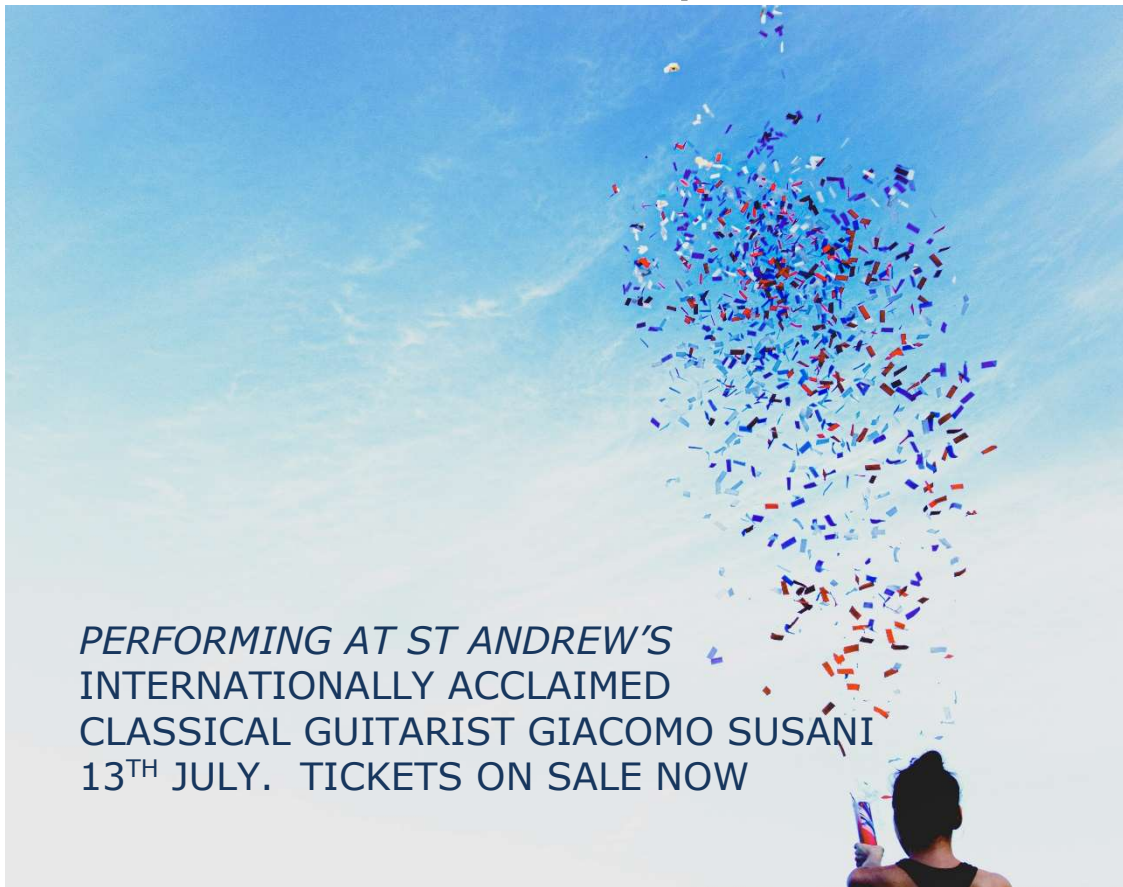


The parish magazine of

Hertford St Andrew

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JULY/AUGUST 2024



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Deanery Synod Member: Shirley Taylor

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Whilst every reasonable care has been taken in presenting the information in this magazine, no responsibility can be taken for any inaccuracies. The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Priests, Churchwardens or editor.

EMERGENCY CONFETTI



I heard recently of the sweetest conversation that took place between an eight-year-old and his dad in the car. The boy asked his dad 'Do you

want me to throw the confetti in my pocket?'. His dad panicked. 'No, not in the car!' he replied. After a moment the dad asked 'why do you have confetti in your pocket?'. 'It's my emergency confetti', the boy replied. 'I carry it everywhere in case there is good news'.

Isn't that the best? Emergency confetti to take joy in the joy of others.

As I write, I'm at a conference for clergy. In one of the talks, the speaker asked us all to click on a QR code that led us to the question 'what makes you jealous?'. That question hit a nerve for many of us. Often, as clergy, we're jealous of the 'success' of other clergy and other churches. It's a hard thing to admit to.

Theodore Roosevelt apparently coined the phrase 'Comparison is the thief of joy', and he was so right. I waste so much time and energy comparing myself to others, while the only person I should be comparing myself to is the person I was yesterday.

So maybe what I need to do is to carry around some invisible emergency confetti and when I hear of the joys and 'successes' of others, to liberally throw some into the air; to rejoice with those who rejoice. Maybe we can all stock up on that emergency confetti for those good-news moments of others. Alan

WELCOME!

I am pleased to welcome everyone to St Andrew's, but in particular visitors and newcomers. Details of services are given in the following pages and the back of the magazine. If you wish to know more about anything mentioned, please get in touch with the contact person named in the article or speak with me or one of the churchwardens. For contact details, see the previous page.

The church is open during daylight hours, and there is a prayer space by the main door where there is an opportunity to post prayers on the prayer board and light a candle.

AUGUST HOLIDAYS

We all need to take a rest occasionally and August being the time of the long school holiday is chosen for the following services to take a break:

BREATHE PRAYER MEETING, SOUL FOOD CONTEMPORARY SERVICE, MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS BOTH IN CHURCH & ON ZOOM AND ALSO MINDFULNESS AT SELE COMMUNITY HUB.

The choir also has some well-deserved time off as does Junior Church.

I wish everyone an enjoyable summer and hope you can find some time of your own to take a break and do something different.

All these services will resume as normal in September.

