

# All Saints Newsletter



## AT A GLANCE



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## The Rambling Rector



Dear Friends,

There is talk from time to time about fixing the date of Easter. It would make life so much more convenient. We would have our diaries, term times and holidays under control.

The date of Easter is determined, like the Jewish festival of Passover, by the moon. It falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. In recent years it has been as early as March 23rd and as late as April 20th.

Whilst a changing date can be inconvenient, there is something about its being beyond our control that feels like a good thing. In a world where we often convince ourselves that we can and should be able to control everything, and where we are not as in touch with the rhythms of nature as we once were, the determination of this date according to movements beyond the earth, and in fellowship with generations who have gone before us, has a certain kind of appeal.

But let us not get too caught up on the date of Easter. The most important thing about Easter is the invitation to join in the Resurrection life of Jesus. There was an exact moment in the history of the world when Jesus rose from the dead and we call that 'The Resurrection', but the wonder and the power of The Resurrection has greater enormity even than that one moment.

Bishop Stephen Verney wrote that 'there was an energy that flowed through Jesus. It was like wind blowing, like water running, like light shining – it came out of him with a power which was able to transform the self-consciousness of men and women.' Jesus called this energy 'Resurrection', and he understood it as the to and fro of love between God the Father and himself. This energy forgave and healed, taught and inspired, brought belief and confidence, raised from the dead and itself could not be held by death.

As the earth moves through the rhythm of the seasons into the energy of springtime, may we know the rhythm of a life of worship and prayer, and the energy of the resurrection, the to and fro of love between God and us and between one another.

Happy Easter! Christ is risen, Alleluia!

With love and prayers

Geoff

## AT A GLANCE



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turns 90!**

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**Thank you for all  
your contributions!**

## FEATURE PAGE

### BEHIND THE FACE

Avis Owen talks to Catherine Wright

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## FEATURE PAGE

**Behind the Face**

**Avis Owen talks to Catherine Wright (Associate Minister of Hartford and Houghton, Chaplain at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire) and of course, wife of Geoff, our Rector.**

**A :** Catherine, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the Hartford newsletter. Can we start with your childhood memories?

**C.** I was born in Hornchurch, Essex but when I was 11 years old we moved to Folkestone where I attended the Grammar school. Living near the Folkestone ferry terminal we made many trips to Europe as foot passengers. I enjoyed the youth fellowship as a teenager and am still in touch with the eight who made up the group at the local church. My mother taught English and History and my father Science. My mother took my sister and me to places of historical interest which included churches, castles etc. These places laid a foundation for my studies at university.

**A.** Did you know what you wanted to do when you left school?

**C.** Not really, but I have always been interested in English literature and so my first degree was studying English at Bristol University. I then did a Master of Arts degree in Medieval studies. My parents were surprised when I said I wanted to train as a Solicitor, but undeterred I completed the legal training and became a Commercial litigation solicitor in Bristol.

**A.** Your time in Bristol seems to have been a happy time and you speak positively about being part of the youth work at Christchurch, Clifton in north west Bristol.

**C.** I was very impressed with the leaders, a man and his wife, and the way they worked together sharing the tasks. It was during this time that a number of people encouraged me to seek ordained ministry in the Church of England.

**A.** I recall that in the early 1990s very few women were being accepted as priests in the Church of England and so this was a brave step you would pursue? (Ed. It was in 1994 that 32 women were ordained deacon in Bristol Cathedral by Rt. Revd. Barry Rogerson, Bishop of Bristol)

**C.** In 1994 I met with the Church of England vocations team and with a small group of women started ordination training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. I was not only doing a Cambridge degree but completing my Doctorate too.

It was at Ridley Hall where I met my husband Geoff, who was a couple of years ahead of me. He witnessed me striving to complete all this academic work load and was a real support to me.

**A.** You tell me that in the 1990s each Diocese in the Church of England only had two placements for a curacy. So was it difficult to find a position?

**C.** I was fortunate to be a curate in the Bristol area for two and a half years, but when I asked permission to marry, my curacy was terminated on marriage.

## FEATURE PAGE

**A.** I realise along with other women in the 1990s you were real pioneers in Women's ordination and the Church owes each one of you our gratitude. It must have seemed really difficult and hurtful at the time, with so much pressure and resistance to the idea of women as priests let alone Bishops and now Archbishops.

