

TOGETHER

The FREE magazine from the Diocese of Rochester | Issue 17 | May - July 2023

GROW | ENRICH | RESOURCE

COVER STORY: COMMUNITY LARDERS TACKLING FOOD WASTE PAGE 8



CATHEDRAL'S
ANCIENT
TABLE

ANY GOOD
IN CANCEL
CULTURE?

HELP OUT -
VOLUNTEER





Light up the world
in prayer

18th - 28th May 2023

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The Coronation has been an historic moment in which we have witnessed our new monarch's dedication of himself in service to the nation. Inspired by this, you'll find the theme of 'service' as a running thread throughout this edition of Together.

In **Focus On**, we learn about the two members of the Diocese chosen for a special honour in recognition of their long Christian service (pg 4), we also shed light on the church projects serving their communities by tackling food waste and food poverty through community fridges (pg 8).

There's a new archdeacon in town ready to serve the people and parishes of Bromley and Bexley – we catch up with her in our **One to One** interview (pg 24). We also meet Elizabeth, the young person with a passion for caring for God's creation which is driven by her **Everyday Faith** (pg 26)

Inspired? Head to our centrespread for some ideas about how you can explore volunteering in your own area.

In Headspace you'll find our usual mix of great resources and thought-provoking insight (**Big Issue** pg 18)

Wishing you peace and joy this Easter season.

Jennifer Ross
Communications Manager

Editor: Jennifer Ross
jennifer.ross@rochester.anglican.org

In-house design:
Katerina Gerhardt

Design: CPO

Print: Yeomans

FIND US:

@CofERochester

@SeeofRochester

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Get in touch :
communications@rochester.anglican.org



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MAUNDY MONEY HONOUR FROM THE KING

Many congratulations to Derek Shilling and the Rev Jacqueline Littlewood who received Maundy Money from the King at a service in York Minster in April.

Both of the recipients were nominated for showing longevity of service and dedication to their Christian calling in the Diocese.

Derek Shilling has served at both diocesan and parish level for many years and has chaired the Rochester Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) since 2004.

The Rev Jacqueline Littlewood has ministered in the Diocese of Rochester since 1980, and for the last 36

of those within the East Gravesend Group of Churches.

During the Service, the King presented each recipient with a set of specially minted silver Maundy coins equivalent in value to the age of the Monarch and two commemorative coins, symbolising the Sovereign's historic gift of food and clothing.

Reflecting on the honour Jacqueline said, *"The Royal Maundy is a reminder of the humble service that we find at the heart of our faith in Christ's command to love and serve. A vocation we all share as followers of Christ – King or commoner, clergy or lay."*



EARTH HOUR MARKED

Members of the community enjoyed a range of creative and reflective events at the Rural North West Kent group of churches as part of Earth Hour. As well as a 'lights-off' service, participants spent time enjoying creation by painting watercolour landscapes, a nature walk, and eco-inspired prayer stations.



DON'T BIN IT, FIX IT

St Francis, Petts Wood, is doing its bit to help the environment one repair at a time thanks to their new Repair Cafe. For a donation, visitors can bring all types of goods to be mended, from electrical items, furniture, clocks, toys, and clothing, all while enjoying a coffee and cake at the same time.



TUDELEY'S DONATIONS GO CONTACTLESS

With people increasingly using card instead of cash, the team at All Saints, Tudeley - home to the stunning Chagall windows - are delighted with their new Payaz machine, which enables giving through contactless payment technology. To secure it, an elegant stand was crafted locally and sustainably out of recycled oak.



CHURCHYARD MAPPING

A full survey of the churchyard was undertaken at St Margaret's Church Rainham, mapping every grave as part of the 'Putting Rainham First' project. This work will also form part of a national project of the Church of England which will eventually survey every churchyard in England.



CELEBRATING THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FUND

A fund set up in the Diocese five years ago is celebrating after having supported one hundred and twenty-one children and young people projects.

From band equipment and mental health projects to bike repair initiatives and art therapy, the Children and Young People Fund was established to offer small to medium seed corn grants to support children and young people focused ideas across the Diocese.

It was made possible through a generous partnership with the Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust, with match funding from the Diocese.

Having now reached the end of its planned five-year giving-span, a survey of project recipients shows that 72 per cent of the projects are now self-sustaining.

Cheryl Trice, Children and Young People Team Lead said, "It is clear that the funding has enabled parishes to explore new ways of outreach to children and families and new models of children's worship. How good is God!"

