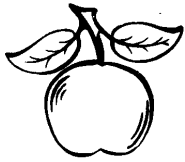


Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton			
Wednesday September 29 th Michaelmas	9.30 Holy Communion	Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064	
October 3 rd Trinity 18 Harvest Festival	9.30 Family Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 II Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1051	
	6.30 Harvest Praise	Deuteronomy 26 vv 1-11 p203 Philippians 4 vv 4-9 p1181	
October 10 th Trinity 19	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	II Kings 5 vv 1-15 p373 II Timothy 2 vv 8-15 p1196 Luke 17 vv 11-19 p1051	
October 17 th Trinity 20	8.00 Holy Communion	BCP Collect, Epistle & Gospel Trinity 20	
	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Genesis 32 vv 22-31 p36 II Timothy 3 v14 – 4 v5 p1197 Luke 18 vv 1-8 p1052	
October 24 th Last after Trinity	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 14 vv 7-22 p772 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Luke 18 vv 9-14 p1052	
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	9.30 Family Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056	
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
October 3 rd Trinity 18 Harvest Festival	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Nehemiah 5 vv 1-13 p489 John 9 vv 1-41 p1075	
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 II Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1051	
October 10 th Trinity 19	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	II Kings 5 vv 1-15 p373 II Timothy 2 vv 8-15 p1196 Luke 17 vv 11-19 p1051	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Nehemiah 6 vv 1-16 p489 John 15 vv 12-27 p1083	
October 17 th Trinity 20	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 32 vv 22-31 p36 II Timothy 3 v14 – 4 v5 p1197 Luke 18 vv 1-8 p1052	
October 24 th Last after Trinity	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 14 vv 7-22 p772 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Luke 18 vv 9-14 p1052	
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	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 8 vv 31-39 p1135 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056	
9.30 Holy Communion Wednesdays @ St Michael's		9.30 Holy Communion Thursdays @ St John's	
Wednesday 6 th William Tyndale	Galatians 2 vv 1-14 Luke 11 vv 1-6	Thursday 7 th	Galatians 3 vv 1-5 Luke 11 vv 5-13
Wednesday 13 th Edward the Confessor	Galatians 5 vv 18-end Luke 11 vv 42-46	Thursday 14 th	Ephesians 1 vv 1-10 Luke 11 vv 47-end
Wednesday 20 th	Ephesians 3 vv 2-12 Luke 12 vv 39-48	Thursday 21 st	Ephesians 3 vv 14-end Luke 12 vv 49-53
Wednesday 27 th	Ephesians 6 vv 1-9 Luke 13 vv 22-30	Thursday 28 th St Simon & S Jude	Ephesians 2 vv 19-end John 15 vv 17-end

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday 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 November Magazine: 15th October 8.30 am Rectory.



Eternal Damnation

When I was writing about the Lord's Prayer for the September magazine, I mentioned the possibility of eternal damnation as one of the evils from which we pray to be delivered. Would it have been better to say that eternal damnation is the evil from which we need to be delivered? Anyway, it occurred to me that eternal damnation is not something we talk about much and, probably, a lot of people don't believe in it anyway. People seem to me to have fairly vague ideas about life after death, either believing that there is no life after death or that any life after death is bound to be quite pleasant, a continuation of our lives in this world, only without pain or taxes. Heavenly rapture and the torments of hell both seem a bit extreme to mild-mannered Englishmen and women.

Obviously you can believe what you like and you may well believe that the God you believe in wouldn't allow anyone to go to hell or to be damned eternally. That's what I would like to believe too, but, I have to ask, on what do you base your belief? Have you invented a god who suits you? Are you the author of your own religion? Or have you picked up your beliefs from family and friends? Did your Church teach you what to believe? Or did you work it out from the Bible or from other sources, or by using your own commonsense? I shouldn't like to think that your beliefs on this important subject were groundless! Or even that they were constructed on shaky foundations.

Some people rely on a caricature in which the God of the Old Testament is vengeful, wrathful and judgmental and Jesus in the New Testament is meek, mild and merciful. This caricature may extend to a belief that the Church (until some time about the middle of the twentieth century) used to terrify people into believing with threats of hell, and then that, quite suddenly, we abandoned all that to become inclusive, all embracing and value free, accepting that nothing really matters and that all or most people will make it to Heaven

irrespective of what they do, how they live or what they believe.

These are, however, caricatures. For a start, the Old Testament says very little about life after death. The focus of the Old Testament is very much on this world. The basic message of the Old Testament is that God is in charge of this world and that things go right in this life when people co-operate with God and that they go wrong when people go against God. It is obviously much more subtle than that and you need to read the Old Testament for yourself, but this is the basic message. There is very little in the Old Testament about what happens to you after you die.