**C.** On my new appointment in Bath and Wells, the Bishop asked me what did I feel my interest and calling was, and in what way I could serve the Diocese? I said helping people find their calling and how they could be part of Christ's mission in the Diocese. So he appointed me as a junior Diocesan Director of Ordination training in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

**A.** How long were you DDO in Bath and Wells?

**C.** I did 10 years and when a new Bishop of Bath & Wells came, I considered it was time to have a change of ministry. So I applied and was appointed in 2014 to the Cambridge Federation (this includes all Theological colleges in Cambridge) teaching Christian history and spirituality plus being a Tutor at Ridley Hall. Twenty years had passed since my Theological college days and I did note there were changes and things had moved on.

**A.** How long have you and Geoff been in Hartford?

**C.** We came to serve the united benefice of Houghton and Hartford in 2016 and have been very happy here.

**A.** A few years ago you were DDO in Ely diocese, but now you're at Launde Abbey.

**C.** Yes. I now serve as a part time Chaplain at Launde Abbey which is a conference and retreat centre for the Dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough.

**A.** You have a busy life. Do you have time to share many hobbies with Geoff?

**C.** Cooking, gardening, reading novels, long distance walking holiday and visiting historic places.

**A.** Catherine, thanks very much for sharing your story. Both you and Geoff have told me of your best-man's advice, when you married. He said he and his wife take it in turns to cook. One week on and one week off... what a good idea! A final word?

**C.** I was delighted to witness Sarah Mullaly being installed as Archbishop of Canterbury – the very first woman to take up that role. That said, what is happening locally is more important to me; as we gather as Christians for our worship and how we share God's love with one another and the wider community.

(...and of course we will have our own new Bishop Sarah to welcome in a few weeks time as Bishop of Ely - Ed.)

'As we wait for +Sarah , so we are grateful for all that +Dagmar has done as acting Bishop of Ely during the episcopal interregnum. We wish her God speed as she moves to be Bishop of Edinburgh in the Scottish Episcopal Church'



## Curate's Corner

### Steph Pedlar

As we approach the beginnings of spring and we look out and see the bulbs turn into flowers, we also see people that we haven't seen for a while; our neighbours, the people down the street, the refuse collectors, the post people. It seems like people and nature come back to life. As I go to Hartford church, I see this as people begin to wander down by the river and sit on the benches. We all seem to get lighter in our spirit as we approach the outside again.

These last ten weeks, a group of people have attended our Alpha group, which is a course to ask questions about Christianity and learn why we believe in Jesus. We have gathered, watched a video, had group discussions, learnt, and importantly eaten cake and drunk tea and coffee as we learnt more about each other and God. This has been absolutely amazing.

Here are some quotes from participators.

"I have learnt so much"

"It has opened my eyes to new things"

"I am going to miss it so much"

What encouraging words. As we learn and listen to other people we absorb so much. And for me, I found it such a privilege and honour to run, facilitate and be with amazing people.

To learn about Jesus, we realise how truly important we are to him. That if we were the last person on earth, he would still have died on the cross for us.

As we approach Easter, I want to re-tell the Easter story again and again. This year we will be opening the church in Holy week, so you can walk the journey of Jesus and discover more about what happened to him. I hope that you can come along. Times are outside the church and on our website.

Then over Easter we have services that give us the message of Easter, peaking with Easter Sunday that shows us all just how much Jesus gives to us.

A great question I am asked regularly is 'why eggs at Easter?'

My response is, new life is often in the form of an egg, so if an egg helps you to remember that new life was given to us, as we give our lives to Jesus and believe in him, then I am all for it. The chocolate is an added bonus.

This Easter I hope that you can find what you are looking for, and that is Jesus. That he will meet you where you are right now and as new life is seen all around us this springtime, you will experience new life in Jesus; be it eating your egg or coming to church, to experience the walk of Jesus or one of our other services.

I look forward to welcoming you and so for now all that remains for me to say is. 'Happy Easter, Jesus is alive'

As the days get brighter and the mornings lighter, so our spirit lifts and we approach the outside again.....Steph.

