

perspectives

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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:

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St Peter & St Paul · St Philip · St Andrew · St Saviour

The Perspectives logo found on the front cover represents the four churches worshipping and working together.

Dear Friends,

Church: Online or Offline that is the question – or is it?!



This might say more about me than about the issue, but nonetheless it is an important point I wish to make. May I, first of all, say how impressed I have been with our whole parish team, who have enabled a tremendous online broadcast so faithfully to so many over recent months. The efforts have been Herculean and the results, of course, we leave in the Lord's hands - surely plenty of seeds have been sown.

As buildings are cleaned and confidence rises after the trauma and anxiety of a 'building-less faith' we once again inhabit Church offline in our precious physical spaces. This will bring joy, with a mixture of sadness for those who cannot join us. We will be dual track for the foreseeable future, namely offline and online.

So what is the point and what is the real question? Offline or online? The question is what is the line? It is not 'are we online' or 'offline', but what is the line....?? What is your line on who brings life to life? What is your line on how we face suffering and worry? What is your line on life beyond mortal life? What is your line on forgiveness and hope? What is your line on Jesus the head of the offline and online Church?

The world may change and the church, of course, with it - but the central issues remain. Jesus is Lord of all. His invitation and His rule never changes. His line for us all is life, abundance, healing, help, forgiveness, strength, even life eternal, which begins now. When life around changes, sometimes important things are put aside to deal with the necessities and the urgencies of the situation.

May the changes and challenges of life, of which there have been plenty in recent months, not distract us from the heavenly line - namely the importance that Jesus is Lord, always will be and always wants to be over our lives.

Yours in Jesus,

The Rev'd Canon Mark Brown
 Vicar of Tonbridge



Vivian Branson

Vivian, a member of St Saviour's congregation, will be known to many for her work as councillor for TMBC, and as an active member of the Kent branch of the Jane Austen Society. We found she has worked in medicine and all around the world ...

Have you always lived in Tonbridge?

No. I was brought up and went to school in Sevenoaks. However, I knew Tonbridge very well.

Tell us about your working life up to now...

I was a medical laboratory scientist specialising in Haematology and Microbiology. After 18 years in the NHS I took a few years off in Rome as an au pair and in Northern Canada testing for metal fatigue in the drilling pipes on the oil rigs. I lived and worked in Belgium, went to agricultural college in Northumberland and finally worked in a Dutch Merchant Bank in London before retiring and moving to Tonbridge.

What led you to stand to be a Borough councillor 14 years ago?

I had just moved to Tonbridge and was feeling very lost. A lifelong friend came to cheer me up (so I thought) and asked me if I had thought of becoming a Borough Councillor. The rest was history...

What are its satisfactions and frustrations?

I love being a Borough Councillor. When a resident contacts me, I never know what their request might be. It's a wonderful feeling to really help people. I love the committee work: I am Chair of Audit and Chair of Area One Planning committees. I suppose frustrations are some people's unrealistic expectations.

What do you think Tonbridge needs to help it recover from the huge setback of coronavirus?

I think everyone and every business needs support and someone listening to them. We need to accept whatever change comes out from this appalling situation and find the positives so that we can move forwards.

You're a member of St Saviour's - do you want to tell us what led you there?

My good friends Claire and Janice Browne introduced me to St Saviour's.

Did you find it easy to fit in?

Yes, very easy.

The parish links with Jane Austen's family brings us a lot of visitors - especially for the December talks. Are you a lifelong fan, or is it an aspect of Tonbridge you help to promote (or both!)?

No, I haven't been a lifelong fan. I had the most wonderful godmother who invited me to the Jane Austen Society AGM at Chawton in 1969. I really had no idea who Jane Austen was, but it was wonderful.

I joined as a life member very soon afterwards and bought my very first novel at Chawton's bookstall. I jogged along with Jane Austen quite serenely and then moved to Tonbridge. I had absolutely NO idea of the Austens' connections to Tonbridge and I have become more and more enthusiastic ever since.

What is next on the Austen (Kent) wish list?

I would love more people to come to Tonbridge and hear this part of her story. My biggest wish would be to find documentary evidence that Jane visited Tonbridge.

How do you like to spend a day of leisure, all restrictions off? I absolutely love being at home and having visitors who I can take around Tonbridge.

Favourite film, book, meal?

