

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
October 31 st All Saints Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 1-18 p892 Ephesians 1 vv 11-14 p1173 Luke 6 vv 20-31 p1034
Tuesday November 2 nd All Souls	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Romans 5 vv 5-11 p1132 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
November 7 th 3 rd Before Advent Shoeboxes for Blythswood	9.30 Family Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
November 14 th 2 nd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Malachi 4 vv 1&2 p962 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
November 21 st Christ the King	8.00 Holy Communion	Collect, Epistle & Gospel BCP Last After Trinity.
	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060
November 28 th Advent Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994
December 5 th Advent 2 Gift Service	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
October 31 st All Saints Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 1-18 p892 Ephesians 1 vv 11-14 p1173 Luke 6 vv 20-31 p1034
Tuesday November 2 nd All Souls	9.30 Holy Communion	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070
November 7 th 3 rd Before Advent Shoeboxes for Blythswood	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 8 vv 31-39 p1135 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p992
	11.00 Holy Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
November 14 th 2 nd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion	Malachi 4 vv 1&2 p962 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
	5.30 Evening Prayer (tea 4.30) Jubilee Hall	Daniel 6 vv 1-28 p890 Matthew 13 vv 1-23 p978
November 21 st Christ the King	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060
November 28 th Advent Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994
December 5 th Advent 2 Gift Service	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Kings 18 vv 17-39 p359 John 1 vv 19-28 p1063
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967

Wednesdays 9.30 HC Cuxton		Thursdays 9.30 HC Halling	
November 3 rd	Philippians 2 vv 12-18 Luke 14 vv 25-33	November 4 th	Philippians 3 vv 3-8 Luke 15 vv 1-10
November 10 th	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	November 11 th	Philemon vv 7-20 Luke 17 vv 20-25
November 17 th	Revelation 4 Luke 19 vv 11-28	November 18 th	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
November 24 th	Revelation 15 vv 1-4 Luke 21 vv 12-19	November 25 th	Revelation 18 & 19 to v9 Luke 21 vv 20-28

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

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton on the last Wednesday of each month also at 2.00. **Saints Alive!** (formerly Sunday School) is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

Copy Date December Magazine: 12th November 8.30 am Rectory.



Sad Times

In these last few months we have experienced a good deal of sadness, with family and friends and members of the congregation suffering from serious illnesses and some of them dying. It is a difficult time for us all. Someone said how much we shall miss certain familiar faces at our church services and other events. We certainly shall.

And yet we ought to be rejoicing that they are now in a better place, a place where love and joy and beauty and worship are perfect, where there is no more pain or suffering, and where they are forever in the presence of God and of His angels and of the souls of just men made perfect, including those whom they knew and loved on earth and had previously lost, maybe many years earlier.

Their membership of our Church was always meant to be a preparation for their eternal life in Christ. If they have now left us (for a time) and entered into Heaven and their fellowship with us has helped them to find the Way, then we have done our duty as a Church. This is what we are here for – to magnify God's Holy Name by sharing His Love with the world, working with Him to bring men, women and children into the full knowledge of His Glory. We are privileged to play a part in the salvation of souls and we should be thankful when this work of salvation is complete in our loved ones and in all the members of the Church.

Of course we miss those whom we love, but see no more. Of course we grieve. We should be very strange people if we did not miss our loved ones and mourn their passing. There is, however, a great deal in what one of my old junior school teachers used to say. "We are really sad for ourselves, not for our loved ones who have gone to Heaven."

When I did the Friends of Kent Churches cycle ride this year, I called at Southfleet Church, where my father sang in the choir as a boy, where my sister was christened and where my mother used to take me when I was a child. I also visited Southfleet Congregational Church (now URC) which was my grandmother's church and the place she took me to evening service and the place where I attended the infant Sunday School. Later on (having eventually extricated myself from the

vortex of Bluewater) I got to Northfleet where my father's aunt used to attend the URC I called at in Dover Road, and her husband and children went to the Roman Catholic Church on the Hill which I also visited. For reasons of time and economy, I bypassed Pier Road Pentecostal Church where one of my father's uncles was a regular attender and another was the pastor. In other years on the cycle ride, I have visited St Matthew's Wigmore, responsible for my formation as an older child and a young adult; Durham Road Evangelical Free, where I enjoyed Christian fellowship with a number of friends when I was a teenager; and Frindsbury Church, where I was myself baptised, my parents were married and also my mother's parents. It seems a bit sad that my family and friends worshipped in so many different denominations, but the point is that they all worshipped and it is very much more sad that so many people do not seem to belong to any Church at all.

