



EWELL PARISH NEWS

The monthly newspaper of St Mary the Virgin Ewell

No. 632

September 2025

60p



Sharing the Love of Christ, the Light of the World, with the people of Ewell



A Day For All Wonders of Creation Sat 27 Sept 12noon



Free Refreshments all day Tea & Cake at 4:00pm
Free Soup & Bread Lunch 12:30 – 1:30pm

ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES INCLUDING:

Children's Crafts
Shetland Ponies and their Small Friends
Visits to the Bell Tower
Surrey Wildlife Trust Talk - Young Musicians
DIVAS Choir - Photo Competition

See the full programme at www.stmarysewell.com

Or ring Sue on 020 8337 6347

Optional Fish & Chip Supper at 5:30pm
Please order and pay by Tuesday 23 September £9.00

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COPY FOR THE NEXT EDITION: Please email EPN copy to: epn@stmarysewell.com. Handwritten or typed copy will only be accepted by prior agreement (call 020 8393 4804). Please do not embed photos in WORD files, but send the images separately. Copy date for the October 2025 edition is noon on Monday 15 September but if possible please send copy before this date.

Fr Mark Stafford writes

Mission and ministry?

As you enter the Church, you may notice the newly repaired floor and freshly fitted tiles. This project required extensive planning, and we owe a big thank you to George and Godfrey for their efforts in selecting tiles and organising the work.

The project was partially funded by tile sponsorships. The names of all sponsors have been placed in a time capsule under the floor, along with items that represent our time, such as orders of services, weekly notes, crosses, a COVID test, Brownie badges, books about the Church's history, a prayer book, and more. This time capsule continues the centuries-old tradition of leaving messages for future generations, capturing who we are today with photographs, prayers, and snippets from church life.

Our Church is rich with legacies from the past, including flags, wall plaques, and benefactor boards, each telling the story of the worshipping community in Ewell over the ages. Besides the time capsule, what will our legacy be?

How will we be remembered and what will our legacy be both with the Church and the village?

I hope that we will be remembered as a congregation that was outward looking, that we would be remembered as a group of people who not only met to worship God, but also added something to our community and the lives of those in our village.

A few weeks ago, at a Church social I was speaking to one of you about Church growth and we concluded that the way that a Church grows is not through great mission initiatives but by one person inviting another to come and see what we are doing. Great idea, the catch is that when they come, they need to see and feel a few things in order to want to come back. Firstly, they need to be welcomed - I think we are good at this, we are welcoming and friendly, secondly the worship needs to be beautiful and transcendent, something that whilst accessible is a gateway to something other, and I think we are good at this too. Thirdly we need to be intentional in what we do and what we do needs to be exciting, this is where I think we might be on a bit of a journey. We have a great mission action plan, and this is a developing plan of action and continues to change and grow as we change and grow.

In 2025 we have been turning "back to basics", shoring up our Biblical knowledge, discussing the individual persons of the Trinity, exploring sin and evil, we will think a little more about our faith in Advent, to help us as individuals to be mission able - but then what?

Sam Wells, theologian and vicar at St Martin in the field, has shared that Church growth has become more challenging since the state became responsible for social and health care. In Sam's opinion the Church stopped doing work that impacted on the lives of those in its local community and therefore lost its social impact and connections that brought people into contact with the Church and also started their faith journey.

If the Church is to remain relevant and alive it needs to re-establish its social links and find ways in which it not only proclaims the Gospel through prayer and praise, but also through becoming the heart of its community.

During autumn 2025 it would be great if we could think more about our outreach for 2026.

St Mary the Virgin EWELL PARISH CHURCH 020 8393 2643

Website: www.stmarysewell.com
Registered Charity Number 1128409

CLERGY

Vicar: Fr Mark Stafford 020 8393 1297

Email: vicar@stmarysewell.com

Day off: Friday

Assistant Priest: The Reverend Sue Ayling OBE; 020 8337 6347; Email: assistantpriest@stmarysewell.com

Day off: Wednesday

LICENSED LAY MINISTER

Sara Holland;

Email llm@stmarysewell.com

CHURCHWARDENS

Mrs Valerie Wood 020 8393 5991;

Email churchwarden1@stmarysewell.com

Mrs Vicky Gocher 07732 459281;

Email churchwarden@stmarysewell.com

Bereavement Café

Mrs Wendy Paxman 020 8224 2851;

Email: pastoral@stmarysewell.com

Lay Pastoral Visitor

Mrs Marian Morrison 020 8391 2325;

Email: pastoralvisitor@stmarysewell.com

Safeguarding Officer

Mrs Helen Crossley;

Email: safeguardingofficer@stmarysewell.com

Diocesan Safeguarding

Safeguarding team 01483 790379;

Email: safeguarding@cofeguildford.org.uk

Finance Officers

Day-to-day financial queries

Donna and David Boosey 07791 993261;

Email: financeteam@stmarysewell.com

Stewardship Recorder

Mrs Sarah Holmes;

Email: plannedgiving@stmarysewell.com

Private Prayer

The Church is generally open daily for private prayer between 9am and 5pm

THE PARISH OFFICE

Administrator:

Mrs Lynne Yuille 020 8393 2643 (Office)

Office email: parishoffice@stmarysewell.com

The postal address is: St Mary's Ewell Parish Church, London Rd, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 2AY.

