

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
28 th October S Simon & S Jude Bible Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 28 vv 14-16 p711 Ephesians 2 vv 19—22 p1174 John 15 vv 17-27 p1083
Friday 2 nd November All Souls	9.30 am Holy Communion and Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.	
4 th November 4 th Before Advent	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Revelation 7 vv 9-17 p1238 Matthew 5 vv 1-12 p968
	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 6 vv 1-9 p185 Hebrews 9 vv 11-14 p1207 Mark 12 vv 28-34 p1018
11 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion & Parade	Jonah 3 vv 1-10 p928 Hebrews 9 vv 24-28 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 10 v33 – 11 v9 p696 John 14 vv 1-29 p1082
18 th November 2 nd Before Advent	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
25 th November Sunday Before Advent Christ the King	11.00 Holy Communion Preacher: The Very Reverend Dr Mark Beech, Dean of Rochester.	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
2 nd December Advent Sunday Year C	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Joel 3 vv 9-21 p914 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065
	11.00 Family Communion & Gift Service	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 I Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057
Services at Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
28 th October S Simon & S Jude Bible Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 28 vv 14-16 p711 Ephesians 2 vv 19—22 p1174 John 15 vv 17-27 p1083
Friday 2 nd November All Souls	7.30 pm Holy Communion and Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.	
4 th November 4 th Before Advent	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 6 vv 1-9 p185 Hebrews 9 vv 11-14 p1207 Mark 12 vv 28-34 p1018
11 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion & Parade	Jonah 3 vv 1-10 p928 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002
18 th November 2 nd Before Advent	8.00 Holy Communion (Trinity 24)	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 24
	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
25 th November Sunday Before Advent Christ the King	9.30 Holy Communion The Very Reverend Dr Mark Beech, Dean of Rochester.	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
2 nd December Advent Sunday Year C	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 I Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

There is an **After School Club** at St John's on Thursdays at 3.45. **Saints Alive** (formerly Sunday School) meets in the Church Hall, Cuxton at 9.30 on 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month in term time.

There is a parish lunch to which all are invited every first Wednesday at 12.00 in the Church Hall.

If you are prepared to *gift aid* your monetary contributions to the Church, please use one of the envelopes provided. Contact Jack Payne to *gift aid* all your donations.

Copy Date December Magazine: 9th November 8.30 am Rectory.

30th November: St Andrew's Day: Holy Communion St Michael's 7.30 am.

Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 am St Michael's		Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 am St John's	
31 st October	Ephesians 6 vv 1-9 Luke 13 vv 22-30	1 st November All Saints	Revelation 21 vv 1-6 John 11 vv 32-44
7 th November	Philippians 2 vv 12-18 Luke 14 vv 25-33	8 th November	Philippians 3 vv 3-8 Luke 15 vv 1-10
14 th November	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	15 th November	Philemon Luke 17 vv 20-25
21 st November	Revelation 4 Luke 19 vv 11-28	22 nd November	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
28 th November	Revelation 15 vv 1-4 Luke 21 vv 12-19	29 th November	Revelation 18 v1 – 19 v9 Luke 21 vv 20-28



The First Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer comes twice in a number of prayer book services and people often wonder why. Surely it isn't necessary to say the same prayer twice. At best it is redundant and at worst it is *vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be*

heard for their much speaking (Matthew 6⁷), a practice condemned by Jesus just before He gave us the Lord's Prayer. It is a mistake to think that God is more likely to hear you if you keep asking or shout louder. God knows what you need before you ask Him. Christians persist in prayer because we have faith, not because we are trying to get our own way through the religious equivalent of pester power.

