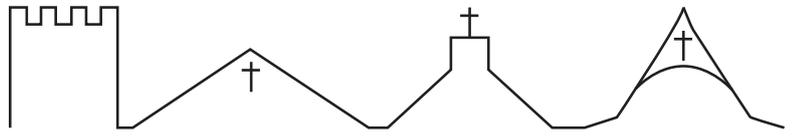




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perspectives

In this issue:

- A meeting in cherry-blossom season!
- The Coronation
- The Stone Rolled Away
- Going Outdoors – Into The Garden!



Issue 58 - Spring 2023

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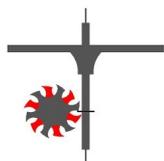
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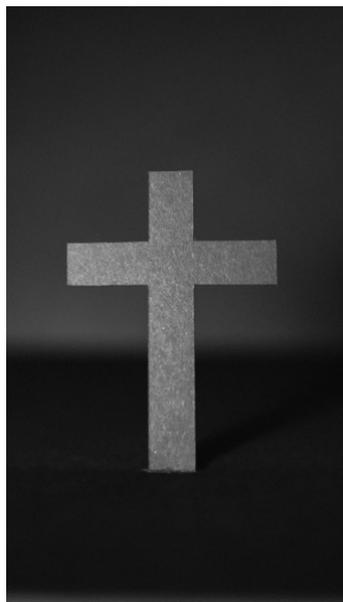
If you have any comments or questions, would like to make any contribution to the next edition of Perspectives or would like to receive this magazine on a quarterly basis please contact the editorial team via: perspectives@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk

LENT

Lent is a time for fasting and prayer, leading up to Easter. This is a prayer for the Lent season:

Almighty God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN



Dear Friends

Easter – fact or fiction?

'Why do you believe Christianity is true?' – I have been asked this question many times over the years. From different people, each wrestling with the same issue many of us wrestle with today – how do we know what is true about life, when different voices tell us truths that contradict one another? They can't all be true!



Easter is that moment for me. If I had to pick one thing that is true, it's the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The stakes are high when it comes to that first Easter weekend! So high that, as the Apostle Paul says in one of his letters to Christians: "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." Which makes sense – without the resurrection how can we know if Jesus was telling the truth about who He is and what He came to do? He would be one of many religious figures who made big claims, but then died leaving us wondering how we could know if they were true.

But the Bible presents us with claims of clear evidence that Jesus did rise from the dead – an historical claim, a real event in space and time. Not convinced? That's fair enough, it's a huge claim! But if it is true, it changes everything for everyone who ever lived. So why not at least explore these things some more, just to be sure?

The story of Frank Morison is great. He was so sceptical about Jesus' resurrection that he set out to prove it didn't happen. But as he looked at the evidence, he became convinced it really had. His resulting book '**Who Moved the Stone?**' is a good place to start thinking about these things.

We'd also love to welcome you to think more about these things any Sunday at any of our churches. There is a great programme of Easter events across the parish. Do contact us, or see our website, for more details.

Ben Thorndike
Vicar, Tonbridge Parish Church

My faith and my role in the community - Tomiko Evans

Tomiko Tokuda was invited by a friend in April 1993 to come with her to Naoa, a town close to her village. It was cherry blossom season, a significant moment in the Japanese calendar, and proved to be significant for Tomiko, since it is there that she met Tim Evans. Tim, who had by then been working several years in Japan, had learnt to speak Japanese. That proved to be useful when they met!

Tell us a bit about yourself...



I was born in a village on the outskirts of the city of Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. I was one of 3 children in my family, and we followed the traditional religions of Buddhism and Shintoism. In Buddhism there is much worship of ancestors, seeking their favour and protection: Shintoism is mainly the worship of spirits which inhabit the natural world. We did not have

a church near us, but I first heard of Christianity when some Australian missionaries visited our area. The adults did not show much interest, but we children followed them, and they taught us simple bible songs. I still remember them, and sometimes sing them. Even today, Christians number only about 1% in Japan.

How did you come into contact with Christianity?

After meeting Tim, we kept in contact, and in 1995, I came to the UK. We were married in 1995 in a Registry Office in Wigan, but then had a formal ceremony in Japan in 1996. We moved to Tonbridge in 1998, but I found it quite lonely, not knowing many people. Our daughter, Serena, was a year old, and I went to a Mother & Toddler group at the Baptist Church. I became friends with one of the mothers there, who eventually invited me to a bible-study. I accepted, thinking it would be good to understand more of English culture! I had a bible with English on one side and Japanese on the other. I gradually started to understand more, and felt God was speaking to me.



