

October 2013 – forthcoming events

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm Quinta parent's info evening	10am BB 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am LTF 10am MITM	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS 6.30pm YB	7.45am HC 10.30am AAS Harvest 12.30pm Newcomers lunch 2.30pm Football 6.30pm TES
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12.30pm Contemplative prayer 4.45pm Kic cell 7.30pm Central Gathering	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am BB 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS 11am Made & Grown 7pm The Mix	7.45am HC 10.30 HC 6.30pm United Service at Tonbridge Baptist
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
4.45pm Kic cell	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am BB 11am HC	10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh 7pm Ladies Evening	10am HotS 10am DT 6.30pm YB	7.45am HC 10.30am Baptism 6.30pm TES
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
4.45pm Kic cell	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am BB 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh	9am Work day 10am HotS 7pm The Mix	7.45am HC 10.30am SOW 6.30pm HC
28	29	30	31	Key to abbreviations LTF= Ladies Thursday F'ship MITM = Men in the morning DT=Dads & Toddlers BB = Bumps & Babes YE = Younger Elements OE = Older Elements HC = Holy Communion SOW = Service of the word TES = The Evening Service AAS = All Age Service YB = Youth Band HotS = Healing on the Street		
Quinta residential			10am MITM 5pm Light party			

Stepping down but still around

As I write, I just cannot believe it's been four years when Mark, quite unexpectedly invited me to join the *Encompass* team by co-editing its content with Joanne Ramsden. Little did I know then just how much I was to enjoy the role. Now, due to a greater work commitment that changes to family life and circumstances have allowed me to take on I have, with sadness, had to step down from the *Encompass* role that I have found so enjoyable.

It has been such a pleasure and a real privilege in getting to know so many of our church family and friends of St Stephens, through co-ordinating their contributions to this monthly newsletter over the years and I'd like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you.

Thank you to everyone who helped in making the work so easy, for taking the time

to write and provide the articles so willingly, when they were asked, and for meeting the deadline. It's been great working alongside Joanne too, in planning and preparing the magazine's content. Meeting a repeated deadline offered it's stressful moments, but somehow we managed and it always all came together just in time. Having helped in many of the groups offered at St Stephens, I don't believe I felt God's helping hand in my work as much as I have in putting the *Encompass* magazine together.

So, if you get an invitation to do something, especially if it's when you least expected it, I would really encourage you to have a go. You never know, you might find, like me, it was well worth it.

Kandy Regis

ENC COMPASS

THE MONTHLY ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Walk the Talk

October 2013

There is a saying – 'If you don't walk the walk, it's probably best not to talk the talk'.

The last few weeks have probably been some of the most challenging and yet interesting of my time in ministry. Many of you will have been aware of the homeless man camping in the churchyard, and there has been a lot of talk about it both within the church and in the community, people against him being there and people glad that the church has allowed him to stay whilst trying to find a longer term solution for him. Interviews with ITV Meridian, Radio Kent and *The Courier* have highlighted the growing number of homeless in Kent (up 11% in the last 12 months) and in Tonbridge.

Aware of the need to care for and protect the wider community, I have been working hard to find him a longer term solution than living in a tent. By allowing him to stay, I have been able to challenge some of his behaviour whilst also able to keep an eye on what he has been up to, which if he was kicked out and ended up nearby but not in the churchyard would not have been so possible. Yet I have been acutely aware of his needs and the calling for Christians and the church to be people who show compassion and love – 'Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'. In this I have been challenged each week by our evening sermon series using themes from that great film *Les Miserables*; over the last few weeks we have looked at 'The Cry of the Poor', 'Mercy triumphing over Judgment' and 'Sacrificial Love'.

Titus 2:14 says that Jesus 'gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right' (NLT), and I have tried to do what I believe to be right in this situation, following Jesus' command to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned (Matthew 25). J John writes that the disciples of Jesus must 'struggle against everything that condemns people to a sub-human existence – hunger, disease, poverty, inequality and injustice. The church must exhibit an obvious concern for all segments of society since all people are called to share in the kingdom'.

In the famous parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), Jesus depicted life in the gutter – a man who had been beaten up for the little he had on him. I for one did not want to be like the priest or the Levite, walking by on the other side, or even worse, giving him another kicking by getting the police to remove him from our premises.