The Parish Office is on the south side of the church.

The parish office is staffed periodically during the week. Emails and phone messages will be answered when the office is open.

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Maybe we could invite a friend to come to Church with us, no pressure, just a simple question and if they say no, well that's fair enough! We could also be thinking about the need in our community and ways in which we can make sure St Mary's is in the heart of Ewell village.

I would like you to ask yourself two simple questions and when you have thought, prayed and reflected, feedback to me.

Q1. If I did not come to Church and a Christian friend brought me to St Mary's, would I come again and if so why, or why not?

Q2 What is the biggest need in our village and community? Can we do something about it?

Thank you, we have included the names of all our supporters in the time capsule. Future generations will know of your commitment and care for this sacred space. Your involvement is literally woven into the fabric - or should we say, 'tiled into the floor' - of our church.

However, a bigger question is how we can ensure that the name of our Church will be firmly embedded in the fabric of our community for generations to come?

What's on in September?

September promises to be a busy month at St Mary's!

2 September - Come and join us at 1.05 pm for our regular **lunchtime Bach recital** followed by refreshments in the Parish Room.

3 September - **Church online quiz** - Our online quiz is open to all, if you would like to register, please see the link that will be our weekly notes the week before the quiz or you can email zoom@stmarysewell.com. We would love you to join us for this fun event.

Bereavement Café offers a chance to meet with others who understand the experience of loss. Bereavement Café is a space to talk about the pain of bereavement, and find mutual support and encouragement, when you need it most. The café is open on the first and third Thursdays of the month from 2.45pm to 3.45pm at Ewell Hall (7 London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY).

Patronal festival - We will be celebrating our patronal festival on Sunday 7 September, so please come and join us as we celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary.

10 September - **St. Mary's Crafters** - join our new LLM, Sara Holland, for crafting, chatter and cake. Sara will be demonstrating paper crafting techniques every second Wednesday of the month at 7.30-9pm at Ewell Hall. See page 10 for details.

13 September - **Ride and Stride 2025** - This annual event is a great way to see some of our lovely local churches, get some exercise and spend some quality time, possibly with family or friends. Many churches will be welcoming participants, opening their doors and offering refreshments. Additionally, it's a way to raise money for Church restoration and repair, and St Mary's Ewell will benefit directly.

20 September at 7.30pm - **Organ Recital** - Jonathan Holmes will be featuring a very popular work suitable for children and adults, Saint-Saens wonderfully evocative 'Carnival of the animals', Patrick Gower's brilliant 'Toccata', two Anna Lapwood film score arrangements: Chevaliers de Sangreal from The Da Vinci Code, and 'Stay' from Interstellar, both by Hans Zimmer. He will conclude with Vierne's final symphony, number 6. Interval refreshments kindly provided by Liz and Julia.

26 September - **Macmillan Coffee Morning** - Come and Support our coffee morning and cake sale in Ewell Hall from 9am - 12 noon It would be great to see you and you will be supporting a great cause!

27 September - **A Day for all** - 12 noon to 5pm. If you enjoyed Ewell Village Fair, you will enjoy 'A Day for All'. The theme of this year's fun community event is 'Wonders of Creation'. The church bells will ring out to launch the day and at 12.30pm and at 1pm there will be an opportunity to visit the bell tower and discover how the bells are rung. After a talk and a demonstration, you'll be encouraged to have a go. PLEASE NOTE that there will be limited spaces. The popular Kingswood Shetland Ponies and their small friends will be here and there will be a talk by the Surrey Wildlife Trust. There will be various activities for children and much much more, including a (free) bread and soup lunch, teatime cake and a drink and refreshments throughout the day. See page 6 for more information - have you thought yet about entering the photo competition?

Do check the calendar on the back page for the full list of our services and events.

Every blessing

Fr Mark

GIVING TO ST. MARY'S

If you would like to support us by regular giving, the easiest way is through the Parish Giving Scheme, a simple and secure method for parishes to receive donations by direct debit. You can register for and administer your giving online here:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/ewell-st-mary-the-virgin-epsom/>

or you can phone:
0333 0021260.