## How many go to church?

or **'lies, damned lies, and statistics!'** (attributed to Mark Twain or Benjamin Disraeli)

(Clifford, our Editor, reflects on church attendance locally and nationally)

There are still many myths in circulation about church attendance, twenty five years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two opposite poles are 'in those days everyone went to church' and 'these days no-one goes to church anymore'. It pictures in our minds a downward sloping graph, like a landing aircraft, which will soon hit the runway and then churchgoing will be over for ever.

Neither of these poles are true. In fact, we have actually survived a period when 'no-one went to church'. It was called COVID19! All places of worship were off limits and we learned how to worship online by zoom. Now that the churches have refilled themselves, are we able to start counting numbers sensibly again? This interest in church attendance has recently been rekindled because the Bible Society carried out a national survey in 2024. It has become known as the 'quiet revival'. The survey suggested that churchgoing was growing again from 10% of the population up to 12%. One claim is that a special interest is coming from young people seeking faith. So how do we check such claims? The only specific census of religion in modern history was carried out on Mothering Sunday 1851, in Victorian England! That census has been much questioned and challenged, but it did suggest that at best something like 30% of the country went to church that day. The challenging revelation was that a very high proportion of that attendance was by non-conformist denominations. All subsequent statistics show that it was the first World War which caused a significant downturn in church attendance. (cf. How can a loving God allow such horrors to happen?)

But let me give you some of my own statistics: In the 1990s I had three delightful Worcestershire rural parishes. Total population 1000 souls. The mean total for regular Sunday attendance (across four churches) was around 100 (10%) But at Christmas and Easter the total attendances would be over 200.

One autumn I added in the total attendances for Weddings and funerals and special services, and over a three month period, about 1,600 different people passed through the church doors.

In Holy Trinity Corfu (2002-2008) our winter English speaking congregation numbered some 30-40, but with summer visitors we were rarely less than 70.

Currently, if you add up the totals for the Church of England nationally, it still comes out at approximately 1,000,000 per week! (2%? Of the population) But a million people in a heap aren't much use to anyone. It is at the local level where churches make their impact and people connect.

In the thirteen years that I have been retired I have taken services in over 60 churches of different denominations. This includes five locums in the Diocese in Europe. In only two

cases did I have a sense that a particular congregation was in terminal decline. All the rest had a spiritual core sustaining them. There was clearly a live faith commitment from those cores which was keeping the fires of faith burning. None of those 60+ churches had large congregations; but on average between 25 and 45 folk were present.

Last year during my annual stint as a cruise liner chaplain, about 100 folk turned up for the onboard morning service out of 800 passengers (12%!) but they were SAGA age range and the vast majority were already regular members of their own churches at home. A significant proportion were from other denominations and independent congregations. Incidentally, only 8 Philipinos turned up for the crew mass which I had to take following a Roman Catholic style (but it was deep in the bowels of the crew's quarters at 10 pm...with most on watch!)

As a comparison, the register at Ely Cathedral shows that the average Sunday morning attendance for the main communion service is around 160. (I attended Winchester Cathedral on January 4<sup>th</sup> when 150 were present)

So whichever way we look at it, there are a lot of folk out there who are interested in what 'the church' has to offer and are prepared to take a courageous peep.

But back to Huntingdon. I have (with Geoff's permission) included three pics. from our registers. Two are pre lockdown 2015, 2018, and a most recent one from Christmas 2025 into this year. You can analyse these for yourselves, but I think it safe to say that Sunday attendance has remained solid at around 50 for our main act of worship. When you spread that over a month and add in the smaller services a figure of at least 70 is reasonable. But church life is much more than getting 'bums on pews', it is about prayer, growth in faith, education, teaching, small groups, caring pastorally one-to-one. All these factors are crucial to the organism which is the local church. When you start to list all of the church congregations in Huntingdon of all denominations, including the independent ones and do an anecdotal guesstimate of their regular attendance, I come up with a 'ball park' figure of at least 1,000 people; which I think equates to around 5% of our population. So somewhere between 5% and 12% of us locally are likely to be found worshipping somewhere on a Sunday. There is a more exact analysis to be done here!

I would sum up by saying that however the real statistics are interpreted from the data, my 'feel' of the situation from my 13 years of retirement ministry is that despite all the negative anecdotes one hears about 'church', something is definitely happening. Something is stirring. The reach of the churches in any community is still considerable. Of one thing I am sure and I often say it from pulpits: when the Lord returns there will be a Christian church in England to greet Him. But I can't tell you how large it will be!

