



Pip and Steve and the Gang —

A newsletter for the parish of All Saints & St Philip, Maidstone, with St Stephen, Tovil.

For the week ending 1st November

On Sunday we mark the feast of All Saints, which is, of course, the patronal Festival of All Saints church. Order of service for Sunday from previous years, it struck me how this service was once kept with processions and choral anthems and much solemnity. Reading the order of service felt like a snapshot of what All Saints used to be.

It is tempting, when the spring tides gather — as it feels as though they are, just now — to try and take ourselves back to last summer, so to speak. It is tempting to think of our past glories as being our future hope. However, the whole point of All Saints is to remind us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, stretching back to before Maidstone was even a simple little market Hamlet, on through to those who are yet to be born, who will see marvels of which we cannot conceive. And God is faithful, leading us forward to a new chapter which is not just a reprise of what we have done before, but rather an expression of her love for today's Maidstone.

I am conscious that the All Saints' Church of yesteryear was much more separate from the life of Saint Philip's, and indeed St Stephen's. But the community of Saints, varied though it is, with people from every colour and class and language; people with great sweeping theologies and visions of heaven, and people who simply got on with the business of discipleship amongst the people around them; people who succeeded, according to the measures of the world and the church of their day, and people whose lives were a failure by the reckoning of this world, but glorious in the eyes of heaven. As we build our vision for the future, we need to build one for the whole parish where our overlapping communities, and our buildings, work together for the glory of God.

I am really excited to be part of this new chapter in the life of Pip and Steve and the Gang (otherwise known as Philip and Stephen and All Saints). There is a sense that not only the community of Saints, but also much of the community of Maidstone is currently cheering us on as we gather ourselves up to restore the building of All Saints, and also renew our vision of ourselves in service to this parish.

I hope this newsletter is useful, sharing information and updates about what is going on in the parish. If there is anything you would like included in this newsletter, [please do let me know](#). And my thanks to those who have already to done just that.

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This Week

This week was not the quiet week I expected, but rather I have been “coalface” vicaring — pastoral visits and preparing for life events, so forgive me if I have not replied promptly to any emails sent to me! Nevertheless, I mostly managed to retain my quiet day on Monday, when I spent a day with the Cloud of Unknowing, a book written by an anonymous 14th century monk which has had a significant influence on the church through the centuries, including Evelyn Underhill, Rowan Williams and Pope Francis.

The Cloud teaches a form of contemplative prayer, which puts aside thinking and analysis concentrates on our most simple yearning for God. *“take thee but a little word of one syllable: ... And such a word is this word GOD or this word LOVE. ... And fasten this word to thine heart, so that it never go thence for thing that befalleth.*

This word shall be thy shield and thy spear, whether thou ridest on peace or on war. With this word, thou shalt beat on this cloud and this darkness above thee. With this word, thou shalt smite down all manner of thought under the cloud of forgetting. Insomuch, that if any thought press upon thee to ask thee what thou wouldest have, answer them with no more words but with this one word.”

I find it very challenging!

Next Week

On the 2 November, we will be holding an All Souls Service at 7 o’clock at All Saints Church. There, we will be reading out the names of those dear to us who we see no longer, along with all those whose funerals we have attended to over the past year. There is yet lists at the back of All Saints church at this week’s service so that you can write (clearly legible printed, please) the names of anyone you would like remembered that service.

On 7th of November, we are accompanying Jacqueline Anson, Summer Beale, Kelsi Harris and Zoryana Jeffery to Canterbury Cathedral for their confirmation. The rite of confirmation is an expression of our faith and commitment as active Christians. It is the partner to our baptism. In baptism we are united in Christ's death and new life; by our confirmation we are called to his service. Jacqueline, Summer, Kelsi and Zoryana will renew their baptism commitment, be anointed, and have hands laid on them by Bishop Rose in a gesture invoking the Holy Spirit who anoints them to equip their Christian life. Please come along (11 AM at Canterbury Cathedral) if you can.

Coming up

On 15 November, after church at All Saints, we will be raising money for Macmillan as part of our post service hospitality. Please stay and buy cake!

Please put in your diaries the 22nd November, when you are invited to bring a packed lunch to church, so that over lunch we can begin to discuss our priorities together as a parish. *Over the coming month, it would be really good if you could be thinking about what we do well, and what we need to work on (and what resources we would need so to do).*

And on 29 November, Advent Sunday, we will be having a parish lunch after the service at St Philips Church. See the pew sheet for information about obtaining a ticket.