There are so many. I loved Lord of the Rings, the latest movie of Churchill with Gary Oldman, the latest movie of Emma. Of course, my very favourite books are all Jane Austen's works, but I am fairly catholic in my taste: I have just finished Dierdre Wolownick's 'The Sharp End of Life' and started Max Hastings' book about the Vietnam War.

I am strictly vegetarian and mostly vegan and really love any food and don't waste any. We are so privileged to live in a country and at a time when many of us have an abundance of food and choice. We must never forget the deprivations in our country and others around the world.

Thank you for your time.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Back in 2019 the parish got together and raised funds to help us improve:

- Hospitality - improved kitchen at St Peter & St Paul
- Access - a toilet accessible for the disabled at St Peter & St Paul
- Safety - safe access to the tower at St Peter & St Paul
- Basic facilities - water, drainage, kitchen and toilet at St Andrew

During the winter of 2019 - 20 work was underway...

St Andrew



Mains water and drainage were a first for St Andrew's church ...enabling kitchen and toilet to be installed.

The church now hosts our young people's evening meal and Bible study and in the future will enable many more social and community events.



St Peter & St Paul

continues...



Meanwhile work was going on enlarging the kitchen off the coffee lounge.



The facilities are great and the new layout means our lower lounge is no longer used for kitchen access. It is more private, and safer for small children.



We can now welcome big groups for events and courses.

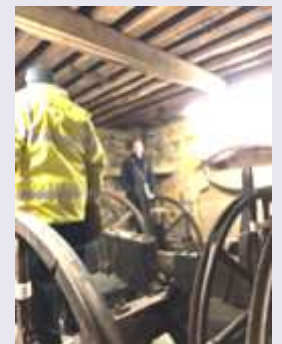
St Peter & St Paul

Down at St Peter & St Paul, gaining a disabled toilet meant a loss of part of the Youth, Children & Families office.



What about the tower?

Surveys were done (including in the bell loft, pictured) and we will be starting this project soon!



The churches and coffee lounge will be open as soon as it's safe. Check our website/social media for details.

David Balcombe & Paul Jagger

Here for Youth

Youth & Children Families MINISTRY

The Youth, Children & Families Ministry at Tonbridge Parish Church was 'Here for Youth' in many ways during lockdown, broadcasting **Sunday Club** live at 3pm on YouTube.



Each Sunday Club member received a personalized letter and mini Bible Timeline. Online Sunday Club included a variety of Bible Stories, songs, fun activities or crafts, prayer and the occasional workout!



Activity sheets helped young people keep discovering more about faith and themselves, either individually or within their family units – these are published on the Parish website after each session.



Interaction was encouraged by asking young people, under parental supervision, to share photos of their crafts and creations on social media including the ministry's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

The team, led by Andy Page, continues to pray for all children and young people as they prepare to return to school in September and updates will be posted on the Facebook page.



Teddies and Tiny Acorns at home



Tiny Acorns

Teddies, a toddler group at the Parish Church that usually meets on Tuesday mornings, is blessed with a fantastic group of volunteers who run interactive singing sessions, a creative craft table and imaginative story time. Virtual Teddies continued to give families with pre-school children an opportunity to enjoy a little taste of Teddies at home during lockdown.



Caroline Zuber, a regular attendee and volunteer, used the Teddies Facebook page and transformed real-life Teddies into an engaging virtual platform with new stories, craft, singing and recipe ideas for families every Tuesday. "We've really enjoyed Virtual Teddies but cannot wait until we are able to be all together again!" says Caroline.



Tiny Acorns is a friendly, supportive and relaxed group for mums with babies under one, suspending its regular Wednesday morning sessions during lockdown (usually starting at 10:30am at St Peter & St Paul all year round) but group leaders have managed to reach out and support families with young babies in other ways.



Both groups hope to return in some capacity in September 2020. All updates will be posted on the Facebook page

www.facebook.com/TeddiesToddlerGroup

or you can send an email to:

teddies@tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk



Zoom, zoom zoom, we're going to the moon

Local families who bring their babies and children to **Musical Bumps** classes have felt like part of the family at the Parish Church, where they are always so warmly welcomed. Since 2007 the team, led by Margaret Lewin, has run up to 15+ classes every week during term time, but 2020 has been very different...

"In March, the only 'Zoom' I knew was from the children's favourite song 'Zoom zoom zoom, we're going to the moon'. By mid-April we had moved 20 weekly classes from real-life to online life" says Margaret.

For new mums with 'lockdown babies', the Zoom classes have been the highlight of their week as they get to know other mums. Online classes will continue to provide families with friendly, fun music using traditional songs and lullabies from around the world.