Most of those people have been dead a long time, but most of them also prayed for us all when they were alive and are, I am sure, waiting for us in Heaven when our time on earth is over.

When I think about it, it is so very sad that many of these churches now struggle to survive. Among the churches I crossed off on my list were the Swanscombe church which has now been converted into flats and St James, Gravesend, which was demolished probably thirty odd years ago. And yet there is no shortage of customers for Bluewater on Sundays. Which is really the better way to spend our time? Worshipping God, sharing in Christian fellowship, hearing God's Word and participating in the Body and Blood of Christ? Or shopping to satisfy our bodily needs and even our lust and greed? I should think the answer is so obvious, but evidently it is not at all obvious to many thousands of people – themselves each one made in the image of God, for every one of whom Christ died on the Cross.

Life in this world is good. There is so much to enjoy. It is hard when people die and it seems harsh when they die young, especially when they die in great pain or having lost their faculties and perhaps their dignity. We ask why these things happen. It is human to want to know reasons. This is how humanity has advanced. But often the reasons for sickness and early death defeat us.

We get a lot of advice on how to live healthily, but the recommendations mostly have regard to risk factors. You may be more likely to die young if you don't exercise, eat the wrong things, smoke and drink too much. But not necessarily. You can do all the right things and still contract cancer or have a heart attack or stroke. On the other hand, some people disregard all the advice and live long and healthy lives. Health advice is generally a matter of probability rather than certainty. There are no guarantees that, by following medical advice, you will live a long time. I don't think doctors will ever discover a way to make us live for ever. I certainly hope not! Just think about it.

We also look for moral reasons. It seems wrong to us that good people suffer and bad people so often seem to prosper. It doesn't work out in any simple way that people obviously get what they deserve.

We demand reasons, but we can seldom find them.

I cling on to two thoughts. The first is that God knows what He is doing. I can and do pray that things might be different from what they are, that such and such a person may experience a miracle cure. But often no such thing happens and the disease seems inexorably to follow a predictable course. I can't agree with naïve liberals who think they get God off the hook by claiming that He cannot or will not intervene in the world to contradict the Laws of Science which He created. Neither can I go along with naïve conservative religious people who try to blame all evil on Satan or humanity. The Bible is quite clear that God is in charge of Nature, the Devil and human hearts. He is omnipotent and omniscient (all-powerful and all-knowing). Nothing happens outside of His Providence. I do not and cannot know why He allows suffering, especially innocent suffering, but I do believe that He is all loving and all powerful and that He knows what He is doing. The only truly innocent Man Whoever lived, Jesus, suffered horribly, but it was through His suffering that God accomplished the salvation of the world. So I pray and I trust God for this life as well as for the next.

God is in control. It would be appalling and terrifying if we thought that things just happened by chance or merely in accordance with

impersonal, uncaring scientific laws or that the Devil or human beings could somehow thwart God's loving purposes. Everything and everyone exists in the loving Hands of God.

And so to my second thought. Real as this world seems to us, it is all a preparation for the world to come. Our eternal destiny as human beings is to spend eternity with God. For all its wonders and joys, what we are experiencing now is necessarily temporary. It is only meant to last a lifetime. We are being prepared for eternity in the presence of God. This is our true destiny. It is what we were made for. Life in Heaven is the fulfilment of our lives on earth. The good things of the material world are to be received with thanksgiving. They are the gift of God. But they are to be received, used and enjoyed in the light of eternity.

This is why human lives are so impoverished when they are lived only for the material, the everyday, the humdrum. It is not just that spiritual things are infinitely more important than the things of this world. The fact is that the things of this world can only be properly appreciated and understood in the light of eternity.

Yes, we will miss those whom we love but see no longer. Yes, our Church will be very different for their passing. We are sad to lose them for the present but I hope we have the grace to rejoice with them that they are now in Heaven. The question is, how are we going to fill their shoes? We do not know how long we have left on earth, but what are we going to do with that time? Are we going to use it to glorify God by sharing His Love in worship, witness, edification of the Church, and generous service to the world? Or are going to be so tangled in the affairs of this passing age that we lose sight of the things of eternity? Will our churches follow St James Gravesend to oblivion and will the coming generations in Cuxton and Halling have no one to pray for them, no one to teach them the Way to God, no one to share with in public worship? Conscious of the debt we owe to those who have gone before us in the faith, I hope we shall play our part in this generation in preparing the way for those who will come after us.

Will we, as we pray, so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal?
Roger.