Alan

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE SEPTEMBER MAGAZINE IS **SUNDAY 18TH AUGUST**. Please send copy by e-mail to hertfordsta@aol.co.uk or post to Richard Taylor at 22 Highfield Road, Hertford SG13 8BH (Tel. 01992 302995).

SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

Church Services

You will find a full list of church services on the final two pages of this magazine and on the church website, with some additional information about certain services on this and the following page.

Junior Church

Children are welcome to attend Junior Church which runs during the 10.30am Parish Communion service on most Sundays during school term time, except during an All-Age service, when the children stay in church for the whole service.

ALL-AGE SERVICE

14th July at 10.30am

11th August at 10.30am

A shorter, child-friendly, interactive communion service with songs, prayers and surprises.

St Andrew's services on Zoom

Zoom codes are set out immediately prior to the list of services at the end of this magazine and are also available from the church office: standrew.hertford@btinternet.com or by calling 01992 504373.

Join us on Zoom for:

Service of the Word

every Sunday at 10.30am with praise, prayer and teaching. There is a communion service once a month. Please check the services on the last two pages of this magazine and the website for dates.

On Zoom on Sundays at 7pm except the second Sunday of the month.
PLEASE NOTE: COMPLINE TAKES A BREAK IN AUGUST



Compline is based on the Felgild Compline from the Northumbria Community and Night Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book.



**OUR MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING
IN PERSON & ON ZOOM
on Saturday 6th July at 8.30am
BACK ON SATURDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER**



**ON ZOOM at 7.30pm on
Wednesdays 3rd & 17th July
ALSO IN CHURCH ON 3rd JULY**
Explore the riches of Christian Meditation and how it fits with the practice and insights of Mindfulness
Each weekly session is free and lasts for about 45 minutes. We begin with some gentle exercises to help still the mind and then a guided meditation, followed by some silence. Beginners especially welcome!
RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER AFTER AUGUST HOLIDAYS

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

CONTEMPORARY CAFÉ-STYLE SERVICE

7pm

on Sunday 14th July

in the St Andrew's Centre

JOIN US AT 6.45 FOR REFRESHMENTS

soul food

*a service with worship songs,
creative prayer, gentle discussion and
time for reflection.*

FREE Mindfulness

AT SELE COMMUNITY HUB

10.30AM
ON
MONDAYS
1st, 15th and
29th JULY
NONE IN
AUGUST

Mindfulness
can help with
wellbeing, stress
and **anxiety**. Come
along and join
the **FREE 30-min**
sessions, followed
by refreshments.

**Everyone is
welcome**

WHERE

Sele Community
Hub
Fleming Crescent, Sele
Farm SG14 2DJ

just turn up!

Prayer

CHANGES THINGS

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING

PRAYING FOR

Our Youth, Our Schools
Our Community - Hertford and Ware

WHEN

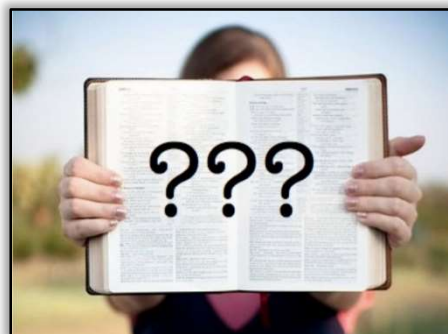
12:30-1pm
every Tuesday
(Term time only)

WHERE

Pioneer Hall,
Ware Road,
Hertford

For more information please contact Helen
h.houghton@yinternational.org

 younglife



WHAT IS THE BIBLE ABOUT?

Thursdays at Rev.
Bill's house at 8pm
until 25th July.

PRAYER FOR THE EARTH

Every day in Salisbury Square
at 12.00 noon

**ANOTHER
WORLD
IS
POSSIBLE**



Do you have questions about what the Bible is all about? Are you asking: what has it to do with daily life? Or maybe it's just a long time since you thought about the bigger picture and the Bible as a whole. If so, the **Summer Bible Course is for you**. The course started in June but it is not too late to join. These are interactive sessions combining video teaching, personal reflection and daily readings. Plus, there is always the chance to share thoughts and experiences, as everyone learns from one another. **If you are interested** talk to Melanie Seward or email the parish office:

standrew.hertford@btinternet.com

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

CHURCH FAMILY

FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISMS:

We welcome into the Lord's family:

- 2nd June **Isla Alina Huckle**
9th June **Esmæ Christina Gayle, Faith Pamela Ford and Jacob Tommy Gayle**
15th June **Reo James Stephen Dupey**
30th June **Isla Keane and Archie Frank Dracott**

CONFIRMATION:

We offer blessings to those who confirmed their baptismal promises:

- 4th June **Louise Cobb, Ian Kamau-Swan and Jayden Musinguzi**

OUR CHURCHWARDENS

May's magazine included an introduction to Julie Markey. She and Lesley Self, were elected churchwardens at the annual meeting of parishioners on 28th April. Here is a brief introduction from Lesley.



Married to Paul with two adult children, we moved to Hertford from Essex in 1990. Initially we worshipped at All Saints' before making the move to St Andrew's about 20 years ago. My children were choristers at both churches.

During my years at St Andrew's I have served on the PCC and on the fund-raising committee which was set up to raise money to rebuild the hall and create the St Andrew's Centre. I was also on the Mission Committee for several years.

On a personal level, I retired at the end of 2022 after working for the NHS as a Registered nurse for 48 years in various

roles from Ophthalmic nurse, Nurse tutor, District nurse and finally in General Practice.

I enjoy Pilates and gentle exercise, visiting family, travelling, especially cruising, gardening and visiting gardens. I am honoured to be given the opportunity to serve as Churchwarden.

HAZEL

Hazel Risby, stalwart of St Andrew's choir and a lot of other things at this church, celebrated a big birthday by sharing this beautiful cake with the congregation after the 10.30 service on



Sunday 23rd June.