Was there any particular event which made a difference?

There was a time when Serena started to have a very hard time at school. I felt completely powerless to help her – it made me realise how little we really control things. All I could do was to pray, and ask God to help – the verse in Philippians really helped* – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer....” It turned out we were able to move Serena



to another school, where she thrived. She is very musical, and when she was in secondary school, she wanted to start playing the organ. I asked several churches without success, but then felt I should go to St. Saviour, which was nearest to our home. I was given such a welcome, and David, the organist was very helpful. I decided that if she could have access to practice the organ, I would come to church every week! That was in 2011, and in 2012, and with Tim’s agreement, I decided to be baptised, to make a public statement of my faith in Christ. It has been a source of such joy in my life. I have noticed that in Japan, while we are materially well-off, there is not much joy. That is something which God has given me, and it comes from within.

How are you involved with the community?

I have been helping with Teddies, the Mother and Toddler group at the parish church. I also volunteer with the Japan Society. The Kent branch aims to “Bring Japan to your Classroom” in both primary and secondary schools, though we have done less since Covid. With lockdowns in 2020/21, I started for the first time taking an interest in gardening. I have enjoyed developing my garden – though it is still half-wild!



**Philippians 4:6-7*

God Save The King



On Saturday May 6, for the first time since 1953, the coronation of a new monarch of the United Kingdom will take place providing a national occasion for celebration. The UK will get an extra bank holiday on May 8th (two days after the actual event) to mark the royal occasion, giving families and communities across the country the chance to come together to celebrate.

The coronation itself is a solemn religious service. It will take place, as have all royal coronations for the past 900 years, in Westminster Abbey. However, whilst retaining its time-honoured rituals, the Palace have said that they will also look to the future - reflecting the monarch's role today.

The pageantry will begin with a state procession from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey. The service passes through various stages including the Coronation Oath, the Anointing and Investiture, and the Homage before the final procession back to the Palace.

The Coronation Oath is in effect an oral contract entered into by the monarch with the people. It is the only aspect of the ceremony that is required by law. This is one of the oldest parts of the ceremony, dating back in some form to at least 973. When taking the oath, the Sovereign swears to govern the peoples of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Realms "according to their respective laws and customs".

The Sovereign is then 'anointed, blessed and consecrated' by the Archbishop of Canterbury, whilst seated in King Edward's chair (made in 1300, and used by every Sovereign since 1626). Whereas the Oath is the main legal focus, the act of anointing with holy oil is the central religious moment. It closely resembles the ordination of a priest or the consecration of a bishop and it marks the bestowal of God's grace upon the ruler and the monarch's acceptance of his other religious responsibility.

Next the symbols of monarchy - the orb, sceptre, coronation ring (known as 'The Wedding Ring of England') and rod - will be conferred upon the Sovereign. These incredibly beautiful and valuable objects, wrought from precious metals and adorned with numerous stunning gemstones, display many religious symbols. The 1.3 kg hollow golden sphere of the orb is surmounted by a cross which represents Christ's place as Saviour of the world. Also topped by a cross, the sceptre (which contains the world's largest diamond) is a symbol of the temporal power now bestowed upon the Sovereign. The Rod of Equity and Mercy is topped with a white enamelled dove (a symbol of the Holy Spirit).



When the Archbishop places St Edward's Crown on the Sovereign's head this marks the formal investiture. King Charles III will then ascend from the Coronation Chair to the Throne. The ancient tradition of the paying of homage comprises the final part of the coronation ceremony. One by one senior religious and state representatives approach the monarch to pledge their loyalty.

The service of the Coronation is a glorious spectacle but at its heart is a vital reminder that there is only one great and eternal King, our Lord God, whom each Sovereign takes a solemn oath to serve within the privileged role to which they have been called. Our part as the people of the nations is to pray that God will give our Sovereign wisdom and strength to carry out those promises.

Morwenna Fernandez

Teach me wisdom in my secret heart

From Psalm 51:6

“How was your day?” It’s a common question, something that we might ask friends or family when we reconnect with them at the end of the day, but it’s also a simple gesture of care, a moment of connection and recognition.