Why then do prayer book Mattins and Evensong and Holy Communion contain the Lord's Prayer twice? This is often answered in historical terms. The Lord's Prayer said by the priest alone at the beginning of the Communion service is the last vestige of the mediaeval prayers of preparation the priest was expected to say before Mass. The Lord's Prayer comes twice in Mattins and Evensong because they are both really more than one service melded together. Monks and nuns prayed together several times a day – basically seven times each day in a literal interpretation of Ps 119¹⁶⁴ *Seven times a day do I praise thee: because of thy righteous judgments.* At the time of the English Reformation the monasteries were suppressed and the intention was that all Christian people should be as devoted as the monks were supposed to be and meet together daily for public prayer. Seven times a day was obviously impractical for people with families and ordinary jobs, but it was hoped that the parish might come together to pray at the beginning and end of each day for Morning and Evening Prayer. So the basic seven services were conflated into just two services for daily use and then there was to be

Holy Communion on Sundays and other major holy days. Sadly what was intended to be daily – Mattins and Evensong – was observed only on Sundays by most Christians and Holy Communion came to be celebrated as few as three or four times a year. Thankfully, we have restored Holy Communion to its rightful place as the principal service at least every Sunday, but there is a long way to go before most Christians meet together for daily prayer. Many people of course pray alone at home each day. If you want to, you can use the prayer book (BCP or Common Worship) services and readings and you can know (if you live within hearing range) the times the services are being said in church because the bell is rung when they are about to begin. As well as using the books, you can find the words for daily Morning and Evening Prayer online.

Lately, however, I've come across a much more positive reason for saying the Lord's Prayer that additional time at the beginning of these services. Whether or not you use the 1662 Prayer Book, whether or not you use any set form of words at all, this reason is well worth thinking about and it has certainly given me a lot of profitable food for thought over the last couple of months.

It is this. When we pray, we pray with Jesus. Jesus is with us and we are with Him. He joins His prayers with ours and our prayers with His. It is only through Jesus that we can approach the Throne of God. It is only through Him that our prayers reach the ears of God. When our prayers fail, as they are apt to do, we being only too human and weak, it is Jesus and His Holy Spirit Who pray on our behalf. So it is good to remember at the beginning of our prayers that we are praying in Christ and He in us. It does not seem unreasonable to me that we might express our unity with Christ in prayer by using the words which He Himself taught us when His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.

Our Father, which art in heaven. God is Jesus' Father and our Father, His God and our God. Jesus is our brother and we are the children of God. We are co-heirs with Christ and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. It is in this Spirit that we pray.

Hallowed be thy Name. The Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a perfect unity of mutual love. The love between and of the persons of the Trinity overflows to enfold and encompass us. Such love reaching out to us calls on us to love Him back, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. In Christ we worship God with our whole being. We hallow God's Name. We pray that God's Name will be hallowed because it is only when men and women recognise God as their Father that they can behave towards each other as the children of God. We pray that God's Name will be hallowed in the blessings which He pours out on the whole of creation.

Thy kingdom come. God's reign is of mercy, justice and peace. What a prayer for the world. What a prayer for our nation and for our community. What a prayer for our family, our home and our heart. That God should reign and His perfect Law of Love should be kept by you and me, by our families and neighbours, by this nation and by all nations.

Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. I sometimes think that *thy will be done* is the only prayer. God's perfect will is for the perfection of all things. God's Will is for goodness and justice and love and truth and beauty and life and joy to prevail. God's Will is the very best for you and for me and for the whole of creation. So we cannot do better than to pray *thy will be done* and I sometimes wonder whether we need to say more than that. *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*, that the people of the world should conform themselves to God's perfect Will as the angels do, that I should conform my own life to God's perfect Will as Jesus did.

Give us this day our daily bread. Actually we do need to say more than *Thy will be done*. We need to put into words what we need from God because prayer is part of our conversation with Him. Talking to God is essential to our relationship with Him. In our daily prayers we talk to God about what we need for our lives and for our loved ones and for the world in general. We ask for the

daily necessity of bread in the context that Jesus is the Bread of Life.

Forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. Confession is another element that often comes near the beginning of religious services. It is sin which creates a gulf between God and us. It is sin which makes it impossible for us to come into God's Presence. Sin would make prayer impossible, sin would make it impossible for us to get to Heaven, except that God has dealt with sin in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Cross deals with sin once and for all. In order to receive the blessing of the Cross, the bridging of the gulf between us and God, the Atonement, what we have to do is to repent and to have faith and to be baptised. We confess our sins and God forgives our sin and we can once again come into His Presence. Jesus makes it quite clear that we can only be at one with God if we are at one with other people; our trespasses can only be forgiven as we forgive them that trespass against us. If we really do love God with all our hearts, then we love our neighbours as ourselves, all of them. We really do need Jesus if we are to have any hope at all of attaining that standard. Human beings just can't do it on their own. But Christ has done it and, through faith in Him alone, anyone can do it.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. The devil doesn't give up once we become Christians. Time after time I find myself tempted back into sin, to fail to love other people, to fail to trust God. Every time I sin God forgives me as I repent, but it is only through His grace that I can repent, only through His grace that I can know that I am forgiven and only through His grace that I can become a better person. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.* (James 4^{7&8}). The two go together – resisting the devil and drawing nigh to God.

For thine is the kingdom, The power and the glory, For ever and ever. Another thing about our services which some people find funny is that sometimes we say these words at the end of the Lord's Prayer and sometimes we don't. In your King James Bible you'll find that the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11 doesn't have these words but the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 does have them. Modern scholarly versions of the Bible may well omit them from Matthew as well or add a note

explaining that they are not to be found in the most ancient manuscripts. In all likelihood, Jesus didn't include these words originally as part of the Lord's Prayer. But they are good words. They are scriptural. They echo I Chronicles 29¹¹. It is very likely that Jesus used words of praise like these, and, even if He didn't originally include them in the prayer He taught His disciples it is perfectly appropriate to use these words of praise, this doxology, at this point or on any occasion.

Amen. This is the Aramaic word that Jesus would actually Himself have used. So we are actually using the word He Himself would have spoken. It means *so be it* or *verily* or *truly* and it confirms

our assent to the whole prayer, prayer we offer both with Christ and in Christ.

Morning and Evening Prayer go on *O Lord, open thou our lips*. It is by the grace of God that we are empowered to worship Him. Holy Communion goes on *Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit*. Only God can make us fit to be in His Presence.

So, whatever you think about saying the Lord's Prayer twice in some services, the meditation it has given rise to on Christ's Presence with us when we pray is very precious and I'm glad I've been pondering it since reading those articles. Roger.



Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

This year we raised £350 from this parish of which we receive £175 back – the rest going to KKC to help other churches in Kent. Thank you to all those who took part in cycling, walking, stewarding and sponsoring.

St. Michael's Draw: £20 Rosalind Mills, £10 Neil Jones, £5 Joyce Haselden

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Thorne (3), Miss Heighes (40), Mr Mitchell (68) & Mrs Garrot (122) – drawn by Mrs Baker.

All Souls

On the 2nd November each year, the Church commemorates the Festival of All Souls. It is a day specially set aside to remember the faithful departed. In the words of the Creed, we believe in *the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body*.

In other words, we believe that we can trust God for those whom we love but see no longer. Death is not the end, but a new beginning, a new phase of existence. Our love for them and their love for us continues within the love of God. The things we have done wrong on earth can be forgiven if we ask God in Christ.

Our personality, our soul, is not extinguished by death, but finds its fulfilment in God's love. These are the kinds of thoughts to remember when we think about our loved ones who have died.

In this parish, we remember by name on All Souls Day all those whose names are in the Books of Remembrance, those whose funerals we have arranged in the last year and any other individuals we are asked to commemorate.

The All Souls services this year are on Friday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St John the Baptist's Church Halling and at 7.30 pm at St Michael & All Angels' Church Cuxton. At both services we remember all those whose funerals we have taken in this last year and people from the parish we have heard about. If you would like to be present at either service, you would be most welcome. If there are other names you would like remembered, please give them in writing to the Rector.

Missing this Summer?

We've all noticed that the unusual weather this year has had a strange effect on our gardens and the countryside. Weeds seem to have flourished while food plants have perished. One gardening society cut its losses and had a competition for the biggest slug as these molluscs were the most abundant *crop* in members' gardens. There seemed to be dearth of butterflies and an abundance of dragonflies, but where have all the wasps gone? RIK.



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Nature Notes September 2012

I have chosen the First World War poet Laurence Binyon's "The Burning of Leaves" to express the feelings which September brings.

