

Good News Parish Magazine

for Eastling, Otterden, Stalisfield and Throwley

www.goodnews.rf.gd

FEBRUARY 2026



- 4th Stalisfield and Otterden W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 11th Egerton Arts Society
Egerton Millennium Hall 2.30pm
- 12th Local History Society meeting
Charing Parish Hall 7.30pm
- 18th Ash Wednesday Communion
Doddington Church 7.30pm
- 20th Deadline for March Good News:
goodnewsmagazine@me.com
- 25th Lent Bible Studies begin
Doddington Vicarage 7.30 - 9pm
- 27th *Together in Boots* walking group
Doddington Church leave at 2pm
- 28th Quiz Night
Eastling Village Hall 7pm

MARCH

- 4th Stalisfield and Otterden W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 14th Pizza and Praise for 11 - 17yrs
Lynsted Church 4 - 6pm
- 15th Mothering Sunday

EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

QUIZ NIGHT

28TH FEB 7 PM

CAN YOU BAKE A CAKE FOR
THE RAFFLE? LET US KNOW

Tables of up to 8 people - if you don't have a team,
let us know and we'll match you up with one.
Bring your own snacks & drinks
£5 per person
Please bring cash for raffle and entry fee.

TO BOOK, PLEASE EMAIL
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LENT 2026

Ash Wednesday Communion Service

18th February 2026

7.30pm in Doddington Church

Lent Bible Studies with Reflection

Wednesdays 25th February - 25th March

7.30pm in Doddington Vicarage

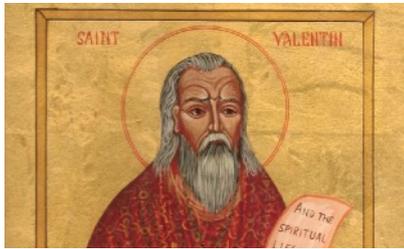
More information inside on centre pages



Henry is making a real effort for Lent –
he's giving up the remote control and
walking to the TV

Message for the Month

January has been and gone, we are now into February, I'm not sure how many of you send a card (or two) or give flowers on Valentine's Day but do you know anything about this Saint?



Well Saint Valentine was believed to have lived in the 3rd century AD when Emperor Claudius II governed the Roman Empire. Christianity was still relatively new and was incompatible with Roman Law. Claudius II was himself a pagan and he created strict legislation against Christianity including laws against marriage vows. (Claudius II thought unmarried men made better soldiers). During Claudius II's reign Christians were persecuted and Valentine ministered to them.

Over the years the story of Valentine was enhanced, and it was said that he defied the law and married many soldiers in secret Christian ceremonies, which is how it is thought he gained the reputation as the saint of lovers. What few people realise is that he is also a saint of epilepsy and beekeepers.

The story goes that he was arrested and imprisoned because he conducted these clandestine marriages. Whilst in prison he continued his ministry, caring for the other prisoners and he is said to have healed the jailer's blind daughter. His last act before he was executed around the year 269AD was to send a note to the jailer's daughter signed "from your Valentine". He was buried in Via Flaminia in Rome.

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote in 1382 in his poem the Parliament of Fowls that Valentine's day was when birds chose their mates. The earliest association with February 14 as an annual celebration of love appears in the Charter of Love thought to be issued by Charles VI of France in 1440. The Roman Catholic church removed Valentine's name from the General Roman Calendar in 1969, but he is still recognised as a saint and celebrated on February 14th.

The feast day then evolved into a day for expressing love and affection where people give cards and gifts to their loves. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

It is estimated that approximately 6 million people get engaged each year on Valentine's day making it the most popular day for marriage proposals. The number of weddings that occur on Valentine's day is difficult to state, however in Las Vegas over 1000 people get married on this day compared to the normal 300. So we can estimate that weddings increase by 20-30% worldwide on Valentine's day.

Some people have the view that it has become too commercialised over the years, Valentine cards and gifts started appearing in the shops on Boxing day! Whether you love it or hate it Valentine's day holds special meaning for many.