The scheme handles gift aid automatically and at no cost to St Mary's.



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SEPTEMBER CONCERTS

2 September 1.05 pm

Tuesday lunchtime organ recital

Jonathan Holmes - Director of Music

Jonathan continues his lunchtime Bach recitals

20 September 7.30 pm

Organ recital

Jonathan Holmes - Director of Music

All concerts have refreshments. Tuesday concerts are free with donations for the organ fund being welcome. The Saturday Concerts have a suggested donation of £10, free to students and children (Gift Aid welcome)

See EPN page 3 for programme details

ST. MARY'S ON-LINE QUIZZES



We hold on-line quizzes using Zoom

These are very popular and are fun for all the family, so why not join us?

Our next quiz is on 3 September

As always, you will need to register beforehand.

You can use links provided in the Weekly Notes or you can register by emailing zoom@stmarysewell.com.



1 in 5 of the UK population live below the poverty line

Our local foodbank relies on your goodwill and support. Over 90% distributed comes from our donations. In 2024 our foodbank donated 7963 three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis.

Your food donations are vital - please help if you can.

Urgently needed: tinned fish, tinned meat, cooking sauces, dried pasta in sauce, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, sweetcorn, instant mash, pasta/beans with meat, packet soup, tea (bags), instant coffee, ketchup/mayonnaise/brown sauce, squash, long life juice, jam/honey /chocolate spread/peanut butter /marmalade, custard, rice pudding, chocolate, sponge pudding, chocolate biscuit bars, biscuits, savoury biscuits, crisps, sugar (500gr), non dairy milk, male/female deodorant, shaving foam, shampoo, hair conditioner, toilet rolls, washing powder/tablets and washing up liquid.

Please no more of these items as we are fully stocked: tinned soup, cat food, pasta and pulses.

*** Please note that we are unable to take refrigerated or frozen items. Make sure all donations are sealed, in date and do not contain alcohol ***

You can donate food at:

St Mary's Church Ewell, Sainsbury's Kiln Lane, Waitrose Epsom and Banstead, Asda Burgh Heath and Tesco Leatherhead, or directly to Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, Good Company Hub, (behind West Ewell Primary School), Ruxley Lane, Ewell KT19 0JG. Open Monday to Friday 9am - 2pm excluding Bank Holidays).

You can make a monetary donation via the Foodbank website www.epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk where you can also sign up to the Foodbank newsletter,

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FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS HOLY MATRIMONY

**That theirs may be the love that knows no ending,
Whom thou for evermore dost join in one
(AMR 463)**

2 August Joshua Simon Marshall and
Lucy Rhiannon Penwarden

A Prayer for September



New beginnings!

Loving God,

We pray for all our children, young people, and their families as they prepare for a new chapter in their lives, whether it be starting school for the first time, moving to a new class or a new school or moving on to work, to an apprenticeship, or college or university. We pray too for the teachers, assistants, helpers, carers, and volunteers who teach and nurture them.

We also pray for all those who have been in the workplace for a long time and returning to work after the summer break; for those starting a new job; for those who may be finding it difficult to find work and who are worried about supporting themselves and their families financially; and for those who have recently retired or are in the process of working towards retirement.

We ask that all may receive your blessing, your joy, your wisdom, and your patience as they make ready for the coming weeks of autumn and all the challenges that the new year ahead may present. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
AMEN

The Countdown...only 6 weeks to go

Don't forget... and spread the news



Pick up a leaflet from the back of church or find out all you need to know by going to the charity's website at

<https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal-2025>

With all the cost-of-living rises, everyone is stretched so why not put together a box or two with other members of your family or with your neighbours or a group of friends? Every box that we send off in October will be bringing a glimmer of hope to people who are even worse off.

St Mary's will be a drop off point for all your filled boxes. Drop them off to us on

Saturday, October 12 10.00am-12.00pm

Wednesday, October 23 2.30pm – 4.00pm

Saturday, October 26 10.00am – 12.00pm

Wednesday, October 30 2.30pm – 4.00pm

Or bring them along and join us for one of our church services on Sunday, October 13, 20 or 27.

Any problems? Please contact the Parish Office tel: 020 8393 2643

PLEASE NOTE: Shoe box gifts will be collected from church during the week commencing November 4, so don't be late! Many thanks.