What if God were to ask you now: “How was your day?” What would you say? The Bible teaches us that God knows and cares for each of us personally and intimately throughout our lives (see Psalm 139, Isaiah 43:2, Luke 12:7, Matthew 6:31-32 and many more). There is a Christian tradition of prayerfully reviewing the day in God’s loving presence*. This simple but profound process aims to help us to recognise those moments in our everyday life where God offered us blessings or where we felt God’s presence.

* This is also known as the Examen.



If you would like to try this yourself, aim to set aside about 15 minutes in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Put away any phones or devices that might distract you.

- 1** Make yourself comfortable, then sit in silence for a few minutes. Breathe slowly, relax your body and mind. If troubling thoughts cross your mind acknowledge them but allow them to pass you by for the moment. Remind yourself that you are in God’s presence. For some people, it may help to imagine God sitting or standing close to you, perhaps gazing at you or speaking your name with love.
- 2** Ask for God’s help during the prayer. Ask for grace to look at your day with God’s eyes, not just your own. Pray for wisdom and understanding.
- 3** Give thanks for the day that you have just lived. Acknowledge that this day, like all others, is a gift from God.
- 4** Now it is time to review the day. Let your mind drift back over the events of the day, and the moods and feelings they invoked in you.
 - i** Which moments do you feel gave you life today? When did you experience moments of joy, contentment, happiness, relief? These are your moments of consolation. They are gifts which God has given you during this day. Take some time to relish them and enjoy them once again. Take time to thank God for these precious gifts.
 - ii** What events and feelings have drained you of life today? When have you felt sad, helpless, angry, frustrated? When did something go wrong? These are the moments of desolation. It may be uncomfortable to think about these moments, but it is important to work through that discomfort with God. Ask God to forgive you where you have gone wrong. Express your real feelings to God, asking Him to help you to understand them together with unsatisfied needs that any difficulties have stirred up within you. Offer anything that you are unable to deal with to God, remembering that God longs to help us with His infinite mercy and grace. Ask for healing of any harm that has been done.
- 5** Now focus on the coming day. Are there things that you are worried or anxious about? Is there something you are looking forward to? Ask the Lord to be with you in every aspect of the day. You may want to ask Him for a quality that you particularly feel you will need, (e.g. patience, fortitude, inner peace) or remember before God a particular person or situation that you will face tomorrow.



Morwenna Fernandez

Go Outdoors - Gardening!

*Oh, Adam was a gardener and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees.
So when your work is finished you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass away!
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away*

- Rudyard Kipling

*'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, The world and
all who live in it.'*

- Psalm 24

What an opportunity gardeners have! Spring is here, yellow and open-mouthed with daffodils, bulbs pushing through the dark soil of winter past to show their beauty; beauty which nourishes the heart and soul. Now is the time to sow seeds, to plant for biodiversity, to encourage pollinators and wildlife, to nurture God's gift of creation. Why not start with sowing seeds of some annuals – cosmos, calendula, cornflower, poppy, nasturtium and marigold? Easy to sow, their flowers give months of delight for a small amount of money.

If you prefer vegetables and hanker for fresh food to enjoy, try spinach, lettuce, Swiss chard, dwarf beans, which don't need the space of the squash family. And if you want something more exotic, aubergine seeds produce glorious purple flowers before the shining texture of the growing fruit emerges.

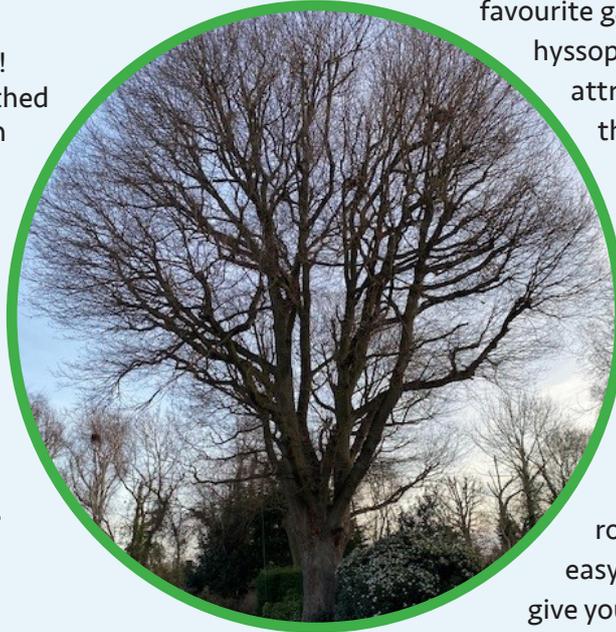
From Hortulus

*Though a life of retreat offers various joys,
None, I think, will compare with the time one employs
In the study of herbs, or in striving to gain
Some practical knowledge of nature's domain.
Get a garden! What kind you may get matters not.*

