

Parish Newsletter - Issue No. 102

50th

August & September 2026

**St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill, St David's, Lordswood,
and St William's, Walderslade**



"Where am I?"
"In the Village."
"What do you want?"
"Information."
"Whose side are you on?"
"That would be *telling*...
...We want information... *information...
information!*"
"You won't get it!"
"By hook or by crook, we will."
"Who are you?"
"The new Number Two."
"Who is Number One?"
"You are Number Six."
"*I am not a number; I am a free man!*"

You may recognise this exchange. It is the introductory dialogue from the cult 1960's television show, *The Prisoner*. I watched the series again recently having first seen a re-run about thirty years ago. Growing up, it appealed to me. Perhaps it was the Italianate set of Portmeirion, Wales, the fashion, the bizarre story-lines — spy thriller, science-fiction and psychedelia all rolled into one — or maybe it was the machismo of the mysterious central character played by Patrick McGoohan. I was intrigued by this nameless individual imprisoned because of information held in his head; his every attempt to escape 'the Village' thwarted by mysterious captors, of which host-Government we are never told, and a giant bouncing white bubble named Rover. Only the 1960's could have birthed such an original idea; one that has influenced modern day TV creations such as *Twin Peaks*, *Lost* and *Severance*.

Having watched *The Prisoner* again as an adult, I was left thinking: what on earth was that all about!? But I think a deeper meaning can be found when viewed from an existential and spiritual perspective.



No. 1 Buckingham Palace, London, SW1E

LOVE ♦ ACT ♦ SUSTAIN

'turning the holy ordinary and the ordinary holy'

The imprisonment of Number Six appears to be self-inflicted; a result of refusing to explain his resignation from the Secret Service. One might admire this strident individualism reinforced by his rebellion against the societal norms of the 'the Village,' but his constant attempts to escape might also be understood, in the words of the Apostle Paul, as a kicking 'against the goads' (Acts 26.14). Dotted throughout the series, there are small clues about who is responsible for his incarceration and suggestions about who holds the key to freedom.

In the final climactic episode, the plot descends into utter chaos to the soundtrack of the Beatles', *All You Need is Love*, and Number Six meets Number One at last. As he removes his captor's mask, he finds himself staring face-to-face with himself, and even then he fights against this revelation. One might suggest that in this moment, the human condition is laid bare. It is we that imprison ourselves by placing ourselves at the centre of our own universe: Number One.

Regardless of the intention, *The Prisoner* provides an insight into the doctrine of

Original Sin. Before and after his surreal incarceration, the man, Number Six, is a prisoner. No word or deed; neither power within nor force without, can change this fact. Likewise for us, salvation begins when we come to terms with the person staring back at us in the mirror. As the Evangelist, J. John once said, 'The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart...' Becoming aware of our weakness and inability to defeat sin in ourselves, so that we might escape our self-made prison leads us to Christ, and keeps us near Christ; Christ who doesn't number us but names us and sets us free (John 8.36).

Turning to the newsletter, I present a double edition this month which covers all the worship and events in August and September. Look out also for articles from Pauline Bowdery about Gift Aid (p. 7), and an extract from Rev. Ann's sermon from the Midweek Holy Communion on 1 July (p. 8). I thought it was extremely helpful.

Rev. David Kitchenside
Team Rector

Worship in August 2026

Sunday 2 August (Trinity 9)

10am **Morning Worship** at St David's, Lordswood

Wednesday 5 August

10am **Midweek Holy Communion** in the Chapel at St William's

Sunday 9 August (Trinity 10)

10.30am **Holy Baptism**
at St William's, Walderslade

10am **Morning Worship**
at St David's, Lordswood

Sunday 16 August (Trinity 11)

10am **Morning Worship**
at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill



Credit: Rev. Elaine Crammer

Sunday 23 August (Trinity 12)

10am **Holy Communion** at St David's, Lordswood

Sunday 30 August (Trinity 13)

10am **Morning Worship** at St William's, Walderslade

Worship in September 2026

Wednesday 2 September

10am **Midweek Holy Communion**
in the Chapel at St William's

Sunday 6 September (Feast of Creation)

10am **Holy Communion** at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill

Sunday 13 September (Trinity 15)

10am **Morning Worship**
at St David's

Sunday 20 September (Trinity 16)

10am **Holy Communion**
at St William's, Walderslade

10am *Family Vibes* at St David's

Sunday 27 September (Trinity 17)

10am **Morning Worship**
at St Alban's, Blue Bell Hill



On the Social side

All our social events continue over the summer holidays..