Upcoming services:

November:

Sun 1st - 10.00am – Parish Eucharist, *All Saints, Mill Street,*

6:30 PM – Evensong, *All Saints, Mill Street,*

Mon 2nd – 7 PM – All Souls Service at 7 o'clock, *All Saints Church, Mill Street*

Sun 8th - 10.00am – Parish Eucharist, *St Philips, Waterloo Street,*

10:30 AM – Remembrance Parade, Town Centre

12 PM – Act of Remembrance, *All Saints Church, Mill Street*

Sun 15th - 10 AM Parish Eucharist, *All Saints, Mill Street*

Sun 22nd - 8 AM holy Communion, *St Philip's Church, Waterloo Street*

10 AM Service of the Word, *St Stephens at Archbishop Courtenay School*

followed by lunch (bring your own) and discussion

Christmas services:

Sat 19 – 4 p.m. 9 Lessons and Carols, *All Saints Church*

Sun 20 – 6 p.m. Carol service, *Saint Philip's Church*

Thurs 24th - 4:30 PM Christingle service, *All Saints Church*

11:30 PM midnight mass, *All Saints Church*

Christmas Day 10 AM service of carols and readings, *Saint Philip Church*

10 AM Eucharist, *All Saints Church*
Sun 27 – 10 a.m. Eucharist, *Saint Stephen in the School*

For Prayer

I am looking for people who are able to commit themselves to praying at a set time every day, in their own homes, for the work of the parish. [Please get in touch](#) if you're interested.

As a matter of course, please pray for those whose lives touch the ministry this parish through their Life Events (see below), but particularly Mervyn Penry Stanton, late of this parish, recently departed.

Jacqueline, Summer, Kelsi and Zoryana as they are confirmed next weekend.

Please note the names of those on our prayer list will be refreshed each month, so do remember to let us know if you want us to keep someone in our prayers this month.

For Action

I'm conscious there is a solid group of people who work hard both in the community and maintaining our buildings and grounds, and I'm very grateful. We do need volunteers, however for:

Keyholders, available to unlock for events, and respond to minor queries. In particular, next year, I want to be opening both churches every Sunday at 10 AM, so I need a rota of people to open the church where the service *isn't*. On which, more anon.

Members of our working groups — we need *your* wisdom and experience! In particular, I need to build a communications team to think about noticeboards, pew sheets, social media et cetera.

Do [get in touch](#) if you think you can help.

Please come along to St Stephens at the Archbishop Courtenay School, on 22 November, and share with us your insight into who we are, and what we are growing towards.

Life Events

We are beginning to build up a list of couples looking to get married with us in 2027. Please pray for Laura and Sean and Gary and Katriel as they prepare for their weddings next year.

Look forward to more banns of marriage being read in the spring!

We will be holding the funeral for Mervyn Penry Stanton on 23 November at 12 PM at All Saints Church. Please hold his widow and family in your prayers.

Discipleship and Training

There are moves afoot to reboot our **prayer and study group**. Do get in touch if you are interested. I'll keep you updated here.

In the wider diocese:

Prayers for peace and reconciliation

 Every Tuesday starting 15 September the

 12:30pm

 Canterbury Cathedral crypt

Jonathan Arnold, Director of the Social Justice Network, will be leading a weekly service of prayer and silent reflection for peace and reconciliation. All are welcome to join in praying for the needs of the world, our communities and our own lives.

Christ's Love: A Choral Concert

 Sunday, November 1

 7 PM - 8:15 PM

 [St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church Folkestone, Kent](#)

if you fancy schlepping down to Folkestone, [Caritas Chamber Choir](#) are singing music of devotion, sacrifice, mercy and divine love, by MacMillan, Palestrina, Neil Wright, Burgon, Byrd, Pärt, Tallis and Preece, including

- A Child's Prayer — MacMillan
- Sicut Cervus — Palestrina
- Jesu, grant me this I pray — Neil Wright
- Christ's Love — Burgon
- Emendemus in melius — Byrd
- The Deer's Cry — Pärt
- A New Commandment — Tallis

Odds and Sods

This week I've been running around more, so I have less in the way of random thoughts to share. If you have read or heard something interesting this week, do let me know.

Keep in Touch



<https://www.stphilipschurchmaidstone.co.uk/>



(parish): <https://www.facebook.com/p/All-Saints-with-St-Philip-St-Stephen-Maidstone-100069767707374/>

(bells): <https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsMaidstone>



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donate: <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/all-saints-mairstone>

Giving

Finally, owing to the hard work of our treasurer, Terri, it's now really easy to make both one-off donations and to set up a direct debit to give to the work of the parish. **Go to [parishgiving.org](https://www.parishgiving.org) and set it up there** — you can even stay anonymous if you would like. More on this, anon.