



COVER STORY:
GRAVESHAM'S NEW MAYOR GREW UP IN
THE SHADOW OF ST AIDAN'S CHURCH

Issue 04 August/September 2014

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ALSO INSIDE:

NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
MARGARET
BRAMBLE

ASK THE VICAR:
ON BETRAYAL &
FORGIVENESS

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CHURCH CONTACTS

Vicar

Rev. Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy
nsengangoy@btinternet.com
01474 352 500

Wardens

Mr David Rawlinson
01474 352 253

Mr Dennis Ashurst
01474 567 300

Reader

Mrs Mavis Prater
01474 812 330

Pastoral Assistants

Mrs Daphne & Mr Ernie Lane
01474 564 902

OTHER SERVICES

Church Hall Lettings
Mrs Marjorie Church
01474 361 946

Nursery Schools
Mrs Fiona Brown
01474 356 316

Powerhouse Manager
Mr Michael Welch
01474 567 722

Westcourt Residents Assoc.
Mr Christopher M'Boge
07883 648 872

MAGAZINE CONTACT

Editing, Design & Photography

Mirjam Ngoy mirjamngoy@gmail.com

Would you like to contribute to the magazine? You could either feature in one of the articles or help with writing, design, photography and proof reading. Please get in touch with Mirjam.

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine is Sun 14th September!

YOUR COMMENTS

"I like the new format of the magazine. I do miss the diary of prayer."

"The Pilot looks very professional and inviting."

"I enjoy reading the questions to the Vicar."

"The magazine is very good. I would like to see more articles about interesting members of the congregation. Many of them have a tale to tell."

"Could you please add some quotes from famous Christian saints?"

"It might be an idea to add favourite hymns/songs of members of the congregation and why they are special to them."

Have you got any comments or suggestions for the magazine? They are very welcome! Please email mirjamngoy@gmail.com or drop a note with your ideas at the Vicarage next to the Church Hall.

EDITORIAL

Let go
Let god



CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS



8th June - Pentecost Service

7th July - Coffee morning in Mavis' beautiful garden



LETTING GO

As I am finishing off this fourth issue of the magazine, it is just 13 more days until our due date! We are excited to welcome our new baby into this world, while at the same time it feels as if there is still so much to prepare!

One of the few things you don't get to plan in life is when your baby is born. I am someone who really likes to plan and know in advance, but this whole experience of expecting really forces me to let go and trust that things will work out in time and on time.

It is often in times of 'letting go,' that we seem to receive and learn the most. I enjoyed meeting all the people who feature in this issue of the magazine and find out about their journeys of life and the lessons they've learnt along the way.

I was also challenged by our Ask the Vicar article on forgiveness and a beautiful quote from Desmond Tutu. Forgiveness is also about 'letting go' and through that experience we can grow as a human being. I hope that this issue of the magazine will encourage you to keep on 'letting go!' Enjoy your read!

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

We have been able to put together and distribute this magazine thanks to the help of the following people:

- Mrs Daphne Lane
- Mr Ernie Lane
- Mrs Janet Trevor
- Mrs Mavis Prater
- Mr Michael Welch
- Mrs Mirjam Ngoy
- Rev Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy

MAYOR MEETS VICAR

GRAVESHAM'S NEW MAYOR, CLLR JOHN CALLER (52), GREW UP IN THE SHADOW OF ST AIDAN'S CHURCH



He was born to a poor family in a house at St Dunstan's Drive, "just a stone's throw away from St Aidan's Church". Coming from a not so well off family to becoming the new mayor of Gravesham has been a long but exciting journey. One of the first things Cllr Caller decided to do when he started his role this May was appointing Rev Lusa, our vicar, as his chaplain. The Pilot was curious to hear his story. So the mayor met with the vicar for a chat and some challenging questions over a glass of squash.

What was it like growing up in the Westcourt and Riverview area?

Cllr Caller: "Me and the church were almost born together! It was in the old days, when parents lived with their children's grandparents. I started my life at St Dunstan's Drive and when I was about 1-year-old, we moved to Riverside. It was great growing up in this area. There were so many children and we were always playing outside."

