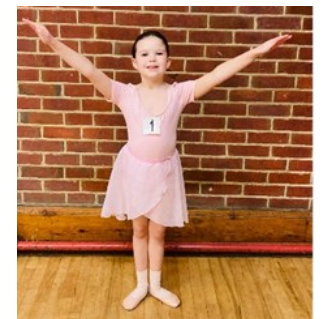


FOR ALL AGES



Babies, Grades, Adults and Silver Swans

Classes held in
Milford, Brook, Godalming,
Haslemere, Grayshott, Fernhurst
milfordandbrookschooldance.co.uk
beckybradburymail.com



Jenny Austin says: "Old as I am, I can still remember how much I loved my ballet classes when I was 4. Everyone should try it. So I'm sponsoring this ad for the MILFORD AND BROOK SCHOOL OF DANCE."

You don't have to be young to do it and you don't need any experience for Silver Swans. Royal Academy of Dance set up the idea for over 55s as a way to keep fit. We don't do points or leap in the air. There is no age limit. I joined their "Silver Swans" class about 6 months ago and I'd guess most of us are in our seventies. The music is lovely and, well, it is just wizard fun. Two classes for Silver Swans are held on Wednesday mornings at the Unitarian Church, Godalming. See you there? Men are also welcome."



Where Musicals



The **Italia Conti Summer Show**

to mark its 115th anniversary, will take place at the **New Victoria Theatre Woking between 9 -11 July.**

Tickets aren't on sale yet but they will be available from the ATG tickets website

Tasha Volak



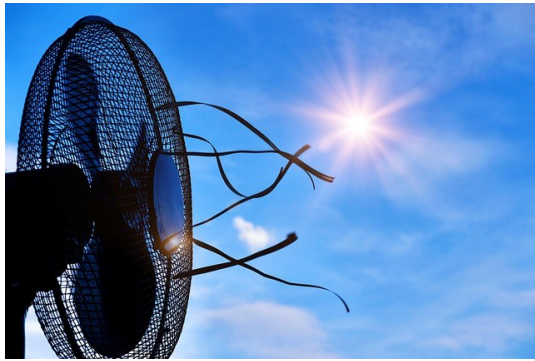


Image by Bruno, Pixabay

Summer shows up like that one friend who said they'd "just pop by for a bit" and then somehow ends up staying three days. One minute you're fine, wearing a normal jacket like a functioning human being, and the next you're lying to yourself about how "it's not that hot" while your little battery fan sounds like it's trying to make you airborne holding it.

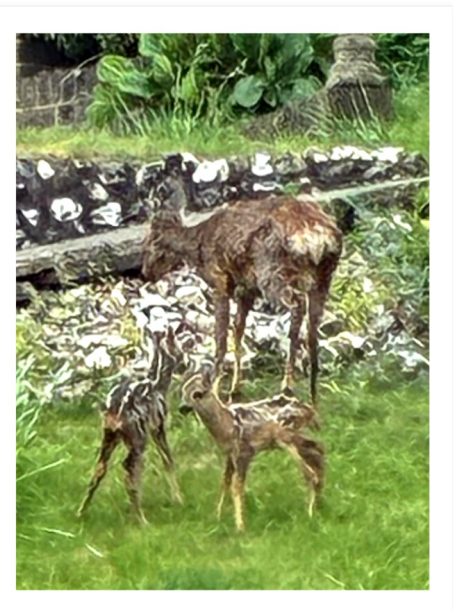
The sun stops being a nice idea and turns into a full-time nuisance. It's just there, constantly, judging you. You step outside for five minutes and come back inside slightly melted, wondering why you thought denim was a good choice. It's like the weather has developed a personal vendetta against your comfort. You were told that denim was not suitable for cold weather but nobody tells you it's not good in a heatwave either. So you ask yourself if it's worth keeping and occupying space in the wardrobe. And then there's ice cream, which should be a relaxing treat, but becomes a competitive sport. You're not enjoying it—you're managing it. There's always that moment where it starts to drip faster than you can deal with, and you have to decide what kind of person you are under pressure. A licker around the edges or a few hearty mouths full to get it consumed before it drips down your arm. And why do kids always want the pointy bit of the cone?



