



January 2024

LINK-UP

Keeping Churches in Touch

www.godalmingchurches.org

facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherinGodalmingandDistrict

Message from the Chair

Once upon a time I was challenged by a friend I consulted when going through a testing time to try and do something new every week, even if it was (for instance) varying my route to work slightly. Once a week really was a challenge although once a month was a bit easier to manage. It was still fundamentally rather good advice. When we're small everything is new. As we grow up, we discover all the difficulties unfamiliar things might throw at us and we become less willing to take the risk because we know the effort it will demand, and we'd rather conserve our energy for when it's actually needed. The danger is that as a result we'll retreat completely into what we know and actively avoid anything we don't.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity falls when it does because of two feast days in January, the Chair of St Peter on the 18th and the Conversion of St Paul on the 25th. At first this was an occasion for high-church Anglicans to pray for the reunion of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches but later it broadened out to include all Christians who wanted to pray for unity (apologies if you know this already!). As a by-product it puts the Week of Prayer close to the start of the year but not right at the beginning, so we have time to draw breath after Christmas, and the theme of newness associated with the turn of the calendar year is still just about with us.

I wonder whether it may not be fruitful for us, while we're thinking about these things, to bring together the idea of unity and that of doing something new. Perhaps this year we might, each of us, do one thing to try to broaden our knowledge of our Christian brothers and sisters who aren't part of the church we ourselves belong to. It could be a conversation, a book, a visit – whatever suits us best. Unity grows out of generous understanding, and it begins with each of us.

Rev James Rattue, Chair of Churches Together in Godalming and District

jamesrattue@hotmail.com

News of the Churches and organisations

St John's Parish Church, Farncombe

As always, the Christmas season for St John's has been a time of welcoming groups, organisations and even people who come to worship! In common with most churches (the Minster excepted) January is comparatively quiet, but we are digesting some advice from the Guildford Diocese's consultant on church families and children's work about the development of ours. There's no better time to begin working on the suggestions than now.

www.farncombe.org.uk

Godalming Baptist Church

Overwhelmed - Finding balance in a fast-paced World, Saturday 27 January

We have the ideal Life Issue to begin 2024 – *Overwhelmed: finding balance in a fast-paced World* on Saturday 27 January from 9.30am to 1.00pm (coffee from 9.00am) led by Andy Peck. Andy will cover issues such as What makes us overwhelmed? How do we respond? What can we learn from the ministry of Jesus? This promises to be such a helpful morning, especially to begin the year with. Do come for yourself and to help others. To book a place, please contact Sally Pollard on 01483 428646 or pollard3@hotmail.co.uk

The Life Issues Brochure is now available - see attachment or do call in for a hard copy when reception is open on weekday mornings.

Visit our library

Just a reminder too for a great New Year resolution that we have a library stocked with many books on encouraging us in our faith journey, various biographies and a wide range of books on many life issues, including depression, bereavement, divorce, addictions to name but a few. The library is open Monday to Friday mornings 9.00am 12.00pm (subject to bookings - do ring reception on 01483 414544 to check). Do call in and browse and borrow a book. Attached is our Library Book Review for January, *The Grief Jar*, a beautiful book about the warmth of human nature and kindness of friends when dealing with grief.

Coffee Stop, Saturday 3 February

We have a monthly Coffee Stop on Saturdays from 10.00am to 12.00pm in aid of a different charity each month. There is no charge for coffee and delicious home-made cakes, but donations are much appreciated. The next Coffee Stop is on Saturday 3 February, and all contributions will go towards the vital work of Godalming Good Neighbours, a wonderful team of volunteer drivers who provide transport for a very small donation to appointments and events for those in need. If you are shopping in town, please do call in. We would love to see you!

We look forward to seeing you at the United Service on 21st January-a wonderful opportunity to be together as the New Year begins. We wish everyone a very happy, blessed, healthy and peaceful New Year.

www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk

Godalming United Church

Online services: <https://guc.online.church>.

Service recordings: www.guc.org.uk, <https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>.

Annual Covenant Service, Sunday 14 January, 10.30am

A reaffirmation of our faith marked by Methodist churches worldwide since the time of John Wesley. We contemplate the direction our lives will follow in 2024: New Year - a good time for spiritual renewal.

Churches Together United Service at St Peter & St Paul's, Sunday 21 January

No morning service at GUC

Three-week Bible Study

"Whatever happened to... Jesus's Disciples?" Tuesdays January 23, 30, February 10.00am.
repeated Thursdays 25 January, 1, 8 Feb 7.00pm

Messy Church Saturday 27 January 3.00 to 5.00pm

"The Lost Son" Bible-based activities for all the family, story-time and songs, party tea.
messy.church@guc.org.uk

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Pantomime

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 February. Always a great coming-together of the organisations and

generations within the church community. Four performances; advance booking strongly recommended. Tickets £8, children free. Contact beckylkeene@gmail.com

For more information and other future events, please visit www.guc.org.uk for a constantly updated rolling calendar.

www.guc.org.uk

Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund, King & Martyr, Godalming with St Joseph's Milford

Pope Francis' prayer intention for January

Pope Francis' prayer intention for January is for the gift of diversity in the church. Let us pray that the Spirit help us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

The Feast of the Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated this year on Sunday 7 January, with Mass at 8.45am and 10.30am, and our Saturday 6.00pm Vigil Mass at St Edmund's.

