

August 2013 – forthcoming events

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
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 F'ship MITM = Men in the morning YE = Younger Elements OE = Older Elements HGL = Home Group Leaders CC = Community Centre HotS = Healing on the Street	1	2	3	4
				9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am Streams 6.30pm TES
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	9am Re:Fresh	11am HC	LTF outing	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30 Streams 6.30pm TES
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	9am Re:Fresh	11am HC	MITM outing	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am Streams 6.30pm HC
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Deep clean in church				9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am Streams 6.30pm TES
		11am HC in CC				
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	9am Re:Fresh	11am HC		9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	



What's in a name?

You are perhaps one of the millions around the world who have been taking in every moment by moment detail of the Royal birth, or maybe you have had enough and wonder whether there has been any other news in the world this week. However, let us congratulate William and Kate on the birth of their first child and wish them well as they set out on the hard task of parenthood.



It was a few days between the birth being announced and the naming of Prince George, and it made me reflect on the importance of names. In the earliest days, a child was given a name at puberty, the time of initiation as an adult, but the custom of Christian baptism brought forward the time of naming to as soon after the birth as possible. Nowadays a name is often given at birth, or with the technological advances that mean we know the gender of the baby before it is born, even before the child is born.

For the Royal couple, choosing a name for their son probably took some time since he is going to be so much in the public eye, and one day will be King, but for most of us we choose names that we like, maybe adding a name that has meaning to us because it has come through the family, or is in remembrance of someone. This rather random way is totally contrary to the orderly evolution of the rules by which our ancestors named their offspring over thousands of years.

If you look at the Bible you will find names that carry an implicit message, so Jacob means "taking by the heel" reflecting the fact that he was born feet first, or Abraham means "Father of many" reflecting the calling God gave him to be the father of many nations. The Romans had a much more complex triple-name system – a personal name, a family name and a nickname. One such nickname was Caesar, which means "the hairy one", which eventually became the accepted name for the famous family.

The new prince has been called George, a popular name over the years for the Royal family but which has far humbler origins for it is a Greek name meaning "farmer". I hope that when he is older that humbleness will be reflected in the way he rules, for Jesus said this to those who will be leaders – "whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10v43-44).

Yet for all of us, whether we are of humble origins or royal, the most important thing about our name is that God calls us by name, and if we respond to him and give our lives to him, then Jesus tells us our names are "written in heaven" (Luke 10v20), or in Isaiah 49 the Lord says, "See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands". It is amazing to think that God knows me by name and that my name is written in heaven – and my hope and prayer for the new Royal baby is that he will grow up knowing that for himself and that he will become a servant leader in this nation, following the example of Jesus.

But there are many in our families, amongst our friends, in our streets and community who do not have the privilege and certainty of knowing their names are written in heaven. On 22nd September we have another Back to Church Sunday planned – have you thought about the name of the person you are going to invite back to church? Back to Church Sunday is all about personal invitation and this summer is a perfect opportunity to be thinking about who you would like to invite – by name.

Names are important – to us...and to God.

Mark Barker
Mark - from Marcus, meaning offspring of Mars, the God of war, but more importantly from the apostle and gospel writer!!
Barker - meaning tanner of wood.

Confirmation Testimonies

I have always had Christ in my life. I was brought up in a Christian family, dedicated as a child and have nearly always gone to church. When I was 14 I chose to get baptised, this was a big step for me, something I'd always wanted to do but had always waited for the right time. I was an active part of the youth group and the support and friendship from this has stayed with me into my adulthood. When I was 18 I moved away and went to university. During this time my faith took a back seat; I struggled to find and attend a church I was comfortable with and this really affected me. I had built a wall up between me and God and Christ was no longer the centre of my life. During university I was diagnosed with M.E. and this often left me feeling drained with only enough energy for uni work. However, I started messaging friends and asking them if they had any prayer requests. Through that time I prayed, sometimes screaming out to God I managed to find a small gap in the wall and God's light shone through. I had a lot of support and prayer from my home church; I have been blessed to have such a supportive family behind me. I moved to Tonbridge in October to start a gap year in youth work. During this time I feel I have continued to destroy the wall and I feel closer to God day by day. I have had the chance to really grapple with my faith and question my own beliefs and to really think who my personal Jesus is. I enjoy having a connection with the Holy Spirit and I enjoy the gifts God joyfully hands to us. I am looking forward to receive what God has in store for me in the next chapter of my life.
 Emily Pearce

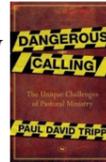
Books I have read and enjoyed this year

The Lion's World by Rowan Williams, a great read for those who, like me, have enjoyed the Narnia stories since childhood. Having done more theological thinking about the allegories in those books Rowan brings the character of Aslan to life.

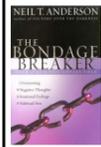


How God became King by Tom Wright which gives a fresh look at the Gospels. In particular there is a strong encouragement to read a gospel at one sitting to get the whole picture of why Jesus lived. The shortest, Mark, takes about 90 minutes, others about two hours each. It's something I encourage baptism candidates or parents of baptism candidates to do.

Dangerous Calling by Paul David Tripp (as recommended by Norman). I'd describe it as quite a scary read for anyone in any sort of church leadership. It's not aimed particularly at clergy as it would apply equally well to home group leaders, worship leaders, ministry leaders, wardens and any who want to support them. How to lose our way... and possibly find it again.



The Bondage Breaker by Neil Anderson is one I've reread... again; along with *Victory over the Darkness*. They help with all sorts of issues of identity and self esteem and some of his books come with helpful prayers and checklists in the appendix.