**(The Bible Society who commissioned YouGov to do the church attendance poll, have officially pulled the survey following doubts concerning the Methodology used. So the figure of 12% attending church at least once per month is officially withdrawn. It obviously awaits more accurate surveys to be done. It doesn't affect the substance of the above article - Ed.)**

### Register of Services

Date	Day	Hour	Service	Officiant	Comments	Attendance Total / Present	Teacher
10/11	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		6 / 74	
11/11	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		7 / 77	St. Paul
12/11	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	23	50	St. Paul
13/11	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	25	48	St. Paul
14/11	Friday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	30	76	St. Paul
15/11	Saturday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	38	100	St. Paul
16/11	Sunday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	40	9	
17/11	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	40	4	
18/11	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	1 / 41	41	St. Paul
19/11	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	1 / 30	30	St. Paul
20/11	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	4	15	
21/11	Friday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	0	15	
22/11	Saturday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	7	7	
23/11	Sunday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	1	1	
24/11	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	11	11	
25/11	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	11	11	
26/11	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	2	2	
27/11	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	48	48	
28/11	Friday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	53	15	
29/11	Saturday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	1	1	
30/11	Sunday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	2	2	

### Register of Services

Date	Day	Hour	Service	Officiant	Comments	Attendance Total / Present	Teacher
20/11	Tuesday	11:00	Worship	St. Paul		2 / 66	St. Paul
21/11	Wednesday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		5	
22/11	Thursday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		11 / 28	
23/11	Friday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		1 / 23	St. Paul
24/11	Saturday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		4 / 20	St. Paul
25/11	Sunday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul	7	7 / 10	
26/11	Monday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		2 / 70	St. Paul
27/11	Tuesday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		17 / 36	
28/11	Wednesday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		40	
29/11	Thursday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		2 / 40	
30/11	Friday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		9	St. Paul
1/12	Saturday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul	7	2 / 27	St. Paul
2/12	Sunday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		7 / 32	
3/12	Monday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul	45	1 / 50	St. Paul
4/12	Tuesday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		1 / 68	
5/12	Wednesday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul	46	1 / 46	St. Paul
6/12	Thursday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		10 / 38	
7/12	Friday	12:00	Worship	St. Paul		7	

### Register of Services

Date	Day	Hour	Service	Officiant	Comments	Attendance Total / Present	Teacher
12/12	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	5	5 / 50	
13/12	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		4 / 22	
14/12	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	10	1 / 10	
15/12	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	11	35 / 40	
16/12	Friday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	6	8 / 50	
17/12	Saturday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		1 / 22	
18/12	Sunday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		1 / 15	
19/12	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	50	6 / 44	
20/12	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		5 / 5	
21/12	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		6 / 51	
22/12	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	9	9 / 10	
23/12	Friday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		3 / 50	
24/12	Saturday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		4 / 40	
25/12	Sunday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		44 / 40	
26/12	Monday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	5	5 / 15	
27/12	Tuesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		16 / 16	
28/12	Wednesday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul	5	5 / 5	
29/12	Thursday	8:00	Worship	St. Paul		41 / 50	

## Happy 90th Birthday to Jim Dagleish!

Born in Galashiels baby Jim was taken to Corstorphine, a suburb of Edinburgh, to live, spending a very happy childhood near the zoo and left aged 17 to join the Revenue in London. At school he played rugby which became a lifelong passion and continued to play as a hooker until his final club in Huntingdon.



His first love is writing and he wrote stories since childhood and later submitted manuscripts until one, in the historical fiction genre, was published in 1974. Four more historical fiction novels were published and then a change of style writing Westerns. Twenty five were published under the pseudonym J D Kincaid.

After thirty odd years in the Revenue the dream job came along working in the library which Jim did up until retirement. Other interests apart from reading have

included bird watching, playing tennis and badminton, watching opera and ballet.