Photo by Nathan Langer, Unsplash

Then there's the insects. No one talks enough about the insects. The received wisdom is they are in serious decline. Not in my garden! Wasps in particular act like they own the place. They hover around your drink with the confidence of someone who absolutely pays rent, and you're left awkwardly backing away like you've done something wrong. And are you, when a wasp appears, a frantic waver, a cool single brush stroke it away, or a stoic, like me, who says irritatingly to others "if you wave at them they just get angrier with you" and then panics when one takes a liking to the sweat on your hand and settles there.

.Sleeping is a whole separate issue. Too hot for a duvet, too weird without one. You flip your pillow over for the "cool side" like you've just invented something revolutionary, even though you'll need to do it again in about 30 seconds.



Still, there's something about it. Evenings stretch out, people hang around longer than they mean to, and everything feels a bit looser, a bit less serious. It's chaotic, uncomfortable, slightly ridiculous—and somehow, it works. Sadly it's all over far too soon.

Philip Thomas



Image by Thành Nguyễn, Pixabay

Fawns born in our garden one Tuesday morning. Mother and twins doing well. **Grace Beckett**

Deflections in Early Summer

A stained-glass window with Gothic arch embellishes the eastern wall above the altar. Tripartite and pedestrian in its art the window depicts excerpts from the Bible: stylized, innocuous, symbolic, bland, classically chaste, formally balanced, pinioned with lead.

Sometimes as I stand, hymn book in hand,
my eyes searching haphazardly about the church,
(as if faith might be found behind a pillar),
sunlight pours headlong through the glass
undoing the craftsman's deft precision
and stippling the plain cream northern wall,
that flanks the chancel beside the organ pipes,
with muted rainbow patchwork, fluid fantasy;
wild medley of bubbling globules, mish-mash
of floating figments trellised in mottled magic;
leaving uninhibited delight on the bare plaster,
spilling immoderate joy on the bare surface of
my soul.

All symmetry is gone; the gospel is confounded.
Yet that mystic message of light-hearted hope,
spelled out by the science of refraction,
speaks to me more volubly than all the Scriptures can.