**Hand Knitted
Winter Woollies
Sale
and
Coffee Morning
at**

**St John's Church
on
Saturday 27th November at
10 o'clock.**

In aid of Church Funds

THE CONFESSION PRAYER OF THE CHORISTER

Almighty and most merciful Conductor;
We have erred, and strayed from thy beat like lost sheep;
We have followed too much the devices and tempos of our own parts;
We have offended against thy pronunciation laws;
We have left unsung those notes which we ought to have sung;
And we have sung those notes which we ought not to have sung;
And there is no intonation in us.
But thou, O Conductor, have mercy upon us, miserable singers.
Spare thou them that have lost their music;
Restore thou them that have forgotten the signature;
And grant, O most merciful maestro, that we may hereafter live an
allegro moderate, un poco andante life;
To the glory of thy choir's Name.
Amen.

No Need For God? – Trinity 16

Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922, I Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192, Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050

Stephen Hawking has announced that it is no longer rational to believe in God because modern Physics can explain the origin of the Universe. His logic seems to run something like this. Human beings always want things explained. This, indeed, is the impetus behind Science. When we run out of explanations for things, we resort to God to fill in the gaps in our understanding. So, the more we understand the world, the less need we have for God. For some time now physicists have held that the Universe originated in a Big Bang, but have had no satisfactory explanation of what caused the Big Bang. Accordingly, some people have been inclined to say that it must have been God who caused the Big Bang. Now, Hawking argues, we can see how the laws of Science could have themselves created the Universe without any need for a personal Creator and that, therefore, there is no God.

Hawking's logic breaks down on that last point. It may well be that modern Physics can explain how the scientific laws we already know about might (perhaps inevitably) create a universe or even a multiplicity of universes. There are very few people in the world today who sufficiently understand what Hawking is talking about and even they disagree among themselves about the viability and implications of the theories in question. There is no reason in principle, however, why Science should not explain the physical mechanisms behind the Big Bang. Over the millennia, human beings have come to understand many things that were previously complete mysteries or even entirely unknown. Discovering things and explaining things is an important part of what it is to be human. Dare I say that this is the way God made us?

Anyway, while it may be true, that one day human beings will be able to explain how the Big Bang happened in terms of the laws of Physics, we should still be left with a huge gap – if we want one. Where did the laws of Physics come from? Almost everything we know about, nearly everything we experience, everything we can see and touch and measure with scientific instruments, depends on something else. Something made it. Someone begat it. Something

explains it. Ultimately we have to believe that there is an infinite regression of causation – that everything is caused by something right back to infinity, or else we have to believe that something just is, that something simply exists without any cause. You can believe that matter and energy just are, that the universe Physics describes simply is, without any other cause or explanation. Most people, however, believe that God is the ultimate cause and that everything else depends for its existence on Him. What you cannot prove scientifically is which of these two ideas is true. Either the physical universe has no cause outside itself or it is caused by something or Someone outside itself, but there is no observation you can make or experiment you can carry out which would decide the issue one way or the other. You can guess. You can attempt an informed hypothesis. You might have faith or belief one way or the other. You might turn to the resources provided by Philosophy, Theology and maybe the humanities. But you cannot prove scientifically whether or not God exists and whether or not God is necessary for the existence of the Universe we inhabit. So Hawking has not closed the final gap in our human understanding of the universe and thereby rendered God even an unnecessary hypothesis. He has certainly not disproved the existence of God. Explain the how questions and you are still left with Why?

However, what we mean by God is something infinitely bigger and better than a convenient explanation for what we cannot otherwise explain. *God of the gaps* is an insult to God and to what human beings mean by God. The evidence of archaeology and anthropology is that humans beings have always been religious. We humans have always related to the spiritual. Belief in God never has been simply a scientific or philosophical theory, an idea which could be disproved or become outdated or redundant as human knowledge advances. Children growing up naturally absorb religious ideas. Humanity is naturally religious. The Christian explanation for this is that we are made in the image of God. We are made to be loved by God. We are made to love God back and therefore to love one another.