"I grew up in the shadow of St Aidan's Church. When I was young, no matter where you were, you could always see the church sitting on the hill. I have fond memories of all the parties I attended at the church hall."

"Our family was poor. We never went on holiday; I always wore my brother's clothes... But we didn't

realise this as children. Everyone was in the same boat, we were all the same."

"Over the years, the area has changed a lot. A lot of new communities have moved in. I think this is a good thing, it is very enriching. I don't see why, while living on such a small planet, we wouldn't be able to move around and mix up. As long as we respect each other and are open to learn about other cultures and people."

Where does your interest for politics come from?

Cllr Caller: "I've always been interested in politics, ever since I was a young lad. My dad's brother, Colin, has been my biggest influence. We used to have numerous conversations about politics and he told me: 'If you think you know better, go and join the Labour Party!'"

"When I left secondary school at the age of 15, I was encouraged to get into work to help out our family. My dad left when I was 11-years-old. I first worked at the Town Pier Restaurant as a waiter. The staff really

"NO MATTER WHERE YOU WERE, YOU COULD ALWAYS SEE THE CHURCH SITTING ON THE HILL..."

took me, a poor boy from St Dunstan's, under their wing. This job taught me to be a bit more cultured. I had to be smart, wear a suit and a tie."

"My official involvement in politics started when I got a job on the railway. I became the junior rep in the National Union of Railwaymen. At the age of 26, I got a job at Britannia Refined Metals in Botany Road, Northfleet, and I still work there."

"What interests me most about politics is representing people that don't really know how to bring a problem up and get it resolved themselves. That was my motivation to join the Labour Party. I don't want to change the world, I just want to help somebody that

"ALONG THE WAY, THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KEY PEOPLE HELPING ME. I AM JUST TRYING TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK NOW..."

has an issue and make their life a bit easier. I think I have got this desire, because a lot of people have helped me in my life. It is amazing to look back at where I come from to where I am now. Of course I've had my own drive, but along the way, there have always been key people helping me. I am just trying to give something back now."

What is your dream for Gravesham?

Cllr Caller: "My dream for Gravesham is that communities will integrate better. I would like to see the wealthy sharing the same facilities with those who are less well off. I would love for Eastern Europeans and Africans to be fully integrated. It is good to have our own communities, but also the Gravesham community. I'd like us to be mixed up, learn from each other and get on with each other."



The Mayor with his wife Sue. They have two daughters, Naomi (23) and Poppy (17)

Why did you ask Rev Lusa to be your chaplain?

Cllr Caller: "One day I attended the Friday breakfast at St Aidan's to meet with people from the community. This is where I met Lusa. He had the biggest smile on his face. For a clergyman, Lusa seemed very smiley and different. When I became the mayor, I really wanted to have a young and positive chaplain next to me. I think our generation should step up more; we should be the voice of the community. Lusa is a good representative of Gravesham at this time. His role is to bring the spiritual side to the work I do. What I say is very scripted, but Lusa brings the thought-provoking words."

Rev Lusa: "I think it is a great honour to be the mayor's chaplain. I believe that being part of the church is not just being there for "your" people, the gathered community, but for the wider community. Both for those who do believe what you believe, and for those who don't share your faith."

Cllr Caller: "I see us as a team. We should be a team, we should be working together to achieve the same goals and ends. I like Lusa's formal informality. When you see him up there working, you don't feel you are being preached to. Somebody is giving you a story and advice and a way if you want to take it."

Rev Lusa: "I like John as a person, because I see his commitment to people's humanity and willingness to meet people at that level. That is exciting, especially for someone in his role, to do that. My contribution is just to be there as a support to the work that he does and bring a perspective that comes from a different place. Together we can try to give a full picture of what we dream our community can be."

By Mirjam Ngoy

NEWS FROM THE PARISH

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2014

During this annual appeal week, 41 roads were covered in St Aidan's parish for house to house collecting – 9 by members of the Riverview Baptist Fellowship.

This method of fund raising collected £1,489.31. A further £509.01 was raised by the jumble sale (£229 at the sale plus a generous donation from "Sense" who cleared away the tremendous amount of left over items). Donations raised a further £150.91.

