

Church Magazine ***for Steyning and Ashurst***

Resurrection



May 2026
ISSUED FREE

Registered Charity No 1132913



DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER

family camp 2026

Friday 19 June to Sunday 21 June 2026

A weekend family camp with **fun, worship and family time** held in the beautiful South Downs National Park

WHAT IS FAMILY CAMP

Come together with other families from across the diocese to enjoy a weekend of fun activities and adventure, combined with worship and family time. Designed primarily (but not exclusively) for families with primary school aged children

EARLY BIRD OFFER

£25 per person* (under 5's free) includes two evening meals and use of all the Stedham Campsite facilities
*After Easter tickets will be £30 per person

BOOK YOUR TICKETS

For more information and to book your tickets please use the QR code or visit www.trybooking.com/UK/FYCD
Follow our Facebook page for all the latest news & updates

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your Church Leader



Christian Aid Coffee Morning

Saturday 16 May 2026

from 10am until Midday

We will be hosting a Coffee Morning at the Penfold Hall, Church Street



An entrance fee of £5 entitles you to: a cup of coffee, or other soft and hot drinks will be on offer and a piece of cake.


We hope that we will have lots of plants for sale to enhance your garden



This is the only fundraiser for Christian Aid in our Steyning and District Churches Together area so please save the date and bring plenty of cash with you.

Second Friday of each month, 2pm-4pm
In the Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

GOOD GRIEF Café



- Are you feeling alone?
- Have you been affected by any kind of loss?
- Would you like to be with people who empathise and can help?

If so, we offer a safe space where you can talk, or just listen

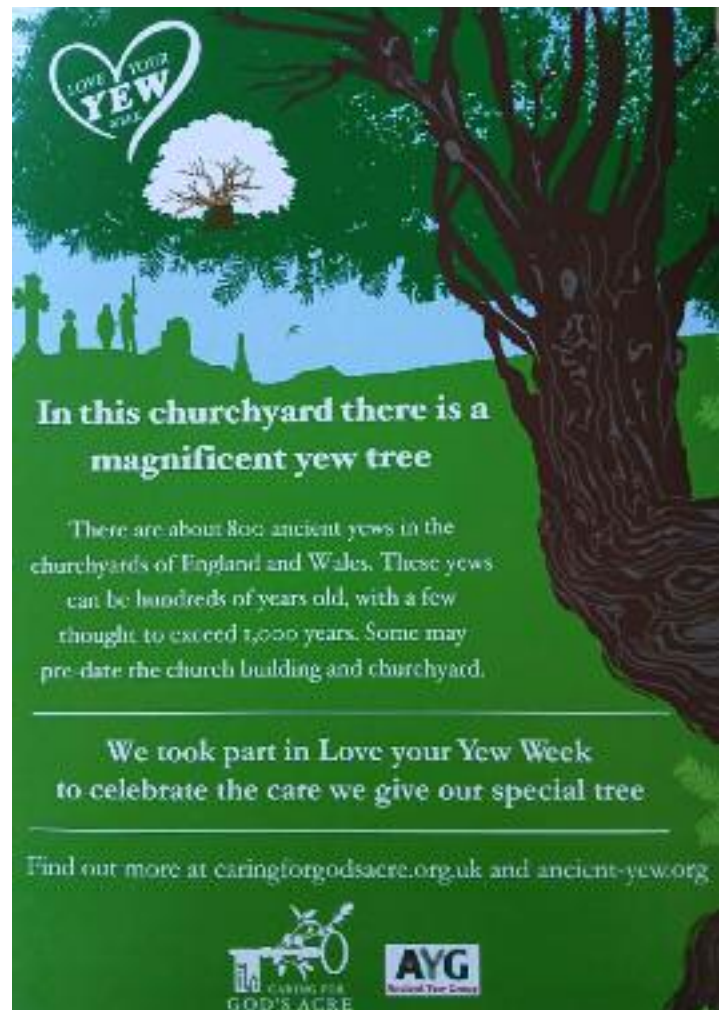
- Never mind how recent or how long ago - we can all be affected by loss
- Everybody welcome, regardless of faith, any or none

Tea, Coffee and Biscuits provided
Donations welcome

Contact us at care@steyningparishchurch.org
Or phone 01903 813276

The Parish Church of St Andrew & St Cuthman, Steyning

**Next Café:
Friday 8 May**





LOVE YOUR YEW WEEK

In this churchyard there is a magnificent yew tree

There are about 800 ancient yews in the churchyards of England and Wales. These yews can be hundreds of years old, with a few thought to exceed 1,000 years. Some may pre-date the church building and churchyard.