'The study of herbs' by Abbot Walafrid Strabo

Abbot Strabo was writing in the 7th century. Five centuries later, Hildegard von Bingen, a 12th century German abbess, spent many hours tending the convent herb garden, writing medical and theological manuscripts, and healing the sick. She wrote: 'Gaze at the beauty of earth's greenings. Now think what delight God gives to humankind with all these things. All nature is at the disposal of humankind. We are to work with it. For without it we cannot survive'.

'We are to work with it'. Herbs top the list of my favourite garden plants. Lavender, rosemary, hyssop, sage, thyme, marjoram – they attract pollinators and butterflies; they have glorious fragrance; they add appetizing tastes to any soup or casserole. A bunch of herb leaves left in boiling water for fifteen minutes makes a soothing herbal tea. Last but certainly not least, they have many medicinal qualities. Herbs are healers. What's not to like? Give them a go! Lavender, rosemary and hyssop are particularly easy for taking cuttings; one bush can give you abundantly more after they've finished flowering.



Too much work? Go wild! Nature really doesn't thrive on manicured lawns. Leave at least part of your lawn to grow wild, dig in some wildflower seeds and watch the transformation from a nature-dead, neat piece of grass to one alive with the biodiversity of many different insects. You might want to join Chris Packham on his London Walk for Wildlife this Spring.

'They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour' (Isaiah 61 v 3). Did you know that the mature oak supports over 2,000 species of wildlife? Old is good! Peter Wohlleben in his 'The Hidden Life of Trees' writes: 'In the case of trees, being old doesn't mean being weak, bowed, fragile. Quite the opposite. It means being full of energy and highly productive. Elders are markedly more productive than young whippersnappers and when it comes to climate change, they are important allies for human beings.' So let's nurture them and plant for future generations. If we don't have space for planting a tree, why not support Woodland Trust in its valuable work to protect our ancient trees?

And finally, I hear the frustrated flat dweller's cry: 'What's in this for me? I don't have a garden'. Don't despair. You could be a guerrilla gardener, planting random seeds in neglected areas of town. You could become part of a community or church gardening team. Window boxes, roof gardens, vertical planting are all possibilities but, as a high school in Putney scientifically demonstrated: by bringing nature into classrooms, indoor plants boost pupils' health, wellbeing, sense of calm and even productivity. A home without a garden outside can still be a home with a garden: inside. I've seen some truly spectacular plant arrangements in living rooms and bathrooms; it takes flair and creativity to bring a garden into a small indoor space - but you can do it!

So, let's give thanks for the wonder of Spring, the abundance of blossom, and the beauty of birdsong. Let's give thanks for the immeasurable privilege of being guardians of the garden of creation. Let's get to work sowing and planting. For the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!

Helen Longley



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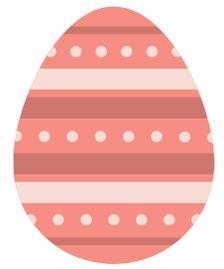
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EASTER FUN



Did you know:

- Easter is the oldest Christian festival.
- Eggs are a symbol of new life. They are used at Easter to remember that Jesus rose from the dead.
- In Medieval times people didn't eat eggs in Lent, before Easter, but were allowed them on Easter Day.
- The idea of giving eggs as a tradition on Easter Sunday turned into chocolate eggs in the nineteenth century. J. S. Fry and Cadbury's were the first companies in the UK to make chocolate eggs, in 1873.
- The eggs originally had that 'scaly' pattern, known as scutes, to help hide imperfections on the smooth surface.
- Easter bunnies are relatively new additions to the Easter festival. Originally from Germany, there was a tradition of an Easter hare leaving gifts for well behaved children.