Jim pictured here holding the ball and Captain of Huntingdon Stags 3rd XV

Finally Jim's favourite saying: "There is no such thing as a bad scotch and the cheaper the better!" (supplied by Lesley Grant)

# Tapestry



Tapestry is a mixed voice a cappella choir based in Cambridgeshire. The name “Tapestry” derives from the wide variety of musical genres and the interweaving of part lines. The choir sing a wide variety of secular and sacred music from modern composers such as Eric Whitacre and Patrick Hawes right back to Tudor and Renaissance composers such as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis. Originally started as a friends meeting together to sing for pleasure, the choir has grown and developed over the years into a locally renowned group. This year marks their 30th anniversary.

We are very much looking forward to performing once again in Hartford Church on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026, do check out our website for more details about the choir.

[www.tapestrysingers.org.uk](http://www.tapestrysingers.org.uk)



# 🦢 Dancing Swans 🦢

Hello everyone

We started off this term with prize giving celebrating the winter exam session. The children were delighted with their medals and certificates. Everyone did really well with good marks from high merit to distinction. We also awarded trophies for the best newcomer, best presented and runner up as pictured below. It was a lovely day enjoyed by us all.

Adult classes have been super this term too! Yasmin and I really enjoy the variety of the class work and particularly enjoy the creativity, fun and laughter from every class.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter. Amanda and Yasmin



[www.whiteswandanceacademy.com](http://www.whiteswandanceacademy.com)

## Harford Church Craft Club



### How did Crafty Saints start?

Well, we ran out of children at our lovely “Tots Praise” which had been taking place for more than 15 years- when we began that is lost in the memory of time!

They had all grown up and gone to school and so in 2018 we decided to do something totally different and at the same time develop our own craft skills. Over the years the numbers of people who have attended has varied, but we have a core of people who, as well as improving their own skills, have learnt new ones. We enjoyed it when Sam Perez, then our Curate, came with his embroidery talents. Over the years we have made different items to be sold in aid of Church Funds at our Christmas Fayre. We also knitted a lot of angels for Hartford and Houghton when they held Nativity displays. These were given to school children and adults! Blankets went out via Godmanchester Food Bank and Easter bunnies (with chocolate eggs) appear each year. We meet every Monday from 10am to 12ish. Anyone is welcome. We enjoy looking at the possibility of a new craft, but we do like to chat as well!

### *Chatty Saints*

After Covid it was felt that there was a need to provide a time for people to get together for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. After a few meetings Mary Adlam introduced us to the game of Rumikub, which she enjoyed playing with her grandchildren.

It can be played at any age and we are now hooked! Other games are played as well and folk are open to trying new ones. So, if you have a favourite bring it along and share with us. Old favourites of scrabble and chess are in our cupboard!

We meet on the first and third Mondays from 2pm to 4pm.

By Elaine Levitt

## ***TWO STORIES from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026***

**The January Week of Prayer for Unity proved to be a very rewarding time and well worth the effort that went into organising it. One small experiment I was keen to carry out was to invite two people that I knew fairly well to share briefly the stories of their faith journeys. But in particular I wanted them to mention the different churches and denominations that have played a part in their spiritual formation. From the feedback I realised that Genene Triggs and Helen Dowzall's talks had aroused quite a lot of interest. So I have added below an edited version of their talks (mainly to get them the same length! Do speak to either Helen or Genene for further info...Clifford, Editor)**

### **Genene writes:**

I was brought up in a small, rural, Norfolk, farming village. My parents and grandparents regularly attended the tiny Bethesda Methodist chapel. It was something that the vast majority of people in that tight knit, family orientated community did. I knew nothing else, Sundays were for wearing my best clothes and going to chapel mornings and evenings and when it was Sunday school anniversary time it was mornings, afternoons and evenings. That was my life and I loved it. I feel so blessed that I was born into such an idyllic Christian family.

I particularly loved Sunday school and it was then that I took Jesus as my best friend. He walked beside me wherever I went, he never left my side. I remember singing hymn number 144 in the old Methodist hymn book and I always requested it as often as I could. It was 'Jesus friend of little children, be a friend to me. Take my hand and ever keep me close to Thee'. My night time prayer as a little girl, kneeling by my bed, was 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child, pity my simplicity, suffer me to come to Thee' which was not surprisingly written by Charles Wesley.

Mum and Dad were small farmers and they both worked so hard and very long hours from early morning to late evening. They were by no means rich but they amassed enough money to do what they thought was best for me and send me to a fee paying school and the only such school around us was 12 miles away and it was a Convent. I think that they had delusions of grandeur for me, bless them, as they named me Genene Francesca Landymore; what a mouthful!