We took part in Love your Yew Week to celebrate the care we give our special tree

Find out more at caringforgodsacre.org.uk and ancient-yew.org

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Cover Picture:

Easter Eve Service of Light and Vigil at St Andrew's & St Cuthman's, which included lighting the Easter fire and blessing the new Paschal Candle, renewing baptismal promises and blessing the Easter Garden (Picture by Neil Aiton)

Magazine Donations

If you enjoy this Church Magazine and would like to make a donation towards the costs, we would be very grateful.

BACS transfers with reference 'Magazine Donation' can be made to: Sort Code 30-99-93, Account 03220862. If you are a UK tax payer and fill in the Gift Aid slip, we can recover an extra 25p for every £1 you donate. Thank you.



I wish to Gift Aid my donation to 'Steyping Parochial Church Council' to help meet the expenses of the Church Magazine. We suggest an annual donation of at least £12

Title Surname Forenames

House No/name Postcode Date

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and /or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Please notify Steyping Parish Church if you / cancel this declaration / change your name or home address / no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Registered Charity No: 1132913

Prayer Diary for May

Friday 1 May, Philip and James, Apostles

Almighty Father, whom truly to know is eternal life: teach us to know your son Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life; that we may follow the steps of your holy apostles Philip and James, and walk steadfastly in the way that leads to your glory.

Sunday 3 May, Fifth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect.

Sunday 10 May, Sixth Sunday of Easter

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy.

Thursday 14 May, Ascension Day

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as we believe your only-begotten son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we in heart and mind may also ascend and with him continually dwell.



Friday 15 May, Matthias the Apostle (transferred from 14 May)

Almighty God, who in the place of the traitor Judas chose your faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the Twelve: preserve your Church from false apostles and, by the ministry of faithful pastors and teachers, keep us steadfast in your truth.

Sunday 17 May, Seventh Sunday of Easter (Sunday after Ascension Day)

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before.

Sunday 24 May, Pentecost

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort.

Sunday 31 May, Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities.

*Collects from Common Worship,
© 2000, 2004 The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England.*

Pastoral Letter

Why did Jesus have to go away? It is a question many of us may feel, even if we might not ask it aloud. The disciples certainly felt it. They had walked with him, eaten with him, watched him rise from the dead – and then, from the slopes of the Mount of Olives, they watched him leave.

But the Ascension is not a story of absence. It is a story of a new and fuller presence. When Jesus ascended, he did not retreat from the world; he was enthroned over it. As we say in the creeds, ‘He took his seat at the right hand of the Father’ (compare Mark 16:19) – ‘our great High Priest’, who intercedes for us, in a similar but altogether different way as the High Priest used to offer prayers in the Sanctuary of the Jewish Temple (Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-25).

And because he went, ten days later his Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to enable the church to do Christ’s work on earth (Acts 2; Matthew 28:16-20).



Steve Erspamer © 1992 Archdiocese of Chicago

The angels at the Ascension asked the disciples why they were staring into the sky (Acts 1:11). It was a gentle rebuke. There is work to be done, a world to be loved, Good News to be lived. We serve a reigning Lord, not an absent one.

*See! he lifts his hands above; Alleluya!
See! he shows the prints of love: Alleluya!
Hark! his gracious lips bestow Alleluya!
Blessings on his Church below. Alleluya!*

Charles Wesley (1739)

fr Mark

Steining Festival - 31 May

Instead of the usual 9:30am Holy Communion service at Steining, we will be celebrating Trinity Sunday with a special Ecumenical service with our Music Group to mark the closing day of the Steining Festival.

All are welcome to join us in the large Festival marquee on the Cuthman Field, opposite Steining Parish Church, at 10:30am.

FROM THE EDITOR

World politics is something I never thought I would write about here. But as this magazine nears completion some shocking events, from an inclusive Christian point of view, have unfolded.

The term 'Christian Nationalism' seems inoffensive enough by itself, but when one analyses what it actually appears to mean it takes on a rather sinister tone. We have seen it in our own country where the name of Christianity has been used to oppose those of other faiths meeting peacefully for prayer, as well as the divisive overtones that have come to be associated with the St George's flag, and in antisemitic actions (as opposed to disagreeing with the present Israeli government).