Yes, staying there was not a long term solution for the church, for the community or for him, but moving him on did not resolve the problem, just made it someone else's. Thankfully through the TV interview, he has been offered shelter elsewhere – hopefully a better and longer term solution, and one which will give him the chance to turn his life around. He has got a long way to go and needs to make an effort himself, but sometimes we all need the help of others to get back on our feet and move on.

The 18th Century philosopher Edmund Burke said, 'Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little', and in AD125 Aristides, a Greek observer, wrote about the Christian church: 'They walked in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and grieve not the orphan. And he who has gives liberally to him who has not. If they see a stranger they bring him in under their roof and rejoice over him as if he were their own brother...and if there is among them any man who is poor and needy, and they have not the abundance of necessities, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food'. I hope that people will say the same about St. Stephen's.

A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, 'Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!' The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, 'Well, I made a difference to that one!'

No one person can change the world, but we can change the world for one person at a time.

A prayer:
Lord, look through my eyes,
listen through my ears,
speak through my lips,
act with my hands,
walk with my feet. Amen

Mark Barker



What will Will be doing?

At the Children's Workshop

The Children's Workshop conducts assemblies in every primary school in the Tonbridge area and also leads two lunch clubs. This results in a programme of four assemblies each week during term time, and means that 6000 local children each receive eight Christian-based assemblies each year.

CW started this school year with a brand new team. Leader Mike Harrowing's wife Antonia joined the team last spring, and Lily Lamb and Will Parkes have just joined as interns. Will is going to be with CW for one year; Lily will stay for three years while studying Theology with Specialism in Children at Moorlands College. All three newcomers are undergoing training in September and October.

The current series of assemblies centres on the tongue as a dangerous weapon, a small thing with a big impact for good or ill. In mid-October this will switch to a Christmas theme, featuring the royal baby.

Mike mentions three needs as a prayer focus for the year:

- Lily and Will represent the new generation of children's workers and the next generation of Christian leaders. May this year launch them into lifelong service, making them, not breaking them.

- This year sees a new work pattern, with Lily based at St John's Hildenborough and Will at Tonbridge Methodist Church, each focusing particularly on schools in those areas. It's hoped that this will enable CW to diversify into chaplaincy work, establishing new relationships with children and schools, and getting alongside troubled children to help them and their families.
- Of its £50,000 budget for the year, CW still needs to raise £20,000 by December. Without these essential funds, the ministry will suffer. As an example, each assembly tour costs £600 to mount, but that's only 10p per child! Many churches and individuals already help very generously, but if you or your church are not one of these, please do consider giving and encouraging your church to do so.

To become a prayer supporter, request a regular newsletter, or make a donation, contact **Mike Harrowing on 07725 561154** or mike@childrensworkshop.org.uk. All are welcome at one of CW's Cake & Prayer evenings, Mondays 6 October and 2 December, 7-8 p.m. at Christ Church, High Street, Tonbridge.

George Gilbert-Smith



CORNER

Off to Romania

A team of 12 St Stephen's members will be visiting the Charis organisation in Romania during half term this month. The relationship began more than ten years ago and in the past we have sent teams of our youth groups to work in the orphanages there.

A lot has changed over the years. The orphanage is no longer needed, praise God, and so Daniel and Mona Ciupe who lead now work with the Romany gypsy communities. These groups are still very marginalised so Charis aim to bring God's love, word and acceptance to them, changing lives and bringing hope.

As a church we have committed to supporting Charis for a further five years. During this trip we will be laying

concrete (weather permitting), painting in the gypsy churches, visiting the elderly and serving in the churches. Most importantly, we will be building our relationship with Daniel, Mona and with the people they humbly serve.

It has been decided that the offertory from this year's harvest festival will go to Charis. Daniel and Mona have not been paid a salary for many months; any income Charis receives goes to pay taxes to the government and local authorities.

All those going would appreciate your prayers and support. We hope to be doing a daily blog but do please take time to look at the notice boards and watch out for a flyer giving more details nearer the time. Thank you.

Edith Wills



Archbishop's Blog Have you read it?

You might already have managed to read some of Archbishop Justin Welby's blog on the internet. If not, then check it out. Below is a sample of his musings from Sunday 4 August 2013.