It is Jesus, in the New Testament, Who warns of terrible judgment to come, with the possibility of being "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

So where do these ideas of Heaven and Hell come from? What is the point of them? Most human cultures and religions seem to have some idea of an afterlife – even those which believe that what happens is that you return to this earth as someone or something else (reincarnation). I think it is generally true that most religions hold that what happens to you after you die depends on what you have done. The afterlife is a reward or a punishment for what you have done with this life.

The point of the afterlife from this perspective is justice. As the Old Testament teaches, things tend to go well in this world if people are good, and things go badly when people are evil. But, as the Old Testament well knows, it is often good people who suffer, at least for a time, and evil people who seem, again at least for a time, to get away with it. That seems wrong. It is an outrage. One of the first things we learn when we are young is a sense of justice or fair play. Children very soon complain when things aren't fair. So Abraham demanded, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Our whole sense of morality, our whole sense of our humanity, depends finally on our faith that Justice ultimately prevails.

Judgment after death, punishment for the wicked and vindication for the innocent enable us still to believe that the Universe is ultimately just, even though, in this life, it often looks as if there is no justice. A good person gets a horrible disease. A bad person lives a long and prosperous life. I believe nevertheless that there is justice in time but that often it is pretty rough justice. I also believe, however, that it is all sorted out in eternity.

The Second World War is an example of what I mean. Nazism was evil and the Nazis were defeated eventually. Justice prevailed. However, what about the people who died fighting for the right, the innocent civilians who were bombed, the millions who died in the concentration camps? They didn't live to enjoy the fruits of victory. And what about the Nazi supporters who survived the war, avoided being tried for war crimes and perhaps managed to hang on to their ill gotten gains for many years after the War? Where is the justice in that? There was justice in this world of time and space, the material world, but it was pretty rough justice. I do believe, however, that there is perfect Justice in the spiritual realm, in eternity. I believe that the people who died fighting for right and the innocents who were killed receive justice the other side of the grave, just as I believe that those who got away with it in this life nevertheless face the consequences of their actions in the life to come.

We are often torn, we suppose, between justice and mercy. We can't really envisage a good God dealing out serious punishment, but neither can we think that murders and rapists, concentration camp guards and paedophiles should simply get away with it. It isn't merciful to the victims of evil people to let their tormentors off.

Heaven and Hell are perfectly reasonable concepts because we believe in Justice. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

If, however, we accept the concept of punishment beyond the grave for really bad people, don't we have to accept that all our conduct comes under judgment? We might want to say that murderers and rapists should go to Hell, but that people who commit much more minor misdemeanours (the sort of wrong things you and I do) ought to be let off with a slap on the wrist or not punished at all. But where do we draw the line? If murder merits hell, what about serious assault? If serious assault

deserves eternal damnation, what about a more minor assault? Terrifyingly, Jesus says, "But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Getting angry and insulting someone could land you in Hell - if Jesus is to be believed!

By now, if you're still with me, you might be willing to accept that there is ultimate Justice in eternity, that the good are rewarded and the evil are punished after death, but I guess that there are still lots of questions. Very few people are consistently good. Christians believe that Jesus Himself was the only truly good man. No-one (except Jesus) would deserve Heaven if you have to be perfect. But, surely, very few people are entirely evil. Eternal damnation seems very harsh even for a concentration camp commandant, but for someone who abused the ticket collector on a railway station? Why aren't there grades of punishment, depending on the seriousness of the offence - hellfire for Hitler, but a few days in Purgatory for the commuter who loses his temper?

This is where it gets difficult. We have to remember that God and the realm of the spirit are not only beyond our understanding; they are beyond our imagination. We have to use pictures, metaphors and analogies if we are to speak about these things at all. I think the Truth we are trying to grasp is that ultimately there are only two choices - fellowship with God, which is life, and alienation from God, which is death. All that stuff about unquenchable fires and insatiable worms is a metaphor for eternal death, a concept which we cannot possibly understand. Similarly, images of pearly gates, harps and heavenly singing are attempts to describe eternal life, although eternal life is necessarily indescribable to those of us who are still living the half life we experience in the material, temporal world.

All sin alienates from God. We alienate ourselves from God if we become murderers, bank robbers or rapists. We also alienate ourselves from God if we abuse our fellow human beings, steal a few pence or commit adultery. It is not the magnitude of the offence which separates us from God; it is the fact of any offence at all. There can be no fellowship between sin and the thrice holy God. Sinners cannot be in the presence of God.