Coffee & Cake is held at St David's on the second Friday of each month between 10.30am and 12pm. *Hot drinks, cold drinks, lots of cake and good company!* Next dates: **14 August & 11 September**.

Tea at Three at St William's on the third Monday of each month at 3pm. *Afternoon tea served with a smile!* Next dates: **17 August & 21 September**.

Holy Communion & Coffee Morning at St Alban's on the third Wednesday of each month. Next dates: **19 August & 16 September** (worship at 10am, refreshments from 10.30am).

Cornerstone Coffeeshop at St William's in Walderslade Village is open most days throughout the week serving a range of hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, cakes and other bakes; **Monday - Friday** 10am - 2pm and **Saturdays** from 9am (from 10am during the school holidays!)

People of the Parish

This month Ann Bengier interviews Vera Jones, longstanding member of the Parish.



Age 83

What is your role in the church? I have retired from most of what I did, but I still visit at Woodlands.

Married to Michael for 57 years.

Children Two girls, Trudy and Michelle.

Where are you from?
Forest Gate

What did you want to be as a child? A dressmaker. I was always sewing and I loved embroidery.

What is your church background? Methodist.

Could you share any childhood memories with us?

I went to Junior Church on Sunday morning, Sunday School on Sunday afternoon, and had to change out of my best dress in between.. I went to Community Singing with my Grandma at Wanstead Flats in the evening.

What was your employment?

I was a dressmaker until I had the children. Later on I became a Teaching Assistant.

What is your favourite food?

Roast lamb.

What are your hobbies?

Reading and crosswords..

Do you have a favourite holiday destination? Yorkshire.

What music do you listen to?

Sixties and seventies.

What do you watch on TV?

Gone Fishing and mysteries.

Do you have a favourite hymn?

Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us.

Do you have a favourite Bible reading? *Psalm 121*

What do you draw from

spiritually? Church music, nature. I pray and am closest to God in a garden.

Have you ever had a profound spiritual experience? Yes

In our prayers

We remember before God:

- the great gift of creation; the earth, the universe, and the beautiful diversity we see all around us
- countries affected by poverty, conflict and environmental disaster
- our shared global history and politics, praying for God's Kingdom of justice and peace
- His Majesty King Charles III and the UK Government
- our local community, especially as the summer holidays begin and people travel by land, air and sea
- the churches of the North Kent Methodist Circuit and Rev. Dr Bonni-Belle Pickard and family as she retires from ministry

- Rochester Diocese, our Bishops, this Deanery and Rev. David McCleod, Vicar of Christ the King, to be licensed on 10 September
- the sick in body, mind and spirit
- for couples preparing for their wedding day and future life together
- those preparing for baptism, confirmation and ordination
- those we have loved and lost, we pray especially for the families of Bryan Tolhurst and Pat Long.

Dates: August 2026

Midweek Communion at Woodlands Court on Monday 3 August at 6.30pm

Midweek Holy Communion in the Chapel at St William's on Wednesday 5 August at 10am

Trinity Prayers in the Chapel at St David's on Thursday 6 August at 7.30pm

Wardens Plus at St David's on Friday 7 August at 9.00am

Woodlands Study Group (Residents only) at Woodlands Court on Mondays 10 & 24 August at 11am

Bible Study Group (for everyone) in the Chapel at St David's on Mondays 10 & 24 August at 2.30pm

Funeral Service for Pat Long RIP at St William's on Friday 14 August 1.30pm followed by the Committal at Medway Crematorium at 2.30pm

Browse and Buy Sale at St David's on Saturday 22 August 10am to 12noon with set-up on Friday 21 August 10am to 12noon

Dates: September 2026

Midweek Holy Communion in the Chapel at St William's on Wednesday 2 September at 10am

Trinity Prayers in the Chapel at St David's on Thursday 3 September at 7.30pm

Wardens Plus at St David's on Friday 4 September at 9.00am

Midweek Communion at Woodlands Court on Monday 7 September at 6.30pm

Woodlands Study Group (Residents only) at Woodlands Court on Mondays 14 & 28 September at 11am