Betty Shepherd 1922—2016

Sent by **Sally Lowe**

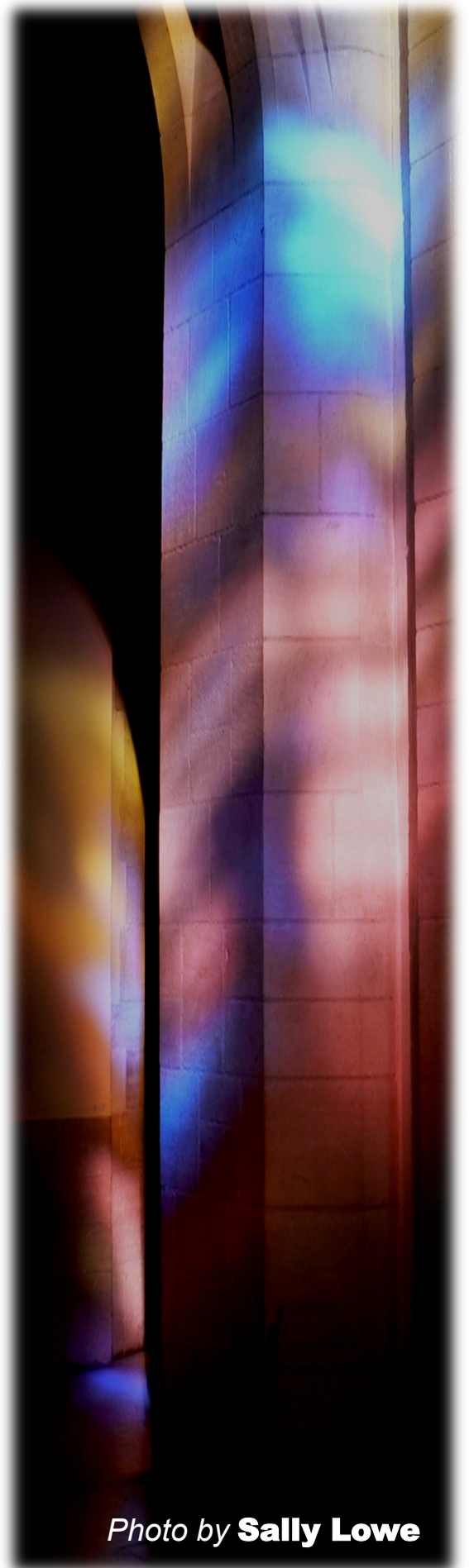


Photo by **Sally Lowe**

Open to men and women. We usually meet on the last Wednesday of every month, 2pm. We are trying out different Guildford venues, so **please look out for updates in Pews News** or see **Helen Trussler** or **Jean Taylor** for details.

Susanne Kelly says: “This group enables me to be with people who are prepared to listen and themselves be listened to, which is a huge relief in the turmoil of grief. It goes a long way to soothe the isolation you feel in that nightmare second year, when most people peel away and some you never hear from again. The group understands the pain of being alone for Sunday lunch with your child and again at Easter and Christmas. I have found kindness and support by talking about struggling to do quite simple jobs around the house. I really feel it is important to share about the existence of this group when otherwise there is so very little support available.”



Photo Grace Beckett

Grace Beckett Loss and Grief

One of the things about having a large part of my family based in Australia is that I miss going to funerals. I miss weddings and generally times of rite of passage such as significant birthdays.

I live in a fantasy that the aunts who were so kind and had me to stay because of my mother are still there. I do have one aunt who is well into her 90s but I don't hear from her. I used to feel that I could go over to where they all are and I would be remembered because they had known me as a little girl of 5. I have visited with my family since then and we were so lucky with the hospitality. Now I do not know the young cousins and am just another old cousin who is quite impossible to place.

Another time of loss is when my French family visit me in the UK. I take ages getting ready and then get completely consumed when they are here. When they move on to wherever their next port of call is, I miss them for at least a fortnight, it takes that long to get over their going. I think about that last week of their visit here and then the time the following week when they had gone, and it leaves a big hole.



Memories

It comes in small
whispers.
He would have been
sitting there,
The bins would have been
emptied anonymously,
The milk paid for on first
demand
The cat waits for
someone, perhaps him.

Grace Beckett



I am still mourning the loss of my elder son who refuses to have any contact with us. It is as if he is punishing us. He is still alive but my loss is very real, like a grief for a bereavement. It is a bit like a divorce. That person who has left the relationship is alive and living with someone else or possibly just does not want to relate to the previous partner any more for whatever reason.

When a child grows up, often the mother mourns the loss of the baby that once was. I think it is the loss of a chance to love the person who has bereaved you of their presence and I suppose we could go on loving even though there is nothing in return but a memory. I felt that one solution to grief was just to allow myself to forget and that this would help me survive in the moment. However, memory plays its tricks. Cold rainy days bring on low moods which are filled with when so and so was here, “don't you remember?”

Eckhart Tolle teaches the *Power of Now*, that living in the moment is how to avoid pain of the past and the uncertainty of the future. To live in the present and in the Presence is how to survive.



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Tuesday Group members met again after our Easter break, and together planned a varied programme of activities and talks. We collaborated on the writing of our own Tuesday Group prayer, with which we now begin our meetings.

The making of simple pop-up greeting cards showed our artistic talents. With a little cutting and sticking, our achievements were varied and attractive. Carpet bowls without the carpet, played in two teams, resulted as always in hilarity and surprises! Well done to the Blue team!

There is always plenty of time for friendship and conversation, helped of course by a good supply of coffee, tea and chocolate biscuits.

You are most welcome to join us from **9:45am for 10am on Tuesdays in term-time, in the Parish Centre. Hilary Fletcher**



Tuesday Group

TUESDAY GROUP PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
 We thank you for bringing us in safety
 to this morning ~

We thank you for our friendship, and for
 the opportunity to chat and share activities.

We ask that you will bless all the members
 of Tuesday Group, and we pray especially for
 those who are unable to be with us today
 because of their infirmity, or their other duties.

Graciously grant us peace ~

Guide us through the coming week,
 that in all things we may act with your
 wisdom, your joy and your love,

Lord, in your mercy,
 Hear our prayer ~

AMEN.