This leads to the Christian understanding that nobody is good enough for God. Nobody deserves to go to Heaven and there is only one alternative destination. You are either in the

presence of God or you are not. To be with God is Heaven. To be without God is hell.

There is no space here to go into this in detail, but the next chapter in the Christian story is Jesus. God comes into the world in the person of Jesus. Jesus makes God fully known, because Jesus is fully God. He is also fully human and lives a human life as human life is meant to be lived. In Jesus God deals with sin. It has to be God's initiative. There is nothing we sinners can do to save ourselves, but God saves us in Jesus. What is required of us is repentance and faith. If we put our faith in Jesus and confess our sins, God makes us like Jesus. Our sins are washed away. God makes us the brothers and sisters of Jesus. We are adopted into His family. We are coheirs with Christ. We are citizens of Heaven. We have eternal life.

The price of our forgiveness is the Death of Jesus on the Cross. Our salvation, therefore is not cheap or easy. It is not without value. It is priceless. When we think of what Jesus did for us, of how much He loves us, the only reasonable response on our part is to love Him with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength, and, if we only love like that, we'll sin no more. Faith in the Christ Who died on the Cross for us cannot be casual, careless or indifferent. It is all consuming.

The Cross unites Justice and Mercy, God and humanity. Through the Cross of Jesus, we have eternal life.

There remain three questions.

1) What about people who have never heard about Jesus and what about people who have rejected Jesus because they have been put off Him by Christians? I think that the answer to that is that people are judged according to their consciences. Essentially, we all know the difference between right and wrong. What have we done with that knowledge?

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,
Good Lord, deliver us.

Richard Allington Smith

Richard Allington Smith was Rector of Cuxton from 1961-1967. After holding other positions, he eventually retired to Norfolk. Occasionally people have asked for news of him and I am sorry to have to pass on the information that Mr Smith died in May 2007. *Requiescat in pace.*

2) Is there any chance of changing after death? The usual (and safe) answer is that there is not. You have the choice whether to walk with God or to reject Him throughout your life, but, when your life is over, you will just have to accept the consequences of the decision you finally took. There is just a hint that souls might hear the Gospel from Jesus in the hereafter and have an opportunity of life, but it would be foolish to depend on it. Maybe this is for people who never heard of or never understood Jesus in this life. Anyway, why would you want to put off loving Jesus till after death? We have a better life on earth for knowing Him than we would if we didn't know Him, as well as an infinitely good one to look forward to in Heaven.

3) Why does a loving God ("Who desireth not the death of a sinner") allow anyone to go to Hell? I think the answer is that God finally accepts our right to make our own decision. He is like a Good Shepherd, searching for every lost sheep. He reaches out to us. He woos us. Christ dies for us. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. But ultimately it is our decision whether we go with God or reject Him. I'm sure it breaks God's heart if people finally reject Him. Maybe, in the end, everybody does come to know the Truth and Hell is empty. I'd like to think so, but it would be complacent to believe that it must be so and irresponsible of me to preach that it is necessarily so.

Heaven and Hell are necessary because there necessarily is Justice if life is to make any sense at all. Mercy and justice are two sides of the same coin, which is love. So God justly and mercifully opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. This is all more awesome than we can possibly comprehend, but eternal life is what God intends for all of us. We only have to respond to His love.
Roger.

For Thought

“The Church is first of all a kind of space cleared by God through Jesus in which people may become what God made them to be (God's sons and daughters), and that what we have to do about the Church is not first to organise it as a society but to inhabit it as a climate or a landscape. It is a place where we can see properly - God, God's creation, ourselves. It is a place or dimension in the universe that is in some way growing towards being the universe itself in restored relation to God. It is a place we are invited to enter, the place occupied by Christ, who is himself the climate and atmosphere of a renewed universe.” The Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Whoever marries the spirit of this age will find himself a widower in the next.” Dean Inge.

“The Church of England is an ingeniously devised organisation for defeating the objects it is supposed to promote.” Bishop Charles Gore.

An Imminent Victory For Common Sense.

Our Member of Parliament, Mark Reckless MP, has very kindly taken up our problem over the church barbecue with the Minister for Tourism and Heritage, John Penrose MP. You remember that Medway Council prevented us from holding it in my garden because we had not obtained a licence from them for the singer – even though we had held similar events (attended by councillors and officers) for many years without any problems. Our MP is very sympathetic and the minister says that the government is firmly committed to cutting red tape and encouraging live music. They are sorting out the mess as quickly as they can. I am very hopeful that we shall be able to hold next year's barbecue without any interference from the council! Incidents like this not only impoverish community life; they also bring local government into disrepute. Thanks for all your support Messrs. Reckless and Penrose and everybody in the parish who has expressed sympathy for the Church in this matter. Roger.