Our readings today bring out some of the implications of what it means that human beings are religious. St Paul talks about prayer. Prayer for human beings is as natural as breathing. Prayer makes sense of our lives. Praying, we find the resources to manage. He speaks about giving thanks. Our natural response to the world around us is wonder. We see the Universe and we praise the Creator. He speaks about prayer for those in authority. Our social order as human beings is intimately bound up with our faith. Rulers are agents of God. They are answerable to Him for how they rule. We owe them our loyalty because, how ever imperfectly, they represent the rule of God. It is in religion that we find meaning and purpose for our lives. Ultimate Truth is to be found in God, not just scientific truth, but the truths of Philosophy and the Arts, the truths of beauty, order, wisdom, law and every other aspect of human enquiry and endeavour. Faith is a relationship, a relationship of love between the individual believer and God Himself. Religion encompasses everything in this world, but this world is only a fraction of all that there truly is. Faith is about salvation; it is about a union with God, which is not merely for this Universe but for all eternity: eternal love; ineffable, eternal joy in the presence of God in communion with all those who love Him. Amos speaks about justice and mercy, about concern for the poor and needy. Religion provides the framework in which we are called to live this life and prepares us for the life which is to come. Today's Gospel reading is pretty mysterious, but it too speaks about the stewardship of this world's things (the things which Science investigates) in the light of the true riches of eternity. Whatever else we can say about the Parable of the Unjust Steward, it does describe us as *the children of light*.

In I Corinthians 8, St Paul speaks of the knowledge which puffeth up and the charity (or love, *αγάπη*) which edifieth. There is a human approach to knowledge which leads a person who think he's clever to disparage others and to despise God. Such knowledge is destructive of the community and of religion and of the *cultured despiser* himself. Love, however, builds up. It edifies. Love (or charity, *αγάπη*) builds faith. It builds community. It builds us up as human beings. Paul goes on "But if any man love God, the same is known of him." As we are perfected in Christ, so we come to know God as He knows us. So we come to know all things. Knowledge (Science) is not opposed to faith. Faith brings us through love to knowledge. Only a few people like Stephen Hawking can understand Physics, but absolutely anyone can come to the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Volunteers Needed To Work in Prison

Prison Fellowship England and Wales (www.prisonfellowship.org.uk) help local Christian communities respond to the needs of prisoners, young offenders, their families and communities through local groups, training and programmes in prisons and today we are launching our national campaign to recruit more volunteers.

Volunteers are at the heart of our charity and our mission of 'seeing lives transformed'. Together we seek to restore all those affected by crime through prayer, practical action and values-based programmes: Sycamore Tree, Angel Tree, Letter Writing and Prayer Groups.

Stamps Required for Charity

Cuxton & Halling Scout Group are collecting used or mint postage stamps for Guide Dogs for the Blind and OCD UK. We should be grateful for any British or foreign stamps. Please cut off envelope carefully with a margin of about ¼". They can be dropped off at the Scout Hall or at 11, Ladywood Rd. We are hoping to send some for Christmas, but would value your continued support. Thank you.

From The Registers

Baptisms:

26 th September	Oliver Robert Knight	Strood
26 th September	Sophie Louise Penney	Barn Meadow

Weddings:

18 th September	Billy Mark Pullen & Catrina Evans	Cuxton
9 th October	Matthew Philip Lee & Charlene Ridley	Halling
10 th October	Ross Neil Bullen & Vicky Buckingham	Cuxton

Funerals:

16 th September	Irene Maud Marie O'Neill (73)	Leybourne
27 th September	Ida Rose Self (83)	Hayley Close
27 th September	Winifred Bertha Ledger (89)	Downsland House
28 th September	Joyce Winifred Smith (73)	Woodhurst Close
29 th September	Raymond Lewis Foster (89)	Bush Road
7 th October	Rosina Lilian Mepstead (86)	Ladywood Road

Jerry Baker RIP

It is one year now that Jerry my husband passed away. I miss him a lot and wish I could talk to him. He was a kind and helpful man and loved animals and nature very much. He was born in Upper Halling, worked and lived here all his life. I also would like to thank all the friends I have made since returning to Church for their kindness, help and understanding to me. Thank you all. Hanna Baker.

Remembering the Departed

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 Tuesday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St John the Baptist's Church Halling and at 7.30 pm at St Michael and 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 or other members of your family or friends 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.



There is the usual shoe box appeal this year for Blythwood. We shall be collecting the boxes at services on 7th November. There will be leaflets in church advising people on how best to fill the boxes or go on to the Blythwood web page.



Quiz for Church Funds

30th October, 7.30 pm, Cuxton Church Hall, £6 includes food but not drink. Contact Rector on 717134. Teams 6-8 or come individually and join a team.

Thanks For Your Support In Paying Our Debts

Donations continue to come in towards paying off our parish share debt (£22,000). The hope is that every adult in the parish will donate £5 to keep us financially viable. So far we have collected £986. So there is still a long way to go, but thanks to all those who have donated so far. Any further donations please to rector, treasurer or churchwardens. Any cheques should be payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC*. If you can *Gift Aid* your donation, that adds about 25% to its value.