Thank you Hazel and thanks also go to Laura Ramsay who baked, iced and decorated the cake.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

CHURCH FAMILY

NICK IS INSTALLED

We sat under the towering dome of St Paul's Cathedral marvelling at its scale and the splendour of Wren's magnificent edifice. It was 5pm on a Wednesday evening in May as the organ burst into life and clergy and choir processed in for Evensong. And within the procession was Nick Sharman, a longstanding member of St Andrew's, choir member and our joint Treasurer with his wife, Judy. The procession was watched by Judy, daughters Anna and Laura and son Peter, his parents and two brothers, his father-in-law and sister-in-law, Judy's aunt and cousin, work colleagues and a whole host of people from St Andrew's. The arc-shaped seating, our viewpoint for the service, echoed the curve of the dome above.



THE ACT OF INSTALLATION

This was no ordinary evensong. It was the occasion of the installation of Nick as the Chief Financial Officer of St Paul's Cathedral and of a new Head of St Paul's Cathedral School, so a very special occasion. In the absence of the Bishop of London, the service was conducted by the Dean of St Paul's, who led Nick and the Head to their respective allocated seats in the Quire stalls.

After the service and photographs we were welcomed into the nearby Chapter House for drinks and canapés and a few words from the Dean. A special occasion indeed. The hard work for Nick, looking after the finances of St Paul's, had already begun and now it's official!



FAMILY AND FRIENDS GATHER ROUND NICK AFTER THE SERVICE

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EVENTS

ST ANDREW'S COFFEE MORNINGS IN JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

Coffee Morning
SATURDAY 6TH JULY
10.30am - 12.30pm
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HERTFORD SG14 1HZ

- Brainteasers
- Quizzes
- Puzzles
- Fairtrade coffee & home baked cakes

RAISING FUNDS FOR
RACE AGAINST DEMENTIA
AND ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

RACE AGAINST DEMENTIA

Saturday 6th July

10.30am - 12.30pm

Our July event features brainteasers, quizzes and puzzles! Our nominated charity is [Race Against Dementia](#). Half of all funds raised will go to them (with the other half going to St Andrew's Church).

So, come along with your thinking caps on and have a go at the various fun challenges on offer, alongside the welcome selection of home baked goodies, freshly brewed tea and coffee.

We look forward to seeing you!

Saturday 3rd August

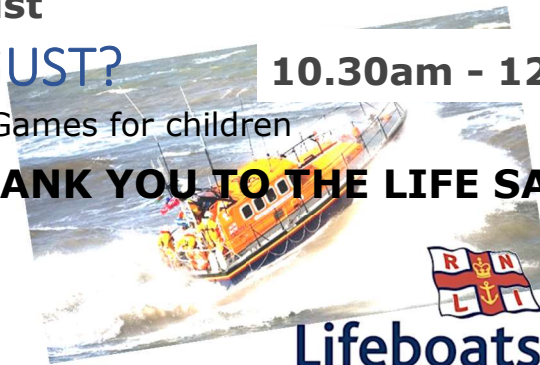
A MAY-DAY IN AUGUST?

10.30am - 12.30pm

Competitions - Treasure Hunt - Games for children

A CHANCE TO SAY THANK YOU TO THE LIFE SAVERS

Funds raised will be divided equally between the church and RNLI.



RNLI
200

BOOK SIGNING & COFFEE MORNING



Saturday 7th September

10.30am - 12.30pm

Homemade cakes, coffee and cards

"Anyone who cares about mental health should read this": **Sharn Tomlinson**

CEO Mind in Midherts

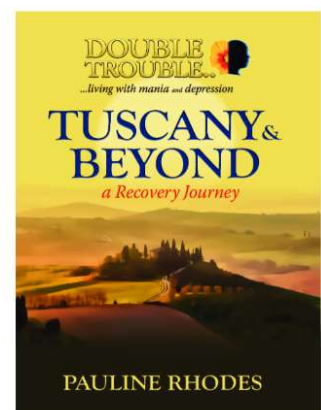
"A love story with a twist": Revd. Richard Allen

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www.4emspublications.com

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Money raised at the coffee morning will be in aid of church funds and Mind in Midherts

An extract from Pauline's book appears later in this magazine.



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OUTREACH

SAFETY, CARE & SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING

Bring and share lunch - Sunday 28th July 12.30pm in the St Andrew's Centre



You are invited to come along and hear about the work of the charity called Ella's

Ashleigh Gibb, a member of our congregation, has been working for some years with Ella's, an anti-slavery organisation supporting women who are traumatised by the effects of trafficking.

This is a great opportunity to hear about and support the work of Ella's before Ashleigh returns to the USA in August.

Please note that the content of the presentation will not be suitable for children.

For more information and any questions please contact Rosemary on 07713 139650 or rosemarywillis77@hotmail.com

ellas.org.uk

Malawi Project run by St Lawrence Abbots Langley

We'd like to support this appeal by offering what we can. The following items are needed – please help if you can!

Biros, colouring pencils, pencil sharpeners, lead pencils, rubbers, rulers, maths equipment, footballs, PPE, masks, gloves, bandages (out of date is

okay), cotton wool, hand sanitiser, plasters, wheelchairs, crutches, zimmer frames, incontinence pads, blood pressure machines, children's clothes (0-6yrs).

Please leave donations at St Andrew's Church labelled for Rosemary Willis. Thank you!

Improving our sound system and adding screens for services & events

We are aiming to provide a greatly improved quality of experience for services at the church including Sunday mornings, weddings and funerals, and also to enable St Andrew's to offer the building for a range of community and cultural activities that require high quality audio and visual equipment.

We are working with CAV Solutions, a Hertfordshire company dedicated to church installations nationwide.

