

April 2013 – forthcoming events

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bank Holiday	9am Re:Fresh	11am HC	10am LTF	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am SOW 6.30pm TES
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		11am HC (CC) 7.30pm Baptism Preparation			9am Church Work Day 10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am AAS 6.30pm HC
HOLIDAY CLUB						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
4.45pm KIC Cell 8pm SRC	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE 7.30pm Baptism Preparation	10am B&B 11am HC 8pm Vision Focus groups	9.45am Toddlers 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh 8pm Friday @ 8	Unlock London Walk 9am HGL 10am HotS 7pm Mix	7.45am HC 10.30am SOW 6.30pm TES
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
4.45pm KIC Cell 8pm APCM	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am B&B 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 3.30pm Blend 7.30pm Shampa Rice Evening	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS 10am DT	7.45am HC 10.30am Baptism 6.30pm TES
29	30	Key to abbreviations : HC = Holy Communion DT=Dads & Toddlers SOW = Service of the word TES = The Evening Service BB = Bumps & Babes AAS = All Age Service LTF= Ladies Thursday Fellowship MITM = Men in the morning YE = Younger Elements OE = Older Elements HGL = Home Group Leaders CC = Community Centre HotS = Healing on the Street				

Rev Mark Barker and the team at St Stephen's Church would like to invite you, and others from the local community, to join them in celebrating the completion of their project to provide kitchen facilities in the church.



re:fresh

Date: Tuesday 23rd April 2013
 Time: Re:Fresh will be open as usual from 9am until 12pm.
 Our opening ceremony will be at 10.30am
 Place: St Stephen's Church
 37 Waterloo Road
 Tonbridge TN9 2SW



The Church of England

April 2013

Whilst the media has much negative press about the Church of England, I thought it might be of interest to publish the top ten facts that the Church issued just prior to the enthronement of the new Archbishop:

- ◆ The Church of England conducts more than a thousand marriages a week (nearly 55,000 couples per year), an increase of 4% from 2009 to 2010.
- ◆ The Church conducts more than 2,500 christenings and thanksgivings a week (144,200 in 2010).
- ◆ 85% of the British population visits a church each year for many reasons apart from services of worship, e.g. weddings, funerals, school services, concerts and special events.
- ◆ 25% of all primary schools and 1 in 16 secondary schools are Church of England, many in deprived areas. Church of England schools educate almost a million students.
- ◆ At Christmas 35% of the population attend a church service and more than 1.6 million people a month attend a Church of England service. Its network of parishes covers the whole of the country, bringing a vital Christian dimension to the nation as well as strengthening community life in numerous urban, suburban and rural settings.
- ◆ Churchgoers contribute 23.2 million hours each month outside their local church to voluntary work in their local community. In addition, more people do unpaid work for churches than for any other organisation.
- ◆ Congregations give £49 million a year to other charities - that's more than the BBC's annual Children in Need appeal.

◆ The Church provides activities outside church worship in the local community for 470,000 children and young people (aged under 16 years) and 32,900 young people (aged 16 to 25 years). More than 116,000 volunteers and an additional 4900 employed adults run children/young people activity groups sponsored by the Church of England outside church worship.

◆ The Church of England maintains more than 16,000 church buildings across England, 9,000 of which are rural and 7,000 in urban areas, including 42 cathedrals. Two-thirds of them are listed buildings, including 45% of all Grade 1 listed buildings in England. It costs more than £110 million a year to maintain, most of which is raised by the hard work of parishioners. Three locations are World Heritage Sites: Durham Castle and Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

◆ The Church of England plays an active role in national life with its members involved in a wide range of public bodies. Twenty-six bishops are members of the House of Lords and are engaged in debates about legislation and national and international affairs.

From these it can be seen that the Church of England plays a vital role in the life of the nation, proclaiming the Christian gospel in words and actions and providing services of Christian worship and praise. It is also part of the worldwide Anglican communion, and so has influence and involvement throughout the world.

Let us therefore be thankful for the Church of England and pray for Justin Welby as he takes up the challenging but important role of leading the Church.

Happy Easter

Mark Barker

Archbishop Justin Welby

The Road to Canterbury by Andrew Atherstone

This biography of Justin Welby, the 105th archbishop of Canterbury, traces the story of his life and ministry from his earliest years to the eve of his enthronement in March 2013. It examines his conversion to Christianity as a student at Cambridge University, his career as a treasurer in the oil industry and his meteoric rise through the ranks of the Church of England - as a rector in Warwickshire, director of international reconciliation ministry at Coventry Cathedral, dean of Liverpool and bishop of Durham.