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves
They go to the fire; the nostril pricks with smoke
Wandering slowly into the weeping mist.
Brittle and botched, ragged and rotten sheaves!
A flame seizes the smouldering ruin and bites
On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock's fallen tower is dust;
All the spices of June are a bitter reek,
All the extravagant riches spent and mean.
All burns! The reddest rose is a ghost.
Sparks whirl up, to expire in the mist; the wild
Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

The first of the month is an autumn day, cool with pale grey skies and only glimpses of the sun. Trees' leaves are beginning to change colour while hips and haws are turning red. The 3rd is a late summer's day when I walk with Murphy round the lake at Bluewater. Flowers and grasses are beginning to look very tired and as the month progresses when I walk in this area, the leaves on the trees along the banks of the lake and on the steep chalk faces display beautiful colours of red, orange and yellow. The nuts on the hazels ripen and the grasses become the colour of straw. At the beginning of the month I still see a variety of flowers: bird's foot trefoil, bristly ox tongue, yarrow, sanfoin, goat's rue, Lucerne, viper's bugloss and clover. The leaves of the willows turn yellow while their stems reveal a deep red. Coots glide on the rippling water which reflects either the blue of the sky or the billowing grey clouds which become more frequent. Canada geese fly overhead and I hear the calls of green woodpeckers as they suddenly emerge from the willow trees ahead of me. We experience cool days but occasionally we are reminded of the few summer days we have enjoyed. On the 9th of the month, butterflies, which have been absent from the garden for many days, return and are a joy to see. Small white butterflies flutter across the flowers and shrubs while red admirals suck nectar from the ivy flowers where bees also congregate. A dragon fly hovers over the garden pond. I watch a squirrel on the grass below the bird feeders as it eats the seed which has dropped down. The little creature's head peeps out from long grasses. Rain falls on 11th but eventually we see some late summer sunshine, the difference being that the evening air is very cool and darkness has fallen by 8.00pm. South westerly winds blow quite frequently during this month, and they bring a variety of conditions: warmth, rain and wind. The 13th was a beautiful, warm day. In the afternoon, I walk to the

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,
Time for the burning of days ended and done,
Idle solace of things that have gone before,
Rootless hope and fruitless desire are there;
Let them go to the fire with never a look behind.
That world that was ours is a world that is ours no more

They will come again, the leaf and the flower to arise
From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,
And magical scents to a wandering memory bring;
The same glory to shine upon different eyes.
Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.
Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

village through Mays Wood then along Bush road to the alley. I cross golden fields and up to the wood where I see ripe haws, old man's beard, ripening blackberries, hips and pigeons gathering seeds from the field which has been harvested. At the top of the hill I sit on the bench and watch a dragonfly hovering to and fro. I continue along the path and turn in to May's Wood which is quite dark. I appreciate the peace of the surrounding countryside. Eventually I cross Church Fields where, along the hedgerows, hips, haws, sloes and spindle berries have ripened. The fields beyond the sparkling river are golden with strips of green and the warm sunshine beams down from a blue sky brushed with feathery clouds. There is a beautiful sunset in the evening. Comma butterflies come to the garden on 15th. The next day I have a pleasant surprise for a goldfinch comes to the garden something which has not occurred for a long time. Since then, others have been sampling the niger seed. On 18th north west winds are bringing a chill to the air, definite signs of Autumn. The next day, I notice hawthorn leaves and young elm leaves are beginning to change colour and the ash keys are turning brown. By 21st darkness has descended by 7.20pm. Rain falls throughout the morning of 24th and into the afternoon when strong winds blow causing the branches of lilac and sycamore to bend and bow. The rain eventually ceases and in the latter part of the afternoon a pale sun shines from a sky veiled in high cloud. Watch birds come to the feeders; robin, goldfinch, magpies, collared doves, white doves, great tits, blue tits, and greenfinches. A tiny white feather twirls in the air, finally landing on the grass. Holly berries in the garden are turning red. Evening skies become clear and bright before the light begins to fade. The next day I decide to walk to the fields after visiting the library. I haven't gone far when it begins to rain but I'm determined to continue. I walk along the