Bible Study Group (for everyone) in the Chapel at St David's on Mondays 14 & 28 September at 2.30pm

Deanery Chapter at TBC on Tuesday 15 September at 8am

Bible awareness for faith and life in the 21st century — a course hosted by Walderslade Baptist Church (ME5 9HP) next date: Wednesday 16 September from 7.20pm to 9pm. *See leaflets for details.*

CEC in the Cornerstone Coffee Shop at St William's on Wednesday 23 September at 7.30pm

Cornerstone Management Committee in the Cornerstone Coffee Shop at St William's Wednesday 30 September at 7.30pm



Claiming Gift Aid

It's not often the Government gives tax money out but they occasionally do. If you are a charity, which the Church is, and you receive donations from tax payers then the charity can claim back the tax individuals pay on their donations. This is called Gift Aid and for every £1 donated the Government gives another 25p to the charity.

This increase in your donation only requires you to a) pay tax and b) fill in a simple form with your name, address and then tick a box stating that you pay tax and want to have gift aid reclaimed on it. If you then make a donation, that can be linked to you e.g standing order, gift envelopes or cheque, then a claim can be made. If it is digital payment you prefer and it is over £30 then we need to sort something out but it will be simple for you.

Some people prefer not to have their tax reclaimed and that's okay but if you want to have the Government refund the Church some of your tax then talk to me. Thank you.

Pauline Bowdery

Gift Aid Officer

When Jesus Comes Near

Our Gospel reading today is one of the most dramatic and unsettling encounters in the whole of Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus arrives in the country of the Gadarenes and is immediately confronted by two men possessed by demons. Matthew tells us they were so fierce that no one could pass that way. These were men whom society had given up on. People avoided them. They lived among the tombs, isolated from family, community and ordinary life. Yet Jesus goes towards them.

That is often the first thing we notice about Jesus. Where others avoid, he approaches. Where others write people off, he sees possibility. Where others see danger, he sees suffering.

The men cry out, "What have you to do with us, Son of God?" They recognise who Jesus is before anyone else in this foreign territory does. The powers of evil know exactly who stands before them. Jesus does not need to argue or struggle. With a word, he commands the demons to leave.

Now, many of us may feel uncomfortable with talk of demons. We live in an age that often explains everything through psychology, medicine or social circumstances. Yet even if we understand this story differently today, we still recognise the reality of forces that damage human life.

We see addiction that destroys families, hatred that divides communities, fear that paralyses people, loneliness that leaves people cut off from others, guilt, bitterness and despair that can imprison the human spirit. Whatever name we give them, there are powers that diminish human flourishing and prevent people from becoming who God created them to be.

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus comes to set people free. That freedom is not merely something that happened two thousand years ago. It is part of Christ's continuing work in the world and in us.

Many of us, if we look back over our lives, can identify things from which God has gradually freed us. Perhaps fears that once dominated us. Old resentments we

eventually learned to let go. Grief that slowly softened. Habits that no longer hold the same power.

The work of Christ is often quieter than this dramatic Gospel story, but it is no less real. Yet there is another surprising feature in today's reading. After the healing takes place, the whole town comes out to meet Jesus. You might expect them to celebrate — two troubled men have been restored, a dangerous area is now safe, lives have been transformed — But that is not what happens. Instead, they ask Jesus to leave.

It is one of the saddest responses to Jesus in the New Testament. Why do they do it? Partly because they have suffered a loss. The herd of pigs has rushed into the sea and been destroyed. Their economy has been disrupted. The arrival of Jesus has cost them something.

And perhaps that is where this story comes closest to our own experience. We all like the idea of Jesus changing things, provided he changes other people. We are happy for Jesus to heal, comfort and forgive.



Credit: Courtesy of Lumo Project Films —www.lumoproject.com

But when his presence begins to disturb our priorities, challenge our assumptions, or call us to a different way of living, we can become uncomfortable.

The people of the town preferred the familiar order of things, even with all its problems, to the unsettling presence of God's kingdom.

There is a warning here for every church. It is possible to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," and yet quietly hope he does not change too much. It is possible to ask for renewal but resist the consequences of renewal. It is possible to desire God's blessing but not God's transformation.