"I feel extraordinarily privileged to have been able to play some small part in providing families with a little relief from the day-to-day challenges they have faced," says Margaret.

For more information on upcoming classes, please contact: margaret.lewin@musicalbumps.com



Kerry Reichenmiller

Good News for the Parish

Rev. Wendy Carr joined the parish as a curate, with husband Jason and family Aaron and Erin, in 2017. We are so pleased and excited that she is now licensed as our **Associate Vicar**. Wendy shares her vision for the new role



On Monday 22nd June 2020 I was licensed as Associate Vicar to the Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Tonbridge. Tonbridge and the 4 churches of St Andrew's, St Philip's, St Saviour's and St Peter and St Paul are all familiar to me, as I have served my curacy here for the past 3 years. This new post is an exciting opportunity to continue to seek to see where God is at work in this area and to continue to join in with that.

The doors of the church have been closed over the past few months due to covid-19 but our churches have been alive and active online and within our community. For many, this time has given us a new outlook on our lives and the opportunity to stop and reflect. It has also highlighted areas of need and, of course, in the months to come I am sure there will be others emerging.

My passion is to see people grow into the whole people they are created to be and to be able to live life in all its fullness. As I serve in this parish I look forward to walking with people as they journey through life, to be a listening ear and to share my friend and saviour Jesus with them. I believe no question is a stupid question.

I look forward to opportunities where we can share conversations about life and faith together. Give me a wave if you see me running by in my Tonbridge Parish Church running shirt!

CANCELLED Due to Covid 19

Many special events have had to be postponed or cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. However, around the Parish people have found creative ways of celebrating whilst they make new plans for the future.

Rachel and Damien

We were so sad to have to postpone our wedding which was due to happen on 29th May, but we had a wonderful day in the sun!

We were blown away by everyone's kindness- particular highlights were a video made by all our friends and family and a virtual choir video made by the students at Judd!

We are looking forward to next year even more, and hope to see some friendly faces when the day finally comes!



Postponed
weddings

Amy & Harry

Amy and her fiancé Harry should have been married on Saturday 20th June at St Peter and St Paul church. After nearly 2 years of planning we were all very sad and disappointed that the wedding was not going ahead. However, we decided to make the day a special one and we had a small gathering and BBQ in our garden. We were blessed with wonderful weather so we were outside all day.

The wedding florist did a stunning bouquet for Amy and the wedding cake lady made a small but very delicious cake. We toasted the happy couple with champagne and were joined in this via Zoom with many of the wedding guests. Some even dressed up and wore their outfits and there was even a lovely hat to be seen. So the day ended up full of happiness, love, laughter and sunshine and has made us look forward to their actual wedding even more.



Cancelled Proms
(& Exams)

I zzy Vallis

I was really disappointed that my Year 11 prom was cancelled due to the present situation.

However, a few of my friends and I had a Zoom call. We dressed up in our gowns and had a nice evening - definitely not the same but a bit of fun at least!!



Francesca Fernandez

Together with my friends, a virtual prom was arranged in replacement for not being able to be there in person.

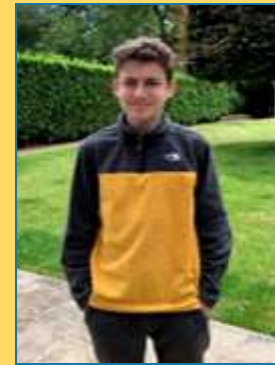
We all dressed up and sat down on Zoom. It was a lovely evening seeing so many friendly faces.



Erin Carr

Watching the news at the beginning of the pandemic I saw how the NHS was struggling. I wanted to do something to help, no matter how big or small. I decided to raise money for NHS charities together, and many people have been walking, running and cycling, sharing their mileage each week as we travel around the world and encourage people to give. In July we had raised £542 and travelled 13,451km.

To see more or join in go to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/wendy-carr4>



John Roberts

As a 2020 GCSE candidate, the cancellation of exams was disappointing; the past 2 years of my educational life had been dedicated to these exams and to see them cancelled over-night was demoralising, especially knowing that personal events including sports, social-time and holidays had been invested into preparation for these exams.

Morwenna Fernandez

God's words for all carers

I was preparing to lead prayers for a Taize service which requires a reflective approach, when I came across this lovely reflection and prayer, based on Elijah's encounter with God in the shade of a broom tree, when he was in despair as described in 1 Kings chapter 19.