But by far the worst distortions of Christian principles are evident in the United States. Christianity is a very broad faith, covering a lot of different forms of worship and interpretations of Scripture. The US President's views have, up to now, been largely endorsed by many Christian churches in that country, though Roman Catholic and Episcopal Bishops have voiced opposition.

There has rightly been condemnation of images where the President appears to depict himself as Jesus, as well as him and his henchmen telling the Pope (and an American Pope at that) that he has no grasp of real theology.

We just have to pray that right will overcome this evil, and be thankful that Anglicans are joining other churches here in speaking out.

Blessings, Bill

Weekly Notices

The weekly notices email, sent from the gives information about services, news and events. There is also the list of those needing our prayers. If you would like to regularly receive this email please contact:

office@steyningparishchurch.org
or ring 01903 813276

To add any new prayer requests contact:

prayers@steyningparishchurch.org
or ring 01903 813276

Reflections Service



'Reflections' is a quiet contemplative time of about 40 minutes, with readings, prayer and music built around a 10-15 minute period of silence.

Saint of the Month for May

PHILIP NERI, FOUNDER OF THE ORATORIAN (1515-95)

Philip Neri was the son of a Florentine notary and educated by the Dominicans at St Mark's Florence. On leaving school he took a business appointment with a firm owned by his uncle who planned to make him his heir. However, he experienced a deep conversion and, with no plan or money, he went to Rome, living in extreme poverty.

For two years he lived like a hermit and then was minded to study philosophy and theology but, after a time, gave that up to tend the sick. With his outgoing personality he attracted friends whom he persuaded to give up their dissolute lifestyles and follow his example of helping the poor and sick and of preaching the Gospel.

This work led to Philip founding a Confraternity in 1548 after he had experienced a vision. The main work of his followers was to look after the many who made the pilgrimage to Rome. In 1551 Philip was ordained priest and went to live in a community at St Girolama where he spent many hours giving spiritual advice and discussing the Faith.

From this developed the Congregation of the Oratory, so called because Philip and his five priest-disciples used an oratory built over the nave of St Girolama. The priests shared a common life and recognised Philip as their leader but were not bound by vows. The Congregation was approved in 1575 by which time its numbers had grown immensely. Philip was recognised as Superior but continued to live at



Guercino's 1656 painting of San Filippo Neri, in the National Museum of San Marino

St Girolama and received a constant stream of, not only the poor, but also priests and cardinals seeking his spiritual advice.

He died in 1595 after a normal day of seeing visitors at the end of which he said "last of all, we must die". Just after midnight he suffered a haemorrhage and died; his Feast Day is kept on 26 May.

There are now Oratorian Congregations world-wide. In England the Oratorians are best known for the work of John Henry Newman who founded the Birmingham Oratory.

When do You Think About God?



Photo by Humble Lamb on Unsplash

I wonder what your answer is to that question? Whether it's a little or a lot, what would you tell your friends or your work mates or your family if one of them asked you? Would you say at the Sunday or Wednesday services? Before bed? In the bath? At a home group? When things go wrong? Or what?

It's a big and complicated question and not altogether to do with whether one believes in God or not, but maybe to do with where our focus lies – in what plane? Are we looking at the earthly things, the physical things around us as so very important; perhaps we work towards gaining more money or more of the fun things, the here and now, because life seems to demand it? We can do that, and then think about God on Sunday.

I think each one of us must be moved and worried by the world situations. By

the conflicts, by the people in the seats of power in nations, by the use of weapons, by the way people can treat each other, by the rising prices... we can go on. When we spiral into the worries surrounding us the world tugs at us, and we are pulled into a fear that says "I really don't know what to do."

Uncertainty and fear, and a deep, deep worry do that and make us forget to pray, forget that when we talk to God, give him time, something so very special happens, because Isaiah gives us a simple promise:

Isaiah 26:3 (RSV) *Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.*

God can give us perfect peace, a peace that is beyond understanding. It is a peace that knows we cannot put the world right, but we can put a tiny corner right. How? By trusting in God, and then,

rather like the miracle of spring growth, I think we grow more into who God wants us to be ... that person who will love our neighbour, no matter what, just as Jesus loves us.