The screen which is moved manually for All-Age services will be replaced by a main screen hung from the roof to be electronically controlled and, when not in use, retracts to a high casing out of sight line. Additional small screens will be located to serve areas where the main screen will not be entirely visible. Speakers will be upgraded.

A new digital sound desk will be located at the rear of the church with potential for on-line streaming of services.

The total cost for the equipment, installation and training is estimated to be about £87,000 (incl. VAT). Money raised so far is about £47,000 (using grants, parish funds, fundraising events e.g. Coffee Mornings).

The PCC will discuss next steps at its July meeting.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

EVENTS

Giacomo Susani Recital Saturday 13th July 7.30pm at St Andrew's

BBC Music Magazine describes Giacomo as "a guitarist with myriad colours and bold sensitivity".

You may wonder how and why a 29-year old talented, classical guitarist from Padua in Northern Italy is coming to give a recital in St Andrew's Church.

Some church members will recall that we invited Giacomo to give a short recital after a Sunday Service at the end of Covid. Since then Debbie and I have been keen to get him back!

I first met Giacomo five years ago when he had completed his advanced studies at the Royal Academy of Music. He had just been selected by the City Music Foundation (CMF) as one of about a dozen young musical artists who would be supported from a business point of view for two years or so.

Being interested in music myself, I was delighted to be asked to mentor him. We met in-person while he was London based and have Zoomed regularly since he moved to Milan last year.

In 2020 Giacomo established a Guitar Festival in Padua (his home town), which takes place every September (this year on 9th-17th Sept). The event offers young guitarists the opportunity to take part in workshops, to perform and to hear wonderful recitals by other experienced classical guitarists. As a composer, his music has been played and recorded all around the world by performers such as Grammy Award winner David Russell, Jason Vieaux and Stefano Grondano with whom he earlier



Tickets are £19 + £1.45 booking fee
(under 18 tickets are free)

www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-andrews-church

studied. Giacomo has recorded two albums and is planning to record a third later this year. He composes for a number of other artists, including the Nigerian-American poet and lyricist, Chinwe Dorothy John.

This year, Debbie and I heard Giacomo give a recital to the Bristol Classical Guitar Society in April. It was a wonderful evening! Since then, he has given several other recitals in parts of Europe, as well as performing his New York Respighi prize-winning work for guitar and small orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Debbie and I are delighted to sponsor Giacomo's return to St Andrew's. The programme will include works by Sor, Handel, Ravel, Goss and Susani.

Tickets can be obtained from www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-andrews-church. Any surplus raised will go towards St Andrew's new sound system.

We do hope you will join us!

Charles Ledsam

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

EVENTS IN JULY

ST MARY'S HERTINGFORDBURY EVENTS FOR ALL TO ENJOY

St Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury



Saturday 13th July
2-5pm
Cream Teas Welly Toss
Build-a-Rocket Safari Trail
and the famous
Teddy Zip-Wire!
Fun for all the family

Rev Alan Stewart's artistic talent is well known. At this exhibition he shares some of his drawings, with the added attraction of a bar on the Friday.

'40 Days' - Alan Stewart an exhibition of drawings

St Mary's Church Hertingfordbury
Friday 26th July 7-9pm (with bar) and Saturday 27th 10am -2pm.



10% Proceeds go to the Friends of St Mary's

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance set to host Heli-bration event a free fun-filled afternoon for the whole family at Hatfield House

Sunday 14th July 2024, 12-4pm

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance is thrilled to announce its Heli-bration event to celebrate the launch of the charity's new AW169 helicopter. Set against the stunning backdrop of Hatfield House, this one-of-a-kind event promises a fun-filled afternoon for the whole family. Entry is free. There is plenty of free parking available onsite.

The highlight of the event will be the presentation and 'take off' experience of the charity's new AW169 helicopter



which will be on display from 12 noon. Visitors can also look forward to a range of free activities and a display of emergency vehicles.

To register for free tickets for the event, please visit ehaat.org/heli-bration.

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GAELIC, PURE & TRADITIONAL

A personal review of Scottish folk superstar Julie Fowlis, live at St Andrew's at the end of May, by Forbes Mutch



There is a greater air of anticipation in the church tonight. Julie Fowlis is playing the altar stage in the latest of our folk concerts. The great Julie Fowlis, who a Google search reveals is a *Scottish folk singer and multi-instrumentalist who sings primarily in Scottish Gaelic*. But she is much more than that – she is an iconic representative of Gaelic music in its purest form; a world-renowned performer, award winning musician and singer, engaging entertainer and nice person. And she's here at St Andrew's, stopping off on her way to a gig in King's Place, London the next day, which will be in front of a 400-plus audience.

When it was first announced that Julie Fowlis was playing at St Andrew's, several members of the congregation said: *Oooh, Julie Fowlis*. These were people who don't claim an in-depth knowledge about contemporary folk music, but who admit to knowing about JF, saying: *Oh yes, I've heard of her*. It's not surprising.

Julie Fowlis was born and grew up on North Uist, an island in the Outer Hebrides, in a Gaelic-speaking community. Her mother was a Gaelic-

speaking islander from a family of fishermen and crofters, while her father was originally from Pitlochry on mainland Scotland. She was always playing Scottish pipes, singing and dancing. After finishing her schooling, she studied Applied Music at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, followed by a year at the Gaelic-language college Sabhal

Mòr Ostaig on the Isle of Skye, where she improved her Gaelic and formally studied traditional Scottish music.