**Lord I am exhausted. The days run on without a break,
So much to do, so little time... for me... for you.
So much dependent on me, my strength, my ability to cope.
To always be there, to always have the answer,
To always be the strong one. I can't do it Lord, not any more.**

***My child I am your broom tree
Come and sit awhile in the shade of my love.
Take, eat, drink of the gifts I lay before you.
Silence, stillness, peace, my healing presence.
I will refresh you, I will restore you, I will give you strength for the way ahead.
My gentle whisper will uphold you in earthquake wind and fire.***

I have used it again recently, and on both occasions, people have told me they have found it helpful at a stressful time in their lives.

I thought I would offer it to Perspectives in the hope that it might meet a need in these challenging times.

Richard Roberts



All Saints?

Ellie Carter

"All Saints?" is the first book from author Ellie Carter. She has written a sensitive story covering the lives of 3 friends, Sophie, Hayley and Lucy and their different paths in life.

It explores their lives including the issues of infertility, adoption and challenges in marriage or single, and life in a village church. This is a book for both Christians and non-Christians.

It is definitely an intriguing book exploring themes of temptation, trust and tragedy. Are the friends all saints? You decide! It was definitely a page turner and I managed to read it in under a week. I can't wait for her next book!

Georgiana Cooper



The Road to Little Dribbling

Bill Bryson

Bill Bryson has a real talent to write about uneventful situations and subjects in an incredibly funny and insightful way, and turned this 'travel guide' into comedy, exploring the best and the worst sides of our 'wondrously beautiful, magnificently eccentric and endearingly unique' Island.

We follow him from Bognor Regis to Cape Wrath on a very knowledgeable journey, discovering different angles to facts and sites we, most of the time, take for granted.

How much can a country change over 20 years from the last visit? A lot... and not at all... Great read.

Aneta van Bodegom



Parish member John Schluter founded Café Africa, a non-governmental organisation, in 2006 to follow a “call by God to do something to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and to restore something of the lost value of Africa’s coffee exports”.



Training agronomists in Tanzania

Café Africa traditionally starts its meetings with a prayer. “We are not a missionary society”, says John, “but our core values are based on Judeo-Christian principles”. It is with regard to this that John tells a compelling story. Taken aback by the suggestion that a 30-strong meeting with officials in Cameroon might begin with prayer, the Minister of Commerce responded in finger-jabbing irritation that if praying had to happen then it had better be quick. As John was about to start, the person next to him, in a room of different faiths although mainly Protestant and Catholic, rose to his feet while smiling at John and said that “you can’t possibly pray sitting down”. Later, in Ethiopia, there was another gentle reprimand when John was told that it was customary in that country to pray not just at the start of a meeting but also at the end. Perhaps this is something of what John means when he talks of “God changing the atmosphere in the room... and the outcomes” when prayer was taking place.



Café Africa, Uganda staff

John feels there are three other things he has learned in his 14 years running Café Africa. First, persuading African governments to invest in their coffee sector and do things differently, is arduous work. He likens it to steering a super tanker where one had “best hurry slowly”. Second, “God always provides what you need”. He says Café Africa is limited to operating in only Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, due to a lack of funding. Despite this, John feels that they have made at least a contribution to the cause of raising Africa’s position in coffee growing, to awakening governments to the potential of the sector, and to encouraging the industry to have a vision of a better future. John is “unsure quite how it has happened, but we have always had enough to keep going”.



Coffee nursery

Last but not least, bringing about change in the practices of subsistence smallholder farmers is a long game that will “take a generation”. Farmers are getting older (the average age in Cameroon is 65) and there is a younger generation, unconvinced that agriculture is worth the effort, making for the bright lights of the city. Large rural farms mean relentless land subdivision, making plot sizes uneconomically small. Imaginative schemes for consolidating land holding are needed but farmers’ experiences with co-operatives have resulted in reluctance to pool resources. As John says, “Trust outside the family circle is a challenge”.

Julie Lynn



Coffee conference, Kampala

Our Services

As we go to press these are our planned services from September.

Please check our website or the parish office for more details.