In the back of my mind is a saying “trust is never given, it is earned.” Trust is not something we give to others very easily, and I remember way, way back when I was teaching in a team situation we went on team building exercises involving falling backwards, and we had to trust that the person behind us would catch us. I wonder if that sort of thing still happens, or if you have done something similar? It is a beautiful moment when I watch a young child have absolute trust in their parent/carer, knowing that they will catch them when they leap off the side of the swimming pool, and into the arms of their catcher in the deep water. Thinking more about this I realise that perhaps we all use trust every day; I trust the bank that they will do their best to look after my money; I trust that the path I walk on is made strongly enough to keep everyone safe; I trust that the mechanics who checked the plane my son is about to board have done their jobs properly so he will be safe in the air; also, I completely trust that unknown person, the pilot, etc. Trust between people is actually quite sacred, and then quite devastating when it fails.

Where does all this leave God? Proverbs 3:5 says “trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Trust in God needs to have your heart fully engaged. Writing

that is easy, but I know the reality is that doubts creep into my life, maybe because someone, or a group, or a thing I’ve trusted has let me down, and then I become a little timid about trusting again. It is all very hard, but perhaps what the Bible is telling us is that in order to give God trust we must stop leaning purely on our own resources. We humans are all flawed and actually we do not know better than God, and we do not need to try to figure absolutely everything out independently, but in all situations, we should bring God into the equation, through prayer. “Let go and let God.”

God should not be put into a box

marked ‘Sunday’, or ‘Before bedtime prayers’, but God is in all things, in all life, in all situations – the good, the bad, the ugly and the absolutely

awful. No dividing line portions our life out. *We love because God first loved us* (1 John 4:19) and from that love and trust all else will follow because God gave Jesus to die for our sins on the cross – for you and me – and so I will definitely try, more and more each day, to trust this big-hearted, peace-giving, truly loving God and give him more and more time and attention.

Philippians 4:6-7 – *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Chris Fitton

‘Trust between people is actually quite sacred, and then quite devastating when it fails’



Steyning Festival Events 2026

IN St ANDREW'S & St CUTHMAN'S PARISH CHURCH

The Life of a Church Organist with Brian Sawyer

May 23, 4pm - 5pm

No charge (retiring collection)

Brian Sawyer from Steyning Parish Church returns to the Festival to talk about the life of a church organist, from training to performing to teaching. This is your opportunity to hear his story, not to mention his anecdotes!

Jazz Vespers with Riverboat Shuffle

May 23, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

£12.50

Escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life and come to this special celebration of Jazz Vespers - traditional hymns and spirituals with old jazz standards - performed by a brilliant local Jazz band.

Echoes of England: a Celebration of English Music with the Kaleidoscope Singers

May 24, 4pm - 4:45pm

No charge (retiring collection)

An exploration of choral repertoire with pieces from Rutter, Ireland, Tallis, Britten and Chilcott. The Kaleidoscope Singers are based in Steyning and have been singing their eclectic mix of music together since 2002 under their musical director Zoe Peate.

Let Nature do the Talking: Creating Soundscapes of Hope with Hazel Reeves

May 24, 7:30 pm - 9pm

£5.00 - £10.00

Sculptor turned sound recordist Hazel Reeves will be sharing some of her favourite nature recordings and chatting on-stage to Matt Phelps, Lead ecologist on the Knepp Estate about their favourite sounds of nature.

This year the *Soundscapes of Hope* installation comes to Steyning Parish Church.

Soundscapes of Hope - The Parish Church Goes Wild!

May 25, 9am - 12:30pm

May 27, 9am - 11:00am

May 28, 9am - 12:30pm

May 29, 9am - 12:30pm

Step into Steyning Parish Church and be magically transported into a Sussex wilderness. Steyning Parish Church will undergo a transformation by sound artist Hazel Reeves, using local wildlife recordings played through speakers arranged around the church.

Organ Extravaganza: Brian Sawyer

May 26, 12:30pm - 1:15pm

No charge (retiring collection)

Brian Sawyer, Director of Music at Steyning Parish Church, will perform some well known organ music, including Bach's famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

Music of Quincy Jones by the Phoenix Big Band

May 26, 7:30pm - 10pm

£20.00

A swinging evening of big band music to honour the legacy of Quincy Jones, a legendary figure in the music industry.

Shelley: a Celebration of Sussex's Most Famous Poet

May 27, 7:45pm - 10pm

£12.50

Percy Bysshe Shelley is one of the major English Romantic poets and is internationally known as one of the most influential poets in the English language. A night of Shelley-inspired entertainment will be led by Sussex-based poet, John McCullough, and the Shelley Memorial Project. The evening includes winning Steyning Grammar School poets and a chance for locals to perform too.