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 £831. 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.

Poverty and Hope and Hope Appeal

This year's Poverty & Hope appeal supports youth work in Guatemala, media for the “voiceless” in India, literacy in Afghanistan (especially women and girls), street children in Brazil, global learning in Kent, education in Zambia and mobile health teams in Burma. More details on leaflets to be distributed in church with envelopes on 3rd October (Harvest Festival) – also www.rochester.anglican.org/poverty_hope.htm

Explanation of Weekday Services

A friend expressed surprise recently that there are two services on Wednesday mornings at St Michael's. Actually we say Morning Prayer {7.15 am (7.45 am Saturdays)} and Evening Prayer {5.00 pm} every weekday except Mondays and celebrate Holy Communion at St Michael's on Tuesdays {7.30 am}, Wednesdays {9.30 am}, Fridays {7.30 am} and Saturdays {8.00 am} and at St John's Thursdays {9.30 am}. Daily Morning and Evening Prayer in the parish church are among the few prescribed duties of the parish clergy and among the most important. We owe God our daily worship as a community. Daily prayer makes the world go round. God speaks to us through the Bible readings. To worship God on behalf of the community, to pray for the community and to teach and preach the Word of God to the community, are vital aspects of our rôle. They are part of our service to God and our service to the world and they sustain us in our other duties of pastoral care, evangelism and working to make the world a better place. Saying these services in church is an invitation to other people to join in with the clergy and to share in the work of God and to be sustained by their own encounter with Him, as well as to support their ministers with their presence and their prayers. Holy Communion is the service Jesus gave us and, while it is probably sufficient to celebrate on Sundays and other major festivals, it is a wonderful privilege each day to proclaim His Death until He comes, to enjoy fellowship with Him in our present day lives on earth, and to anticipate the glory which is to be revealed.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,

I will praise thee:

In my heart, though not in heaven,

I can raise thee.

Small it is in this poor sort

To enrol thee:

E'en eternity's too short

To extol thee.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

15 th August	Elise Iris Gordon	Larkfield
22 nd August	Laura Katrin Suranyi	Charles Drive
29 th August	Riley Christopher John Hall	Thomas Harris Close
5 th September	Mason Richard Shorthouse	Harold Road
5 th September	Samuel Henry Masters	Rochester Road North Halling

Wedding:

5th September Martin Francis Boudette & Deborah Elizabeth Ellis Ashgrove Australia

Funerals:

20 th August	Violet Head (98)	Vicarage Road
27 th August	Marjorie Stella Roots (94)	Kent Road
31 st August	baby Arabella Joy	Lambarde Close
31 st August	Thelma Partridge (69)	Strood
3 rd September	Enid Hurst (74)	Bush Road
7 th September	Geoffrey Stubbing (88)	Strood

Thelma Partridge RIP

Roger Long wishes to thank all those who supported Thelma in her illness and attended her funeral. The numbers attending and the kind things people said about Thelma supplied an ample testimony to the big part she played in the life of our Church and the wider community. She will be sadly missed. RIK.

Nature Notes August 2010

The 1st of the month is grey in the morning but eventually there are glimpses of the sun in the afternoon. Birds come to feed. A beautiful greenfinch samples the nuts, great tits join it and a blackbird takes a bath in the pond. Next morning while sitting outside, I listen to a chattering robin. In the afternoon, I walk through Six-acre Wood, skirt the barley field and make my way up to my secret paths in Mays Wood which are quite dark because of arches of thick foliage. I take the paths across Church Fields; I see haws which are turning red. Cows graze in the field. Later, a shower of rain fills the air with after-rain scent.