Test yourself:

How well do you know the Easter Story?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Where was Jesus arrested?
a. the temple
b. his home
c. a garden | 4. Before he was crucified, what was placed on Jesus' head?
a. purple scarf
b. crown of thistles
c. crown of thorns | 7. What was the written sign above Jesus' cross?
a. Friend of Sinners
b. King of the Jews
c. King of the World |
| 2. Judas betrayed Jesus for how many pieces of silver?
a. 30
b. 15
c. 10 | 5. Where was Jesus crucified?
a. Golgotha
b. Gethsemane
c. Dolorosa | 8. In whose tomb was Jesus buried?
a. Joseph of Arimathea
b. Lazarus
c. Mary Magdalene |
| 3. Which prisoner was released instead of Jesus?
a. Barnabus
b. Barrabus
c. John the Baptist | 6. What did the soldiers cast lots for?
a. Jesus' hair
b. the cross
c. Jesus' clothes | 9. Who wanted to see the nail marks in Jesus' hands before they believed he had risen from the dead?
a. Nicodemus
b. Peter
c. Thomas |



Happy Easter



Answers: 1.c, 2.a, 3.b, 4.c, 5.a, 6.c, 7.b, 8.a, 9.c

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Peter* had been doing cleaning work, but a bad accident affected him both physically and mentally, reducing his capacity to maintain the number of hours each week. He fell into arrears with his rent, and being unable to pay all the bills, he used his credit cards to pay for day to day living, accumulating £6000 of debt, on which he was being charged high interest. Although he received a little Universal Credit to supplement his low income, he was becoming increasingly anxious and stressed, and came to **Crosslight** to seek advice and help.

With Peter's permission, **Crosslight** contacted all his creditors, asking for breathing space to allow them to work with Peter to gather information about his exact position. They then went through all his income and expenditure, identifying some expenses, such as subscriptions which Peter was no longer using, on which he could make some savings. They also gathered more information about his medical situation.

With the full picture, **Crosslight** then wrote to all the creditors, explaining Peter's situation, and asking them to consider writing off all or part of his debt. Some agreed to this in part, others insisted on repayment. **Crosslight** also went through the benefits which Peter was receiving, helping him apply for some additional amounts. With his slightly increased income and some reduction in his debts, a repayment plan was worked out on his remaining debt. Today he is within 12 months of being free of all debt, living within his regular income and receiving relevant benefits.

This story illustrates some of the work which is done by **Crosslight** to support those who are facing difficulties keeping up with their debt repayments, be it mortgage, car repayment, utility bills or credit card debt. **Crosslight** West Kent is part of the national **Crosslight** organisation, which helps people seeking support and assistance in dealing with debt and signposting them to organisations which can help with debt issues.



The Tonbridge and Sevenoaks Branch is headed by Andrew Hull, based at Tonbridge Baptist Church, and works in an area stretching from Edenbridge in the West to Snodland and Swanley in the East. With four paid staff and about 30 volunteers, **Crosslight** gives free advice and support, not just in managing difficult debt situations, but also in learning how to develop a budget system for the household, keeping track of expenditure against income. It also signposts people to different organisations which may be able to help with other areas of stress and anxiety for families and individuals. Some may come for just some short-term information and advice, while with others, it may be walking alongside people over several months while they sort out their financial situation.

If you have a little time to give, (at least two evenings or two days a month) and are interested in providing help to individuals and families facing financial difficulties, **Crosslight** Tonbridge and Sevenoaks branch would certainly be interested to hear from you.

Able to help by becoming a debt adviser? Call 01732 442580 or via the website: www.crosslightadvice.org

Crosslight was founded 20 years ago and, as Andrew Hull says, whereas in the early days it was generally possible to balance the budget in households, recent inflationary pressures have made it increasingly hard to do so. This may leave a deficit between expenditure and income, even after making all the savings possible. **Crosslight West Kent** is gradually extending its activities across the different towns in its area. Its ability to support more effectively will depend on finding new volunteers!

**Peter is not the person's real name, in order to protect their identity*



Facing difficulties with debt repayment and covering your monthly bills?
Call 01732 442580 or via the website:
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10.45am: Morning Service* (Holy Communion on 1st Sunday of the month) and children's groups (school years R-5 and 6-9), plus crèche for pre-schoolers

6pm: Evening Service (Holy Communion on 4th Sunday of the month).

*Also available online on our YouTube channel

Wednesdays

10.30am Holy Communion (1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month)

ST. PHILIP: SALISBURY ROAD, TN10 4PA

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ST. ANDREW: HADLOW ROAD, TN10 4LS

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9.45am Morning Service (Holy Communion on 3rd Sunday of the month).