Exciting plans are now underway to use any underspend to offer Mental Health First Aid Training to develop a network of mental health advocates and to support young people with their wellbeing.

DIOCESE COMMITS TO NO DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN FOSSIL FUELS

The Diocese has committed to having no direct investments in fossil fuels across its entire investment portfolio, now or in the future.

Matthew Girt, Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese of Rochester said: "Where we invest our money is very important and this decision is the right thing to do as we respond to the climate crisis together."

The announcement follows a decision by the Bishop's Council about the management of the Diocese's

investments. It also agreed to reduce indirect exposures to fossil fuels to levels of below 0.1% by the end of 2023 across the entire portfolio.

The Bishop's Council confirmed that it would continue its investment in 'positive impact' renewable energy assets, such as solar / wind farms, and to providing capital to early-stage technology companies that support a sustainable transition.

NEW ARCHDEACON WELCOMED

The Ven Allie Kerr was welcomed to the Diocese as the new Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley in a joyful service at St John's Church, Welling in April. Led by the Bishop of Rochester, the service was attended by family and friends, members of the archdeaconry, local civic dignitaries as well as

diocesan staff. During the service, Allie made special oaths and was anointed with oil to mark the official start to her ministry as Archdeacon in the Diocese.

Find out more about Allie in our One to One interview on page 24.





REBECCA DAY, MANAGER OF PENGE FOOD BANK LIVING WELL WITH REV DAVID JONES

IN THE CHILL OF THE FRIDGE IS THE WARMEST OF WELCOMES

Community fridges and larders are appearing in locations across the Diocese as churches seek to tackle food, waste as well as support those facing hardship.

Figures show that 9.5 million tonnes of food go to waste in the UK each year.

Put that alongside another number, that 8.4 million people live with food poverty, and you get an ugly fact; that there is over one tonne of spare food each year for every person going hungry in the UK.

But there are ways of connecting these statistics and the community fridge movement is one of them.

Although the idea of providing food for those who might need it is familiar to many churches, add to that growing concerns about waste and sustainability, and it is understandable why several new larders have been opened by churches in the Diocese since the beginning of this year alone.

Increasingly they are being run in partnership with other churches, businesses, and community groups - just like the new Crayford Community Fridge.

The brainchild of a group called Churches Together in Crayford, its aim is to tackle both food waste and food poverty. Based within the grounds of Crayford Baptist Church it is run by volunteers from across the churches.

"It is fabulous to see us all come together to provide a service like this," says Stuart Spence from St Paulinus Church, a Church of England church in Crayford that is part of the group.

Open every Wednesday between 1pm and 3pm, it is stocked with both fresh and frozen food, as well as other items such as nappies and pet food, which are free to take.

"The principle behind the community fridge is very much to be a place where people in the community, as well as the businesses, can bring food and share food, to avoid food having to go to waste," explains Stuart. "Anybody is welcome to come and help themselves to food from the fridge and we hope that it will be a welcome support for anyone struggling with the rising cost of living too."

The project has received financial support from the Diocese of Rochester, Cory Environmental, The Co-Op, and Bexley Borough Council.

It's a similar story over at St John's Church, Beckenham which, in partnership with the Green Bird Cafe, opened The Larder store cupboard in the spring.

The Rev David Jones, says the idea came about after discussion with the local foodbank:





BISHOP SIMON OFFICIALLY OPENS THE COMMUNITY FRIDGE



“After liaising with our local food bank, Living Well, we identified a need for a ‘no questions asked’ service that provided non-perishable essentials for those unable to access the foodbank during its opening hours, whether it be down to travel difficulties, embarrassment, or other issue.”

“Every person comes with a story unique to them, with gifts, skills, families and friendships that make them who they are.”

He continues: “The response so far has indicated that the need is as we thought and the shelves are regularly being used and restocked with generous donations.”

For Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, the Bishop of Tonbridge, initiatives like these are an important reminder of the humanity of each person they support:

“Even when we show care for those in need, there is a risk we look through them. They become just another face in the sea of faces we encounter in our towns and cities. But they are not.

“Every person comes with a story unique to them, with gifts, skills, families, and friendships that make them who they are. And they are loved by God with an everlasting love. That’s why Christian charity can never just be an industry. It’s the building of relationships; the creation of a loving community.”

He added: “I thank God for these initiatives. I thank God for those who will use them. I thank God for those who provide them. In the chill of the fridge is the warmest of welcomes.”