We probably have the best stocked Christian bookshop in the world just over the road and it's easy to take that privilege for granted. Most people in the world have no access to Christian books. Comparatively few have access to a shop to browse for what they want and a choice of all levels of Bible, commentary, novel, humour, gifts etc. Make the most of it.

Sheila Perkins

Friends of Rochester Cathedral

Can you help?

There are fascinating links between the mission of 7th century invaders and 21st century men and women of Kent. While the iconic cathedral, overlooking the Medway, has developed and grown over the centuries, the mission of the cathedral community is still the same; nurturing those radical human qualities as seen in Jesus Christ.

To put it another way, the cathedral community puts into action the love of Jesus Christ by welcoming hundreds of visitors and worshippers each week, through welfare work in the Medway Towns; by close involvement in the Dickens festivals and other events, and by facilitating the working out of Christian ethics in business and commerce.

You may have heard by now that Rochester Cathedral has been successful in its application for a Heritage Lottery grant (HLF). This will enable work to be undertaken in improving access for the disabled, re-roofing the library and refurbishing the crypt as an exhibition space, displaying some of its hidden gems.

As with all HLF bids, matching funding is required from local sources and in this context we, the Friends of Rochester Cathedral have been able to offer our support, as we have done concerning numerous aspects of the care and maintenance of our cathedral's fabric, since our foundation in 1935.

The Friends of Rochester Cathedral help finance the maintenance of the cathedral fabric and assist the dean and chapter of the cathedral in preserving the worship and its services. The Friends are a diverse community with a wide range of interests but share the common goal of preserving this ancient hallowed place, or as one recent dean put it: 'these living stones'.

Rochester's first cathedral was founded in 604 AD and has been a place of religious worship and quiet reflection ever since. Ensuring its survival for another fourteen centuries needs our care.

A very small sample of the projects funded by the Friends in recent years are:- new gas central heating £126,000 – internal toilets £40,000 – fire alarm system £39,000 – audio system £64,000 – electrical work £19,000.

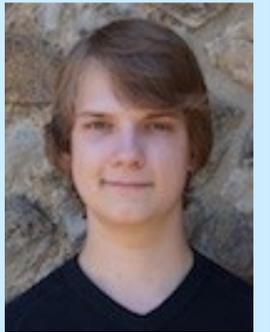
There is also a social side of the Friends' activities and their excursions and social evenings are very popular. If you would like more information about the Cathedral and Friends or would be interested in joining the Friends of Rochester Cathedral please contact The Friends' Secretary at 1 The College, The Precinct, Rochester. ME1 1SU. tel. 01634 832142 or email at friendsofrochester cathedral@btinternet.com.



Where next for our gap year interns?

Moving on

I've been on a gap year here at St Stephens now for the past year. This has meant being involved in various activities run by the youth and children's department from running round a hall with young people to pulling up weeds in the community centre. I love working for the church and learning and teaching more about God, and I also have a large passion for drama, which is fortunate as after this year I'm going to Regent's Theological College in Worcestershire to study theology and performing arts. This year has been a complete blessing and I know that God has taught me so much through what I've done here, and so I'm equally confident that as I move on to college he will have just as much in store for me. I'm going to the college with the intentions of taking the degree into the world of Christian theatre, hopefully to join a touring theatre company who go around to various places teaching about God through drama. We will see where God takes me though!



Josh Kennedy

Or not moving on, as the case may be



I cannot express how much this year has done for me. When I moved here I didn't really know anyone, I didn't know the area, and had never been to the church before; it was a completely blind move, and I have never done anything greater than making the decision to apply here. I have felt so welcomed into the family here at the church and as a result am planning to stay on here come September.

I have loved being part of the children and youth team and have completed a wide variety of tasks, from sitting in a bath dressed as a sumo wrestler to laminating, painting, writing, dancing and being gunged. It has been a great year to explore and expand my skills.

My faith this year has grown so much, I have learnt to trust God and come to Him when I need Him. My health this year has been amazing, which has been a real gift from God; this is the first year ever where I have not taken a day off sick.

I am currently job hunting in the area and just waiting and praying for God to reveal His plan to me. Thank you for everyone's support and for making me feel so much part of the family here.

Emily Pearce

Call to stop moneylending

We see suffering every day in all walks of life and we try our best to help, to be a community and to 'do to others as you wish to be done by' (Luke 6:31). Recently we have seen an increase in need as our country battles with recession, people losing their jobs and having their benefits cut. As a result there have been more and more requests for advice and debt services.

It seems counterproductive then, even irresponsible, to see at the same time a surge in short-term high interest loans. Celebrity-endorsed advertising on television, internet, radio and even the high street has multiplied, offering 'solutions' to those already experiencing financial

difficulties, often the most vulnerable in society. Four figure interest rates are noted in the small print fulfilling the legal obligation but does that make them morally responsible? 'If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him' (Exodus 22:25).

Let us be the conscience of those lenders. If you wish to add your name to the e-petition and put a stop to these abhorrent adverts visit <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/42019> to force a debate in the house of commons. 'The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender' (Proverbs 22:7).

Confirmation Testimonies... (continued on back page)

Before Jesus I was drifting through life without inspiration or motivation in my life, struggling to manage my frustration and didn't have anyone or anything to turn to. I hadn't found my faith until the youth week away in 2012 I joined St Stephen's in 2012 and joined the youth group. After attending the youth work and experiencing other youth services like Souled Out where we worship in many different ways I feel I have made a connection that I wasn't expecting.

I now have the Holy Spirit who shows me the path I should take, a comfort and support for day to day life. I can find strength through prayer and have made a stronger connection to God and other people in the church. I have recently joined the youth band and I really enjoy this.

Sian Roberts