Fast forward to May 2024 and she has worked on the soundtrack of Disney-Pixar's movie *Brave*, has released two CDs with the Scottish sextet Dòchas and six solo albums, plus numerous appearances as a guest on a growing portfolio of collaborations with other well-known

Scottish folk artists. She has picked up countless musical awards, including the Horizon Award in the 2007 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards and the 2009 Folk Singer of the Year crown in the same awards. And now, here she is, at St Andrew's

CONT'D →



JULIE PLAYING THE BAGPIPES WHICH CAME OUT FOR THE FINALE

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

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GAELIC, PURE & TRADITIONAL

A personal review of Scottish folk superstar Julie Fowlis, live at St Andrew's at the end of May, by Forbes Mutch

The anticipation is recognisable by the unprompted silence of the audience before she takes the stage. She begins her set with what she describes as two 'seal' songs, including Òran an Ròin/The Song of the Seal. She explains that there is a musical tradition in the Scottish islands for songs about how seals can come onto the land in human form. Her opening songs are greeted by probably the loudest applause for a concert opening at any folk gig at St Andrew's, such is the power of her strikingly pure voice. The audience is intoxicated immediately.

She introduces the band – her husband Éamon Doorley on guitar, who has featured on most of her solo albums, Duncan Chisholm, one of Scotland's most recognised and accomplished folk musicians and Irish fiddle player and guitarist Tony Byrne. They look, feel and sound relaxed playing with Julie. You can imagine them picking up their instruments in a bar in County Wicklow or somewhere in the Outer Hebrides.

Julie plays the Scottish small pipe, oboe and a melodeon shruti box, which provides a sort of soothing background melody to her songs.

Into the mix of traditional Gaelic songs, jigs and reels, the band throws in a version of the Beatles' 1968 song Blackbird, sung, of course in Gaelic. The first half ends with a rousing reel, which is picked up at the beginning of the second half. Although there are softer songs and a gracious farewell song towards the end, there's no doubt that Julie and the band enjoy a dance jig and there's a growing sound of clapping and

tapping of feet. How we resist getting up and dancing, I don't know.

After the show, I hear Hertford Folk doyen Pat Crilly saying: *That was the best folk concert at St Andrew's yet. If you don't know the language, you have to listen to the music.* He's right. The Gaelic lyrics maybe incomprehensible to most of the audience, but the music is inspiring and there's no getting away from the beauty of Julie Fowlis' voice. As acclaimed nature writer Robert Macfarlane once said: *If snow could sing, it would sing like Julie Fowlis.*



JULIE WAS HAPPY TO CHAT WITH MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE AFTER THE SHOW

It has been a successful run of folk concerts at the church so far this year. There will now be a summer break until The Gigspanner Big Band hit the stage on 3rd November. Make sure you book your tickets now.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

BURIAL, CREMATION OR...

FRANCES CRACKNELL RELATES AN UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE WHICH OPENS UP A QUESTION

Most fortunately, I found myself in "the right place at the right time".

My niece, Evie, is in her second year of medical school and with no medical precedence in the family pretty much everything she experiences during her learning is all new to us.

So when I boarded the train at Hertford North heading into London for an early meeting, the WhatsApp message that arrived with the usual "ping" was no surprise other than it was from Evie (Evie is a girl of few words and doesn't post willy nilly). "*This is on in London today if you are about*" written in her usual no nonsense style, her message supported with an image introducing "A Service of Thanksgiving" to commemorate those who donated their bodies for medical education and training in 2023.

Forgive me, but as I sat on the train gazing out of the window on a lovely sunny morning it was the first time I have ever really thought about the process of her studying anatomy and of those brave souls who donate their bodies. I checked her message again to seek out the address - St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Rd. It transpired that the cathedral was no more than a seven minute taxi ride from my meeting venue. So when the meeting was through by 10.35 I jumped into a black cab and headed for SE1.

I arrived to find a gathering of clergy & dignitaries standing outside the main entrance, with several cars and taxis pit stopping by the iron gates as many,



many people arrived from all directions to attend the service.

I made my way inside the cathedral to see Evie in the distance, dressed in her black gown directing guests into the pews and offering orders of service. At last it was my turn to be in front of her and as I kissed her cheek she quietly thanked me for coming. I had already begun to realise I would not have missed this for the world.

I sat in the cathedral and observed the groups of people around me, appreciating the overwhelming significance of the event. Slowly I began to read through the list of the names of the donors (nearly three hundred of them) conscious not to simply skip across any name.

I looked up from time to time to see members of the congregation welcoming family and friends to their seated groups; this was an occasion of several funeral services in one. They were attending a very unique service (and likely the only one) of remembrance and thanksgiving for each of their loved ones. This was unlike a funeral - this was not looking back but forward - this too was full of hope, kindness, respect

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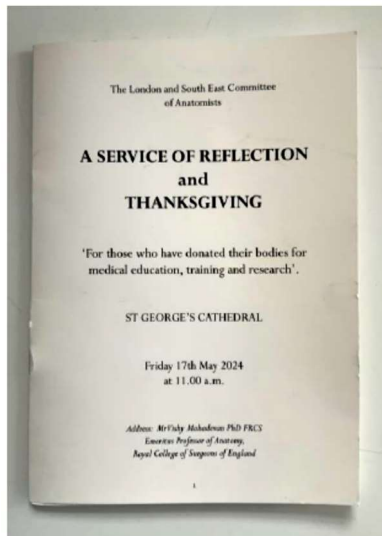
and an overwhelming sense of trust and great peace. This was not the end of their loved ones' journey - this was another beginning.

The contributors to the service clearly demonstrated the importance of every single donor giving thanks to the "Teachers" describing a non-verbal relationship full of respect, kindness, dignity, compassion, consent and sensitivity.

The service included hymns, beautiful choral music from the choir of King's College London and carefully written words from scholars and clergy. The service was compassionate but so too, uplifting.

I am quite grateful that Evie extended the invitation and that I was local enough to attend. Evie getting into medical school has been no small achievement; she has had to leap over some very high hurdles and her drive and commitment to medicine is relentless. She generously shares her way finding knowledge & experience with other prospective students who are also without medical heritage and as last Friday demonstrated she moves among like-minded individuals who quietly go about their research and study with great integrity and with a huge sense of responsibility to those who they heal and the donors they rely on to inform.