STUART SPENCE FROM ST PAULINUS CHURCH, CRAYFORD



EASTER SUNDAY CONFIRMATION AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Holy Week and the joy of Easter were celebrated across the Diocese. As Christians, we now look expectantly to Ascension Day (18 May), when we remember Jesus' return to Heaven, and then the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples at Pentecost (28 May). The days in between are often a special time of dedicated prayer. Discover materials to support your prayer life on page 20.



EASTER BANNER PREPARATIONS AT ST PETER AND ST PAUL, UPPER STOKE



EASTER AT EAST DARTFORD BENEFICE



PALM SUNDAY AT ST JOHN, SIDCUP



DAWN SERVICE AT ST GILES THE ABBOT, FARNBOROUGH



PALM SUNDAY AT KING CHARLES THE MARTYR, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

MAKE A DIFFERENCE – CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering can make a real difference in your own life and the lives of those around you. As part of the King's Coronation, thousands of organisations across the country came together as part of The Big Help Out, to give people the chance to explore how they could help in their own community.

If you are interested in volunteering but are not sure where to start, here are three steps to help you find the role right for you.

1. Think about what interests or excites you. This could be something you enjoyed doing before, or something completely new.
2. Think about what time or skills you can give. With so many opportunities to choose from, it's a great idea to narrow down the choices by deciding what you're willing to give.
3. Get researching!
 - find your local volunteer centre
 - search the internet
 - ask friends what they do
 - check out a recognised online opportunity finder such as www.charityjobs/volunteer-jobs

Based on guidance from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).
Visit www.ncvo.org.uk/get-involved



WANT TO HELP AT A CHURCH?

➔ Being part of a church community isn't a prerequisite to volunteering in a church. From helping tidy the churchyard, assisting at a community outreach, to bell ringing – you could make a difference by helping the church to serve its local community.

➔ Look out for requests on noticeboards, in church newsletters, or on a church's social media, where volunteering opportunities are most likely to be posted, along with details of any pre-starter requirements or commitments.

➔ Whether you are already engaged in a church community or not, talk to someone in the church leadership about the fact you might like to be more involved.

➔ They can guide you as to what opportunities might be available and how we recruit, support, train, and supervise our volunteers.

➔ For those looking to volunteer with any of our work involving children, or adults who may be at risk of harm, there are additional processes that we follow to ensure that our church buildings and activities are safe spaces for all.

If nothing is available right now, please don't be disappointed. You can still help by praying for the work of your local church and community organisations. Use the prayer on our back cover.

Artwork is from www.vecteezy.com



TABLE BEING DELIVERED TO ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

THE ANCIENT TABLE BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

A spectacular 13.2m long table made from the wood of a 5,000-year-old fossilised black oak tree has arrived at Rochester Cathedral.

Called the Fenland Black Oak Table, it will be resident in the Cathedral for the next year.

The hope is to use it to bring people together.

“It is a real privilege to be hosting the Fenland Black Oak Table. A wonder of creation and the work of some very skilled hands,” says the Dean of Rochester, the Very Rev Dr Philip Hesketh.

“The heavenly vision of many nations and peoples gathered around a common table, eating, and drinking in the presence of God is one which at the Cathedral we will aspire to replicate over the coming year as we invite others to share in this remarkable

story with genuine thanksgiving.”

Crafted out of a giant black oak tree that was discovered in a field at Wissington Fen in East Anglia in 2012 – the year of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee - black oak is the nation’s rarest and most precious hardwood.

A 13.2m long section of this immense tree had been preserved deep in the peat for 5,000 years, with the tree believed to have been 55 metres tall.

It was decided that this incredible discovery needed to be preserved for future generations.

Over ten years a team of privately-funded specialist craftspeople created a stunning sculptured table known as the Jubilee Oak Table.

Unveiled in 2022, the year of HM the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, at Ely Cathedral, Rochester Cathedral is now only the second place it has been on public display.

“It does sort of concentrate the mind really when you think this predates Christianity by 3,000 years.” says Hamish Low, cabinet-maker and Jubilee Table Project Lead, “It sort of puts your problems into perspective.

He adds: “Because Rochester Cathedral is so inclusive, we want it to be used for everything. Children’s activities on it one day, summits the next, you know important meetings. We just hope people use it.”

And so it is, having already been used to host events to bring people together, including an interfaith Iftar meal to break the fast during the Muslim feast of Ramadan, and as part of the ‘Big Lunch’ over the Coronation weekend.