Linda Staff

GOLDEN JUBILEE CONCERT

Saturday 14 June

Katherine Dienes-Williams

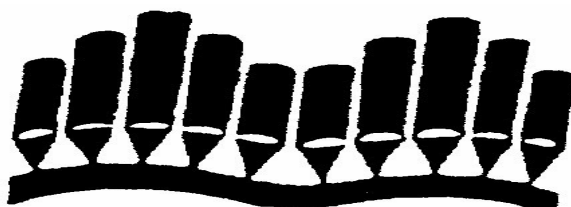
In 1975, a celebrity organist – Barry Rose – was invited to Ewell to inaugurate the newly-installed Willis organ. The old organ had been burned down in the church fire. Fifty years later, we welcomed Katherine – from Guildford, where she is Organist and Director of Music at the Cathedral – to play this magnificent organ.

Her opening number amply demonstrated the range and capability of the Willis. *Intrada* by **Grayston Ives** (born 1948) was written to celebrate the late Queen's Silver Jubilee. This music, with its sturdy march rhythm, put the writer in mind of works in that vein by Elgar and Walton. French music always sounds good on the Willis; hardly surprising, given the fact that Henry Willis spent some time working in France with their leading organ builder, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Several French composers, well-known and less well-known, made an appearance today. In the less well-known category, is **Blanche Rozan** who lived and taught in Marseille. Few of her compositions survive; amongst those that do, is this reflective *Communion* written, as its title suggests, as a voluntary during the Mass. **Alfred Lefebure-Wely** was a friend of that nineteenth-century composer of light operas, Jacques Offenbach. This fact is apparent in the next piece, Lefebure-Wely's *Sortie in E flat*. Note that the description 'sortie' here means 'closing voluntary'. One further French composer is **Jean Langlais** two of whose works we heard today. A rather charming story attaches to the first one. The fifth movement of his *American Suite* has the title *Scherzo – Cats* and this refers to the pet cats belonging to Langlais's American friend Helen Hewitt – all of which were named after organ stops. The organ piece *Fête* ('festival') was written to celebrate the liberation of Paris after the Second World War and, also, to celebrate Langlais's own appointment as primary organist at one of Paris's leading churches.

No organ recital can possibly be complete without something by **Johann Sebastian Bach**! Today was no exception. Katherine played the *Prelude and Fugue in B minor, BWV 544*. One hundred years after Bach's death, **Felix Mendelssohn** moved heaven and earth to help restore Bach's reputation as a composer. Among Mendelssohn's own organ works, is a piece very much in the vein of Bach himself: *Chorale with Variations* on "Wie gross ist des Allmacht'gen Gute". It is a German hymn, 'How Great is the Power of the Almighty'.

The remaining composers today were all British by birth and most have worked in this country. One who went abroad, was **Thomas Tertius Noble** who found work in Canada where he spent the rest of his life. He wrote music for choirs and organ. Of the latter category is, appropriately for June, *A Summer Idyll*. **Iain Farrington** is one of our leading composers. His 'Animal Parade' is a suite of depictions in sound of animals including *Penguins*. Lastly, a piece that harks back to the days of cinema organs, is *On the Square* by **Michael Thomson**.

TT



'A Day for All'

**With something for everyone to enjoy
Saturday 27 September**

- Come for all or part of the day with the theme 'Wonders of Creation'.
- The church bells ring out to launch the day at 12 noon.
- At 12.30pm and at 1pm there will be an opportunity to visit the bell tower and discover how the bells are rung. After a talk and a demonstration, you'll be encouraged to have a go. You can sign up in advance to book a slot by emailing adayforall@stmarysewell.com or by signing the list in church, or just come along on the day. (PLEASE NOTE There will be limited spaces.)
- Meet Kingswood Shetlands & Friends - two Shetland Ponies and their small animal friends (all day in the churchyard).
- Hear all about the Surrey Wildlife Trust - a talk plus Q&A (2.30pm - 3.30pm).
- Be entertained by some Young Musicians (12.30pm - 1pm and 2pm - 2.30pm), Balloons, Magic and Tricks (1.30pm - 2pm), and by singing led by the JAM (Jesus and Me) children (3.30pm - 3.45pm) and by DIVAS, a women's vocal group from Fitznells Music Centre (3.45pm - 4pm).
- Enjoy Children's Craft Activities (from 2pm), follow the Mouse Trail (all day) in church, and outside (if the weather is kind) play Big Connect 4, Jenga, Hook a Duck and Skittles.
- Vote for your favourite photo. The winners of the Photographic Competition (categories 'Under 16 years' and '16 years and above') are chosen by everyone coming along on the day. The rules can be downloaded at <https://www.stmarysewell.com/a-day-for-all-2025/a4-photo-competiton-rules/> or pick up a leaflet from the back of church. The deadline for entries is 23.59 on Sunday 21 September.
- There's much more, including the familiar favourites of Swop Shop, the Prayer Corner (in church), the Prayer Walk (in the churchyard), a (free) bread and soup lunch, teatime cake and a drink and refreshments throughout the day. We celebrate the day with a short service in church at 5pm.