We are truly grateful that Evie continues to share her journey with us her family



and this particular event has left its mark which I simply had to share with you too. So it might not be for everyone and it is indeed a very personal choice, but it's certainly a conversation being had amongst our family. Perhaps when we end our days on this earth there is an option other than burial or cremation.

Details of body donation is available from Kim & Sarah London Anatomy Office 5th Floor, Hodgkin Building, Kings College London, Guys Campus, London, SE1 1UL 020 7848 8042 Email:lao@kcl.ac.uk

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WHEN HISTORY, CULTURE & NATURE MERGE

A REFLECTION ON A JOURNEY ALONG THE BORDER OF ENGLAND AND WALES BY JENNY MUTCH

I have been back a few days from my trip to Offa's Dyke. The Fit Bit exercise monitor on my wrist tells me that I have walked over 220 miles (354km) in 11 days and my Ordnance Survey App says I have been up and down hills equivalent to four trips to the top of Ben Nevis and back. Those are the walking stats, but what really struck me about the walk was the diversity of habitats, and how history is inextricably interlinked with the natural world and how legends and facts have become merged over time.

So, who was King Offa and why build a dyke?

Offa was born circa 740AD. He was King of Mercia (that's Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, North-West Midlands and Warwickshire to you and me) from the age of 17 and ruled until he died at 56. He was a Christian but came into conflict with the Archbishop of Canterbury when he persuaded the then Pope (Adrian I) to create the Archdiocese of Lichfield, thus reducing power at Canterbury and giving his son an opening to become an Archbishop. He also wanted to increase his power to encompass Northumbria. He didn't quite manage that but married his daughter to their King, so came close enough. He liked to show his power through big deeds and has been attributed as founding several churches and monasteries, including St Alban's Abbey around 790AD. But he just couldn't keep away from conflict and was not too keen on the Welsh entering his kingdom, and so, as you do, he spent around 12 years building a dyke some 8ft high, 25ft wide and around 80 miles long to stop invaders.

He seems to have done quite a lot during his 37-year reign and is seen by many historians as the most powerful Anglo-Saxon king prior to Alfred the Great.

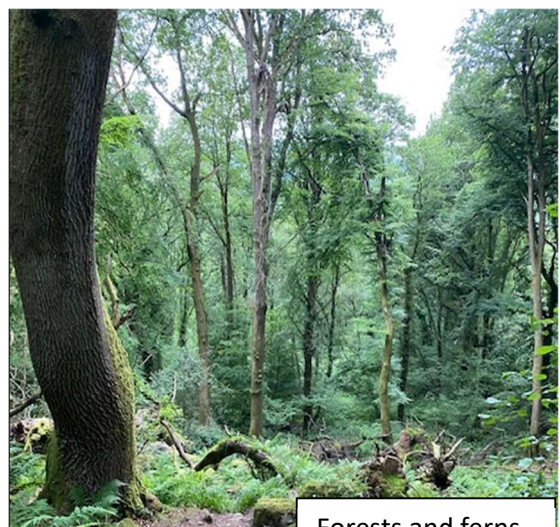
The Offa's Dyke Path Route



Wild Horses in the Mountains

Offa wasn't the only person building dykes, so there are quite a few remnants of dykes lying around which you can still see in the landscape (along the border between England and Wales); some even clearly follow old Roman Roads which I thought was pretty resourceful. The actual Offa's Dyke walk meanders, so you rack up over twice as many miles as the length of the Dyke itself. Sometimes, when walking the route your travel along the Dyke top, at others, from the valley below, you see it high up in the landscape and then it becomes non-existent, leaving the route to your imagination.

The walk runs through all types of scenery; from the Black Mountains, with wild, rather unpredictable but stunning



Forests and ferns

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stallions, to canals with boats adorned in every conceivable colour.

And then up again to listen to skylarks screeching and hovering in the air or going ahead of you to keep you off their patch, a stampede of inquisitive cattle or sheep keen to nick your sandwiches. Lower down, orchids nestle in amongst

The Dyke still visible in the landscape



the grasses, trees tower above you and even a UK rainforest was spotted with ferns and mosses. And then up again to scree slopes along narrow ledges and down into nestled hamlets. So much to take in my short journey.

Nature and its links with humans

It was great to see how nature has recolonised a landscape previously fashioned by humans. Large plantations of firs, giving way to native vegetation and monkey puzzle trees (grown by the Victorians in their attempt to conquer the natural world) intertwined with naturally colonising birch trees. Signs explaining that this was the site of a



St Cadoc's White Church

'bloody' battlefield now strewn with foxgloves, bees (oh and some not-so-nice hornets) and meadow flowers. And there, above it all, remains Offa's Dyke as a memory of how we try to conquer nature. In places the Dyke is being preserved as part of our heritage; in others, where it is beyond repair, sheep see it as a great place to scour sheltered holes on the lee side for their young lambs; initiative or instinct – I will leave that one for you to decide.

And the history beyond the Dyke?



White Castle: the perfect castle

From Prestatyn on the north Welsh coast, to Chepstow on the River Severn Estuary (the beginning or end of the walk) everywhere you look, humans have stamped their mark. The whole Dyke and surrounding countryside is steeped in history and mystery. You can feel it in the air and oozing from the soil. In one valley (Caerleon) a small church was spotted named after St Cadoc. He was quite a local hero by all accounts in the 5th century and is said to have performed miracles after he was conceived but before he was born. Rather than lead his father's army, he preferred to fight for Christ, becoming Abbot of Llanancarfan in Glamorgan and, on one occasion, is said to have protected a man who had killed King Arthur's soldiers. Cadoc compensated Arthur with a herd of cattle which, when Arthur took possession, turned into

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WHEN HISTORY, CULTURE & NATURE MERGE

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ferns! Cadoc either had a sense of humour or a death wish.