It’s also already been having some unexpected consequences, as Dean Philip explains, “We’re finding as people

gather round the table to look at it, they are having conversations and sharing stories. It is very moving.”

The table, alongside panels detailing the history of the black oak and the project, is available to view in the Nave during general opening hours and will remain on display at the Cathedral until March 2024.



FENLAND BLACK OAK TABLE

WHAT'S GOOD - AND BAD - ABOUT CANCEL CULTURE?

Looking to an ancient story of compassion Erin Crider seeks inspiration for an ethical response to today's cancel culture.



You cannot ignore cancel culture today. In her 2022 BBC Reith Lecture, the writer Chiamanda Ngozi Adichie called it “social censure”. Even beyond universities and other public forums, many of us worry about the effects of cancel culture in everyday social settings.

Saying the wrong thing, or trying to respond well when someone else does, can quickly lead to awkward family gatherings, strained meetings, and broken friendships, or awaken the ever-present social media trolls.

In a post-pandemic moment, when people are already struggling to re-establish healthy human interactions, cancel culture can make social engagement seem even more challenging.

How can we navigate this moment well? Behind the fraught discussions and growing angst around cancel culture, we can perhaps detect something well worth preserving: compassion. Some of the most heated

controversies today involve language concerning people who have been historically disadvantaged.

Genuine compassion motivates many who want society to speak more kindly, with more understanding, in order to avoid perpetuating harm to people who have already suffered. People who have been hurt deserve to be acknowledged, and that means taking their pain seriously. This compassion is an important and noble instinct. Many faith traditions call us to honour the vulnerable and pursue justice.

At the same time, resistance to cancel culture also includes an element of compassion. Within the voices expressing concern about cancel culture can often be heard a humble awareness that we all are prone to say the wrong thing at times.

We cannot hope to learn or grow without honest risk and mutual, human grace. A brief period of silence to let emotions cool can be helpful; ending a relationship permanently seems less helpful. It might

seem easier to say nothing than to risk offence, but silence out of fear of ending a relationship itself ends the relationship.

Seeking to continue a difficult but important conversation can also be an important and noble instinct. Many faith traditions also encourage humble self-assessment and generous engagement with others. As the Bible records Jesus saying, “Let the one among you who is without sin cast the first stone.” None of us is wholly above reproach, and we all need a bit of compassionate grace.

So how do we balance these conflicting calls of justice and grace? This conflict might seem peculiarly modern, but in the story we re-tell every Christmas, we see a young man named Joseph wondering how to balance justice with gracious concern for someone who had deeply disappointed him.

Joseph is engaged to Mary, but she has been found to be pregnant. Joseph is sure the baby isn't his. In their culture, a woman who was pregnant outside of marriage brought shame to her fiancé, her family, and the whole community. Matthew's gospel tells us that Joseph was “a righteous man,” which means that he appreciated the demands of justice. Ignoring her situation meant ignoring the pain they all felt, papering over a grave offence which they wanted no part of. At the same time, though, the text also tells us that Joseph was “unwilling to put her to shame.”

Like many people today, Joseph wanted to leave Mary some way to move forward with her life, but their culture did not provide people much opportunity to learn from tragic mistakes. Sometimes, it can feel as if ours doesn't, either. If you're familiar with the story, you already know how it ends, but it's important not to skip too quickly past Joseph's dilemma. It feels strangely modern, Joseph's desire for justice coupled with his equally strong desire not to see someone condemned because of a single mistake.

Thankfully, the story also describes a way forward from Joseph's dilemma: the baby in Mary's womb, Jesus. In Jesus, we see the depth of God's compassion for all who suffer. Jesus never ignored the painful consequences evil can create. Indeed, he allowed himself to experience the absolute worst of humanity. As an adult, Jesus was thrown out of his

home village and religious community. According to the gospels, he endured one of the most unjust trials ever recorded. Jesus was tortured, beaten, and sentenced to a cruel death. When we suffer injustice, we are not experiencing something alien to Jesus, and therefore, alien to God.

But there is another side to Jesus' suffering that is equally important: Jesus also demonstrates profound compassion for people have made terrible mistakes.