path to Purty's Shaw where I see bright red hips and haws. The rain is quite heavy but I continue along the overgrown path on Six Acre Field. By the time I reach the churchyard, the rain has ceased and the sun shines brightly as I make my way home. After another day of rain the 27th is quite different. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. A westerly wind drives billowing grey and white clouds across the sky. A coot glides across the rippling water. Leaves are gradually changing colour: beeches, hazels, and oaks, while grasses protect bristly ox tongue flowers and white and pink clover bloom along the edge of the grassy paths. I see a few lucerne flowers and one tiny clump of viper's bugloss. Squirrels have feasted on the

hazel nuts, no longer see any on the branches. In the evening, there is a beautiful sunset with salmon pink clouds. The holly tree in the garden is bearing a wealth of berries. The next day, a young rabbit hops across my path when I am in Addington. On 29th, I heard a great tit's song while I was out in the garden and it reminded me of the songs I hear in the Spring. The 30th is a chilly, dry day with pale sunshine and variable cloud. I walk to church in the morning when I'm aware of a chill in the air. The afternoon remains dry and bright. White pigeons come to feed in both the front and back gardens. Darkness falls about 7 15pm. Elizabeth Summers.

Quotations

(from Jürgen Moltmann *From Physics to Theology – A Personal Story* published in *Science & Christian Belief* October 2012).

According to Plato, wonder is the beginning of all knowledge and truth is beautiful. According to the Jewish-Christian tradition fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom. If wonder over the phenomena of nature converges with reverence before the great mystery of the whole world, the outcome is a humble search for truth and unending joy at its discovery.

Confucius: Better than knowing the truth is loving the truth. Better than loving the truth is rejoicing in the truth.



Halling WI

Our September meeting had to be another "do it yourself" evening as once again our speaker let us down.

Margaret set the ball rolling and we sang Jerusalem. Half of our members say they can't sing. Don't believe them. They make a jolly good sound for so few. Minutes were read and signed. Correspondence this month was varied. The W.I. has now got a new website. (When will the National Federation understand that not all members are computer literate?) We had updates on Midwives, Dairy Farmers, and Libraries. Confirmation regarding the 95th anniversary celebrations at the Friars in 2013, and the forthcoming District Conference at Ryarsh.

We have a gem of a member called Jemma who had come up with the idea of letting us play with cup-cakes. Last month we played with dough. So why not cup-cakes? Jemma had made loads of cup-cakes for us, all undecorated, and lots of decorations, pumpkins, spiders, sheep, pigs, flowers, something of all sorts. We had icing sugar, sugar paste of all colours, fancy cutters,

icing bags, and----ready made shop bought butter cream and even I had to admit it was pretty good and even tasted nice and piped the cakes easily. I think the artist came out in everyone. We ended up with some pretty good cakes. Eat your heart out Mary Berry. Everyone enjoyed it and Jemma had even thought of how we could get the cakes home without spoiling them, a little bag for every cake. As we had two visitors, they judged the competitions. I won the flower of the month with a big Begonia, but for the life of me I can't remember who won the something beginning with the letter H. We had hack saws, houses, horses, handbags and hats.

October, we are keeping our fingers crossed, we should be having Mr Porter, his subject, Suffragettes. The competition letter is I. Oh dear, not much beginning with I. One bright spark says she is going to bring an ice cube, more likely to be a bottle of ink if she can find one. We shall see. So with two new members things may be looking up. Phyllis.

Joke: "What is that gardener putting on his rhubarb, Mummy?" "Manure, dear." "That's funny, Mummy; we have custard on ours!" "Shall we have rhubarb pie for tea, Mummy?" "I haven't got a long enough pie dish, dear!"