Then, up on the hilltops in Monmouthshire, is the White Castle which – you guessed it – was built to control the border, in this case from the Norman invasion in 1066 – yes, it's official, other things were happening in that year! It's changed a bit since then, with mod cons added in the 13th century. It now presents a perfect idea of a child's vision of a castle with a perfectly formed moat. Any so to Chepstow, the final destination, with its own castle.

What have I learned?

I first heard about this walk from my geography teacher at school in 1974 (yes Mr Telling, this is all your doing). He told us about a new walk that had just opened. It captured my imagination and has taken me 50 years (a 'how on earth did that many years pass' moment) to walk the whole route.

I wasn't disappointed – I have come back calmer (long may it last, says Forbes) and it gave me time to reflect on what is important in life AND what an important role we all have in learning from history, how transformative and calming our natural world can be, and a reinforced understanding of the message to look after our amazing planet.

The end and the beginning

At the end of the walk, I clambered onto the top of the 1m high stone that marks the spot of the beginning or the end of the walk (depending on which direction you go). As I stood there the wind got



up and the rain poured down – just for five minutes. It didn't matter. Was it my imagination, or was I for those few minutes blessed with a congratulation for finishing this walk and a reminder to leave as a better person, ready to listen to what I needed to do in this amazing world we call planet earth?

Steel Bones and thank you!

I'm lucky. I can walk these distances. Not everyone can. While I was walking, I raised around £2,000 for Steel Bones, a charity that helps people (such as my husband Forbes Mutch) who have been affected by amputations. So, a massive thanks goes to everyone who has supported us. If you would like to contribute, please go to my Just Giving page - search for Jenny Mant - or just speak to Forbes or Jenny.

Oh, and if you want to see any pictures, I have lots more! Just ask.



These feet were made for walking

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LIVING WITH MANIA AND DEPRESSION

PAULINE RHODES SHARES AN EXTRACT FROM HER BOOK

Time is a great healer. On the noticeboard in my office I have a postcard from Rethink which reads "when your car breaks down you can get help within 60 minutes. When your mind breaks down it can take 18 months". Even if you get help sooner, time is vital. It takes time to accept you have mental illness and it takes time to learn to live alongside it. It takes time to talk about it and time for others to listen.



Once a week for six years I volunteered as a Ward Visitor at an elderly persons' mental health unit as part of Richard's Spiritual Care Team and the only requirement is that you come alongside people and meet them where they are. Sometimes you can spend half an hour in silence just holding a hand but you are giving them time. Time to begin to heal. Other times you can be alongside someone who is manic or psychotic who talks without taking a breath for an hour. You seemingly have no input but you are giving them time to express the chaos in their mind.

Do I believe I can be cured of mental illness? No, I don't. I believe mental illness is a bit like some cancers; you can only go into remission. My illness started as manic puerperal psychosis when my twins were born almost 30 years ago and I have had episodes following the death of each of my parents. In total I have been sectioned five times and being sectioned is a dehumanising experience. My last episode was 12 years ago and I still struggle with the trauma of being taken to hospital in handcuffs by the police and then being pinned to the ground and injected. Having said I don't believe I can be cured I do believe I have begun healing.

So how has my church helped me with this? I have been to numerous healing services and received the laying on of hands and

have regularly come away disappointed and depressed, but on one occasion I was invited to stay for coffee afterwards and I did. It was a small group of mainly elderly people who took me under their wing. There was an elderly gentleman who had been a churchwarden and who was losing his sight and he commented that he liked my perfume and asked me what it was called. This took me by surprise but I told him it

was Rive Gauche by Yves St Laurent and I became his "Rive Gauche" lady. Every week he would ask me to sit with him and tell him what cakes were available and I felt useful and valued.

Another elderly lady confessed that she too suffered from manic depression and I became her special friend and we discussed "flying with God" when we were manic and being totally divorced from Him when we were depressed. I grew to look forward to Wednesday mornings and the little group who became my mentors. So, I realise now the healing began in an unexpected quarter. They were not healing my illness but they were healing me. My self-esteem and self-confidence were at rock bottom but they made me feel valued again. (On the subject of self-esteem someone with mental illness once described her recovery as taking "baby steps". When a baby learns to walk it often falls over and sits on its bottom and gets up and giggles; when you suffer a bout of mental illness you fall but each time it is harder to get up and laugh.)

During the time I was going to regular healing services, our church was thinking about employing a Parish Administrator and the Rector asked me if it was something I would consider. He rang me and asked me and said he didn't expect an immediate answer but I felt maybe this was a calling I could follow. So for three and a half years I became the first parish administrator. I had moved from running

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LIVING WITH MANIA AND DEPRESSION

PAULINE RHODES SHARES AN EXTRACT FROM HER BOOK

my own PR company prior to the birth of my twins to taking on the hitherto un-charted territory of parish administrator for a trial period of three months to help out. He had known me since just before my daughters were born, and they were then 12. So we were not exactly strangers but having said that, when you come to work very closely with someone, you get to know them very much better. He was very confident in my abilities, not least because he was not computer literate and I was, but there were many times when I would joke that the computer was the work of the devil designed to drive me to distraction! However, for all my mistakes and heartache with the computer, I gradually began to make the job of parish administrator happen!

I was utterly amazed that so many of my seemingly lost abilities returned. Behind the title of "Parish Administrator" I was no longer simply a manic depressive. I functioned in many ways as professionally as I had done before my illness and the job was very different. There were many times when people complimented me on my diplomacy or tact, my thoughtfulness or my kindness, and I began to realise that they were witnessing aspects of my character which had developed through my own experience of illness. I hope I was never hard-hearted and hurtful to people with health issues, but I realised I had become really interested in people, and their illnesses and problems. Although most of my work was working from home on a computer, I really enjoyed the small amount of work I got involved with especially with the elderly and infirm.