On the 4th, as we drive to Northfleet, the skies become very dark and heavy rain falls. Its severity increases and continues as we make our way home. Spray is whipped up by the traffic and areas of road become mini lakes.. The windscreen wipers cannot cope with the downpour. When we reach home, water is cascading down the drive from the road. Eventually it ceases and some sunshine returns. The next morning, early, I watch a ladybird climbing up a grass stem. The air is cool and billowing clouds drift across the sky from the North West. Following days begin with sunshine but grey clouds build up. On 7th I count 7 blue tits on the feeders. For a brief moment in the early morning of 9th, I smell Autumn in the air. Then the sun breaks through very high cloud and

warmth returns. A fresh westerly breeze blows. I listen to a robin and the agitated calls of a blackbird on the embankment. Three young blackbirds come to feed, then a dunnock. A large slug slithers slowly down the side of one of the flower tubs. On 11th, as I feel the early morning sun on my face, I listen to bird activity, the cackling magpies, the melancholy call of a wood pigeon, the trilling of a blackbird and the calling of gulls from the river. Birds come to the feeders then fly either into the lilac tree or the holly tree. I like to feel that these trees are havens of safety for them. Heavy showers fall on 13th. The 16th is grey with quite a bracing wind which I like as I walk with Murphy in Cob tree Manor Park. Horse chestnuts are forming well swelling the green outer shells. As we return along Halling by-pass I notice trees displaying signs of Autumn. Later, when I walk to the post box, I look up to see bright red haws. The sun shines brightly and with warmth during the afternoon. I sit outside listening to a robin's song then watch a comma butterfly as it settles on the ivy. The 17th is grey all day. The ivy on the fence has been cut back and I watch a robin investigating the scene. The tall elm on the embankment is showing definite signs of Dutch elm disease for the leaves are turning brown and yellow. We walk the grassy paths at Bluewater the next day and watch the radio controlled boats on the lake. The sun shines warmly in the afternoon but by

the evening the air becomes very cool. In the afternoon of 20th I walk up the path to the fields where a few poppies bloom. The unripe hazel nuts have been stolen by the squirrels. I continue through a rather dark Mays Wood to my secret paths then back across Church Fields where elderberries are ripe and haws have become a deep red. Purple sloes and blackberries are ripening while old mans beard straddles elder and hawthorn shrubs. Hips are ripening and some wild clematis is still in flower. The evening skies are grey but the air is humid. Early rain clears on the morning of 23rd to reveal bright blue skies and golden sunshine for a brief spell before more clouds trundle across the sky from the west. We take Murphy to Cob tree Manor Park where I see horse chestnut leaves browned because of disease. Winds from the west on 24th drive clouds across the sky and I watch birds flying to and fro the holly and the lilac. In the late evening Murphy barks at a hedgehog on the back lawn. so we bring him indoors

before a catastrophe occurs. A bright moon shines. Heavy rain falls the next afternoon. The next afternoon I visit Restoration House and the beautiful gardens. The rain holds off. By 29th the fading evening light is becoming more noticeable. Autumn beckons. On 30th north west winds bring a chill to the air. Clouds drift across the sky but the sun shines. The evenings and the nights are becoming quite cold. On 31st, as I sit in the garden I listen to the birds and watch tiny gnats dancing on the air. Billowing clouds drift across the sky from the North West but there is less chill in the air compared with yesterday. I hear a cockerel crowing in a garden along the road. This sound takes me back to my childhood when I lived with my grandmother who kept hens. The afternoon remains warm and sunny and this weather is set to continue for the rest of the week, a short reminder of Summer.

Elizabeth Summers

Summer Song

E.Nesbit

There are white moon daisies in the mist of the meadow
Where the flowered grass scatters its seeds like spray,
There are purple orchids by the wood ways' shadow,
There are pale dog roses by the white highway;
And the grass, the grass is tall, the grass is up for hay,
With daisies white like silver and the buttercups like gold,
And it's oh! For once to play thro the long, the lovely day,
To laugh before the year grows old!

There is silver moonlight on the breast of the river
Where the willows tremble to the kiss of night,
Where the nine tall aspens in the meadow shiver,
Shiver in the night wind that turns them white.
And the lamps, the lamps are lit, the lamps the glow
worms' light,
Between the silver aspens and the west's last gold.
And it's Oh! To drink delight in the lovely lonely night,
To be young before the heart grows old!

St John's Draw: £25 each to Nr head (2) & Mrs Smith (49); £10 to Mr Thorne (32) – drawn by Mrs Carter.

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Marie Hendy, drawn by Joyce Haselden



Cuxton WI

Our meeting on the 2nd September was opened with the sad news of the death of Thelma Partridge who had been a very active member for many years and will be sadly missed by all, particularly when we remember her taking all the photos at our various parties and events. We had 34 members present and enjoyed a demonstration by Claire Aungar-Lively on home made beauty creams concocted from natural ingredients which we all tried out on our hands. Claire gave us all recipe leaflets for these creams and scrubs so at the next meeting we

should all look 10 years younger! Claire also told us something of the varied career she has had in the past at just 25 years of age and as well as being a beauty therapist achieved her life long dream to be a coach driver. A very enterprising young lady.