Cuxton WI

I couldn't believe when I put in the date that it is October already. You get the feeling that we are still all waiting for the summer to come but I feel that we must try to enjoy a beautiful Autumn instead. Well the WI have been busy as Usual. Pat is trying to get members to give in their favourite recipes as she would like to draw up a new WI cookery book for us all to enjoy and to help with funds. This month it might have included chicken recipes as our speaker was a chicken fancier. Martin Gurdon gave us a very jolly evening as he told us of his various travails whilst trying to bring up the many chickens that he had acquired. After all the laughter we realised that chicken keeping is not as straight forward as it may seem and he seemed to spend a great deal of his time and money on and at the local vets! Then it was down to business as usual. The craft group are busy making pin cushions and Christmas runners which I am sure will be lovely when we see them on display in January. June is trying to get us to "do"

something involving 95 things - anything at all not just craft items. The walking group felt that they could mange about 95 steps but 95 miles was a bit too much! Talking about the walkers they enjoyed a visit and walk inside the Sikh Temple {Gurdwara} in Gravesend last month which was a unique experience for us.

There are plans afoot for a visit to see *Top Hat* in London possibly in March which should be enjoyable as we went to the *Lion King* last year and had a good time. All the clubs are doing well and getting ready for the Christmas season. We do run a lot - Poetry, Water and China Painting, Cookery, Drama, Craft and Home Economics. So if you feel like joining us come along and try us out. We shall be very pleased to see you.

Our next Meeting is on Thursday November 1st at 7 30pm in the Church Hall and is about how Victorian History has been distorted - sounds interesting. Sheila.



Mothers Union – Cuxton and Halling Branch.

We continue to meet on the third Wednesday of every month at 10.45 in the church hall and everyone is welcome to join us. This year so far we have had fun in a variety of ways – a pilgrimage to the cathedral (by car!) for Evensong with other members in the diocese. About 200 members in all gathered there, coming from the three archdeaconries, some arriving by coach. It was a great occasion. We also had our annual trip to Herne Bay for a fish and chip supper by the sea. It was luckily a fine evening weather wise. At our monthly meetings we have heard about Jenny and Chris Beaney's experiences on a sailing holiday with one of their sons and his family; and played Channel Islands Cricket; and we repeated this for children in August. Elizabeth often leads us in prayer and gives us food for thought from Eddie Askew's books. We also went to Chris Beaney's Bakery at Snodland for a tour of the bakery and to make our own mini loaves – followed by lunch in the coffee rooms – another fun time! This month (October) Mary Pitt is coming to tell us about her experiences when stewarding at 2012 Olympic Games.

On Saturday December 15th, we are going to have an All Age Christmas Soirée in the church hall and everyone is welcome to join us. So put the date in your diary and come along. You will all be very welcome. Shirley.

Social Committee

On 29th November there is to be a Philippines themed evening in the church hall. This is in aid of supporting our CMS link mission partners, Paul and Charitas Cho, working in the Philippines. Please support this if you can as we didn't have our usual events for CMS this summer (coffee morning, afternoon tea and cheese and wine evening) due to us having a busy year with all the events happening in 2012. We hope to have photos and maybe a DVD or two about the Cho family and/or the Philippines in general, plus appropriately themed refreshments, news from the Philippines, etc. So please be there if you can. Shirley.

Michaelmas and Harvest

It was a joy to welcome Canon Alan Vousden to preach on our Patronal Festival at Cuxton, also to enjoy the lunch and the exhibition in the church hall. Just one week later we celebrated Harvest in our two beautifully decorated churches and with a scrumptious Harvest Supper. We thank all those who worked so hard to make both events possible.

30th September
30th September

Baptisms
Finley Jacob Bullen
Mikey Mark Stapleton

Strood
Hanes Dene

Cuxton's 1st Welly Walk raises £575.00 for Motor Neurone Disease

On the 7th of October at 2pm an enthusiastic team of helpers gathered at Cuxton Church Hall to launch Cuxton's first 2km 'Welly Walk', raising money for local people living with Motor Neurone Disease. After months of planning, the day had finally arrived and with a positive weather forecast, the team members were in high spirits and ready to welcome their Welly Walkers. As 2pm approached our volunteer marshals were positioned throughout the picturesque countryside trail, waiting to encourage the walkers on their way. Outside the Church Hall, tables were prepared to register our walkers, provide a route map and offer a free bottle of water. Additionally participants could find further information about the condition provided by Sheila Thompson from the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

We were overjoyed by the support of the community as people arrived ready to walk for such a worthy cause. On their return every walker was handed a certificate and a goody bag which contained flyers relating to MND, local business cards and a few sweets for their efforts.