Sundays:

8.30am: Holy Communion at St Saviour, Dry Hill Park Cres TN10 3BJ

10am: Morning service on our YouTube channel TonParishChurch YT

11am: Service at St Peter & St Paul, Church Lane TN9 1HD

6.30pm: Reflection and prayers at St Peter & St Paul and on YouTube

Wednesdays:

10am: Reflection and prayer on YouTube

Youth, Children & Families:

Sunday Club (ages 4-11), SOS (11-14), GRUB and Refresh (14-18) will be meeting—see website or our Facebook page @ycfTonParishChurch

Church and Community:

Coffee lounge, Coffee Break, Open House, Teddies, Tiny Acorns, Men and Women's Ministry, Craft workshops, home groups and prayer gatherings: many are on ZOOM - see website for contacts and for news of re-opening.

www.tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk

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Reverend Colin Hutchings, 1936 - 2020

In memory of Rev'd Colin Hutchings, who parishioners will remember as a visiting minister when Rev'd Stephen Seamer was our vicar:

Colin knew Tonbridge well - his father Norman was assistant curate 1943-46. Stephen Seamer remembers Colin as "a remarkably humble, almost saintly man, whose pastoral touch helped many people over the years of his ministry [1968-2000/2014]. He was so unassuming but godly and caring, with a willingness to help anyone".

Colin went to Yardley Court Prep School, Tonbridge and Highgate School. After RAF National Service, mainly at a Bomber Command Radar Site in Germany (1955-57), he spent nine years in the carpet trade.

Colin's ministry started in SW England, holding honorary chaplaincy roles at Kilton Hospital Worksop, ATC Cadets

Ferndown, RAF Chilmark, Royal Green Jackets Army Cadets Aylesbury.

Colin and his wife Maureen were a good team. Maureen brought up John, Michael and Rachel and helped the Mother's Union, Stoke Mandeville Hospital's Chaplaincy Team and the WRVS. Colin liked Motor Sport and his Bentley Drivers' Club membership inspired a retirement near Silverstone!

Colin said that his "commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is total; and I am happy to respond to the call to continue to share the Gospel with any soul or souls whenever and wherever the opportunity is presented". Colin's ministry at Colintree was greatly appreciated. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life... I will never turn away anyone who comes to me." That promise firmly includes Colin.

Starting 9th September: ALPHA!

What is Alpha?

Alpha is an opportunity to explore questions around life and the Christian faith. This online opportunity will give you the chance to meet with others in a friendly open and informal way from the comfort of your own sofa!

A short film clip will be shared, followed by small group discussions where you can share your thoughts with others. Alpha begins on September 9th 2020.

See website www.tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk for the opportunity to book your space!



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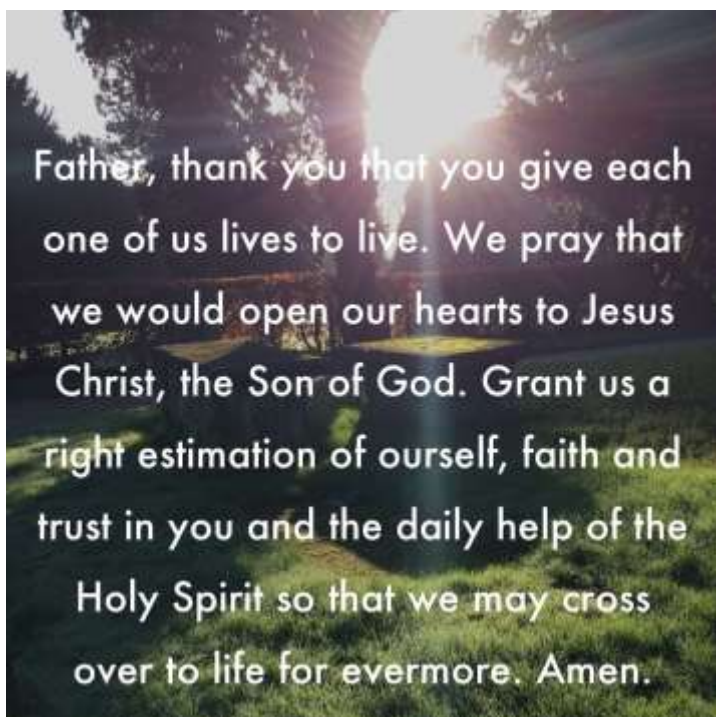
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**Musical Bumps
Tonbridge & Sevenoaks**

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
07756 244142

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Dr Claire Walsh, University of Kent

Wednesday 16th December, 6pm on ZOOM

Fascinating talk on the Georgian traditions, and Christmases in Austen novels.
Contact Vivian.branson1@btinternet.com from 1 Nov for link.



Tessa is a local genealogist, a member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists & the Society of Genealogists, who can help with your family history:
www.genealogy-researcher.co.uk



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