Our next meeting is on the 6th October when we are having a "Dabble Evening" with the opportunity to try out various crafts including card making, flower arranging, embroidery and felt ball making." Pat Reynolds.



Halling WI

Halling W.I. had almost a full house for our August meeting including four visitors who we hope will like what they see and join us again. We had very little correspondence this month, it always seems to come the day after our meeting. We did have a thank you letter from

the District secretary thanking us for entertaining the district at the recent leisure evening when David Hawkes and his fellow climbing mate told us about their adventures when they trekked the Himalayas, their slides were great, made you shiver just looking at them.

Our speaker for August was Helen Allinson, she related to us stories about the workhouses. Workhouses, according to Helen were for the relief of the poor and were run by the parishes. All Saint's Hospital was originally a workhouse, and there was another one Malling and one at Strood. They were pretty awful places, besides the poor families that fell on hard times, tramps and "ladies of the night" all mingled together. The last workhouse closed its doors in 1935. Even I can remember my parents talking about them. Helen was warmly thanked by Lily Hesketh, who said she could remember her mum threatening them with the workhouse when she was a child.

Before Helen left us she judged our competitions, An Old Fashioned Utensil, We didn't have a chamber pot, although they were mentioned in Helen's talk, but we did have a mincer. It didn't

win however, Ann Heaseman won with her flat iron. The Flower of the Month was won once again by Ann Graves with a Begonia as big as a saucer.

Our September meeting is an open one. Mr Chris McCody is talking about the Second War diary of a woman who lived on the South Coast. Bring your friends, husbands, boy friends or anyone who might be interested.

The day after our meeting we had a very enjoyable "garden meeting" in Karen Thorne's little house. The weather was so inclement we had to go indoors, but a good friendly time was had by all. Betty and the team did us proud with our "ploughman's", and most of us went home with a plant or two from the Bring and Buy which helped to swell our funds. Phyllis Chidwick.

Apology and Thanks

Please accept my apologies for the abruptly cancelled services on 4th and 5th September. The previous week I had hurt my back when trying to lift the mower over the rockery while turning to see where Max was in view of the postman's possibly imminent arrival. It got worse and worse, maybe because I rather rashly kept on running with it, and that Saturday morning I found myself lying on the floor in pain and quite literally unable to get up until three ambulance personnel dosed me with gas and air (despite my insistence that I was not pregnant) and forced me into an upright position prior to taking me to hospital. I had to ask my mother to do some quick telephoning, cancelling the 8.00 and getting the rural dean to arrange cover for the other three services that Sunday. Revd David Preston very kindly agreed to take 9.30 and 11.00 and the wedding at 2.00, but I do apologise to those who were expecting services at St Michael's at 8.00 on 4th and the Jubilee Hall on 5th. I am really sorry. It has never happened before and I hope it will never happen again – but you can never know. Thank you very much, James and David, and all the lay people who rallied round so that everything else took place as planned and advertised.

Anyway, powerful painkillers got me home from hospital by lunch time, where I promptly collapsed again, but things gradually improved. By 10.00 Sunday morning I knew I would be able to take the wedding. So I walked up to St Michael's to meet David Preston and tell him at the end of 9.30 service. I realised that if I could walk that far I could at least attend St John's at 11.00. So David kindly gave me a lift and I did not have to miss my Sunday Communion. I really enjoyed being in the pews and listening to somebody else preach! Thank you, all of you. Roger.

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 Blythswood. 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 Blythswood web page.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society is wondering how many people are concerned at the threat to close down FM radio in ten years' time. The proposal is to replace FM services with digital radio. Apart from having to replace our radio sets, in some areas digital radios don't seem to work very well – in parts of Shorne for instance. The quality of digital is often poor compared with FM. If you are concerned, we suggest you write to you MP before it is too late. You could also register with the Save FM Campaign on the internet at www.savefm.org Kay Roots.

September News from Cuxton Community Infants School

Dear Friends of our School,

I am pleased to say we have started the new academic year well. Children and Staff looking refreshed after their holidays and all healthy! Our building work has also been completed. You may remember we were having three rooms in the oldest part of the school converted into two large classrooms. The completion of this project has meant that our foundation stage children now have direct access (without tackling steps) onto the early years covered play area. The rooms are huge: bright, light, well ventilated and newly refurbished. The work involved a large amount of mess and uncovered areas we did not know existed for example some high windows above a ceiling in the old hall and also the bell tower. The works have also included a newly refurbished children's toilet area and storage area for staff resources.