Overall the event was a great success with approximately 90 Welly Walkers attending and raising a substantial amount for a worthwhile cause. We would like to thank St Michael's Church for its support and free use of the Church Hall and for the backing of local businesses including Topiary's, Rabbit Hutch Printing, The Co-op, Enigma Hairdressing, Golden River, G & M Robinson, The Newsagents Cuxton and The White Hart. We would like to thank personally Tom Cooper, Robert Healey, Matthew Dartnell and Roger Widdecombe for their extra contribution in fundraising and support.

Please make a note in your diary as this will be an annual event for the community of Cuxton. We look forward to seeing you in 2013!



Something to Look Forward To

We welcome the new Dean of Rochester – the Very Reverend Mark Beach – to preach at our 9.30 and 11.00 services on 25th November – the Feast of Christ the King.

Forthcoming Attractions 2012

October 27th: 2.00 Sale of Work Halling Church.

November 25th: 9.30 & 11.00 services Dean of Rochester to preach.

November 29th: 7.30 Philippines Themed Evening in church hall.

December 7th: WI District Carol Service at St Michael's.

December 8th: Christmas Minimarket Church Hall 10.00.

December 15th: 7.30 All Age Christmas Soirée in church hall.

Cuxton Community Infants School

Dear Friends of our School,

We have celebrated Harvest in school this month. The children confidently performed songs and poems to their parents. We were all so proud of them. We collected donations of food for the Medway charity, Caring Hands who provide around 250 meals and snacks each day for the homeless people living in the Medway area. The charity were so pleased and grateful for the amount donated, particularly as their organisation had noticed a drop in donations in this currently difficult financial climate.

We held a Maths Week in October, which began with a Maths Puzzle Challenge day, which involved a company coming into school to carry out different activities with the children. Afterwards parents were invited to come into school for a puzzle session to see what the children had been doing throughout the day. We also welcomed parents into school for Reading and Maths workshops. The meetings focused on how parents can help their child with reading and maths, and how we teach these subjects in school.

Parents were then able to tour the school to see reading and maths 'in action'.

October also saw our annual Environment day. All the children were involved in spending the day outside, digging, clearing and planting, and looking after our grounds. Parents kindly sent in donations of plants and bulbs and children enjoyed themselves immensely. If you have a chance, do look at the video of photographs on our website at www.cuxtoninfantschool.co.uk.

At the end of November we have a company called Wise Moves coming into school to talk to the children about the Hindu festival of Diwali. They will be hosting some workshop sessions, which will include Bollywood dancing, drama and story telling. Sadly this day is not for parents, but I am sure the children and staff will have a good time!

That's all our news for now, and the next time I write we will already be thinking about Christmas!

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Jones, Headteacher, Cuxton Community Infant School.

Food For Thought

I see from today's (12th October) "Times" that Professor Marcus du Sautoy is presenting the Queen, in honour of her diamond jubilee, with a new shape which "corresponds to an elliptical curve of conductor 20779051082713382720". I have to confess that I don't even know what this means, but from our point of view it is stated to have two significant characteristics: that it will last for ever and that it is not possible for this shape to be assumed by any physical substance.

If these two points are correct, mathematical truths exist quite apart from the physical world and they exist independently of the conceptual apparatus (or minds) of time bound mortals. Mathematics then would have to be more than merely a tool of science or the invention of ingenious human beings. If this is so, there is such a thing as truth independent of any physical universe.

I suppose that if we think minds or souls are eternal and ultimately independent of the brain and body, this shape could exist eternally in mathematicians' minds. Equally if we believe in an eternal God, this shape could exist in His Mind eternally. Or could it just exist in itself, independent of any physical substance or any being to comprehend its existence? Would that make any less sense than the assumption which many people make that the physical universe exists in itself with no need for an explanation outside of itself?

Or then again du Sautoy could be wrong and his shape might have no existence outside his own mind and the minds of those people whom he manages to convince of its existence.

What do you think? The reason I care so much is that many people talk as if there were no such thing as absolute truth. Such a view has the merit of promoting a lazy tolerance of other peoples' opinions, but if you think it through logically, it fatally undermines science, religion and ethics and has pretty drastic consequences for art and literature. Roger.