The Gospel reminds us that when Jesus comes near, things change. As we grow older, there can be a temptation to settle into patterns that feel safe. We know what we like. We know what is familiar. Yet discipleship never becomes a finished project. So perhaps the question for us this week is simple.

When Jesus comes near, will we ask him to leave, because his presence is inconvenient? Or will we welcome him, trusting that whatever he changes, he changes for our good and for God's glory?

May we have the courage to welcome Christ afresh, to trust his power over all that diminishes life, and to receive the freedom and hope that he alone can give. Amen.

Adapted from a sermon on Matthew 8.28–34 delivered by Rev. Ann Ruby on 1 July 2026 at St William's.

Reading & Praying

Trinity 9 - 2 August

*1 Samuel 15.1-3, 8, 10-17, 24-25;
Psalm 146; Revelation 1.4-6;
& Mark 6.14-29*

Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and faithful,
for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ
our Lord. **Amen.**

Trinity 10 - 9 August

*1 Samuel 17.1-7, 12-16, 24-27;
Psalm 10.1-14; Romans 8.31-39;
& John 10.11-16*

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be
persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to
lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers
before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Trinity 11 - 16 August

*1 Samuel 17.55-18.9;
Psalm 47.1-2, 5-9; Hebrews 1.1-9;
& Matthew 5.33-37*

God of glory,
the end of our searching,

help us to lay aside
all that prevents us from seeking
your kingdom,
and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl beyond all price,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Trinity 12 - 23 August

*1 Samuel 14.49-51, 18.17-21, 29;
Psalm 31.1-7, 14-16, 19-24;
Romans 13.8-10; & Mark 12.28-34*

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Trinity 13 - 30 August

*1 Samuel 25.14-19, 23-25, 42-43;
Psalm 37.1-2, 7-11, 16, 35-40;
Galatians 5.13-21; & Luke 19.1-10*

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Trinity 14/Feast of Creation - 6 September

*Ezekiel 47:9-12; Psalm 65: 5-13;
Revelation 22:1-7; & John 7:37-39*

Almighty and ever living God,
we thank you for your love in
all creation,
and especially for your gift of water to
sustain and cleanse all life.
Christ is the living water, cleansing,
refreshing, and making all things new.
So now we offer our thanks for the
waters that bring beauty to all
that we enjoy,
the wild places, the bush, the
mountains, coast and the sea.
We give thanks and praise for all good
lands, for the trees and pastures,
for our plentiful crops, and for the
living water that quenches them.
Amen.

Trinity 15 - 13 September

*1 Samuel 30.1-8, 17-19;
Psalm 71.1-6; 2 Corinthians 1.8-11;
& Matthew 6.9-13*

Lord God,
defend your Church from all
false teaching
and give to your people knowledge of
your truth,
that we may enjoy eternal life in
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Above the coast of Türkiye May 2026

Trinity 16 - 20 September

*2 Samuel 1.17-27;
Ezekiel 19.1-3, 10-14;
1 Thessalonians 4.13-18;
& John 16.16-22*

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Trinity 17 - 27 September

*2 Samuel 11.2-15; Psalm 32.1-7;
2 Peter 3.1-4, 8-9;
& Matthew 5.21-26*

Gracious God,
you call us to fullness of life;
deliver us from unbelief and banish
our anxieties
with the liberating love of Jesus Christ
our Lord. **Amen.**

Keeping in contact

More information about the Parish is available via weekly emails which you can sign-up to receive from our website, achurchnearyou.com/Holy-Trinity-South-Chatham, or by using the QR code below. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

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(Rest Day: Saturday)

Team Curate: Rev. Ann Ruby 07565 402121 reverendann@hotmail.com
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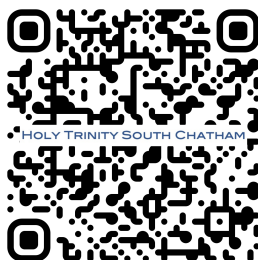
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@southchatham on Facebook and @htscuk on Instagram



HOLY TRINITY SOUTH CHATHAM

One church of St Alban, St David and St William serving Blue Bell Hill, Lords Wood and Walderslade.
A partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church

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The **Methodist** Church