This year we have 5 classes, as we have more children joining our school. We have welcomed 41 foundation stage children into school and hope they will spend a very happy three years with us. We have also had 5 children join us in year one and two who have moved into the village. This week our parents have met the children's teachers and next week we have Enterprise Week for years 1 and 2. This is a creative fun filled week, where the children spend time making items to sell. Each class has been given a budget to spend on resources that they might need in order to make items. These are planned, designed made, costed and sold. The money made by the children goes to resources they choose to buy for their classes. The children not only work creatively but also have to write, and think about money, totals etc. I look forward to telling you all about it!

We will also be having an Environmental day later in September, where 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).

As part of the Olympics we have just found out we are being twinned with Argentina! Will have to think about this one and let you know of our plans once we have had chance to discuss!

I am so grateful to the FCS who have raised so many funds for both schools and who also submitted a community bid on our behalf. We were lucky enough to be awarded £2500 with which in order to meet the criteria of the bid we have purchased masses of physical playground games and resources, also gardening equipment. Thank you FCS!

The next magazine article will give you news of our Enterprise weeks, Harvest festival and Environmental day. That's all from the Infants for now. Sandra Jones. Head teacher.

Rochester Cathedral: Parish Reps. Meeting

Twenty-five Parishes were represented at the meeting held in Garth House on September 2nd 2010. Canon Philip Hesketh, Canon Pastor, welcomed us. He reported that the glass doors installed in West end of the Cathedral appear to be more inviting, and the Welcome Desk is now situated by the North door. He asked how effective the mail shot was in getting information about summer events at the Cathedral through to parishes? It would seem, in some parishes the information had not been circulated effectively. During the summer an interactive exhibition, in conjunction with the BBC, was set up. It provided an opportunity to display the Textus Roffensis, which belongs to the Cathedral but is too precious to be housed here. It is the first book ever written in English, and pre-dates the Magna Carta. This was combined with an event entitled 'Totally Monked' which focussed on the life of monks in the middle ages and gave children an opportunity to engage in some of their skills and crafts. The exhibition was free and attracted approximately 1,500 visitors. There are plans to mount a similar, 'Hands on History' event, during schools' summer holiday next year. More on this will be announced in the Diocesan Link and e-mails will be sent to reps. We were reminded that The Link is an effective way to find out what is happening generally, in the Diocese.

There are plans to make the Crypt accessible to all. There is already a lift to the Choir, by the South door and the shaft will be extended down into the Crypt. Work will begin next year and will take 6-9 months; during the process the Crypt will be out of action.

Consideration is being given to the notion of Parish Pilgrimages, when groups from parishes can meet in the Cathedral, explore and reflect using the reflective audio guides, enjoy lunch or tea and join in Eucharist or Evensong. There are also plans to provide musical experiences for church choirs. These would include a talk by the Director of Music, or his Deputy, joining a rehearsal of the Cathedral choir and taking part in Evensong, as well as tea with the choir. There would be a charge for these events.

There is to be a Volunteers' Evensong on Sunday December 12th at 3.15. Refreshments will be included. There are plans to include a 'Reps Section' on notice boards in the Cathedral, where parish events can be advertised. Churches could also consider mounting displays in the Cathedral. Janice Cheesmer

www.rochestercathedral.org

The Integrity of the Church

Two issues seem to threaten the integrity of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion – that world-wide family of churches which are in fellowship with the see of Canterbury. These issues are the ordination of women as bishops and the recognition of homosexual relationships as legitimate and even blessed. What the two issues have in common is that their opponents claim that they are contrary to the plain meaning of Scripture, as understood by God's Church for 2,000 years, that they divide us from other much larger Churches, which do not intend to deviate from the faith once delivered to the saints, and that they undermine our mission to a world which desperately needs the eternal, simple Good News of God in Jesus Christ; whereas supporters, both of women's ordination and of the blessing of gay relationships, claim that these are authentic developments of the faith once delivered to the saints in the light of modern knowledge, that we have to be true to our insights as Anglicans rather than to look over our shoulders for the approval of Rome and Orthodoxy, and that our unwillingness to modernise and embrace equality and diversity in the realm of gender and sexuality makes our whole message incomprehensible to twenty-first century people. It has to be said, of course, that these are not the first issues to threaten to divide the Church and we are all sadly aware that God's Church is already fractured into a multiplicity of denominations: Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and myriad kinds of Protestant.