A coffee and cake morning, with plant and bring & buy sales held at Martin & Mavis' home at Meopham, completed our fund raising for this year. This was well supported by church members, friends from other churches and neighbours and raised the magnificent sum of £331.72p, bringing the total for the year for this parish to £2,480.95.



At the Coffee Morning in Meopham.

This represents tremendous commitment and support by many people – a huge thankyou to all who helped in any way.

Rudo Chikunguru and Janet Scott-Manga took part in the Meopham Walk and raised over £330 between them in sponsorship.



John and Janet Morris - The Golden Couple

A DOUBLE CELEBRATION

As well as celebrating Ascension, we were delighted to join with John and Janet Morris in celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 1st June.

They were given an orchid and a special card signed by church members and friends after the All Age Service. Janet said that with John's health problems there had been many times when they thought they would never reach this special milestone anniversary, but were very thankful.

A MUSICAL TREAT

It was a real pleasure to welcome back the Rainham Ladies Choir, with their accompanist Janet Stone to St Aidan's on 12th July. Their programme catered for all tastes - ranging from traditional folk songs to Freddie Mercury's "Bohemian Rhapsody"; from jazz to a blessing by John Rutter; from songs from the

musicals to a WW1 sing along.

Simon Tatnall, the musical director, also encouraged one half of the audience to sing "When the saints go marching in" while the other half sang "Swing low sweet chariot" - at the same time as the choir were singing something totally different! Amazingly it worked! The whole evening was very professional (not a piece of sheet music to be seen) and we are so

DEMENTIA FRIENDS CHAMPION EVENT

On Monday 30 June, St Aidan's hosted one of six events being held by Rochester diocese to increase awareness and understanding of dementia and to explore ways people with dementia can be made to feel welcome and valued in our churches and communities.

Julia Burton-Jones, wife of the Archdeacon of Rochester and a Dementia Friends Champion, explained there were more than 100 types of dementia and how different types of dementia can affect people. An exercise was set which highlighted how people's perceptions and expectations of people with dementia differ.

In the second half of the session, the CEO of the Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services spoke about how they can offer help and support not only to people with Alzheimer's but also their carers. St Aidan's was well represented at the event but



members of other local parishes and even from as far away as Sundridge attended.

We were all invited to become 'Dementia Friends' which is an initiative set up by the Prime Minister to recruit one million people creating dementia friendly communities together.

If you would like more information about Dementia Friends or who to contact for support and advice please speak to Daphne Lane or Janet Trevor.

MEET OUR PASTORAL CARE TEAM

After the last AGM, Rev. Lusa suggested that we set up a Pastoral Care Team. This would enable a team of church members to offer pastoral care to people within the parish.

Daphne Lane volunteered to be the convener. We now have twelve volunteers in the team, including Anne, Barbara, Catherine, Daphne, Elsa, Glennys, Irene, Janet B., Janet T., Jennifer, Margaret and Mavis.

The most visible sign of the team in action is the prayer area at the side of the organ, which allows people to talk in confidence and be prayed for on Sundays. Please feel free to talk to the person on duty or talk to one of the team in church or over the phone.

We also visit members of the community who are housebound, in nursing homes or sheltered accommodation, the recently bereaved and the lonely.

In August, we are starting a new COME AND MEET OTHERS group, where people can meet over a cup of tea, a piece of cake and a chat (See Upcoming Events).



grateful to the choir, to Janet and to Simon for sharing their considerable talents with us. Afterwards, one of the choir members said how much they enjoy coming

to St Aidan's because the acoustics are so good - we certainly enjoy having them. £125 was raised for church funds.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS AT ST AIDAN'S

AUGUST

SAT 16/08/2014, 14.30

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION

There will be a service at Christ Church to give thanks for the 20th anniversary of women priests in the Church of England. The preacher will be Revd Canon Jane Lloyd. All are welcome.

THU 28/08/2014, 14.00-16.00

SOMETHING NEW - CAMEO

Are you at a "loose end" on the last Thursday afternoon of the month? If so, why not COME AND MEET OTHERS for a cup of tea, a piece of cake and a chat at St Aidan's "Powerhouse". We plan to meet monthly – all welcome – hope to see you there. Suggested donation of 50p.