Jesus never mis-stepped or said a single cruel word, but he allowed himself to experience the full shame and isolation of being cast out of society. Crucifixion was the ultimate censure, being publicly put to death outside of the walls of the city. Yet even in this moment, Jesus demonstrated compassion for people who had harmed him. While on the cross, he forgave those who put him there. Jesus offered forgiveness to the man dying on the next cross to his own who, by his own admission, deserved his fate. In contrast to aspects of cancel culture, Jesus' actions at that moment of extreme injustice tell us that human redemption is always possible. Jesus created a compassionate way forward from guilt and shame. Whatever our situation, we can find life-giving grace and healing in Christ.

Compassion isn't easy. It cost Jesus dearly, and at times it will cost us, too.

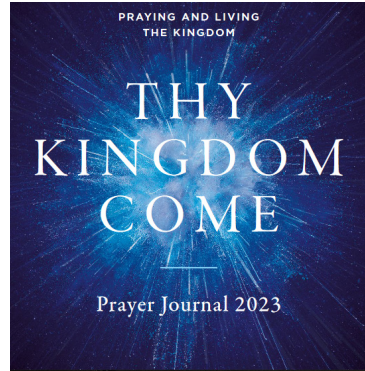
Courageous compassion creates much needed opportunities to heal, learn, and grow. When we suffer and when we err, cruelty and failure do not get the last word. As it says in the last few pages of the Bible, Jesus is making all things new.

Cancel culture ends conversations and damages relationships, but a better balance between the righteous demands of justice and the need for redemptive grace remains possible.

Erin Crider, is Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminar. This article was first published in Seen & Unseen (www.seenandunseen.com), a new magazine web site helping readers discover a world that is greater, more full of meaning and sense than they ever imagined. It is an initiative of the Church of England's Centre for Cultural Witness

RESOURCES – GET STARTED WITH PRAYER

Looking to reignite your prayer life or just get started? Then check out the resources below.



PRAYER JOURNAL – THY KINGDOM COME

Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

Their Prayer Journal offers a series of themed reflections over the 11 days, as well as space to add your own thoughts and responses.

Visit www.thykingdomcome.global/new-2023



TIME TO PRAY

Time to Pray is an official app from the Church of England and presents everything you need for Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer.

It allows you to follow a simple pattern of daily prayer that varies according to the season and day of the week, together with guidance on sustaining a pattern of regular prayer. Free to download.

Visit www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray



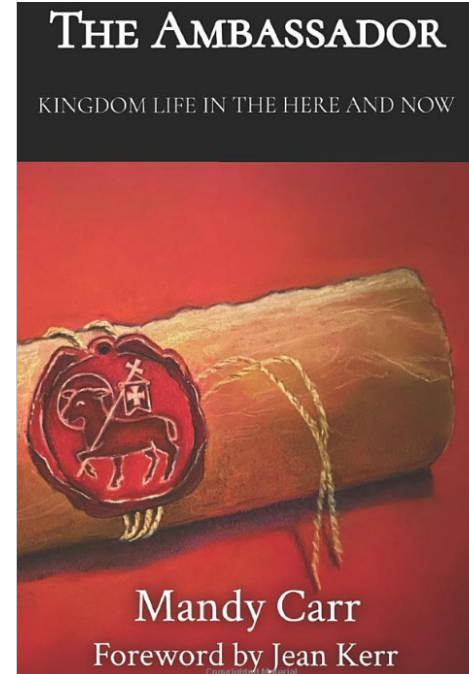
THE PRAYER PACK

Every person has their own unique way of praying; there are no rights and wrongs.

But to those who are still searching for a way that suits them, or in those moments when inspiration has run dry and God's voice and presence seem to have faded, the Diocesan prayer pack offers some guidance; a gentle nudge in the right direction.

Visit www.rochester.anglican.org and search Prayer Pack

The time following Easter in the church calendar is one of expectation as, with the disciples, we wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit and witness its powerful impact on the followers of Jesus. These two books from local authors pick up this theme of how we live out the kingdom in our own lives today.