ST SAVIOUR : DRY HILL PARK CRESCENT, TN10 3BJ

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peterpaulton



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Contact

Parish Administration Parish Office, Tonbridge Parish Church, Church Lane, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1DA	(01732) 770962 ext. 24 parishoffice@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Vicar The Rev'd Ben Thorndike	(01732) 770962 ext. 23 ben@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Associate Vicar The Rev'd Wendy Carr	(01732) 770962 ext. 32
Senior Minister for Families Alyson Bleakley	(01732) 770962 ext.22 Alyson.Bleakley@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Licensed Lay Minister Sally Musson	07713 352017 mussonsally@btinternet.com
Parish Administrator & Vicar's PA Jane Higgs	(01732) 770962 ext. 24 jane.higgs@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Church Family Administrator Jane Thorndike	(01732) 770962 ext. 24 jane.thorndike@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Churchwardens David Balcombe, Paul White	(01732) 770962 ext. 24
Parish Treasurer Ray Tanner	(01732) 770962 ext. 25
Finance Manager Yolanda Roberts	(01732) 770962 ext. 25 yolanda@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk
Perspectives Team John Schluter (Chair), Merle Bigden, Pippa Disdel, Jenny Macpherson, Patricia Osborn.	perspectives@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk

Parish Office Hours: 10am-1pm, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

GET INVOLVED!

There is a vast range of groups and activities across the Parish:

- Men and Women's Ministry
- Tiny Acorns for parents and carers with under 1s
- Teddies for parents and carers with preschool children
- Prayer Gatherings
- Home Groups
- Health Walks
- Stepping Stones Bible Study for women
- Book Club
- Open House at St. Philip

Visit our website www.tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk to find out more or complete the online form on our

Contact Us page:

www.tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk/contactus

In times of need, family matters

*Let our family,
care for your family*



Our award winning family service from mother and daughter Chris and Jo

Your final farewell should respect your loved one's wishes and comfort those they leave behind. Our family has provided funeral services to families and friends in the Tonbridge area, for 30 years, we know this is a time when a caring family can make all the difference.

*Abbey Funeral Services
is independently
owned by Chris,
Jim and Jo Parker.*

Our promise to you:-

- ▲ We understand your wishes and we're here to help
- ▲ Our emergency service is 24/7 and our phone is always answered personally
- ▲ We always provide itemised estimates
- ▲ We operate our own mortuary and private chapel of rest
- ▲ We're proud members of SAIF and BIFD
- ▲ Your family, not profit, is our main priority

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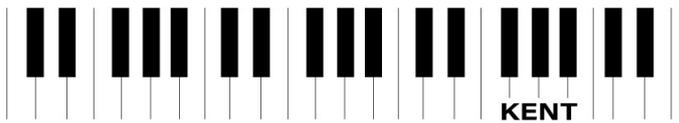
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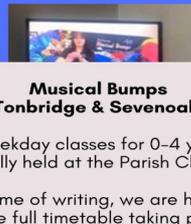
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Monday to Saturday
10am - 5pm


**Musical Bumps
Tonbridge & Sevenoaks**

Our weekday classes for 0-4 years are usually held at the Parish Church.

At the time of writing, we are having fun with the full timetable taking place via zoom online!

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday

New families are always welcome to trial a class

margaret.lewin@musicalbumps.com
07736 244142





EASTER SERVICES IN THE PARISH OF ST PETER & ST PAUL, TONBRIDGE

All are welcome to join with us!

SATURDAY 1ST APRIL

11am Open House Easter egg hunt at St Philip's Church

GOOD FRIDAY 7TH APRIL

10am Family Service (aimed at pre school and primary age) with hot cross buns at St Peter & St Paul

12pm Service of Reflection at St Peter & St Paul followed by an hour of Private Prayer

2-3pm Informal Time of Quiet Prayer with hot cross buns at St Andrew's Church

EASTER SATURDAY 8TH APRIL

2:30pm Easter egg hunt at St Saviour's Church

EASTER DAY 9TH APRIL

at St Peter & St Paul...

5:45am Sunrise Service in the churchyard

8am Holy Communion Service

10:45am All ages together - Holy Communion Service

6pm Holy Communion Service

...and across the parish

9:15am Holy Communion Service at St Saviour's Church

9:45am Holy Communion Service at St Andrew's Church

10:45am Holy Communion Service at St Philip's Church



St Peter & St Paul • St Philip • St Andrew • St Saviour