Everything is free except the Fish and Chip Supper at 5.30pm which costs £9 and can be ordered by emailing adayforall@stmarysewell.com or signing the list in church by 22 Sept. A vegetarian option can be booked.

Simply come along and enjoy the fun



THE CHOICE IS YOURS ALL FREE
In the Parish Room

12 noon-3.00pm
Refreshments

12.30-1.30pm
Bread, Soup and Drinks
Tea and Cake (4pm)



ALL THROUGH THE DAY
12 NOON TO 4.00PM

Outside

Kingswoods Shetlands and Friends – Ponies, Rabbits, Guinea Pigs and other small animals

Prayer Walk

Weather dependant

Play Area with skittles

In Church

Photo Competition

Prayer Tree

Mouse Trail

Swop Shop

In Church

12 noon-12:30 Bell Ringers

12.30-1.00pm Young Musicians Part 1
Visits to the Bell Tower

1.00-1.30pm Visits to the Bell Tower

1.30-2.00pm Balloons, magic & tricks

2.00-2.30pm Young Musicians Part 2

2.30-3.30pm Illustrated Talk about Surrey Wildlife Trust Plus Q&A

3.30-3.45pm Singing led by JAM Children

3.45-4.00pm DIVAS Singing by Fitznells' Choir

4.00pm Tea and Cake

5.00pm Celebration Service!

Bring your excess produce, plants, jam, vegetables, books, toys, board games, etc, to swop items
No money will be exchanged

5.30pm Fish and Chips in Ewell Hall
£9.00 - Booking required

Please sign the list in the Church or email adayforall@stmarysewell.com by the Tuesday 23 September (Vegetarian option bookable)



St Mary's Ewell
www.stmarysewell.com



A DAY FOR ALL

27 September
12 - 4.30pm

Photographic Competition



Email pictures you have taken on the theme 'Wonders of Creation'

FREE ENTRY

Maximum of two per person

CATEGORIES:
Under 16 Years
16 Years and Over

Closing date Sunday 21 September.
All the details of how to enter can be found on the St Mary's website
www.stmarysewell.com

CREATION CELEBRATION

Our 9:30 service on Sunday 10 August was our first outdoor Eucharist for many years as we celebrated our Gold Eco award and followed this with a bring-and-share lunch. We were blessed with a warm sunny day and by 8:45 that morning everything was ready for the service which was held alongside the north side of the church. Chairs were moved from the hall and parish room, the sound desk and organ keyboard were in place, and displays from the Surrey Wildlife Trust and from our new LLM, Sara Holland who is starting St. Mary's Crafters this month, set up.



Our congregation of 99 included the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Cllr Robert Leach, and our MP, Helen Maguire, was

able to join us mid-morning. The celebrant was the Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Rev Andrew Watson. For the readings Bishop Andrew chose the first few verses of Psalm 41, Haggai 1:1-11 for the first lesson and Luke 12:22-31 for the Gospel. The common theme was the word 'Consider', and 'Considerate Living' was the focus of his sermon. At the beginning of the sermon, the Bishop congratulated our ECO team and St. Mary's on their Gold award and said that we were one of only five parishes in the diocese that have gained this award. The hymns he chose included 'O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder' and the final hymn was 'All things bright and beautiful'.



The service was followed by tea, coffee or cold drink and then the bring and share lunch. Our thanks to all who helped in so many ways with the service or provided food and drink. Special thanks to Lucy Stafford for serving croissants and pain au chocolat at 8:30 to those who helped to put everything in place for the service.

DRD

Phonics with Robot Reg

Arrives in Ewell

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Phonics with Robot Reg is a phonics class for preschoolers aged 1-4 years, classes are based in over 60 locations across the UK, Ireland and Australia.

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6 MONTH FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

Introduction

The financials for the last 6 months to the end of June continue St. Mary's trend of overspend.

The 6 month period cash loss comes to £27k and this has reduced our cash at the bank to £318k.

Unfortunately, we know we have some large expenditure coming up (i.e. the nave floor) so this loss is going to become even greater for the financial year ending 31 December 2025.

As always, as a church, we remain reliant on generous legacies and extraordinary donations in order to meet the running costs of the church and hall, along with the parish share amount which is owed to the Diocese.

Draft analysis of the year-to-date figures

Our total income for the 6 months to 30 June 2025, is up slightly when we compare like-for-like income for the year ending 31 December 2024.

We would hope that we can push giving more, especially for the nave floor time capsule appeal. This would help some way towards the cost of this work, as well as create a lasting legacy.

Church Hall takings are up compared to last year, and a lot of this is due to late payers finally paying – thank you to Nick for his hard work on this. The Hall continues to add to our church's profitability and remains a valuable asset.