I don't think that my parents gave any thought whatsoever to it being a different denomination to what they or I had been used to. To me that is Christian Unity at its simplest and best. I attended the Servite convent from aged 5 until I left to start my nurse training at 18. I loved every single minute of my conventschool days; though was rather scared of Sister Edmond as I was not the best student at Latin. But deep down she had a heart of gold. Sister Pelegrina was a real mother figure and very nurturing. She taught me so much, not academically, but love and kindness.

Sister Carmella was great at teaching me the catechism and I still remember the first few pages. I find that I still automatically bow my head at the mention of the name of Jesus. What a wonderful school and I thank God that I had so much input in my spiritual journey from the Catholic faith.

I still worshipped at a Methodist church wherever I found myself as an adult. My life hasn't always been plain sailing though and I've experienced sadness and tragedy but through it all God has never left my side. My greatest heartbreak was the death of my darling husband, Stuart, at 49. However during Stuart's illness and ultimate death we experienced the most spiritual awakening possible. Yes Stuart was sad knowing he was going to leave me a widow and he didn't think that God's timing was great but he anticipated his death with a profound faith that was so obvious to everyone that he came into contact with. He said that he had been healed maybe not bodily but most definitely spiritually. All of our friends at the Methodist church in Ely witnessed what total faith in God can do. Stuart died with a smile on his face knowing that he had been made perfect in Christ and that he was going to meet his Lord and Saviour face to face. What a great ambassador Stuart was for God.

Fast forward at least 25 years during which time I'd loved and enjoyed worshipping in lots of evangelical Churches. I always felt and still do a wonderful uplifting presence of Jesus and I'm not averse at raising my hands in worship. My mainstay after Stuart's death though was always a Methodist Church, old habits die hard.

A few years ago I felt very strongly that God was leading me in another direction. I used to walk past Hartford Church with my little dog Chloe and I always felt a calmness and had a warm feeling but never thinking that I would step inside an Anglican Church. I wouldn't know what to do, where to sit and I certainly wouldn't know or understand the liturgy. However he led and I followed and on one Sunday morning I stepped inside this Church nervous and shy. The minute that I stepped through the doors I felt Jesus right beside me and still holding my hand. God very plainly said 'This is where I want you to be, at the moment'. From that day I've never looked back.

I still don't know when I should be genuflecting ( sorry Geoff) and I'm not always sure when I

should be standing or sitting. What I do know for sure though is that when I look at that cross on the altar it's the same Jesus who took my hand as a little girl, still holds my hand today and died for me on that cross, whether I'm at a Methodist, Catholic, Evangelical or Anglican Church. I'm now loving learning all the liturgy. My cup gets filled to overflowing every time that I receive Holy Communion, at the healing services, at the evening prayer services and at the all age worship services and I always look forward to and enjoy our Wednesday evening zoom meetings, especially Compline. I love it.

In conclusion. I love cooking and I always use the best ingredients that I can find to hopefully bake the best chocolate cake that I can. This, I can liken to my journey with God as I walk with Him to my everlasting home. I feel that I have been given the best ingredients from the Methodist, Catholic, Evangelical and Anglican faiths to help me be the best person that God wants me to be. I don't know what God has in store for me but my fervent prayer is that 'wherever He leads then I will follow'.

### Helen writes:

Clifford asked Genevieve and me to give a talk pointing out which different churches have had an influence on our faith journey and why

When I began to think about this, I also had to think about the influences on my parents and grandparents, because that in turn impacted on me.

To set the scene, I need to tell you that I was born in Western Australia and lived there for almost 24 years.

In the days of my grandparents, there were more rigid divisions between some denominations. I remember my mother telling me that going to a home of a Roman Catholic for a meal, if you were Protestant, was a cause for comment in the 1920s in Perth, Western Australia.

My maternal grandmother had been educated at a Roman Catholic school but as an adult became a staunch Anglican. My paternal grandmother belonged in her later years to a small house-church (a bit like the Plymouth Brethren). If that church sect was asked what they were called, the reply was "We have no name, we are the Truth and the Way".