Based on extensive archival research, and interviews with the archbishop's friends and colleagues, this study analyses his formative relationships, leadership style and priorities for the church. It highlights Justin Welby's passion for evangelism, reconciliation and risk-taking, which mark a change of direction for the Anglican Communion. An excellent opportunity to get to know the man and his vision.

Norman Nibloe

isbn 9780232529944

Price £7-99

The book can be ordered online from www.tcbconline.co.uk (on check out you may request, Collect from Tonbridge and in the additional information box insert 'collect at Church')

Who's Who

Hello St Stephens,

You may have seen me in the worship band from time to time. I have been coming to St Stephens for around 3 years now although I was baptised here as a child; over 20 years later God led me right back here.

I currently work as a gardener, running a small garden maintenance business and at a plant nursery. I have always been a very practical person, even though I was diagnosed with dyspraxia and dyslexia from an early age. I remember being involved in many after school activities including synchronised swimming, judo, dancing, gymnastics, guitar lessons, and St Johns Ambulance. My parents dedicated their time and effort in helping me achieve things that they were told that I wouldn't be able to achieve. God is good.

I enjoy fishing, motor mechanics, computer building and writing songs. There was a time when I wanted to give up playing guitar, because I thought I was no good. However, my mum kept encouraging me to keep working at it. God is good.

Most of all, God has been there the whole time, guiding my footsteps. Even though I have wandered many times off the narrow path and fallen down, he has picked me back up. In recent years, my maturity in Jesus has helped me to realise that Pride has been one of the largest falls. However, I thank God and the friends that have gently revealed this to me. I

really enjoy sharing the good news with others and have started learning to live a life of faith and not fear. I thank God for the gifts he has given us all, to worship him in our daily lives and for the gifts of his kingdom that are accessible through Jesus, by the power of his name. Anything the world throws at us can be overcome; we should not fear for he is with us. God is good.



In the time that I have been coming to St Stephens, there has been a change in me that I can't explain. God has carefully placed others in my life, his timing is perfect. The encouragement received from others is always overwhelming.

For the past 3 years I have also been going out to West Africa with a group called GPO (Gambian Projects Overseas). It has really opened my eyes to see and experience what life is like there and to have a better understanding of the things we tend to take for granted sometimes: medical aid, clean water and a good education.

It has also been great to be a part of the Tonbridge Passion Play, to work with the other churches in Tonbridge to show share the Easter story and show God's glory.

I look forward to what God has in store next, for he never ceases to amaze.

Benjamin Sales

Not just 'Knit & Natter'

Every Tuesday morning, a group of 'crafty' folks get together to share ideas, learn something new or to teach others. You can find us in the church from 10am, as part of Refresh. We have folks who can help you to enjoy knitting, crochet, embroidery, quilting, box-making, soft toy making – you name it, we can do it. And if you would rather just watch and chat, you are just as welcome, but it is a known fact that if your hands are occupied it is easier to talk!

Betty Keywood

Thought for the month

"There is no place for you in the modern Church of England."

How Justin Welby nearly didn't make it

If Dan Brown or Jeffrey Archer had invented an Archbishop of Canterbury with Justin Welby's background, you'd think he was straining credibility.

The new Archbishop's grandfather was an ostrich feather merchant (you don't meet many of those) while his mother was a secretary to Winston Churchill. Justin Welby's father, Gavin, boasted of running alcohol with the Mafia during the US Prohibition. He dated the sister of John F. Kennedy, eloped with Justin's mother, was later engaged to Vanessa Redgrave and died an alcoholic.

As for Justin, his first sniff at becoming ordained convinced him that he was not cut out to be a clergyman and he became an oil executive instead (as you do). When he tried a second time, he was initially told there was no place for him in the modern Church of England. He explained that he didn't really want to be ordained and would go out for a massive

celebration if he was turned down (he wasn't).

His life, meanwhile, was not short of adventure. He smuggled Bibles into Communist Romania, concealing his stash in the false floor of his camper van. After ordination he braved the chaos of post-Saddam Iraq to help re-open St George's Church in Baghdad. Later, as a mediator in West Africa, he faced death threats, a price on his head and several near-escapes from being shot.

On one occasion, staring up the barrel of a gun at a Nigerian roadblock, he heard his mobile go off. It was Warwick Glass, wanting to know if they could fit his new windows.

This all says to me that where God finds someone willing to take risks for him, he can weave the most exciting life story. If the rest of Justin Welby's career is as extraordinary as his life so far, there'll be interesting times ahead for the Church of England.