THE AMBASSADOR

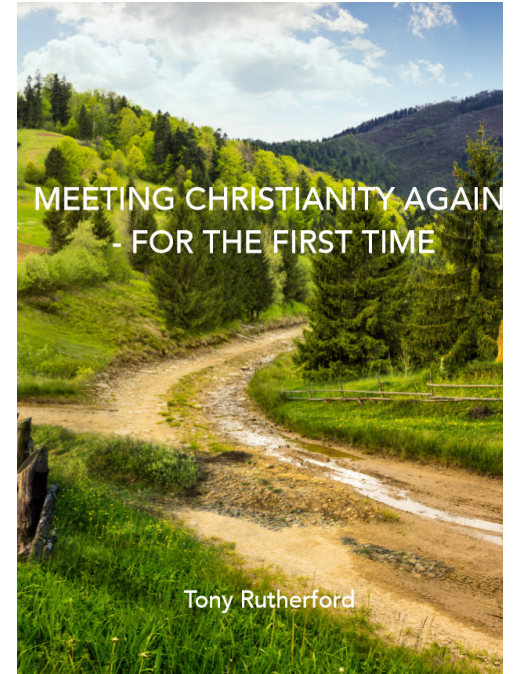
by Mandy Carr

We are called 'Ambassadors for Christ' but what does that mean in our everyday life? What does it look like to live a kingdom life in the here and now?

These are some of the questions Mandy Carr, vicar of St George's, Weald Sevenoaks, invites the reader to consider in 'The Ambassador'. This is not meant to be an exhaustive study but a story of one person's journey.

The reader is invited to go on their own journey to seek more of the kingdom and to let that experience transform how they live now.

Available on Amazon.



MEETING CHRISTIANITY AGAIN - FOR THE FIRST TIME

by Tony Rutherford

In this book, Tony, a retired Anglican priest at St Paul's, Rusthall, considers six themes on faith, and offers insights as to how they may be understood in the 21st Century by those whose 'thinking climate' is vastly different from that of Christianity's formative centuries.

The Rev Anne Payne, who has used the book for the Home Group at All Saints Langton Green says, "Each member really engaged with the material. We found that the questions sparked off many interesting and challenging conversations."

Copies available from the author on: tony.rutherford37@icloud.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



KINGS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
at St Bart's Church, Olford
13 MAY, 7.00pm

The King's Chamber Orchestra is a professional Christian chamber orchestra, formed in 1985 by Gerard Le Feuvre. Hear music ranging from Vivaldi to Boccherini to The Sound of Music!

Tickets at £15/10 from eventsstbarts@gmail.com or tel. 07928 121930.



SHAPED WITH LOVE IN THE POTTERS HANDS
at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling
15 JUNE, 10am to 3.30pm

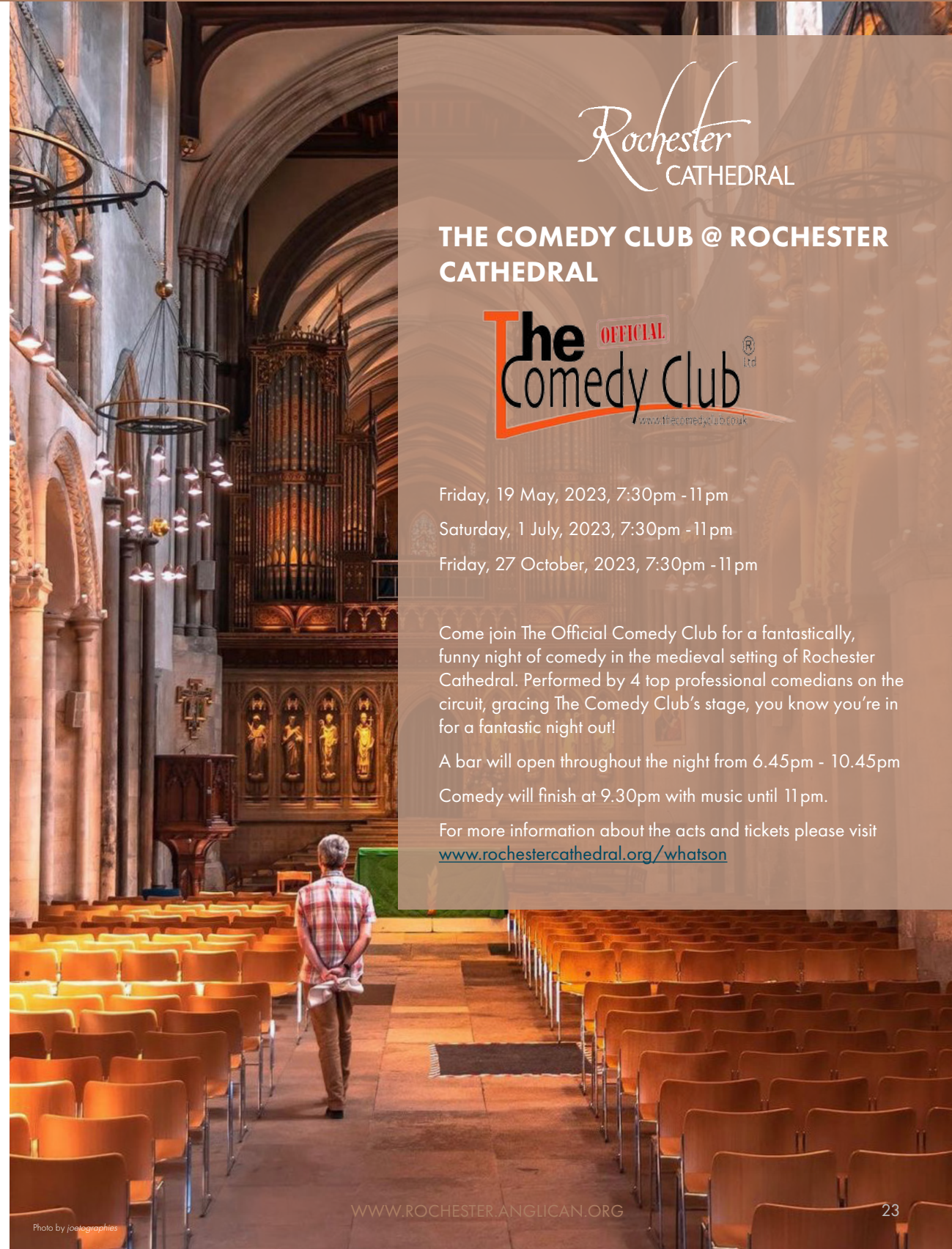
A clay-based encounter day that includes Bible reflections, demonstration, opportunities for hands-on activity and times for silent reflection, during which we will be opened to experience ourselves being held, healed, formed, and re-formed in the loving hands of God. Led by Gordon Oliver. Cost £25 plus £5 contribution for materials. To book bookings@stbenedicts.org