Come and Sing with Chanctonbury Chorus

May 28, 7:30pm - 9:30pm

£10.00

Come along and have a go! Enjoy an opportunity to learn and sing a variety of songs with one of the finest choirs in Sussex under their new musical director. We welcome singers with all levels of experience.



Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra

May 30, 6:30pm - 8pm

£15.00

Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra, one of the finest ensembles of its kind in the South East will present a programme of orchestral masterpieces: Beethoven's Egmont Overture, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Schumann's Symphony No. 3 'Rhenish'. Conductor is Dominic Grier, and Yinong Xiao, an exceptional young musician, the soloist for the Violin Concerto.

More information and booking details for these and all other Festival events around the town can be found at <https://www.steyningfestival.co.uk/>

Steyning Primary School Easter Service



In the last week of March, more than 300 children and their teachers descended on St Andrew's & St Cuthman's Church for the School Easter Service. There was great excitement, especially as this was the first visit for the Reception classes.

There were readings representing all years. The songs were a mixture of whole school and lower and upper school, ably accompanied by the church Music Group who also led the congregational hymns.

The singing was superb. It was lovely to hear the church resounding with the voices of children singing their hearts out. I have to admit, it brought a tear to my eye.

Thank you Fr Mark for leading the service and Jonny Mott (head of music at the school) for organising and rehearsing the songs and readings.

Caryl Vine

Would I be Willing to Die?

Would I be willing to die?
If it came to it, in the end, I would.

What is there to fear?

It is a path well-trodden by all who are
born.

Our mothers give us birth,
We emerge from the dark into the light.
We live out our days and face the
darkness of death.

It is agreed then. That is the path. That is
the plan.

To be born. To live. To die. To be human.
The conversation is concluded.

Or so it seems. But there is more.

Being born is the easy part,
Despite the conditions and the
circumstances.

Living and growing and learning is the
human lot.

I do it willingly. Although this place on
earth is strange.

Yes. So, what more is there?

Would I be willing to die on the Cross?
To know the pain, the agony, the wrack
of soul and body.

Could I give myself to that? Could I bear
the torture?

Long conversations ago it seemed
possible, necessary, needed.

Abba and I agreed. It would be done.

But now I am here, it doesn't seem so
easy.

And yet it must be done. I must do it. I
alone can do it.

In the early hours of the morning it came
to me.

The price of being God's Son is this. To
die for love.



Image: Manuel Guerrero on Unsplash

The price of being human is to die.
The price of being God is to die a human
death.

Conversations over. Now just silence.
No word from heaven.
Just the steady heartbeat of knowing I
am loved.

Abba, leave me not alone. Abba, be my
strength
When all strength fails and my heartbeat
stops.

A while yet.
The searing pain pounds in my head.
Blood drips from the thorny spikes.
A sword thrust in my side. I die for such
as these.
To wash them clean. To make them holy.

The ache of my stretched arms,
The pain of tearing nails,
The agony of mind as my heart
Weeps for sin and washes it away
If only they believe.

The throb of blood in my head and my
heart lessens.

Where is my Hope? It is here, my Son.
That small pin-prick of light through
closing eyes
Will welcome you – if you will die for
love.

You are the Light of the World
And the world to come

Would you be willing to die upon the
Cross?
I AM.

*(From the Good Friday Sacred Concert)
Canon Nigel Hartley*

Wednesday Coffee: Penfold Hall

Do join us in the
Penfold Hall,
Church Street,
Steyning, every
Wednesday
morning, any
time between
10am and 12 noon. We meet in the
main hall.



Several of our visitors go to
church for the Wednesday morning
11:30am service, but you can stay on
chatting, too.

*Elizabeth Brown
and the Coffee Team*

**COME IN ... PLEASE, FOR A
COFFEE OR TEA AND A
CHAT.**

10-12 noon

**IN THE PENFOLD HALL
WEDNESDAY MORNINGS**

Pastoral Care Team

Would you, or anyone you know,
like a member of our
team to:



- Offer a listening ear, or chat if you are lonely
- Give a phone call to help ease a heavy burden
- Be there just to listen

to your concerns or worries?

Please don't hesitate to be in touch
and feel free to email:

care@steyningparishchurch.org
or call 01903 813276.

Someone from the team is ready to
be there at your side either by phone
or in person.

