

Dear All,

September is always a time of change: summer is almost over, holidays are a mere memory, it's back to work, back to school - and this September we shall have a new parish priest in post. We are grateful to all those who have looked after us during this interregnum. Particular thanks go to the priests who have led Holy Communion and other services in our churches, and to Di Dawson and her team who have ensured that each church has had the support it needed. Though things have gone well in the interregnum it will be good to have a parish priest in residence once more.

Turning to services in September, these follow their usual pattern but there are three in particular to which I would draw your attention:

- On Wednesday 5th at 10.30am there will be a **service at Smeeth Church led by Bishop Trevor (Bishop of Dover) at which the newly renovated Smeeth War Memorial will be re-dedicated**. Please come if you possibly can.
- On Thursday 20th at 7pm we have the **Licensing of Rev Chris Denyer as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Stour Downs at Mersham Church**. This is a milestone in the life of our parish and it would be great if the service were well attended. Bishop Trevor will be leading the service.
- The **Combined Harvest Thanksgiving at Stowting on 30th September** will be taken by Rev Chris Denyer and will be the first opportunity for the entire Parish to worship together with our new priest - so please do come.

Regarding events in the parish in September, on 5th and 19th there are the regular **craft mornings at Mersham** - details in the Diary; on 7th **First Friday at Brabourne** meets from 6-7pm, our hosts for the evening being Maggie Radcliffe and Sue Bartholomew. Please do come along, it's always a friendly get together - all are welcome.

On Saturday 8th, we have **Ride and Stride**, the annual event run by the Friends of Kent Churches. If you would like to ride or walk for your church please see the FKC website for details or simply go to your church on Saturday 8th. It's invariably a good day, whatever the weather. **At Sellindge, Ride and Stride coincides with churchyard tidying day**. Anyone able to help in the churchyard, please do come along.

Smeeth's Hobbies Exhibition and Gift Day is also on the same day (8th) so please ride or walk (or go by car) to Smeeth, enjoy the hobbies that interest other people, if possible, support Smeeth's Gift Day, and relish the refreshments in the Oak Room. There's **Afternoon Tea in Sellindge Church** on Sunday 9th. Teas will include sandwiches, a homemade scone and slice of cake, all served on vintage cake stands. Sounds luxurious for £5. Don't miss it.

Knit and Natter meets in the Oak Room on the afternoon of Friday 14th and, as ever, all are welcome. On the same evening at 7pm there's another **Classic Film Night at Mersham**. No charge for entry but donations welcome for popcorn, choc-ices, tea and coffee. On 26th there's a **Coffee Morning in aid of Smeeth Church at 61, Mountbatten Way**, courtesy of Sian and John Hall. These monthly coffee mornings are always very enjoyable so please do come along.

Fridays@3 meets in Smeeth Oak Room on 28th when there will be a talk by Alistair Guthrie with the enigmatic title 'Buy One Get One Free'. This will be followed, by a delicious tea. And on the same evening, (28th) **Brabourne Church holds its Harvest Supper at Penstock Barn**, courtesy of George and Vicki Jessel. Kindly see the Diary for details. If you'd like a ticket, please let me know.

Such a wealth of activity in the parish, both spiritual and social, reflects the very different ways in which our churches engage with those around them. Please continue to support and strengthen all churches in Stour Downs Parish so that they grow as focal points of community activity.

Thank you and all good wishes,

Kathy

Kathy Embleton-Smith, Chair Brabourne Church Management Team