Marriage is viewed as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman, it is a lifelong commitment to love, cherish and honour each other. *Ephesians 5 verse 33* tells us "each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Over 42 million weddings occur worldwide every year with 243,000 happening in the UK. Approximately 83% of marriages occur in a registry office. Whether people marry in a church or in a registry office, the ceremony still involves the making of vows to each other promising to be together in front of witnesses. *Ephesians* tells us that "Marriage should be honoured by all,"

I married my fiancé, David, in a quiet ceremony at the end of last month with just us and witnesses, making our vows to each other and I know that God was also there blessing our marriage. *Corinthians 13 verse 13* states "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

I would like to wish that you all experience love this month and remember that God loves you because "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." *John 3 verse 16*

Caroline McIntyre

Eastling Church Flower Rota 2026

February

1st Feb - Bay

8th Feb - Pippa & Gaby

22nd - Lent - No Flowers

If you would like to join the flower arranging rota, please call Bay on 01795 892036.



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Lynsted Church ME9 0RH,
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4pm - 6pm
on the following Saturdays in 2026
31st January, 14th March, 18th April, 2nd
May, 6th June, 4th July, 5th September, 3rd
October, 7th November, 5th December

Contact for more info:
YOUTH@KC-HD.ORG.UK
or Tel Francette 07929 511596
or just come along

CHAT/GAMES MUSIC PIZZA

Mothing Sunday 15th March 2026

Special Service at 10.30am
in Stalisfield Church
Followed by Refreshments.



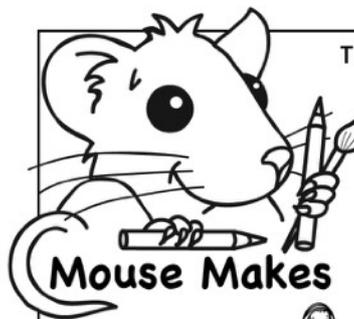
Youth Group at Stalisfield

We have decided to
pause Stalisfield youth group for
now as the number of young
people attending have dwindled
since April last year.

It has been a great group over the
last 4 and a half years, and at its
most had around 18 young people
attending, which for a rural youth
group was fantastic.

If there are more local young
people we will look to do some ad
hoc events or restart it in the
future. Thanks to all who have
helped/ encouraged/ promoted and
supported it, and to the young
people who have come along and
made it happen.

Catherine, Chris, Bridget and
Steve



Read the story in
Luke 4:1-13



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was
baptised in the River
Jordan where did the
Holy Spirit lead him to? v1

How many days was
Jesus being tempted
by the devil? v2

What did Jesus eat? v2

What did the devil tempt
Jesus to turn a stone into?
What did Jesus say? v3-4

What did the devil offer
Jesus if He worshipped him?
What did Jesus say? v7-8

What did the
devil ask
Jesus to do?
What did
Jesus say? v9

FIRST TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son order
this stone to turn into bread."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Man shall not live on
bread alone."

Read Deuteronomy 8:3

WE LEARN:

Read the Bible
Learn God's word.



SECOND TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"I will give you power
and wealth if you worship me."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Worship the Lord your God
and serve only Him."

Read Deuteronomy 6:13

WE LEARN:

Put God first
Worship only Him.



What did the
devil ask
Jesus to do?
What did
Jesus say? v9



R O G L O R Y L O

I B A P T I S E D

V O F O O T H D

S E R V E B T I

J O R D A N J E G

F O R T Y D A Y S S O N K L O R D N H

T D O W N O N W O R S H I P

T E S T W O R L D L T U N B

L V T E M P T A T I O N G R

E I A M J E S U S F N G D E

N L K P D E S E R T E R O A

T H O L Y S P I R I T Y M D

I M J E R U S A L E M F S J

W I L D E R N E S S J U M P

F O R T Y D A Y S S O N K L O R D N H

T D O W N O N W O R S H I P

T E S T W O R L D L T U N B

L V T E M P T A T I O N G R

E I A M J E S U S F N G D E

N L K P D E S E R T E R O A

T H O L Y S P I R I T Y M D

I M J E R U S A L E M F S J

W I L D E R N E S S J U M P

J E S U S • B A P T I S E D • R I V E R • J O R D A N • H O L Y S P I R I T • L E D

W I L D E R N E S S • D E S E R T • F O R T Y D A Y S • H U N G R Y • D E V I L

T E M P T A T I O N • S T O N E • B R E A D • W R I T T E N • S O N • W O R L D

K I N G D O M S • G L O R Y • W O R S H I P • S E R V E • G O D • H I G H

J E R U S A L E M • T E M P L E • S O N • J U M P • D O W N • L I F T • F O O T • L O R D • T E S T • L E N T



THIRD TEMPTATION

THE
DEVIL SAID:

"If you are God's Son throw
yourself down, the scriptures
say God will take care of you."

JESUS REPLIED:

"Do not put the Lord
your God to the test."

Read Deuteronomy 6:16

WE LEARN:

God cares, trust
Him do not test Him.



Stalisfield and Otterden W.I.

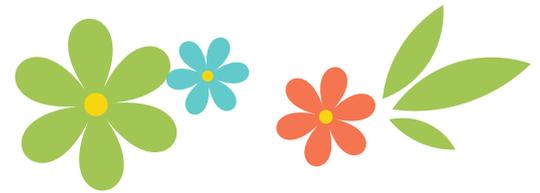
After a very busy and varied 2025 for our WI we are all looking forward to another full year of meetings and outings for our group.

Our first meeting on Wednesday February 4th is 'Plants for the flower arranger's garden' so as we begin to see signs of spring in our gardens, the evening should provide us with inspiration for some new planting ideas.

WI membership is open to women from 18 years of age and we would really love to add to our small village group so please come along if you would like to meet us and find out more.

Membership for 2026 starts in April but can be joined at any time during the year and guests are always welcome for a £5 fee which includes refreshments.

Our group is very informal and we meet at Stalisfield village hall at 7:30 on the first Wednesday each month. If you would like to come along just turn up or contact Helen Brooks on 07477 580727 or Ellie Cameron on 07775 649337



CRAFT FLOWER FESTIVAL

THE PCC OF BADLESMERE AND LEAVELAND CHURCHES INVITE YOU TO CHANNEL YOUR CREATIVITY AND JOIN US BY TAKING PART IN OUR FIRST CRAFT FLOWER FESTIVAL BETWEEN 2 MAY AND 27 JUNE 2026.

CREATE CRAFT FLOWER DISPLAYS ON THE THEME OF 'GROWTH' TO BE EXHIBITED IN LEAVELAND CHURCH. ANY FREE STANDING SIZE OF DISPLAY OF FLOWERS OR PLANTS USING ANY CRAFT MATERIALS CAN BE PRESENTED.

MAKE FABULOUS, ORIGINAL OR FUN DISPLAYS.

FINAL DATE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - 30TH MARCH
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ANDREA DENGATE
(07774 051810/DENGATE31@GMAIL.COM)



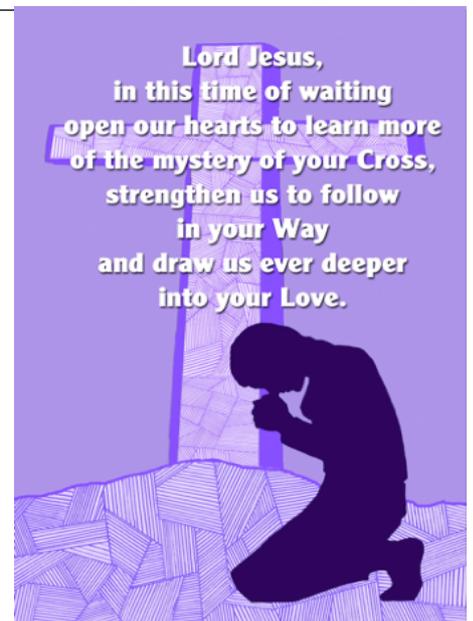
Lent Bible Studies with Reflection

These will be held at Doddington Vicarage on Wednesdays
7.30 - 9 pm.

Each session will be based upon the set Lectionary readings of the preceding Sunday.