Our next Grief Café is in the
Penfold Hall on Friday 8 May from
2pm until 4pm. Please feel free to
join us if you are in need of support
following a loss of any kind. Tea and
coffee and biscuits are served in safe
surroundings.

*Judie Thomson,
Pastoral Care Co-ordinator*

Families and Children



Hello Everyone. The excitement of May's double bank holiday always brings a smile to my

face. Everyone always seems happier when it's a bank holiday weekend. This month we have two – so that's got to be something to smile about. We also have the Steyning Festival. I know that there is lots going on, and that the church is being used for some of the events. It's fantastic that our building is being used, bringing in our community to our amazing church perhaps for the first time for some people. This is great, as when people come in I always hear them say how lovely our church is.

Our new venture of a Messy Church Activity Walk, run in partnership with the Steyning Downland Scheme, went really well. We had four different activities, including bubble prayer where we blow away our worries; wildlife bingo and seeing where and how animals live and survive; nature drawing and finally, making flat bread. All these activities are linked to God's creation and the way he provides for us.

Steyning Festival

We have been given use of the Big Top for the morning of 27 May as part of the Steyning Festival, which I am excited about. We have planned lots of activities which include archery, cake decorating, crafts, games and reflection spaces. So do come along and support us if you can.



Angel Drop

Last year's angel drop at Christmas went down so well we would love to do it again this year. So, if you're a knitter or crocheter and can make angels for me, we would love your help. The children, parents and staff loved seeing and receiving the angels. So if you can help I would truly appreciate your support.

Some scenes from the Messy Church Activity Walk, run in conjunction with the Steyning Downland Scheme



Family Camp

In June the Chichester Diocese Family Camp is happening again. Our music group and Gary will be joining Bishop Will and the team to run an amazing God-filled time for families across the Diocese. We would love any families from our church family to come and join us.

It will be a fun-filled weekend packed full of activities, games, crafts, camp fires and worship.

The cost is very small, at £30 per person and under 5s are free. The cost includes the site fees, all activities and your two evening meals and Sunday breakfast.

The Music Group and I would love you to join us. For booking details please check out our website or the leaflets that are in the church and Penfold Hall. See the poster on p2. If you have any questions please speak to Gary.

Board Game Cafés

The Board Game Café evening edition is held once a month on the fourth Monday from 6pm to 9pm. We look forward to our next one on 25 May

The Afternoon Board Game Café is run in partnership with the Community Wardens. Open to anyone of any age, the board game café runs once a month on the second Tuesday 3:15pm - 5:15pm the next session is 12th May.



Fire Pit Service

The Fire Pit Services are a different style from our normal services; they are a short service with time together at the end toasting marshmallows and getting to know each other. Our next service is Sunday 10 May. Do come and join us as we would love to see you.

Little Stars

This is a massive outreach for the church and it is such a lovely group of adults and children. We have a range of different play areas and craft around the hall and we are seeing deeper conversations coming along with people. We wish to introduce some new books into the book corner.

We are still on the lookout for four more amazing people to join the team on a Thursday. Could you help out once in every six weeks? This could be making drinks in the kitchen, or out in the hall chatting with adults or playing with the children. It is up to you how you get involved. If you would like any more info or have any questions then please speak to Gary, ask any of the other leaders why they like helping with the group.

Little Stars meets on Mondays from 1pm to 2:45pm and Thursdays from 9:30am to 11:30am.



Blessings
Gary

Steyning Annual Parish Meetings

The Annual Parish Meetings for St Andrew's & St Cuthman's took place in Church on Sunday 19 April, following the Music Group Eucharist service.

The first meeting, the Annual Parish Meeting (also known as the Vestry Meeting) is open to all residents in the parish, to elect two churchwardens. Sarah Lavery, having completed her maximum six year term, was presented, with thanks, with a gift hamper and a card created by Elaine Hyde and signed by the congregation (see picture above). Kate Burnett was re-appointed as churchwarden, with Judie Thomson replacing Sarah.

This was immediately followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. After the introductory apologies for absence, presentation of the draft minutes of the previous meeting, and the electoral roll report (which showed an increase of around 20) the first task was to elect



four people to the Deanery Synod. John Edwards, Penny Warner and Bill Thomson were all willing to be reappointed. Brian Hanson, our fourth representative, wishes to stand down at the end of his term after many years of service, including as Lay Chair, so another volunteer is needed.