St John's Church Draw: £5 each to Mrs Parris (53), Mrs Mitchell (62), Mrs Mattingly (66), Mrs Fuller (78), Mrs Waghorn (156) – drawn by Mrs Stevenson.

September Church Hall Draw result: £5 to Renee Barker, drawn by Ray Maisey.

Nature Notes September 2010

The 1st of the month brings glorious late summer sunshine which beams down warmly from a pale azure sky. In the afternoon I walk along Pilgrims Road to the foot of The Warren then climb the steep path either side of which the fields are adorned with marjoram, St Johns wort, vervain and scarlet pimpernel. A beech tree is displaying signs of autumn. I tread the sun dappled paths through Mays Wood then cross the fields where ripe hips, haws and elderberries are on display. Blackberries are ripening. A light north westerly breeze blows across the fields. There is no sign of the cows. A dragonfly hovers over the grasses. The next evening I am aware of a chill in the air. On 3rd we take Murphy to Cobtree Manor Park where the sun shines on the wet grass which sparkles. On our return I notice horse chestnut trees displaying brown leaves and green spiky shells. Two grey days follow reminding me that autumn is upon us. In Cobtree Manor Park on 6th I see knapweed and pink spindle berries and as I walk across the damp grass I notice daisies and selfheal blooming there. In the afternoon dark clouds race across the sky and soon rain is falling. I have just managed to cut the grass. The next day we walk round the lake at Bluewater. We cross the bridge then stop by the nursery windows to let the children see Murphy and they are fascinated by him. On the morning of 8th I walk to the village then return through Six-acre wood to the field where, on the verge, I see a clump of white field pansies, two herb Robert flowers and nipplewort. Spindle berries have developed their beautiful pink hue. I skirt the field then tread the damp paths of Mays Wood where the only sounds to be heard are my footsteps and the drip, drip of water falling from the trees' leaves to the woodland floor. It is dark along the paths because of the arching trees and the overcast sky. As I cross Church Fields where cows are grazing, I'm aware of bright red hips and haws, blackberries and, in one spot, yew berries. There is a brief glimpse of the sun but cloud soon covers it. The 9th is a warm, sunny day with just one shower in the afternoon. I gaze at a billowing white cloud, set against a bright blue sky, as it slowly changes shape. Dark clouds build up from the west in the middle of the afternoon and rain falls. On 11th I walk in bright sunshine across Church Fields

where haws, sloes and blackberries display a wealth of ripe fruit. In the field, near Mays Wood, ash keys are beginning to ripen while on the ground speedwell, nipplewort and vervain bloom. The wood is silent as I make my way down to Dean Valley where toadflax, rosebay willowherb, clover, buttercups, rosebay seed heads, wild clematis, hawkweed, red clover, thistle and daisies bloom. Sheep graze on the hill. I continue through North Wood to Bush Valley where crops have been harvested and where flax flowers have been left. I pass a very old beech tree then two large stumps of trees, wonderful havens for insects. Elder leaves are turning red and yellow and hawthorns display a wealth of soft, deep red haws. Old man's beard straddles the hedges. I shelter from a light shower falling from grey skies then climb up the Dean Valley path to skirt the field and walk through Six-acre Wood where a few herb Robert flowers bloom. There are definite signs of autumn in the trees. In the evening there is a golden sunset. I am up early on 15th and watch the sun rise in the east over the trees. Early mornings now bear an autumn chill. In the evening of 18th I listen to blackbirds "pinking" on the embankment. On 20th, a day with warm winds, I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. Along the route I notice sweet chestnut trees bearing plenty of fruit and other trees displaying autumn colours. The wind ripples one of the lakes where we walk. A Canada goose flies overhead. The next day I walk up to the fields and pick some blackberries. Around me are hawthorns heavily laden with deep red haws, scarlet hips dark blue elderberries, bright pink spindle berries and fluffy tendrils of old man's beard. In the evening I watch a skein of calling Canada geese flying up river then they bear right towards marshland. The darkening skies are clear and I listen to roosting rooks. The 22nd is warm and sunny and a gentle wind blows from the south west. Rain falls early on 24th but the sun eventually shines and we walk with Murphy in Cobtree Manor Park where, sadly, horse chestnut trees are showing all the signs of disease. Conkers have fallen early. More rain falls from leaden skies in the afternoon and the temperature drops as winds blow from the north east. On 26th a bracing north west wind drives billowing, grey clouds across the sky as I walk

through Six-acre Wood, round the edge of the stubble field where I see a single dove leaved cranesbill, a buttercup and a clover. I see trees spreading their roots down a wooded bank as if these roots were long toes. Cows graze in Dean Valley and all is silent except

for the wind in the trees. It is exhilarating walking in the wind. Grey days follow then the last morning of the month is misty before it clears to reveal blue skies and warm sunshine. I sit in the garden to take advantage of this warmth. Elizabeth Summers.