My parents spent most of their childhood in small country towns in W.A. Usually there were only 2 churches they could attend – one was the Roman Catholic church and the other was almost always a Baptist church (to which the Protestants would go), Thus many people called themselves "Bush Baptists".

My mother loved attending Sunday School at the Baptist church as a child – the singing and stories were the highlight of her week. She however attended Anglican churches, when she could, and was confirmed in an Anglican church. It was her wish that I, and my brother, were raised as members of the Church of England. My father had no objections, even though he called himself a non-practicing Methodist.

I began attending the Sunday School at my local Anglican church of St Mary's from the age of about 6, getting confirmed at age 12 and eventually becoming a Sunday School teacher there. I was married at that church and worshipped there, until leaving for Britain in my mid-twenties. [for what was originally planned as a two year working holiday.]

I attended a Church of England girls' school for 4 years from the age of 10. (Its churchmanship was "High church – almost Anglo-Catholic"). However, my last three years at school were spent at a Methodist Ladies College, which to be honest I preferred.

During most of that time, I was having piano lessons (from the age of 8 to 18) from Sister Mary Majella, a Roman Catholic nun at a Sisters of Mercy Convent school. This wonderful and very down-to-earth lady became a great friend of both myself and my parents. Many years after I had finished taking lessons, we still spent time together – sometimes eating at my family home and once or twice at the Convent with the other nuns.

I still use a bookmark that she gave me, in my choir hymn book. Sister Majella (known in her community as a "great prayer warrior") had a definite influence on my life – a number of our music lessons were spent discussing life rather than concentrating on playing the piano. We were open to hearing what the other had to say – with love and mutual respect.

As my first husband's family had come originally from Scotland, as a young adult, I occasionally attended the Presbyterian church in Perth. I always felt very comfortable in those services.

I found experiencing the different emphases that different denominations have, to be stimulating and made me think more deeply about my own faith.

My second husband, Bert, came to faith quite late in life. He was baptised and confirmed whilst in his mid-sixties, here at Hartford Church – not long after we moved down from London - by the then vicar, Rev John Sansom.

At that time (talking about 1990) Hartford church did not have the amenities we enjoy today, which were installed early in 2004. We had no running water, so obviously no kitchen or toilet facilities. This made meetings of more than an hour problematic for some people. Bible studies and Lent courses were therefore limited to the number of people that could fit into the vicarage.

Rev John Sansom and the minister at Trinity Baptist Church worked together, and an enriching solution was found with our congregations joining together to do bible studies and Lent courses. I found that I still have the booklets for one of two full day seminar courses, which was held in 1991 called “Walk through the Old Testament”. Trinity and Hartford did joint services occasionally and our congregations always combined on Christmas Day, alternating venues each year between Hartford Church and Trinity. When John Sansom ceased to be our vicar, the close collaboration with Trinity ended, which came as a great disappointment to me and my husband, and I think many others.

Because Bert came to faith late in life, he had viewed Christian churches from the outside for many years. He always used a food analogy to describe the different denominations of the Christian church as “same meat, different gravy”, and I think I rather agree with him.

Our denominations have so much in common and the differences can be mutually respected and possibly enriching. Uniformity is not necessary, as long as we have a common purpose. I like the phrase **Spiritual unity is diversity loved and united.**

I think being exposed to so many different traditions during my life enabled me to appreciate and enjoy the variety and respect the differences. The most important thing is that we hold the **basics** in common – to believe in Jesus Christ, to love and serve God and to love and serve others.

**..and Helen closed with these prayers:**

As the hymn affirms “The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord”

**Father God, thank you that our different churches and traditions are held together by belief in you as our Lord. Help us to respect each other and to work together in love for your greater glory, so that the world can see that you are Lord and also come to believe and trust in You. Amen.**

**We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches throughout the world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world (by St Francis of Assisi) Amen.**

Hartford Church supports financially, and in prayer, a number of organisations throughout the year. In the next three months, these are:

In **April**, the Star School, Kigali, Rwanda and Place of Grace, Bangkok, Thailand

The **Place of Grace** is a Christian charity in Bangkok, Thailand. They work with the local slum community to reduce poverty and to share the love of Jesus. They run children's clubs and a foodbank as well as a school. The school has 42 children between 6 and 18, who are studying in English for an American diploma.