25th February; Matthew 4.1-11
4th March; John 3.1-17
11th March; John 4.5-42
18th March; John 19:25b-27
25th March; John 11:1-45

Spaces can be reserved by emailing Rev Jim Pye
jim.pye@kc-hd.org.uk or leaving a message at 01795-890276.
Alternatively, come without notice!



Together in Boots

Join us for a monthly mindful walk through woodland

Leaving Doddington Church at 2pm and returning for tea & cake at 2.45pm

Humans and well-behaved dogs all welcome



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Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'.

At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.



So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

February Prayer Pointers



Sundays - For a prayerful journey through Lent.

Mondays - For staff working in the emergency services.

Tuesdays - For those frail and infirm, especially during the winter months.

Wednesdays - For seafarers ocean wide and the work of Mission to Seafarers.

Thursdays - For those falling pray to criminals.

Fridays - For those needing to use food banks to feed their family.

Saturdays - Praise the Lord for his promise of salvation for all who turn to him.







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*In a Little Less than
100 Objects*

12th February 2026
Parish Hall, Station
Road, Charing



Speaker: Martin Crowther

Doors open 7.30pm
Talk starts promptly at 8pm



CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Members free - Guests £3 Membership from £10/year

Remembering the work of L S Lowry

Fifty years ago, on 23rd February 1976, the artist L S Lowry died of pneumonia. He was known primarily for his bleak industrial landscapes of north-west England, populated with matchstick men, but he also painted original and striking seascapes and impressive portraits.

Laurence Stephen Lowry was born on 1st November 1887 in Stretford. His father worked for an estate agent and his mother was an organist, playing at the local church. Laurence went to Sunday school, but as life later turned difficult, his faith became shadowy. After leaving school he became a rent collector for the Pall Mall Property Company and stayed there until his retirement in 1952. This led to some dismissing him as a 'Sunday painter'.

Lowry's life was restricted by his family debts and his mother, for whom he took responsibility after his father died. He tried hard to please her, but she showed no

appreciation for the quality of his art, looking instead for a middle-class respectable life. He became a solitary figure and never married.

Lowry remains popular as an artist, with many imitators, but he never formally taught or gathered a group of followers around him. He holds the record for rejecting British honours—five, including a knighthood (1968). A collection of his work is on display in The Lowry, an impressive purpose-built art gallery on Salford Quays.

During his life he made about 1,000 paintings and over 8,000 drawings. His works often sell for millions of pounds. Buried in Manchester next to his parents, he left an estate valued at £298,459, plus artwork, to Carol Ann Lowry (no relation), whose family he befriended when she was 13, after she asked for help with her own development as an artist.



The Arts
Society
Egerton

**THE ARTS SOCIETY
EGERTON**

Wednesday 11th February at 2.30pm in Egerton
Millennium Hall, Elm Close TN27 9DS

Ancient Egypt at the British Museum.

*Our lecturer Vicky Bailey is a
London Blue Badge Tourist Guide.*

From pyramids to hidden tombs and pharaohs to mummies, uncover the stories behind the statues; and the ways in which the Ancient Egyptians used art and hieroglyphs to ensure their survival into the Afterlife. Highlights include stories of how pharaohs gained power; myths and legends of the gods and goddesses; and how cat scans have revealed health problems of the Egyptians and disasters in mummification!



Visitors are always very welcome at £8 (just turn up and pay on the door), refunded if you join. Membership costs £45 for 10 lectures. For further information please contact Christine Willis, our Membership Secretary via cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377.

Visit our website

www.theartsocietyegerton.org.uk

Peaceful mind

The Bible tells the story of Jesus and His stressed disciples in a boat in a storm. Like them, we also get hit by storms in life. And like them, we can know that Jesus is also with us. Why not take a moment to ponder these promises:

Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4: 6-8)



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Hymns for Professionals

Dentist - Crown Him with many crowns

Contractors - The Church's one foundation

Obstetricians - Come labour on

Golfers - There is a green hill far away

Politicians - Standing on the promises

Librarians - Let all mortal flesh keep silent



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Updates from Citizens Advice Swale

citizens
advice

Are you worried about losing power due to stormy weather? Power cuts can be unexpected and worrying, especially if your power doesn't come back on quickly. It's good to know who to report an outage to and what you can do to prepare.