An Evening Walk - Andrew Young

I never saw a lovelier sky;
The faces of the passers-by
Shine with gold light as they step west
As though by secret joy possessed,
Some rapture that is not of earth
But in that heavenly climate has its birth.

I know it is the sunlight paints
The faces of these travelling saints,
But shall I hold in cold misprision
The calm and beauty of that vision
Upturned a moment from the sorrow
That makes today tomorrow



Saturday 12 December
10.00am

Christmas Coffee Morning

Cuxton Church Hall



Tuesday 4th January

**Exhibition of Christmas Cribs
Open House**

9, The Street, Upper Halling.

Perverse Power of Prayer

A novice Christian needed a new car, but he thought it was wrong to ask God for material things. So he stole a car and prayed for forgiveness, because he had been told that God would always listen to prayers for forgiveness.

**ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL
"HOW ISRAEL REMEMBERS THE HOLOCAUST"**

A morning with the Ven. Simon Burton-Jones

On Saturday 20th November 2010 from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. at St. Nicholas' Church Rochester

???Any Questions???

Advance Notice.

20th January Next Year.

**Panel to include Mark Reckless, MP for Rochester & Strood; The Very Rev'd Adrian Newman, Dean of Rochester; Rev'd Alan Wharton, Minister Sevenoaks URC & ???
Chairman David Summers**

MND Association A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

Anne Carter, who resides in Halling will be presenting 'A Celebration of Christmas' in the form of drama, comedy and tragedy with a seasonal theme. This will be on 27th November, 7.00pm at St Luke's Church, City Way, Rochester. Tickets are priced at £7 and can be reserved on a 'first come' basis from Pat Salter, 01634 827452. All proceeds will be used by volunteers in the Mid Kent Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association to provide the best possible support for those living locally with MND.

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is the name given to a group of related but widely varying, diseases affecting the motor neurones in the brain and spinal cord. Motor Neurones are the nerve cells that control muscles; hence their degeneration causes weakness and muscle wasting. MND is usually regarded as progressive but the rate of progression varies greatly from person to person and between the three main types of the disease. In the UK it is believed that there are about 6,000 people suffering from MND at any one time.

With thanks for your support, Colin Thompson (Chair Mid Kent Branch MNDA)



Halling WI

Our September meeting was well attended, and after a good rendering of Jerusalem Margaret got down to the business. Oh dear, what a lot of correspondence, or papers at least. The National Federation is responsible for a great amount of deforestation, pages and pages of paper, a questionnaire for this that and the other, and every W.I. in the country (and there are a great number) receive the paper work. Our free sample this month was some sort of skin cream. We all still seem to be about. So it wasn't "vanishing" cream. Christmas dinner was discussed. Yes it is nearing that time again. Five of us wanted to go to the Medieval Cookery evening at Aylesford W.I. Sadly we have heard it has been cancelled. Perhaps it is for the best. By all accounts they cooked up some weird things in the middle Ages, but I would have liked to try it.

Our speaker was Mr McCody. What a funny man! His subject was "The Diary of a Woman

living on the South coast in W.W.2. Could have been any of us. The first half hour Mr McCody told us HIS life story and why he became a writer and publisher. He spent a number of years teaching in a Japanese college, then a few more years in America doing all sorts of things. He met the old lady and her younger sister whose diary he was going to talk about. This woman had kept a diary all her life, even from W.W.1. She wouldn't let him publish them, but after she died, her younger sister said O.K. They are now in the Imperial War Museum in London. Most of us at our W.I. could relate to her stories, even more so because we lived nearer the action here in the Medway Valley. Lily Hesketh thanked Mr McCody and told him how she had been injured by shell fire during the war. Lily had a piece of shrapnel to prove it. After our tea, Mr McCody judged our competitions. Gemma won Flower of the Month but even though Lily hadn't entered the competition she won it with her piece of shrapnel. That truly was a souvenir of W.W.2. Phyllis.

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING

This year's box opening will be held on Thursday November 11th at 11.30 am at the usual place, 204, Bush Road, Cuxton. We will be counting the contents of the home collecting boxes which many of you have. I would be very grateful if the boxes could be dropped in to me before 11th, or they can be given to me at church. I know that some of them get pretty heavy so I am also quite happy to collect them from your houses if you let me know in advance. All are welcome to join us on the day and refreshments will be served. Julia Wells (01634 727424).