With John Downe, Judie Thomson and Liz Trundle coming to the end of their three year terms on the PCC, there were three vacancies. Judie, as churchwarden, automatically becomes an ex-officio member so we now have two vacancies.

Tina Hobbs, Treasurer, showed us the relatively healthy state of the finances and thanked our regular givers. Sarah Lavery gave the Fabric report. Other reports were available in a printed booklet. All reports are available on the church website.

Ashurst St James's Annual Meetings: will be held on 10 May

Church Flowers for May

2 and 9 May: Lucy Lane
16 and 23 May: Katherine Heather
30 May and 6 June:
Christine
Aubrey



Carol McKechnie

Parish Registers

Thanksgiving Services

21 March Beryl Carter (d 10 February)
26 March José Peate (d 5 March)
31 March Oliver Geoffrey Hayward
(d 18 February)



Chanctonbury Chorus Lives On!



The revitalised Chanctonbury Chorus in rehearsal at The Towers, Beeding

The Chorus and the music lives on! Liz Kirkland has taken over as the new and only the second Musical Director in its 44 year history. Now in its 45th year, the Chorus is flourishing with an average of 30 singers at each weekly rehearsal and an exciting programme for our concert in June.

The next concert is *Together We Sing!* It features music by Rachel Portman – who is an Academy Award winner for her score for the film *Emma* – Anton Bruckner, Morten Lauridsen, Gabriel Fauré, Randall Thompson and more. Since we first began singing as a chorus over 40 years ago we have performed our main concerts in St Andrew’s and St Cuthman’s Church, Steyning and we return to our home church for this concert on **Saturday 6 June 2026 at 7:30 pm.**

The concert takes its title from a line in Rachel Portman’s and Nick Drake’s *The Gathering Tree*, written for the *Last Night of the Proms* in 2025. The programme features a wide range of works which explore ideas of togetherness, hope, kindness, joy and

renewal in all their forms, shapes and disguises from Fauré’s *Cantique de Jean Racine* to Caldwell Ivory’s *Ain’t No Grave Can Hold My Body Down* by way of Bruckner’s *Locus Iste* and Christopher Tin’s *Hope is a Thing with Feathers* together with a guest appearance by

a talented, prize-winning, local young flautist.

Tickets at £15 will be available from Canon Nigel after most 9.30 services at Steyning, or visit the new website at www.chanctonburychorus.org.

Nigel Hartley



My Cloud of Witnesses - Defenders of “Life in All its Fulness” (John 10:10)

PART 6. IS RELIGION A THREAT TO PEACE?

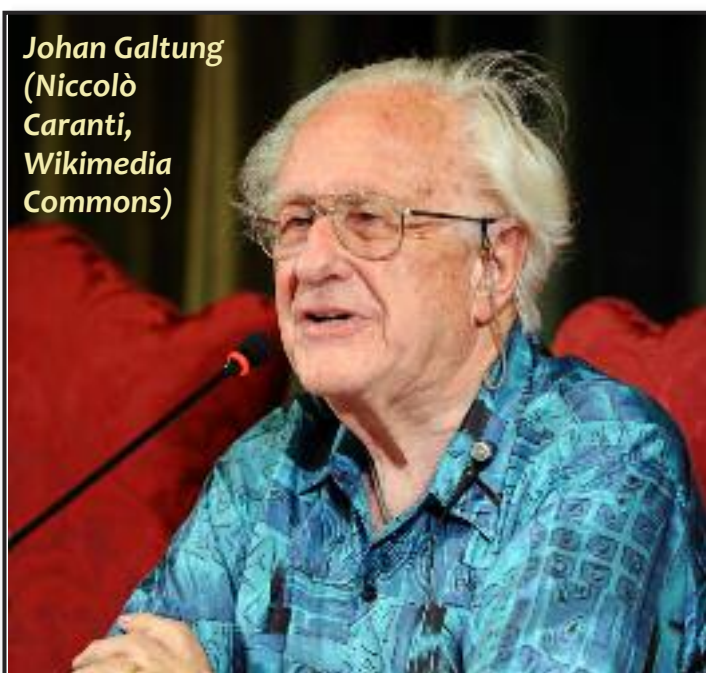
Critics of the church and other religious organisations often maintain that religion is mainly or solely responsible for wars, social religious and ethnic tensions, and even environmental destruction. I would reply that the secular ideologies do not have such a good record either.