If you lose electricity, your electricity network operator is responsible for fixing it. To report an outage, call 105 - a free line that puts you through to your electricity network operator.

In most cases, it's your electricity that will go off in a storm, but it can seem like your gas is disrupted because you usually need electricity to start up a gas boiler. If you smell gas or your carbon monoxide detector is beeping, turn off the boiler, go outside, and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

You might be entitled to compensation if a power cut isn't fixed within 24 hours. Some power cuts are planned, and you should be told in advance if there's going to be one in your area.

After an unexpected outage, your power might not come back on straight away. Here's a checklist of things you can do to prepare for the worst:

- **Check you'll be able to keep warm.** Make sure you have access to blankets and extra layers. You might want to plan to stay with friends or family.
- **Check you'll have a way to contact people.** Charge devices like mobile phones, and write down important phone numbers and keep them safe - an analogue phone line might still work during a power cut.
- **Have food at home which you can easily eat.** Stock food with a long use-by date, like tinned fish, beans and soups.
- **Check if you can sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR).** This can give you extra support during a power cut. You might be able to sign up if you're disabled, pregnant or have young children. See the full list of eligibility criteria and how to sign up on the PSR website. We have specialist advisers at Citizens Advice Swale who can help you with energy issues. Contact us to find out more.

How can we help you?

Drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary):

Sittingbourne

Mondays 10am-12pm - Swale House

Tuesdays 11.30am-1.30pm - Murston Family Hub

Sheppey

Tuesdays 10am-12pm - Sheppey Gateway (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)

Faversham

Wednesdays & Fridays 10am-12pm - 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Thursdays 10am-12pm - West Faversham Community Centre

Telephone advice: Call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979 (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)

Email advice: Contact us online at www.citizensadvice.wale.uk/email-general-advice

Specialist debt advice: Request a call back at www.citizensadvice.wale.uk/debt

To stay up to date with our opening times, please visit www.citizensadvice.wale.uk or follow us on Facebook.



Night Friends

by Audrey Keen

I hear the pheasants speak
Through the dim grey veil of fog,
I listen as the vixen calls
In answer to the dog.
I catch a glimpse of darkened wings,
I know it is the owl
Who seems to be uncaring
Of the clouds that move and scowl.
He waits upon the lime bough
In the chill and vulpine air,
And calls to his own fellows
In the changing wood somewhere.
While tiny night mice come and try
To shift the scattered leaf,
Though if the owl spies them
Their life will be brief.
And, as the clouds move briskly
And the fog is swept aside,
I see the brightness bring the dawn
That creeps across the ride.
The blackbird hails the morn with song
So do the thrush and wren,
As sunshine put shame on the cloud
Now it is day again.

Book Exchange in Oare Village Hall

Open on the 3rd

Wednesday each month

Between 10am and 12pm



The aim of the book exchange is to enable people to pass on a good read and in turn, maybe, pick up another. The books are available to anyone for no cost and no obligation to provide a book in exchange. However, if you do have a book that you have finished which you think others might enjoy, then please bring it along. Please feel free to join us, tea and coffee is available, and a chance for a nice chat.

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3 Jubilee Way, Faversham. ME13 8GD
Telephone: 07598 817692
Email: gemma@favershamfeet.co.uk
Website: favershamfeet.co.uk



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Services in our Benefice

1st February Candlemas

Hebrews 2. 14 - 18, Luke 2.22 - 40

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

8th February 2nd before Lent

Romans 8. 18 - 25, Matthew 6. 25 - 34

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

15th February Sunday before Lent

2 Peter 1. 16 - 21, Matthew 17. 1 - 9

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

18th February Ash Wednesday

2 Corinthians 5. 20b - 6.10 , Matthew 6. 1 —6, 16 - 21

Doddington 7.30pm Holy Communion

22nd February Lent 1

Romans 5. 12 - 19, Matthew 4. 1 - 11

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

1st March Lent 2

Romans 4. 1 - 5, 13 - 17, John 3. 1 - 17

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship



Online Daily Worship

9am Morning Prayer continues on the Benefice Facebook Page

via <https://kc-hd.org.uk> .