Epiphany 2011

I think it was Epiphany 1987 when the power failed on a cold dark night, and a good-sized congregation were each given a candle with which to see to sing the hymns accompanied by a hand-pumped organ in a freezing cold church in order to celebrate the Magi's visit to the infant Christ. I don't know whether it's because we're getting older, softer or less devout, but it is very hard these days to get people to turn out on weekday evenings in Winter. Next year Epiphany falls on a Thursday and I am proposing that we celebrate the festival with our usual 9.30 am Communion at Halling and then at 11.00 am at Cuxton, as we did the Annunciation in 2010. What do you think?

If you agree, we can have our January lunch on Thursday 6th instead of Wednesday 5th. Roger.

Friends of Kent Churches Cycle Ride

Three of us took part this year, raising £380, half each for our parish and FKC to spend on Kent churches generally. Thanks to all our supporters.

Cuxton Parish Church *A Sonnet*

*Upon a spur above the village rests
St Michael and All Angels on the crest.
In view of mother church it stands abreast
The ancient trackway come in from the west.
Its walls of fragstone, flint and Roman tile
Its Norman lancet makes one think awhile
Of bold archangel fighting dragon's guise
In Revelation story's heavy trial.
And at the foot of chancel all askew
The pilgrims' road meanders to and fro
'twixt river and the Downs, and onward through
To Halling, past W. Herne's - seat of Lord Mayor too! -
And t'other way, next Meadway's tidal flow,
To Rochester, the weary palmers go.*

John G Bogg 2007.

St. Michael's Exhibition

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the St. Michael's Exhibition. Thank you also to those who helped me to set it up, especially Dennis Hills, Trudy Fenton-Scott, Mary Morren and Janice Cheesmer. Carole Nunn helped with publicity and sent out an SOS for a tailor's dummy, on which to display a wedding dress. Mounting an exhibition of St. Michael's Church was fun and we worked well as a team, reliving old memories and looking to the future. We had many photographs of weddings and Jo Martin displayed three generations of her family, together with the old family bible and prayer books. The display from the Mothers' Union reflected years of sterling work over the decades and continued by Shirley Crundwell who is a leading light in the Diocesan Mothers' Union.

On the first Saturday of the Exhibition, the children made figures of St. Michael and his angels overcoming the dragon. On the second Saturday, the children made scarecrows for the Harvest Festival Celebrations. A corner was set aside to display much of the recent work done by Saints Alive! (Sunday School).

Looking at old photographs of previous rectors was a great talking point and some elderly members of the congregation can even remember some of them. Marion Tate had old newspaper cuttings of processions from St. Michael's to the Cathedral and Doreen Morley had photographs of Parish Weekends away and Youth Clubs. Buffy Maisey contributed photographs of the many BBQs in the Rector's garden over the years. Floral Art and our flower arrangers have played a big role in the life of St. Michael's and we had many photographs of outstanding displays mounted over the years. After filling one wall up, an offer came in as to whether we wanted 750 more photos! Perhaps another time. We found the scale model of St. Michael's made by Derek Church, which is normally hiding behind the organ.

It was very apt that at the beginning of St. Michael's week we celebrated John Bogg's 20 years of service as musical director of St. Michael's. The photo of members of the present choir with John Bogg look exceedingly young and we quickly placed current photos alongside it. Although many pictures of the Bell Ringers are trapped in people's wedding albums, we consider ourselves fortunate to have such a talented team of ringers. On the evening of John Bogg's "Songs of Praise" in the church, the Bell Ringers rang a quarter peal to honour the occasion.

St. Michael's Week ended with harvest celebrations finalising with the Harvest Supper in the Church Hall. Matthew and Julia Wells provided a wonderful meal with much of the produce coming from their garden and members of St. John's supplied the fruit pies for dessert. There were many photos of social events over the years and these have brought everyone together as one big family.

The exhibition made us realise that we must take more photographs. Over the week we added photographs and it is not too late to contribute because we are putting copies in albums ready for the next exhibition. Your photographs are needed for future archives. Jenny Beaney.

October News from Cuxton Community Infants School

Dear Friends of our School,

The children have settled and it feels like we have been back at school a long time (said in a positive way!). I am so pleased to see our youngest children skipping into school so happily each day. The building work has made such a difference to the Foundation stage area as parents can park buggies under the cover of the canopy on the outside play area and wander into classes, to chat with staff and settle their children. Some of the toddlers want to stay and play too! If you have a child of school age next September, and have not contacted us already, please do. We are holding an open morning and afternoon, in early November.