**Star School**, in the heart of Rwanda's famous rolling hills, opened its doors with a single vision: Star School exists to enable students to succeed, regardless of the circumstances into which they were born. The school was founded in 2008 with 45 students. Star School in Kigali, Rwanda now instructs over 800 children in its nursery, primary, and secondary schools.

In **May**, The Children's Society

**The Children's Society** is a national charity working to transform the hopes and happiness of young people facing abuse, exploitation, and neglect. They support them through their most serious life challenges, and campaign tirelessly for the big social changes that will improve the lives of those who need hope most. They provide specialist support that empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover their hope. The Children's Society have been doing this for over 140 years and they are committed to continuing to build a society where hope is alive in every child.

In **June**, Kings Ripton Court Lifehouse

**Kings Ripton Court Lifehouses** is operated by **The Salvation Army**, which operates over 80 'Lifehouses'. They are places where people can get support with their housing issues and also find support with other aspects of their lives such as employment, debt problems, training, spirituality, loneliness, addiction, or mental health.

Kings Ripton Court provides support with up to two years self-catering accommodation for young adults, aged between 16 and 25 years. During this time residents are guided through a structure programme with the goal of achieving independent accommodation.

January – Fusion

February – Huntingdon Area Money Advice

March – Faith in Business

April – Star School, Kigali, Rwanda and Place of Grace, Bangkok, Thailand

May – The Children's Society

June – Kings Ripton Court Lifehouse

July – The Mission to Seafarers

August – Mid-Cambs Women's Refuge

September – Godmanchester Food Bank

October – Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Chaplaincy

November – The Royal British Legion

December – Winter Comfort

## Joking aside! 😞

Seen on a church noticeboard:

You're very welcome to join us this Sunday. Sermon: 'what is hell like?'

Come and hear our new organ.

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A churchwarden in Worcestershire gave me this one:

The local branch of the Prayer Book Society were doing some canvassing in Worcester High Street. They stopped people in the street and asked them what they thought of Cranmer's language. One wag replied: 'I think 'is language is bloomin' awful, but if he's worth 'is place in the team I'd stick 'im in.'

(16<sup>th</sup> century Archbishop Cranmer was principal shaper of the book of Common Prayer!)

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A vicar was preaching on the importance of forgiving our enemies. After a few minutes he exclaimed: 'Now then, if you have forgiven your enemies, please put your hand up'. About seven hands went up in that congregation of fifty. The preacher thought: '..mm, I'd better give 'em a bit more on this'. So on he went for another fifteen minutes and then asked again how many had forgiven their enemies. Fearing that they might not get home for lunch, nearly all the hands went up.

The preacher looked around and noticed that one old lady in the front hadn't put her hand up. 'Mrs. Jones have you forgiven your enemies?'

'I don't have any enemies to forgive', she retorted. 'Mrs. Jones, are you telling me that you have lived for 94 years and have no enemies?'

'That's right, vicar. I've outlived all of the old blighters!'

# All Saints Special Events

## Regular Events

**Crafty Saints** 10 am - 12 noon - Every Monday

**Afternoon Tea & Chat** 2 pm - 4 pm - Every 1st and 3rd Monday

## Regular Services

### 1st Sunday of the Month

11.00 am - Holy communion

6.00 pm - Evening Prayer

### 2nd Sunday of the Month

8.30 am - Holy Communion

11.00 am - All Age Worship

### 3rd Sunday of the Month

11.00 am - All Age Communion

### 3rd Wednesday of the Month

7.00 pm - Service of Healing and Wholeness

### 4th Sunday of the Month

8.30 am - Holy Communion

11.00 am - Morning Worship

### 5th Sunday of the Month

11.00 am - Holy Communion for the 5th Sunday

## Coming Up!



**Maundy Thursday** (April 2nd) Holy Communion at 1900



**Good Friday Meditations** (April 3rd) at 1200



**EASTER SUNDAY** (April 5th) **Easter Holy Communion** at 1100 **Easter Evening Prayer** at 1800



**SATURDAY 9th May** Concert by 'Tapestry'

and finally:

a. Do forward this newsletter on to a friend or neighbour who may enjoy looking at it.

&

b. Do have a click on the Church website [www.allsaintshartford.org.uk](http://www.allsaintshartford.org.uk)

A Happy and Blessed Easter to all our readers.

Clifford