SUN 31/08/2014, 18.30

PATRONAL FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

There will be a special service as we celebrate St Aidan's Day. Members of other churches and friends will be invited, and we will be delighted to welcome Rev Julie Conalty, the vicar of Christ Church Erith, as our preacher. Refreshments will be served after the service.

SEPTEMBER

WED 03/09/2014, 10.15

COFFEE MORNING

Coffee morning with cake stall in the Powerhouse.

WED 10/09/2014, 14:00

AIDAN LADIES

Our first meeting after our August break. Jack Mitchell will be giving a talk about "The Stars of Yesterday". This will be an open meeting so visitors, both ladies and gentlemen, are welcome.

SAT 13/09/2014, 19.30

ANNUAL QUIZ EVENING

Join us at the Church Hall.

WED 17/09/2014, 14.00

CRAFT CLUB

This will be the first meeting after our August break. We are meeting in the Powerhouse.

SAT 27/09/2014, 11.00-17.00

ST AIDAN'S COMMUNITY DAY

An opportunity to engage with the local community through fun activities and games for young and old.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Every Wed during term-time at the Church Hall:
After School Club: 15.30-17.00
Children's Gospel Choir - 17.00-17.30

COMMUNITY CAFE WITH BREAKFAST

Every Friday in the Powerhouse from 9.00-12.00.

LIFE EVENTS

Baptisms:

13th July 2014

Jack Terry Hughes
Adelaide Marie Lovell

Weddings:

7th June 2014

Stephen John Dadswell &
Samantha Louise Kilburn

Funerals:

2nd June 2014

9th June 2014

17th June 2014

4th July 2014

7th July 2014

22nd July 2014

24th July 2014

Elsie Badrick (90)

Julia Valerie Crothall (76)

Yoan Angel Pullo Da Silva (8 weeks)

Doreen Sylvia Hatfield (84)

Ethel May Matton (105)

Ernest Albert Wakefield (88)

Jack Newton (71)

Nora Eleanor Solomon (93)

Raymond Derek Howe (79)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEET MARGARET BRAMBLE (77)

In this issue of The Pilot, we introduce you to one of our community members.

For those of you who don't know Margaret Bramble, here are a few facts about her life: She was born on the island of Montserrat and moved to England in 1959. She has two children, Neville and Jocelyn, and three grandchildren. Every Tuesday, Margaret teaches people crochet in the Library. Margaret volunteers for the Wednesday Jam Club and is a faithful member of the St Aidan's choir.

What's your favourite day of the week and why?

"Sunday, that's my day of rest. I enjoy coming to church. If anyone invites me over I will say: 'Sorry, but I'm going to church.'"

Eating in or eating out?

"In. I'm not fussy. I go for a meal every now and then, but I prefer eating in. Beside, I have dietary restrictions that mean I can't often eat out."

What's your favourite season of the year and why?

"I don't like it too hot. I think Autumn is my favourite. I used to like Winter. I never used to feel the cold. But I do now. When I was younger, I used to wear the same clothes whether it was Summer or Winter. The cold didn't bother me. In fact, one of the reasons my mum sent me to England was because it was cooler. I couldn't stand the sun."

What inspires you in life?

"I'm lucky that I've had the experience of helping people. It's a two-way thing, but I feel happier helping people. Making people happy is all I'm interested in."

"MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY IS ALL I'M INTERESTED IN..."

If you could invite anyone for dinner, dead or alive, who would you take?

"Sarah Kelly. She was my everything. She helped raising me. Sometimes I thought she was my mother. She always took me with her everywhere. Sadly, she died when I was nine. Although kids didn't really attend funerals back then, I insisted on attending hers."



"ST AIDAN'S IS JUST LIKE ONE HAPPY FAMILY..."

Football or Rugby?

"Neither."

What do you do when you cannot sleep?

"I get up and make myself a cup of chamomile tea. I used to count to one hundred and back, but it doesn't really do it for me anymore. I've got a TV in the bedroom. Sometimes I turn it on just for the sound. Sometimes I'd also do a bit of knitting and crochet."

Who do you talk to on the phone most often?

"I don't really like talking on the phone."