Daniel Lucas, who has reliably attended to St Nicolas' Parish Centre plumbing in the past, has formed **Prime Boilers Ltd** and now offers all the following services:

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Coming up on Saturdays

10 am – 12.30 pm, Coffee from 9.30 am

20 June

Relationships: The good, the bad and the ugly—aiming for the good!

led by Libby Williams

Have you ever wondered why you relate to others the way you do?

Come to this workshop to gain insights into your style of relating.

The sessions are free of charge but voluntary donations are invited for the vital work of various charities. **Please reserve a place by 12 June** by contacting Sally Pollard at pollard3@hotmail.co.uk, tel: 01483 428646

Life Issues Series

At Godalming Baptist church

Queen Street, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1BA



Ashstead Lane,
Godalming,
Surrey, GU7 1ST
01483 675575

Days of Reflection

Join us for a Day of Reflection, away from the noise and haste of everyday life and take time to be with God. These days are led by a member of the Franciscan Centre Team. There is input, prayer, sharing, quiet time for reflection and time to be in our beautiful grounds. The day is £25 per person which includes a delicious two-course lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

Telephone to book, or email David Beresford on davidberesford@franciscancentre.org.uk

Days of Reflection 2026

	Sat	Tues	Theme
Jun	13	23	"Desire nothing else"
Jul	4	28	Heartfelt Prayer
Aug	8	25	Inner peace
Sep	12	22	Dignity
Oct	10	27	Footsteps of Francis
Nov	14	24	Peace-making
Dec	12	15	"Gaze upon love"

Saint Columba's House

Maybury Hill, Woking,
Surrey, GU22 8AB
01483 766498

<https://www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk/your-retreat/our-events/>

£35

SAT 11 **A Year with Christian Mystics - Thomas Merton**
JULY 11, 2026 @ 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

£35

SAT 8 **A Year with Christian Mystics - Meister Eckhart**
AUGUST 8, 2026 @ 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Here is a small selection of offerings at St Columba's, please see the website for much more.

The Surrey Hills choirs present their annual summer concert

The Surrey Hills
choirs present their
annual summer
concert on Sunday 28
June, 7pm at St
Nicolas Church,
Guildford.



This year features Vivaldi's Gloria with string quartet, oboe and trumpet, performed by both the Surrey Hills Singers and Chamber Choir to reflect its original female-led and mixed-voice contrasts.

The programme also includes Karl Jenkins' Adiemus and Benedictus, plus folk songs, musical theatre pieces and works by Palestrina, Will Todd, Greg Gilpin and Bob Dylan. With previous concerts selling out, early booking is advised.

Tickets available from 8 May at
[https://
www.singsurreyhills.com/](https://www.singsurreyhills.com/)
£20 adults, £5 under-16s.



Join us for an evening of chamber music without boundaries

7pm, Sunday 28th June

St. Nicolas' Church, Bury St., Guildford. GU2 4AW

Tickets: Adults £20; Under 16s £5
available from www.singsurreyhills.com



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St Nicolas' refill station

- * Leave a container with your name & note about the required refill outside the Parish Office
- * Pick up and pay next time you are at church

Washing up liquid - 25p per 100ml

Liquid hand wash - 40p per 100ml



St. Nicolas Parish Church,
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Jana at jana.phillips@saintnics.com,
Jon at the Parish office, or give to us at
church.



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AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

NOT JUST SUNDAYS

Mondays **Zero Waste** @ 10:30am, weekly
Free food for the community

Tuesdays **Meditation** @ 8am, monthly
Tuesday Group @ 9:45, weekly
Social Group for the retired

Toastie Tuesdays @ 5pm,
Monthly for school yrs 3-6

Curry & Questions @7:30 termly

Wednesdays **Café Play** @ 10am, weekly
Pre-School Toddler Group

Fridays **Coffee Shop** @ 10:30am, weekly
Monthly Lunch & Bible Study
@ 11:30am

Fizz & Friends @ 8pm,
Women's Group, monthly

Saturdays **Messy Church** @4pm, Monthly
Beer & Banter Men's group,
Monthly