Overall costs are higher so far this year. This is due to having some large repair bills in the first 6 months of the year – for example, the organ had to be re-leathered, and we had to purchase new computer equipment for the office as the old computer we had finally gave up.

Our parish share contribution, which is our largest individual cost, has increased again this year and it is now £102k per year compared to £97k last year.

Our church energy costs are up slightly compared to 2024 and come to over £9k for the 6 months to 30 June 2025. This is a huge amount of money and an area where investment in energy efficient solutions may make sense. Insurance costs remain significant but in line with last year.

Summary

In 2025 we will continue the trend of making a loss, as we face the challenge of increased expenditure. We continue to struggle to balance our church's incoming resources with our outgoing resources.

In the current environment the cost of running the church is likely to continue to rise and with little we can do to impact our costs, it is clear our focus should be on increasing attendance at church and activity and awareness within our parish.

Donna Boosey
Treasurer



ST. MARY'S ECO GROUP

Step outside and connect with nature

This season is dedicated to God as the creator and sustainer of all life. Here are some ideas from A Rocha to encourage you to step outside during the season of creation and connect with nature.

Feast together with friends Why not get together in the great outdoors and enjoy some good food? Challenge your friends to bring (if they can) a local, sustainably-sourced plate of food that can be shared. Wrap up warm with blankets and rugs if necessary and enjoy feasting together, giving thanks to God for His good gifts.

Go on a prayer walk Choose a short route with specific places to stop, pause and pray - an oak tree, a pond or a viewpoint perhaps. At each stopping point pray for the people and nature that are affected by climate change. Download the A Rocha prayer walk guide for some excellent ideas.

<https://arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Prayer-walk-guide.pdf>

Build a bug hotel Create new habitats for invertebrates by building a bug hotel. Your building materials could include logs, branches, twigs, leaves and moss. With time your hotel could provide refuge and a 'family home' for a range of invertebrates. Small changes can have a big impact.

They can be good for wildlife and they're often cheap or even free so good for your budget too.

Pick up rubbish Help keep your local area safe and clean for people and wildlife. Join our churchyard litter picking team or a local litter-picking group such as *Keep Epsom and Ewell Tidy - KEET*.

If you have an ECO tip or would like to join our litter picking team or our ECO Group, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with our chairman, Fr. Mark on 020 8393 1297 or vicar@stmarysewell.com.

DRD

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ATTENDANCE RISES FOR FOURTH YEAR IN SUCCESSION

Attendance at C of E churches grew for the fourth year in a row last year.

The number of regular worshippers across the Church of England's congregations grew to 1.02 million in 2024, a rise of 1.2 per cent, according to an early snapshot of the annual Statistics for Mission findings.

It was the second year in a row in which the Church of England's 'worshipping community' – the combined number of regular members of local congregations – has stood above a million since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The numbers in the pews on a typical Sunday was up by a further 1.5 per cent to 582,000 in 2024, extending rises over recent years.

And overall, the in-person attendance across the week edged upwards by 1.2 per cent in a year, and stood at just over 701,000 last year, according to the early figures.

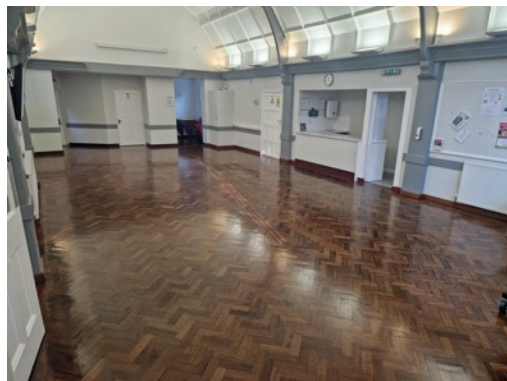
While the overall figures show that in-person attendance has not fully reached pre-pandemic levels, the figures suggest it is moving closer to the pre-pandemic trend.

There has also been a sharp increase in traffic on the Church of England's church-finder website, aChurchNearYou.com.

A TALE OF TWO FLOORS



August has seen the completion of the long awaited and much anticipated repair of the floor at the front of the church. The repair has been successfully carried out, on budget and, very pleasingly, well ahead of time. Whilst the work itself was actually overseen by Father Mark and a small team of helpers, much of the thanks for the project's successful execution must go to George Jarrett. The scope of works, selection of the prime contractor and the initial budgeting were all carried out by George.



to receive hirers in the busy September to Christmas period.

It is very pleasing indeed to report that all the repair and redecoration in the hall was carried out not by external contractors but by members of our own congregation. This has meant the whole refurbishment of the hall only cost about £550 including the relatively expensive wax-oil to resurface the floor, which alone cost almost £300!