More information is updated weekly on St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You': <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>

Monthly Prayer Group

First Wednesday each month
10.30am in Doddington Vicarage.



High Downs Parish

Rector Revd Paula Jardine-Rose
07516 411269 paula.jardine.rose@kc-hd.org.uk

Parish Administrator Joyce Warren
01795 521831 joyce.warren@kc-hd.org.uk

Associate Priest Reverend James (Jim) Pye
01795 890726 jim.pye@kc-hd.org.uk

Reader Caroline McIntyre (07799 538809)

Anna Chaplain Caroline McIntyre
ramshawcaroline@gmail.com

Reader Pim Baxter (07710 116269)

Church Contacts

Eastling Andrew Baxter, Warden (07749 403727)

Administrator E mail: stmaryeastling@gmail.com

Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King, Warden (01795 890366)

Chrissie Webster, Administrator
(07590 351977)

Throwley David Elvin, Warden (07973 837122)
E mail: david.j.elvin@gmail.com

High Downs Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mark Harlow (07979 864000)

E mail: mark.harlow@kc-hd.org.uk

CONTACT THE **GOOD NEWS** EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in the March 2026 magazine, send your submission by 20th February to: goodnewsmagazine@me.com.

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on www.goodnews.rf.gd

Anna Chaplaincy

Anna Chaplains are named after the biblical figure Anna, who dedicated her life to worship and prayer and was in the temple when Jesus was presented soon after his birth.

The main purposes of an Anna Chaplain are:

Offering spiritual support to older people who are living in care homes, their own home or sheltered housing complexes, their relatives and staff who look after them.
If you know someone who is elderly unable to attend church, someone who requires prayer, or a listening ear or would like to receive communion.

Please contact Caroline McIntyre at ramshawcaroline@gmail.com or 07799538809



Eating Disorders Awareness Week: 23rd Feb to 1st March

Do you suffer from an eating disorder? Or are you close to someone who struggles with one? If so, then you will know the long battle that sufferers can wage with anorexia, bulimia, binge eating and EDNOS (or 'eating disorder not otherwise specified'.) Eating disorders ruin lives. They ruin relationships. They also ruin careers. They are estimated to cost the UK economy about £9.5 billion a year.

This year the annual Eating Disorders Awareness Week website

And so it is that "We're celebrating the power of community and the vital role family, friends, and other support networks play in helping someone feel supported, understood, and never alone on their journey from seeking help, undergoing treatment and beyond. How can people with eating disorders be best supported by their employer and colleagues? Visit <https://edaw.beateatingdisorders.org.uk> for details.

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394
or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

A gentle reminder that we shall soon be into the lambing season and that all dogs, more importantly than usual, must be on lead in the vicinity of livestock. We all know the consequences of dogs attacking sheep; a farmer has the legal right to humanely shoot an animal attacking or harassing their livestock.

There have been reports of undesirables touring the area looking for any opportunity to feather their nest. Please report sightings, however irrelevant they may seem, together with details if possible so that action may be taken or recorded.

Scams are still at a very high peak so try and make it a new year resolution to not get caught out. Remember if a deal looks too good to be true - it's a scam, so be careful. Please report any attempts of a scam.

Defibrillators in our Villages

Ready for anyone to use in an emergency, please find the nearest to you:

Eastling sited at 1 Manor Lees, the Street, Eastling. ME13 0BE

Eastling School (School days only, 8am - 4.30pm) sited in the corridor of Main Building. ME13 0BA

Stalisfield sited at Stalisfield Village Hall, ME13 0HY

Throwley sited in the old Telephone Box outside the Old Post Office, ME13 0PJ

The scourge of bogus door step callers seems to be on the rise in Kent. Be very careful when answering a call at your door, and check the caller's identity carefully if they say they are from one of services, e.g water or electricity. Unless you are sure do not let them in and contact either the service company or the police.