BIG CHURCH FESTIVAL
at Weston Estate, West Sussex
27 & 28 MAY 2023

Join with over 35,000 people from across the UK and beyond to worship together in the jaw-dropping surroundings of the Wiston Estate, in the company of some of the best Christian artists in the world.

Each year, rippling flags and worship anthems ring out from the mainstage as families flock to the field of fun, and cream teas are served within earshot of choirs surrounded by the beautiful gardens of Wiston House. This is the church; all tribes and all ages, campsites becoming communities, memories in the making, the happiest festival-goers on the planet. Visit www.bigchurchfestival.com



Rochester
CATHEDRAL

THE COMEDY CLUB @ ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL



Friday, 19 May, 2023, 7:30pm - 11pm
Saturday, 1 July, 2023, 7:30pm - 11pm
Friday, 27 October, 2023, 7:30pm - 11pm

Come join The Official Comedy Club for a fantastically, funny night of comedy in the medieval setting of Rochester Cathedral. Performed by 4 top professional comedians on the circuit, gracing The Comedy Club's stage, you know you're in for a fantastic night out!

A bar will open throughout the night from 6.45pm - 10.45pm
Comedy will finish at 9.30pm with music until 11pm.

For more information about the acts and tickets please visit www.rochestercathedral.org/whatson



THE NEW ARCHDEACON IN TOWN

Allie Kerr is the newly appointed Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley. She joins us from the Diocese of Portsmouth and was officially welcomed into the Rochester diocesan family at a service in St John, Welling in April. We interrupted her unpacking to find out a little bit more about her.

Welcome Allie! How does it feel to finally be here in the Diocese of Rochester?

Exciting. I first felt called to the role of Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley last summer and so it's been almost a year of exploring and waiting to get started.

For someone who isn't really sure, how would you explain the role of an Archdeacon?

There are lots of functions including ensuring the fabric of our churches is kept in good order, being a part of the Bishop's Leadership Team, swearing in churchwardens, supporting parishes through a vacancy, exploring the most effective models for mission and ministry across the Boroughs, dealing with concerns, and being part of various committees. For me the most important part of the role is the care and support of our ministers and churchwardens, praying with and for you and supporting in seeking God's will for your context and the wider Diocese.

You're particularly charged with supporting the churches in the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley. What are you most looking forward to about that?

I'm looking forward to meeting the people of Bromley and Bexley and seeing how God is at work in the communities. There is real diversity across the Boroughs which I think will produce a rich variety of mission and ministry.