What would you change if you were Prime Minister for one day?

"I'll abolish party politics and make sure that ministers and MPs are chosen not according to party affiliation, but competence."

What does it mean for you to be in a Christian?

"I come to church, and believe in God, but I often feel that I'm not good enough to call myself a Christian. Mother Theresa and others seem to be better followers of Christ than I am. But it helps me to serve others and bring some happiness to their lives."

I love my church because...

"It's just like one happy family."

What's next for you?

"Go home and lock myself in."

ASK THE VICAR

ON BETRAYAL & FORGIVENESS

Email your question to
info@staidangravesend.org



Hi Lusa,

Do you believe that someone who betrays you deserves another chance?

Dear anonymous friend,

We all have had to deal with the issue of betrayal in big and small ways. Truth be said, betrayal has the ability of exposing deep-rooted contradictions in most of us. How does one recover from the worst possible break of trust? How does anyone see any humanity in those who refused to acknowledge ones own?

In April this year, the world gathered to remember the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. Close to a million people were murdered in a matter of weeks, and most of them died at the hands of friends and neighbours.

Twenty years on, the wounds of the past are slow to heal, despite all the efforts set in place by the government, the international community and countless NGOs. Like survivors of previous genocides, many survivors of the Rwandan genocide still find it impossible to envisage reconciliation in any shape or form with perpetrators.

I, for one, will not condemn them out of fear of trivialising betrayal by offering an easy fix. Betrayal hits right at the heart of who we are and it hurts. It affects our ability to trust and love. It breaks something of our humanity. The usual answer we're given as Christians is to forgive. We must forgive because God demands it. We must forgive as Christ has showed us. To that is added the positive health virtues of forgiveness.

That, I would argue, is not a compelling enough argument for forgiveness. To me, forgiveness has to be much more than about me. Forgiveness must reach far beyond my well being, whether physical, mental or spiritual. Forgiveness needs to say something about the other, about relationships, about the future.

As part of the commemoration for the Rwandan genocide, I came across a series of stories about forgiveness and reconciliation in the NY Times. These stories accompanied portraits of reconciliation that brought together survivors and perpetrators. What struck me as I watched these pictures, was how widely the relationship between perpetrators and victims varied. Some were quite keen to forgive and engage with old foes, while others were less willing to go further than standing side by side. But the common thread was that all of them wanted some form of reconciliation. They needed to deal with the ghosts of the past and open up new possibilities for the future.

We ought to be careful not to belittle betrayal or forgiveness, however small issues may be. As the famous American radio host, Bernard Meltzer says, "when you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future." Forgiveness does not change what they did, nor does it excuse their actions. Forgiveness prevents their actions from destroying your heart, your humanity. And, in the process, it creates a space for the perpetrator to rediscover their own humanity. Forgiveness is more about healing memory and less about deleting memory. It's about finding a new way of looking at life. Betrayal, in some ways, is about our failure to love well. Forgiveness is our decision to give love a chance.

I hope that whatever betrayal you have experienced, you will one day find the strength to love again and forgive. In the process you might realise that "to forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you."

Yours in Christ, Lusa

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WE FORGIVE FOR OURSELVES

“Without forgiveness, we remain tethered to the person who harmed us. We are bound with chains of bitterness, tied together, trapped. Until we can forgive the person who harmed us, that person will hold the keys to our happiness; that person will be our jailor. When we forgive, we take back control of our own fate and our feelings. We become our own liberators. We don't forgive to help the other person. We don't forgive for others. We forgive for ourselves.”

By Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu, syndicated from spiritualityhealth.com





 **St Aidan's Church**
Gravesend

OUR MISSION

To share God's love in the community.

OUR VISION

As a church we want to develop relationships that demonstrate the love of God.

We aim to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped church that loves God completely, ourselves correctly and the neighbour compassionately.



St Aidan's Way
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www.staidangravesend.org
info@staidangravesend.org

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OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

1st	10.30	All Age Communion Service
2nd	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
3rd	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
	18.30	Joint Service with Riverview Baptists at the Christopher Centre
4th	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
5th	9.30	Communion Service with Prayer for Healing & Sunday School

God's Love Ignites - God's Love Unites