The repair was necessary because of cracking in the floor tiles which had occurred around the joins between the solid flooring in front of the screen and the area in front of the pews. The existing vinyl tiles were lifted and the concrete screed underneath removed, together with a thin top layer of plywood. A section of the much thicker marine plywood was then lifted so the joists under the floor could be inspected.

The consensus view was that although the joists supporting the wooden flooring were a little underpowered by modern day standards, the majority of the cracking was due to a natural settlement and shrinkage in the joists as they dried out and aged. This meant that over time an increased amount of 'flex' occurred between the solid concrete flooring around and in front of the screen, and the wooden flooring running up to and against it.

A new wooden base, and a more flexible screed was laid in the belief this will help accommodate the flex taking place between the two types of flooring. Finally, new vinyl tiles and new borders were laid to complete and finish the job. Two weeks had been allowed for the work, with a third week of contingency in case unforeseen problems were encountered when the floor was lifted. In fact, the work was completed in just five days.

However, our church wasn't the only recipient of a new floor in August. The church hall has also had its floor cleaned and then restored with a new, specialist wax-oil product. The result looks spectacular and together with the redecoration work carried out in June and July, the hall now looks in fantastic shape



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St Mary's Crafters Starting 10 September

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Crafting, Chatter & Cake – What's Not to Love?

Creativity is not only great for the brain – it's a wonderful way to relax, have fun, and connect with others. Come and join me from 7.30 - 9pm as we explore the joys of crafting together each month!

Every session will have a theme, and I'll demonstrate a different **paper crafting technique** that you can use to make your own beautiful creations – whether it's a card, a decoration, or something unique.

All materials and refreshments are provided!

£5 per session to cover materials and refreshments.

Prefer a different craft?

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No experience necessary – just bring your enthusiasm!

Everyone is welcome.

For more information, please contact Sara Holland at:

llm@stmarysewell.com.

AUGUST PCC REPORT

At the PCC meeting on 4 August everyone agreed that the outdoor celebration service and bring-and-share lunch on 10 August to mark our ECO Gold award had been a huge success. Thanks were expressed to everyone who had helped to organise or who had taken part in the day.

Fr Mark reported that the repairs to the church floor between the front of the pews and the screen had been completed. The joists supporting the floor are balanced on walls underneath and one had bowed, causing the cracking of the floor tiles. £1,330 has been donated to sponsor the new tiles (the suggested donation was £10 per tile). The names of the 89 sponsors have been placed in a time capsule under the floor, along with a selection of items that represent St. Mary's at the present time.

It was reported that the mid-year deficit is higher than expected at around the same level as for the whole of 2024. Fr Mark pointed out that there are three ways to improve the finances: spend less, give more and find new revenue streams. To this end, a working group was set up to look at all options.

Fr Mark said that the recent Thursday lunchtime study course had been very well received. He noted that, although only a small group had attended, all had agreed that a follow up would be beneficial. An Advent lecture series, along the lines of the Lent lectures, is being planned.

The diocese is currently considering appointing a Net Zero Funding Officer. Fr Mark explained that this person would be tasked with negotiating energy deals, grants and funding for a group of parishes. Since St Mary's now has a Gold Eco award and has already had energy audits for both the church and the hall, the diocese has asked that St Mary's be the base church for the officer once appointed. This would be a purely supervisory role but would be of obvious direct benefit to St Mary's.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on 9 September

*Liz Divall
PCC Secretary*

SUMMER STUDY & DISCUSSION GROUP

Our Summer Study & Discussion Group consisted of six sessions based around the Church of England publication 'Pilgrim – a Course for the Christian Journey'. Our group got together at midday on Thursdays. Each meeting kicked off with a light lunch which enabled us to get to know each other, and it got the 'discussion ball rolling' ahead of the start of each session.

The Pilgrim booklet was divided into six sessions. Each began with opening prayers, then a reading from the Bible, which was followed by reflection and discussion on the text and what it meant to us personally. We were then asked to look inward a little and explore our own feelings and emotions, and our response to the material we were looking at and 'considering'.

The Pilgrim Course was put together by some of our church's most respected current day theologians, thinkers and commentators – like Stephen Cottrell. It was originally designed for people who might be turning towards Christ for the first time, and to provide support in the early stages of their Christian journey. Indeed, the course begins with an exploration of our baptismal vows- the questions they ask of us and the decisions we are challenged to make. 'Do you turn to Christ?' was the first big question of the first week. The group agreed that reviewing, refreshing and renewing our own baptismal vows could help us gauge where we are on our own Christian journey. It can help show us how and where we might grow in faith and practise.