The Baptism of the Lord, 8 January

The Baptism of the Lord on 8 January brings the Christmas season to an end, and our nativity cribs remain in our churches until then; our crib offerings raise funds to support the Catholic Children's Society's A&B Crisis Fund, which provides immediate help for local families in the diocese who are facing real hardship and have nowhere else to turn.

Peace Day and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Pax Christi Sunday is on 14 January, and this leads into a week of prayer for Christian Unity from 18 to 25 January.

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School Admissions 2024

The closing date for applications is 15 January 2024. Please contact the school office or for more information visit: <https://www.stedmundsschool.co.uk/>

Live Simply and COP28

The climate crisis continues: "May COP28 represent a historic step forward in responding with wisdom and foresight to the clear and present threats to the universal common good", says Pope Francis, reaffirming that "the future of us all depends on the present that we now choose". The January meeting for our parish Live Simply group is at 7.30pm on Thursday 11 January and new members are very welcome. Email jo: jolewry@aol.com

Bumps & Babes

The first session of the year is on Monday 8 January at St John's Farncombe from 10.30am to 12.00pm. The group welcomes all Mums to be as well as Mums (or grandparents!) with newborns and toddlers.

Weekend Masses

Weekend Masses are celebrated at St Edmund's Godalming (6.00pm Vigil Mass) on Saturday evenings; and on Sundays at St John's Farncombe at 8.45am, with Children's Liturgy, (and with coffee after Mass on 7 and 21 January); and at St Joseph's Milford at 10.30am.

Weekday Masses

The dates, times and venues of these vary so please check the calendar on our website: www.stedsgod.com

We offer a warm welcome to newcomers at our regular parish gatherings:

- Bumps & Babes on Mondays at 10.30am at St John's, Farncombe
- Live Simply Our parish eco-group meets monthly on Zoom. Joining details from Jo:

jolewry@aol.com

- SVP Afternoon Tea on Wednesday 10 January at 2.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Elstead (phone 07379 108009).
- Prayer Group on Monday evenings (phone Richard for details on 01252 702230).
- St Edmund's church remains open every day for private prayer, usually between 10.00am and 4.00pm. (19 Croft Road, Godalming GU7 1DB).

www.stedsgod.com

The Franciscan Centre Ladywell

Lent Retreat

Led by: Fr. Caoimhín Ó Laoide OFM

Date: 16 – 18 February

Suggested offering: £180

A Reflective Lenten journey led by Fr Caoimhin O Laoide

“The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. (Mark 1:12)”

During Lent we're invited to shed what is superfluous and enter into the desert with Christ.

What are our deepest desires? Have they become lost in the clutter and busyness of our lives? What is preventing me from living an authentic life in the Spirit?

All are welcome to a retreat experience which includes optional daily Mass and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, if desired.

Led by Fr. Caoimhín Ó Laoide OFM, a Franciscan friar, who will integrate insights inspired by the spirituality of Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi into the celebration of this holy season.

Praying the Passion – Living the Gospel

Led by: Brian Purfield

Date: 15 – 17 March

Suggested offering: £180

In Holy Week the gospels of Mark and John are enticing gateways into both the familiar sequence of the passion story and the perhaps less known, but very beautiful, world of each evangelist's portrayal of Jesus.

Brian Purfield is a team member at the London Jesuit Centre and has worked alongside the Jesuits since 2001. Prior to that he taught at the International Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury. He studied theology at the Gregorian University, Rome and at St. Bonaventure's University, New York. His particular interest is in deepening a knowledge and love of the Scriptures for people, young and old, at a level that they can understand and seek to apply to their daily lives.

Franciscan Triduum Retreat

Led by: FCL Team

Date: 28 – 31 March

Suggested offering: £255

Come join us at the Franciscan Centre Ladywell for our Easter Triduum: Holy Thursday Evening to East Sunday.

Join our community as we celebrate the Easter Triduum, as we recall and journey with Jesus in his last days, from his final meal with His disciples to His resurrection from the tomb. Experience the liturgies as part of a community and take time and space in our beautiful centre to reflect more deeply on these profound events. Be alongside the Franciscan family, as

we celebrate Easter in our unique way with daily prayer, reflections, liturgies and celebration.

Our programme of events offers participants the opportunity to experience the Beauty, Goodness and Generosity of God in a reflective hospitable Franciscan environment, through retreats, quiet days and workshops. There is also the opportunity for Spiritual Direction from our Spiritual Directors.

We offer a place that allows for a deepening of your relationship with God, a place of welcome and safety as you navigate closer to your Creator. Take quiet time away from the haste of everyday life, either on a retreat or by engaging in the programmes and workshops we offer. The Franciscan Centre Ladywell is open for anyone seeking some space and quiet time.

Any enquiries or to book your place please email us at franciscancentre@ladywell.org.uk

<https://franciscancentre.org.uk>

Godalming Quakers

Sunday Meetings for Worship

The regular weekly worship session continues to be held on Sunday mornings, starting at 10.30am at the Quaker Meeting House in Mill Lane, and all are welcome.

www.quaker.org.uk/meetings/godalming

Items for next month's *Link-up*

Please send items for the February 2024 edition of *Link-up* to Matt Farrow:

farrow.matt@gmail.com by **Friday 19 January**, for publication on Friday 26 January.