When did you first feel a sense you were being called to ordained ministry?

I first came to faith at 17 and from day one I felt a call to ministry, to share the amazing love I'd experienced from God with others. At the time I was worshipping in an independent free church and women's leadership wasn't an option so I waited on God, trusting he'd make it clear in time.

Did you have another career before you entered the Church?

I ran an off-licence and convenience store, I hated the unsociable hours but loved the relationships I built with regular customers. Prior to ordination I spent 3 years as PA to a vicar, which provided really helpful insights into ministry.

We hear you enjoy playing board games. Do you have a favourite?

It depends on who I'm playing with but I tend to go for co-operative games where we work together to achieve a shared goal. My current favourite is called Descent, where we battle monsters and (if we win) good defeats evil.

What are you listening to at the moment?

I'm currently alternating between two Spotify playlists. The first is worship music which I'll almost always have on in the car or when I'm working, the other is entitled PLAY LOUD and is a mix of alternative rock including 30 Seconds to Mars and Imagine Dragons. However, I'm also a huge fan of Christmas so I'll have Christmas music on repeat from October until January.

Are you a tea or coffee person?

I love coffee but I have loads of food allergies, including caffeine, so my default is decaf tea with oat milk.

Is there anything about you that people might find surprising?

I am a huge fan of tattoos, I currently have three. The one on my left forearm, is of a pair of hands holding a starfish and some falling shells which reminds me that, although there are lots of good things I could do, I have to focus on the things that God is specifically calling me to. As I begin this new role I'm wondering what tattoo might express this next stage of my journey.

What's your idea of a perfect day?

I'm an early morning person so it would start by being woken early by my excited seven-year-old grandson Joseph; I love exploring new places so perhaps a visit to an unknown city, followed by an afternoon at a theme park. We would end the day with a nice meal in a pub with a roaring fire, a nice glass of something then home for board games with good friends.



PROTECTING GOD'S EARTH

Elizabeth Trice is a Wildlife and Conservation postgraduate from Wolverhampton University. She's also an active member of her church in Chatham in Kent. Now her studies are over, she's using her passion for the environment, alongside her faith, to help her church develop a community-based conservation project.

I have been a member of my church since I was a child and it was there, in a Sunday school lesson when I was five, that I decided I wanted to save the planet. We were looking at the passages in Genesis when God created the world. And as we were being taught one clear part of the story stood out to me. That Adam and Eve were created to protect God's creation. So, I said to myself, I'm going to help protect and save God's earth.

Because of this, my faith has been at the heart of what I've done ever since. For many years I thought of being a zoo keeper, until I went to college where I learnt about conservation. Instead of looking after a small number of God's creation, I could help protect God's creation on a bigger scale, starting on the land and soil itself.

I have always wanted to do something more. I have found comfort in prayer over the last few years through my studies, the pandemic and other personal issues. But really it was almost as if I was guided towards it, through ideas or suggestions, from people and from inside, pushing me forward.

Now, I'm seeking to support my church and the wider community, to make a positive impact on the local environment.

All of this came about after I returned to Kent during the pandemic, in my second year of university, and seeing the lack of wildlife within my surroundings and in my community.

I encouraged my church to start surveying our green spaces as part of an annual UK Churches Count on Nature initiative. Now, our aim is to conserve our green spaces and rewild them to boost local biodiversity and encourage our church's young people, and the wider community, to feel like they can make a difference.

I do see this work as a calling, as well as most things I do. It is my mindset that every day should be lived in service of God and therefore should be used to praise and thank God as much as possible - especially through voicing young people's views. Having been a member of Rochester Diocese Youth Council, it felt uplifting to know that someone was listening. The young people in my church fuel my inspiration to do this project.

When I spoke to them about what they would like to do to support the environmental project and why, I was so impressed. They want to pick up the litter, to sow seeds, and make bird boxes. They are so excited and that's because it is something they believe in and want to help do.

I am thankful to so many - for my vicar for all her encouragement, my mum and dad for their inspiration in following my dreams, and for our Lord God for walking with me every step and giving me the strength to keep going.

Explore how God may be calling you. Visit www.rochester.anglican.org and search for 'God's plan for you'.



Diocese of *Rochester*
called together

A PRAYER FOR SERVICE

We give thanks for all the amazing volunteers who help out in churches across the Diocese. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do
for the least of our
brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will
to be the servant of others as
you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life
and died for us, but are
alive and reign,
now and for ever.

Amen.