The second session began with the question – 'Do you believe and trust in God the Father?' We turned to the Old Testament to examine God's relationship with the world before Christ. Then we moved on to look at how the coming of Christ has taught us so much more about the love God has for us all.

Session three focussed on Jesus himself, his baptism, his relationship with God and his ministry. We discussed how we might respond to his teachings and the example he sets before us.

In session four we began thinking about the Holy Spirit and Pentecost. We looked at 'gifts of the spirit' and following from that the 'fruits of the spirit'. This brought us into a discussion about our own witness and the call the Holy Spirit might make on us all.

Sessions five and six looked firstly at Sin, Christ's role in repentance and then redemption. And lastly, the nature of Evil and how our Christian faith helps to set our 'moral compass' in the world today. We read the story of Cain & Abel. There was a consensus that the group found this last session amongst the most difficult. The subject of evil seemed far less black & white than we might have expected. Again, the discussion between the group was incredibly helpful in taking us all forward and improving our shared understanding of a difficult topic.

The group dynamic, and the discussion component, made the course really come alive for all the participants. Sharing our thoughts and experiences helped give us comfort and confidence that we were neither alone on our Christian journey, or that the questions, or indeed the struggles, we sometimes have as Christians in the modern world, are shared with others more often than we might imagine.

Such was the enjoyment and benefit we all felt we had got from the course, we discussed perhaps making a 'Study & Discussion Group' something that we might make a permanent or on-going feature in the life of St Mary's. At the close of the final session we were careful to thank Father Mark for facilitating all our meetings and providing us with an enquiring and yet sensitive leadership throughout the six weeks of the course.

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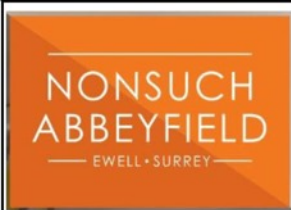
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www.acts435.org.uk/our-mission/how-we-work/

Calendar for September



Said Morning Prayer will usually be celebrated at 0900 Monday to Saturday and shown online.
(Saturdays will be specifically prayers for peace.)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| M | 01 | Day | Home Communion by Clergy |
| | | 1930 | ECO Group Meeting (Parish Room) |
| T | 02 | 1000 | Said Holy Eucharist (Lady Chapel) |
| | | 1305-1335 | Lunchtime Bach Organ Recital |
| | | 1930 | Ewell Yule Meeting (Parish Room) |
| W | 03 | 2000 | Quiz (Zoom) |
| Th | 04 | 1100-1230 | Coffee for all at Priory Court |
| | | 1445-1545 | Bereavement Café (Hall) |
| S | 07 | TRINITY 12 - Creation 1 | |
| | | PATRONAL FESTIVAL | |
| | | 0800 | Said Holy Eucharist 1662 (Lady Chapel) |
| | | 0930 | JAM (Hall then Church) |
| | | 0930 | Sung Holy Eucharist |
| T | 09 | 1000 | Said Holy Eucharist (Lady Chapel) |
| | | 1930 | PCC Meeting (Parish Room) |
| W | 10 | 1930-2100 | New: 'St Mary's Crafters' (Hall) |
| S | 13 | 0930-1700 | Surrey Churches Ride & Stride |
| | | 1100 | Holy Baptism |
| S | 14 | TRINITY 13 - Creation 2 | |
| | | 0800 | Said Holy Eucharist |
| | | 0930 | JAM (Hall then Church) |
| | | 0930 | Sung Holy Eucharist |
| | | 1115 | Choral Mattins |
| M | 15 | 2000 | Julian Group (Zoom) |
| T | 16 | 1000 | Said Holy Eucharist |
| | | 1300 | Review of Coffee Mornings (at Priory Court) |
| W | 17 | 1300 | 'Working with Children' (Parish Room) |
| Th | 18 | 1445-1545 | Bereavement Café (Hall) |
| S | 20 | 1930 | Organ Recital by Jonathan Holmes |
| S | 21 | TRINITY 14 - Creation 3 | |
| | | 0800 | Said Holy Eucharist |
| | | 0930 | JAM (Hall then Church) |
| | | 0930 | Sung Holy Eucharist |
| | | 1730 | Choral Evensong |
| M | 22 | 1930 | Deanery Greenery (Parish Room) |
| T | 23 | 1000 | Said Holy Eucharist |
| F | 26 | 0900-1200 | Macmillan Coffee Morning (Hall) |
| S | 27 | 1200-1700 | 'A Day for All' in and outside Church |
| S | 28 | TRINITY 15 - Creation 4 - Harvest Festival | |
| | | 0800 | Said Holy Eucharist |
| | | 0930 | Sung Holy Eucharist |
| | | 1115 | Sung Mattins |
| M | 29 | 1400 | Children's Support Group (Parish Room) |

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