Attempting the Contradictory

Every week on *Any Questions* it seems that there is a debate about education. Both sides always seem to agree that the twin aims of our school and university system are equality and excellence. The more I think about it, however, the more I wonder whether these two aims are incompatible? If you want excellence, you devote resources to those pupils and students who are the keenest and brightest. If you want equality you concentrate on the needs of the students who are having the most difficulties or who are just not interested in school subjects. If you share out your teaching and other resources equally, the brightest and most industrious children will get the best results.

This debate is often conducted in the context of fairness. On the one hand, it is stated that it is unfair if children born to unambitious parents, living in poverty on tough estates in the catchment area of sink schools are condemned by poor examination results to a life of low grade employment or living on benefits. On the other hand, it is equally pointed out that it is unfair on those children who want to learn and the

teachers who work so hard to teach them if lessons are held back to the pace of the slowest or disrupted by the behaviour of children who don't really want to be in school at all.

If you get your children out of the *bog standard comprehensive* by paying for your children to be educated privately or by buying a house in the catchment area of a good school, that is unfair on the children of parents who are unable to do these things or choose not to. On the other hand, it seems unfair that if you are prepared to spend money and effort on your children's education, politicians and bureaucrats then so manipulate the system (e.g. by lotteries for school places or bussing as they did in America) that your children receive no advantage over the children of parents who can't be bothered.

If even bright children from poor homes can escape a *bog standard* education by passing an examination at 11 or some other age, even that turns out to be unfair on the children who were ill on the day of the exam, late developers and those whose homes do not contain books and educational computer programs. But if the system takes away such ladders for the few, everybody from the sink estate fails instead of just most people.

Maybe there is no fair way to organise education, no system that will promote both equality and excellence.

To take another example, politicians of both major parties often talk about the importance of local democracy, of giving people a real say on the way their communities are run. They also talk about the importance of building new infrastructure – roads, railways and airports – new housing and new industrial premises. Now the plain fact is that very few people want to live next door to an airport, main railway line, motorway or factory or even to see housing estates spring up on the open land around their towns and villages. So, probably, we either have to override local democracy or decide to forego new roads, railways, airports, factories and housing estates.

Finally, there is the issue of welfare reform. It is easy to say that the state should support the deserving poor and let the undeserving poor starve if they won't work. But two questions. How can you tell the difference between the deserving and the undeserving? The workhouse system was the result of trying. Moreover would you really be prepared to see the lazy and the irresponsible starve? And their families?

I'm also sceptical about the notion of making work always pay better than living on benefits. Employers at the bottom end of the market will never pay much above the cost of living – especially when there are young, single migrant workers from Eastern Europe willing to take the jobs. However, obviously the level of benefits has to be set at at least the cost of living. So the person in the low paid job is very little better off than the person on benefits and may well be worse off if he has dependents to support.

How about taking away benefits such as free buses from pensioners who can afford to pay their own bus fares? Or, to put it another way, how about the state paying the bus fares of those who either never worked or else squandered all their earnings, while denying help to those who worked hard all their lives and saved?

The sound bites are easy, but the policy decisions are much harder. Would our democracy be healthier if we and the politicians who represent us were more honest about what is possible? Roger.



Max's Tail Piece

I too enjoyed the MNDA Welly Walk – not that I wore wellies. It was a beautiful sunny, autumn afternoon to walk up across the fields and through the woods. There were plenty of other people, including lots of quite young children. Lolly came too and so did some other dogs. Everybody seemed in a very happy mood and I think all of us, dogs and people, had a thoroughly enjoyable time. I'm glad to see that there is going to be another one next year.

Master always says that he is surprised at how many people suffer from Motor Neurone Disease, which is supposed to be very rare. His own sister was one. It is a dreadful disease and it would be wonderful if they could find a way to prevent or cure it. The MND Association, the NHS and hospices can do a great deal to help people with MND and it is astonishing, Master thinks, how brave people can be who've got it. They don't have to start planning trips to Switzerland. There is a lot of support and that £575 will be well spent.