Have a good month
Take care, Alan

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Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of the prophets. His name means *'The Lord saves'* and he began his 50-year ministry in 740 BC when King Uzziah died (6:1). Many scholars challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book, however there are striking verbal parallels between chapters 1–39 and 40–66. Isaiah spoke during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline



What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Old Testament: Isaiah

of Israel. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom in 721. Judah was left to decide whether they would make alliances with other kingdoms or rely on God to protect them. Isaiah warns Judah that her sin would bring captivity in Babylon, which eventually took place in 586.

Isaiah sees the Messiah coming from the line of David. He speaks of a new temple being established (ch2); a child born with a new kingdom (ch9) and judging differently to other kings (ch11) as well as the nature of His suffering (ch53). The *'suffering servant'* (chapters 42–53) also applies to Israel as a nation, who are called to be a *'light for the Gentiles'* (42:6).

Not surprisingly Jesus applies Isaiah's words to His own life and ministry. eg Is 61:1 quoted in Luke 4:18. Throughout his book Isaiah presents the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation as *'the Holy One of Israel'* (6:1), as well as the *'Sovereign Lord'* far above all nations (40:15–24).

Isaiah looks forward to the promise of a new city of Zion (chs 60–66), in which the people offer praise to the Holy One of Israel. *'Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.'* (65:17).

by Canon Paul Hardingham

News from the Kent County Council Household Support team.

Highlights from the KCC mailing list email to Parish Clerks. Full text available from your Parish Clerk.

HSF Winter Food and Energy Scheme Launch information.

Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of the UK government, the Household Support Fund scheme supports vulnerable Kent households in need of help with significantly rising living costs.

The Government has announced that this current round of HSF funding will be the last.

This final round of Household Support Fund will provide Winter Food or Energy support, and will run from January to end February 2026, offering an online public application route that enables individual self-referral, or professional referrals on behalf of individuals requiring digital assistance, to be made. The Scheme may close earlier if all the available HSF funds are allocated

There is a limited amount of funding available for this scheme and funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Support is offered on a **one award per 'household' basis**, therefore applications from more than one resident deemed to be within the same household will not be approved.

Please note that online registration is required for energy card support, those applicants being referred who do not have access to the internet or a smart phone will be offered a food voucher, which can be delivered by post or email but does not require online security registration.

If successful, **energy support** will be provided in the following ways depending on their bill payment method:

A £90 virtual pre-paid energy card to be used to pay directly to energy providers for electricity, gas, or water bills. Energy providers including British Gas, EDF, Eon, Bulb, Octopus and many more. Sent to applicant via email by our provider [Evouchers.com](https://help.evouchers.com). Any help you may need to redeem your food or Energy card can be found at:

· <https://help.evouchers.com/hc/en-gb/articles/24186825100433-How-to-claim-and-activate-your-prepaid-card>

Applicants must

- be aged 16 or over
- be a Kent resident, permanently living within one of the 12 local authorities covered by Kent County Council (this excludes Medway, Bexley, or Bromley)
- be in receipt of means tested benefits or, if you are not in receipt of means tested benefits, you have a **household** income of £33,000 or less per year
- **not** be eligible for free school meals.

Families who are eligible for free school meals support are, as is usual, **excluded** from this scheme as they will receive a voucher and holiday support, funded by the Household Support Fund, for each eligible child via their child's school outside of this scheme. FSM families should contact their child's school in the first instance if you believe they are entitled to this FSM support.

Application link:

If support is required because of the increase in cost of living, apply for the Household Support Fund on the following link:

[Household Support Fund - Kent County Council](#)

(This link might not work from a pdf.)

Only one application is permitted per household, applicants are reminded that this is taxpayers' money so please spend it wisely on your energy, food and essential household items only.

All applications must be completed online, an offline bulk upload application (minimum of 6 applicants) template will be made available to professionals on request once the scheme opens.

Citizens Advice will also provide support to applicants who struggle to make online applications by calling the Citizens Advice freephone helpline on **0300 304 8003 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm – this line opens Thursday 8th January until scheme closure)** they will submit online applications on behalf of applicant. This line is expected to be busy so please warn potential applicants to be patient if contacting the Citizens Advice Team for help.