Graham Jones

For more, see *Archbishop Justin Welby: The Road to Canterbury* by Andrew Atherstone (Darton, Longman & Todd).



Love in Action

After our last Harvest Festival we thought that we would fill one of the kitchen cupboards with some tins as we were getting a few people come to the door and asking for food. This proved useful for a while – but hard to make sensible meals out of the small selection of tins and packets we had room for. Despite this being hard work for Pat – who was usually the person in the right place at the right time – it helped several people and small family groups over a crisis. Two people keep this cupboard stocked and it will go on being used for people who turn up when the plan below can't work eg in the evening.

The usual crisis for people in housing is that for some reason a benefit is late or has been stopped suddenly or there is sudden unemployment or the bread winner has left and the family can't cope. The problem is getting worse and the only people helping in Tonbridge were the Baptist church; CAB, Gateway, social services and schools were referring people there. Feeling we needed to offer food in South Tonbridge and also take the opportunity to reach out in love to people who are hungry a small group of us met together...

... and decided that Lidl had storage space and was usually reliable in keeping their food in date order so we'd use them as our food bank! They also offer bread, potatoes, milk and other basics that can't be kept in the usual food bank. We

have had a generous offer of funding. We have a dedicated mobile phone for this and David Wake and Tash Lumley co-ordinate. Referrals come from the agencies listed above and someone goes shopping with the person who asked for help so that they can choose food they'd like and will use. One of the team took a mum with two children shopping and was amazed at the sensible and practical way she used her £20; it also flagged up the enormous opportunity the shopping trip is for conversations about church and helping each other. The time to talk is also a time to build a bridge between church and community.

There are other practical ways to help the homeless: Gordon Jaaback has been meeting with homeless people for the last year between 7pm and 11pm with hot food and a sleeping bag wash kit etc. Again there is time for a chat and efforts are made to refer those who would like to be housed to Porchlight – a local charity that has successfully housed several of the homeless people who come to our attention. If there is anyone who has a heart for the homeless and would like to offer some time to being on call and helping these people as they come to our attention I'd love to hear from you. As other people come forward to support this ministry it would help to have a small fund to run it. There isn't much change from £10 when taking someone for a hot meal and cup of tea. Sitting with someone over a meal is a great way to show love and support. You can also then refer them on if they would like more help.

Sheila

ACTI♥N

Where it all began

A history of St Stephens: the first in a series of articles.

St Stephen's was built after the coming of the railway to Tonbridge, to serve the greatly increased numbers of people at the south end of the town, railway workers and their families. The registers show the changing occupations of the men from farm labourers to railway workers. As far back as 1819 the parish church considered enlarging the church in order to accommodate the growing numbers who had moved to the southern end of the town. In 1848 the vicar of Tonbridge, Sir Charles Hardinge, purchased the prime location site for the new church for £200.

The Church was designed by Ewan Christian, and built by Punnett, a local builder responsible for many buildings at the end of town, and completed in 1853. The railed areas each side of the south porch door are where some of the Punnett family are buried, in the vaults beneath the church. The foundation stone is at the east end of the church laid by Lady Hardinge on 20th May 1851.

The church was consecrated on Tuesday 26th October 1852 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. John Deacon of Mabledon gave £300 towards the cost of the building and he held the Patronage of Tonbridge Parish Church; this gave him the right to choose the vicar. Alas, Deacon died before the church was completed. A few days before the church was consecrated it was agreed that John's wife, Sophia, should have the right and her choice was Charles Dallas Marston. Marston preached his first sermon in the afternoon of St Stephen's consecration.

The church was dedicated to St Stephen in memory of the chapel to St Stephen that was originally part of the Augustinian Priory that once stood on the site of the station car park.

On 5th April 1853 St Stephen's was recognised as a distinct and separate parish to St Peter and St Paul's, the parish church at the north end of the High Street. The northern boundary of St Stephen's parish is the stream that flows under the Little Bridge. May 1853 saw the first burial in the churchyard.

Marston remained as vicar at St Stephen's until 1856. He also wrote a number of theology books and these are, somewhat remarkably, available on Amazon. A copy of *Expositions on the Epistles of the New Testament* is available to borrow from the church office. Marston was born in 1825 in Kingston, Jamaica. He became a deacon in 1848 and was ordained as a priest in 1849. He later served as rector at St Mary's, Bryanston Square in London (1862-66) and then at Kersal in Salford. He was married to Katherine and they had six children. He died in Richmond, Surrey in 1876.

Joanne Ramsden