'Over the past week I've visited four very different Christian gatherings. It's been an experience that has left me humbled and hopeful.

Last Friday I was at [Hillsong](#) at the O2 arena in London, speaking to 8,000 people from a Pentecostal tradition. These people were full of love for Jesus Christ and commitment to service. The welcome was extraordinary; I had a great sense of being part of a family....

On Tuesday the journey continued. We travelled seven hours to reach the little Norfolk village of Walsingham. There we joined hundreds of young people on their annual pilgrimage to the [Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham](#), founded first in the 11th century....

He writes on a variety of issues and recently wrote about the value of aid in Africa. It's worth a look.

What are you doing next summer?



New Wine 'United' National Gatherings 2014

St Stephen's will be going to the Week 1 gathering, Saturday 26th July-Friday 1st August 2014, at the Bath & Wells Showground, Somerset.

This July over 100 of us pitched our tents and caravans alongside 10,000 others. Why? To be part of a huge celebration of God's goodness, generosity and grace – called New Wine!

The beauty of New Wine is you can go to as much or as little of the programme as you want or serve on one of the many teams supporting the event (Children's Groups, catering, stewarding, medical etc).

We'd love to encourage you to join us next summer and have the opportunity to:

- Encounter God in heartfelt worship
- Learn through his Word and from his Spirit
- Be renewed to know him better
- Be healed and transformed in body, mind and spirit
- Get equipped to serve him in new ways
- Gain fresh vision from what he is doing elsewhere in the world
- Be part of something that's bigger than any local church. And of course enjoy fellowship with church, family and friends.

We will be Village Hosts in 2014 and would love you to join us. If you are thinking of going but would like more information, do talk to anyone who was there this year, or join us for **tea on Sunday 17th November at 3pm** at our home. Consider booking early as it is likely to sell out quickly. The "super early bird" discount ends on 2nd December. Full details may be found on the New Wine website (www.new-wine.org).

The fee is the same whether you stay on or off-site and size of tent does not affect this, so please don't underestimate the accommodation you are bringing! Please drop us a line when you have booked so we know you are going!

Sylvie & Stephen Barbor
family.barbor@gmail.com



Rooted in Jesus

A total of £400 was recently donated by church members to Rooted in Jesus, a group course in Christian discipleship written for use in Africa. Stephen and Sylvie Barbor have gone out to Kenya this month and Stephen has explained how the course will be used:

'This will really help the Masai Diocese of Kajiado in southern Kenya who have invited a ReSource team to visit and help run a discipleship programme for their clergy and lay leaders. It is the only material of its kind written especially for the use of ordinary African Christians, rather than translated from material developed for the West.

'The emphasis is on the active participation of each member of the group through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, so that together they may be built up into the body of Christ and equipped for ministry to others. The material is absorbed and practised orally, and only the group leader needs to be able to read and write.'

Interns in Tonbridge

Hello to you all at St Stephen's,



I am Ryan Romano and I am the youth and children's gap year intern for this year. My parents are Nadia and Nick Romano, and my grandparents are Brian and Eve Woods. I have two little sisters called Rachel and Alice.

I have just finished sixth form at Hayesbrook and the subjects that I did were Sport, Sport Science and Business Studies. Before I went to Hayesbrook sixth form, I went to Bennett Memorial School and I changed to Hayesbrook because of the sport courses and facilities. From that, I'm sure you can guess that I'm a very sporty person.

My main sports are football and I currently play for Tonbridge Baptist Church Football Club. I also play golf locally down at both Tonbridge Golf Centre (next to Homebase) and Poult Wood. Other sports I can play are tennis, badminton and cricket.

My aspirations for after the gap year is to either go to university to study sport science with QTS and then become a PE teacher or to go into more youth and children's work in a church setting. I'm looking forward to my year at St Stephens. Ryan

Hello,

I'm Will Parkes and I'm one of the new Children's Workshop interns! My partner in crime is one Lily Lamb, who's just moved from Cornwall to be part of this, and it looks to be a great year with the CW team.



I'm a local boy having been in Tonbridge most of my life, going to Bennett and most recently Hillview for sixth form. There I studied Drama, Musical Theatre and Photography for A levels.

I have a sister, Libby and two brothers, Nick and Tim. I'm looking forward to many great assemblies and the Christmas panto should be a riot! Will