In this context I was asked in what circumstances I would leave the Church of England. I am not sure that I can answer that question hypothetically. The rest of this sermon will be devoted to the integrity of the Church of God. The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. She is the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. She is the family of God, the people of God, a royal

priesthood. I am not sure that it would be possible to remain a Christian if one left the Church altogether. I rather think that it would not. To leave one Church and to found another would be a remarkable thing to do. The founder of a new denomination has either identified a very serious error or failure in the existing Churches, or else he is astonishingly arrogant. To leave one Church and to join another already existing Church would raise all sorts of questions about one's true beliefs and one's relationships with one's fellow Christians both in the new fellowship and in the old one. What honest reasons could one give for making such a change?

On the other hand, there are things which could put one's membership of a particular Church under serious strain. It might be hard to belong to a Church if you thought its teaching on matters of doctrine or ethics was at fault or if you felt that your Church generally did not live up to its preaching. It might be hard to belong to a Church whose public worship generally left you feeling bored or embarrassed, rather than inspired and empowered. It might be hard to belong to a Church if you found it hard to get on with the other people in it, the ministers or the people in the pews. At what point do you decide that it is so difficult for you to remain within a given Church that you should change to another one? After all, the fault might as easily lie in you as it might in other members of the fellowship. Bear in mind that you aren't going to find a perfect Church on earth and, if you did, you would only spoil it by joining it.

So I try to approach the question *in what circumstances would I leave the Church of England* from the point of view of the essential integrity of the Church. The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The Church is the Body of Christ. There is only one Christ. So there can only be one Church. Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the eternal unity of the Blessed Holy Trinity. Christ is in us. The Father is in us. The Holy Spirit is in us. We then, through His grace, are one with God. We are one with Him in Baptism. We are one with Him in Holy Communion. We are one with Him in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It follows that, if we are one with God, we are one with each other. We are members of the same Body, the Body of Christ.

God is love and the eternal relationship of the three persons of the Holy Trinity is love. Infinite, eternal love overflows to create us, to sustain us and to enfold us. The love of God invites us to respond by becoming people of love. We are invited to love God. If we love God, then we must love one another, both because we are ourselves filled with the love of God and because other people are loved by the God Whom we seek as our life-long partner, indeed as our eternal soul mate. We fall short of this vision as individuals and as churches, but to fall short is to sin.

We believe in *the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting*. In the heavenly Kingdom, we are risen, we live for ever. We enjoy an eternal communion of love with God and with all God's people. This is so because our sins are forgiven. Sins are our failure to love. Sin is what divides us from God and from one another. We believe in *the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting* because *We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father Who made the world, the Spirit of Jesus, Who was made one with us, died on the cross, rose again from the dead and will come again to take us home to Himself.*

Our life in the Church on earth ought to be a foretaste of the life of Heaven and a demonstration to the world of what God's purposes are on earth. Our worship on earth participates in the worship of heaven. Our prayers are heard in Heaven. Our fellowship, our friendship as Christians on earth is an aspect of the communion of saints. Holy Communion is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. The Holy Scriptures bear witness to the Eternal Word. The life of the Church on earth reflects the life of the angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven. The fellowship of the Church sustains us as Christians and, because we are part of that fellowship, we sustain the Church. The fellowship of the Church so reflects the Light of Heaven that she bears witness of God to the world. A supposedly Christian nation which imagined that *you can be a Christian without going to Church* begat millions of feeble Christians, a weak Church and a post Christian generation which knows little of God or of what it means to be truly human. The Church cannot do without Christians and neither can we do without the Church. It would be verging on the blasphemous to claim that God cannot do without us, but I do believe that His plan for the salvation of the world includes us and that

the Church of which we are members exists in order to show the world the love of God. Whatever difficulties and discouragements there are in belonging to the Church, it is vital for us to persevere for our own sake, for God's sake and for the world's sake. Roger.



Max's Tail Piece.

Not much room left for me at the end of this magazine and life generally has been quite quiet for me. Master's bad back has reduced the frequency and length of my walks considerably. We are all hoping for an improvement there! Last month I wrote about the effect of weeks of dry weather on the garden and all the wildlife it brought to the birdbath. Since then we have had plenty of rain and the grass is growing lush and long. It is a race whether Master's gets better in time to cut it before it becomes too long to tackle with an ordinary lawnmower! We are seeing a lot more slugs and snails – not entirely welcome. I hear that tiny snails have even started on people's tomatoes this year, though I also know of a tortoise which eats slugs. So one man's meat...! Now we look forward to the beautiful colours of Autumn, crisp Winter days and the joy of Christmas is not too far away. Max.