This coming week we look forward to Harvest celebrations and the Foundation stage Enterprise week. Children have been busy making- painting, collage and printing. The Year 1 and 2 Enterprise week was a great success. So many items were sold, including mini apple crumbles and rocky road, several items of art work and all sorts of jewellery. All made by the children. I hope that the week before half term, all classes will have decided what they are going to purchase with their money raised.

Our Environmental day is now going to take place on October 19th. The children will be digging, planting, tidying the gardens etc. All year groups will be involved. If any folk have cuttings or can make donations of plants and bulbs we would gratefully receive these (at any time during the year). In the afternoon we will be going on a whole school walk up into the woods. We hope to encourage the children outside more, curriculum permitting. I am attending an Eco conference next week to find out how we can be more eco friendly in school. Schools are being encouraged to take this on board too.

The children in years one and two have been thinking about people who help us in the local community. Also about people of importance in our village and their roles. We hope to interview some folk over the next few weeks. Rev Roger Knight is coming into school tomorrow and our year 2 children have thought of some questions to ask him. These range from What time do you get up and what is your favourite lunch to do you have a Sunday school, what is your favourite Bible story and do you wear a uniform like we have to at school? The children are most excited about his interview

We are updating our school website all the time and hope to have more photographs on there of children and their work(with parent permission of course). Today some of the year 2 children have been videoing each other doing PE. They were dribbling balls, learning about attacking and defending, scoring goals, and kicking balls at targets. All had great fun, and the videoing is quite amusing. We plan to watch it tomorrow and be analytical!! (if I can stop them laughing at each other first that is !). That's all from the Infants for now, Sandra Jones. Head teacher.

Twenty Years as Choirmaster

It was during the scout group's annual Scoutana that Roger edged up to me to say that we no longer had an organist and choirmaster at the church. After a short discussion, I agreed to play during services for two weeks whilst he found a replacement and the rest, as they say, is history. I remember fumbling through "All Things Bright and Beautiful" from a piano in the south aisle thinking I could suffer this nervousness for a short while not realising that the congregation were suffering too! I had been dragooned into the choir only in the spring but now I was expected to practise and rehearse the music with them as well. We would have to do our best!

I would like to thank all of you who have supported me in this musical journey. I have friends from both St Michael's and St John's churches who have given backing and encouragement. My thanks go especially to the choir who have resolutely stuck to the job of leading the worship and who have provided each week a professional output of hymns, anthems and canticles, even though our numbers have dropped and none of us are as sprightly as we were. I am accustomed to receive a gift before the carol service from the choir but I received a book on this occasion called "The Classic FM Musical Miscellany" which is a good read and is packed with curious quotes and fascinating facts. The choir here, and also our colleagues at Halling come together for weddings and other special occasions, and I would like to thank them as well for the way they fit into how I do things and also support me in the work of the church.

I would like to express gratitude to everyone for their good wishes at this anniversary, and especially those who, by their friendship, strengthened the family during the illness and death of my mother. What an absolute blessing it is that she saw her great granddaughter Emily before she died and what a great joy this is to us. Thank you very much for the gifts from the congregation and the beautiful cake decorated with a keyboard, (I'll never lose weight) which was so unexpected but very much appreciated. Here's to the next twenty years! John.



Max's Tail Piece

Master's heard that Cuxton residents might soon be asked to fill in a form stating, among other things, what they think is best about the village. I don't suppose dogs will be asked, so I'll make my contribution here. Master would be too modest to write this, but I suggest that you put St Michael's Church as the best thing in Cuxton. It's certainly been here the longest – over 1,000 years. 50 generations of christenings, weddings and funerals of Cuxton people. It's been a bulwark of faith and hope through conquest, war and civil war, plague, pestilence and famine. For centuries it was the main source of welfare and health care for the poor. It provided the first school for all the children of Cuxton. Even if its rectors and people have not always lived up to them, St Michael's has always stood for the highest principles of Justice and Truth. While times change and some of its secular activities (like education and welfare) have been handed over to the state with its ability to raise the necessary funds through taxation, St Michael's continues to stand as a beacon of faith, a place of worship and prayer, evangelism and pastoral care, an inspiration to the whole community.

I asked Master what he thought the best thing about Halling was. He answered "What, you mean, now the 'Plough's' closed?" I'm sure he was joking!

Max, the Rectory Spaniel.