Throughout this time the Rector and his wife were very supportive. There were lots of tears and tissues and cups of tea at the Rectory (not to mention chocolate) and

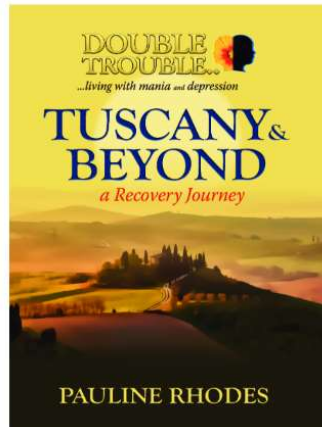
there were many laughs too. It is hard to laugh when you are on your own stuck in a "glass lift" with manic depression not knowing whether the lift is going to go up or down. You have no control and it is a very scary place to be, but with someone alongside you it is easier to bear. (At that time my medication allowed the luxury of emotional extremes).

I believe I have learned to live alongside the illness and I encourage others to try and do the same. It is always there but I choose to ignore it as far as possible. I take my medication daily and I do regular exercise (sometimes) and I have learned to put up with the side effects of my medication. I have monthly check-ups with my GP and I have a fantastic support group of family and friends.

Many years ago, long before my illness, I remember reading that an opal is only made of sand and silica and it is nothing until it is broken and the light gets in and lets it emit the most beautiful rays. I have an opal in my engagement ring and I often wonder if, as humans, when we have been broken by mental illness, especially manic depression, we get a more beautiful perspective on life...

So when you are dealing with people with mental illness look for the beauty in the person not for the blackness in the illness. Finally if Pastoral work is not your strength, try and build a pastoral care team who can come alongside others and give them valuable time.

Extract from "Double Trouble living with mania and depression and Tuscany and beyond a recovery journey" Available online at www.4emspublications.com Pauline will be signing copies of her book at the September coffee morning at St Andrew's.



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WEEKLY ZOOM SERVICES & MEETING ID NUMBERS (these ID details cover July-November 2024)

Service	ID Number
Sunday Worship 10.30am 7 July – 17 November	ID: 812 1941 0820
Sunday Compline 7.00pm 7 July – 17 November	ID: 884 3670 8389
Wednesday Mindfulness & Meditation 7.30pm 17 July – 27 November	ID: 870 0120 1292
BREATHE – first Saturdays 8.30am	ID: 598 221 0120
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Services at St Andrew's

August 2024



Zoom codes are set out in the previous page of this magazine

	Date	Time	Service	Celebrant	Preacher
Thursday	1	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY	4	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)		
<i>Trinity 10</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion		
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom		
Monday	5	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	7	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)		
Thursday	8	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Holy Communion Calton Court		
SUNDAY	11	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)		
<i>Trinity 11</i>		10.30 am	All Age Service		
		10.30 am	Communion Service on Zoom		
Monday	12	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	14	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)		
Thursday	15	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY	18	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)		
<i>Trinity 12</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion		
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom		
Monday	19	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	21	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)		
Thursday	22	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Holy Communion Calton Court		
SUNDAY	25	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)		
<i>Trinity 13</i>		10.30 am	Parish Communion		
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom		
		6.30 pm	Evensong St Mary's Hertingfordbury		
Monday	26	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	28	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)		
Thursday	29	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		

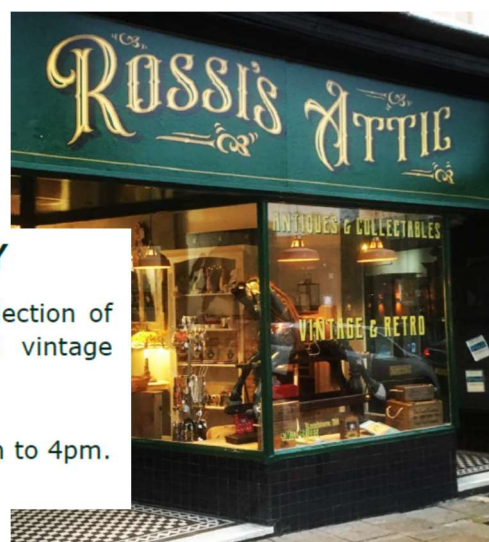
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Services at St Andrew's

July 2024



Zoom codes are set out in the page prior to the August services in this magazine

	Date	Time	Service	Celebrant	Preacher
Monday	1	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	3	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Bill Church	
Thursday	4	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 6</i>	7	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Nick Hoyle	Rev Alan Stewart
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	8	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	10	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Bill Church	Forbes Mutch
Thursday	11	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Holy Communion Calton Court	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 7</i>	14	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Bill Church	
		10.30 am	All Age Service	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Communion Service on Zoom	Rev Bill Church	
		7.00 pm	Soul Food informal service - St A Centre	Maria Henriksson-Bell	
Monday	15	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	17	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Alan Stewart	
Thursday	18	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 8</i>	21	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Alan Stewart	Adrian Waters
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Alan Stewart	Geoff Oates
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Kath Oates	Adrian Waters
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	22	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	24	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)	Rev Bill Church	
Thursday	25	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (BCP)		
		10.30 am	Holy Communion Calton Court	Rev Bill Church	
SUNDAY <i>Trinity 9</i>	28	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev Bill Church	
		10.30 am	Parish Communion	Rev Alan Stewart	
		10.30 am	Morning Service on Zoom	Nick Hoyle	Rev Alan Stewart
		6.30 pm	Evensong St Mary's Hertingfordbury	Rev Bill Church	
		7.00 pm	Compline on Zoom	Rev Alan Stewart	
Monday	29	8.00 am	Morning Prayer (Common Worship)		
Wednesday	31	10.30 am	Holy Communion (Traditional)		