There is indeed an appalling history of the destructive power of religion, but some quick observations are in order. My view, after long study of the subject, is that religion can indeed be used to foment or harden divides into hatred and armed conflict. But at its best, religious motivation and commitment can be a source of genuine reconciliation. Religious identity can go very deep and be used or abused. It is hard to imagine Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Desmond Tutu without that religious and ethical grounding, or even to think of them as

purely secular leaders.

It is also the case, as Norwegian peace researcher Professor Johan Galtung has often said, that religions have a hard or exclusive side, and a soft or inclusive side. The mystical element in faith is usually more oriented towards peace and acceptance of others, whereas the dogmatic side is usually more hardline and exclusive. Galtung goes further and argues that monotheistic faiths tend to be more hardline than other faiths, although one can even find examples of Buddhism or Hinduism which are anything but peace-loving.

In terms of ultimate salvation, I have no privileged or final wisdom to offer on how different religious faiths fit together. Such passages as Isaiah 65: 17-25, Romans 8 and Revelation 21 strongly suggest that there is a continuity between this existence and the ‘new heaven and new earth’ which is spoken about. Where I feel on much safer ground is in arguing for ethical cooperation on such issues as justice, peace and environmental protection. Professor Hans Küng memorably argued that there cannot be world peace without peace between the world religions. He and his colleagues have done great work in seeking to formulate a ‘global ethic’ which endeavours to maximise the overlap in standards of behaviour and to draw out common ethical teachings among the world religions. There are many global,



Johan Galtung
(Niccolò Caranti, Wikimedia Commons)

Revd Dr Wesley Ariarajah
(from own website)



national and local interfaith bodies which seek better understanding and contribute to the development of good societies.

The Sri Lankan Methodist, Professor Wesley Ariarajah who worked on interfaith issues for many years at the World Council of Churches, profoundly illuminated another aspect of this issue for me. Often in situations of ethnic, racial and religious tension, when secular politicians realise their own inability to find solutions late in the day, they call on religious leaders to plead for reconciliation, de-escalation and calm.

As just one of the positive reasons for interreligious dialogue, Ariarajah noted that religious leaders have to start early in building respect and trust with their counterparts in other faiths. If serious tensions arise, it is too late to begin

then. Once the killing starts, religious leaders are usually called upon by their community to act as chaplains to their own side. They often do that.

In recent months I have found it helpful to keep in mind a Palestinian theologian whom I know, Revd Mitri Raheb. Mitri is much in demand internationally as an authentic Palestinian Christian voice. When he was in Germany working for his PhD on the history of his Lutheran Church, he read very widely to understand the Holocaust and the need to move beyond the Christian history of anti-Semitism. Since his return to the Holy Land, he has worked as a pastor to his congregation in Bethlehem, engaged in dialogue with Jews and Muslims, and founded a Palestinian university. In the resources below you can find an excellent address that he made in Vienna on religion and the current conflict. In just 10 minutes he criticises the tendency to put religion and divine rights above human rights, whether this is the Russian patriarch endorsing the invasion of Ukraine, ISIS waging war in the name of Islam, or Netanyahu using I Samuel 5:13 to endorse ethnic cleansing. He points out that in the Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy books, one can find texts to justify war or conversely prophetic calls to peacemaking, depending on which texts one selects. He argues persuasively that Gaza is a turning point. In a similar way

FURTHER RESOURCES

Hans Küng, 'Global Responsibility; In search of a new world ethic', SCM Press, 1991.
Mitri Raheb. The ten minute Vienna talk summarised in the article can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/brightstarsbethlehem/videos/727006223413730>
Mitri's official website with many of his presentations and information about his work can be found here: <https://www.mitriraheb.org/>



Revd Mitri Raheb (own website)

in which Christian theologians had to reflect systematically on anti-Judaism after the Holocaust, he now calls on Jewish theologians to remove any trace of demonising Arabs, Muslims and Palestinians from their faith and practice. There are Jewish theologians whose works are brave initiatives in this direction, including Marc Ellis (see *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, first published in 1987). A few years ago, one of the Cuthman Lectures at Steyning was given by Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok, the author of *The Palestinian State: A Jewish Justification*.

In his brief Vienna address, Mitri Raheb says the Palestinians have not lost their faith in God/Allah, but rather question their faith in humanity. He does not see the answer in the European secularising tendency to demonise religion and blame it for most if not all conflicts. He rejects the simplistic idea that armed conflict is solely because of religious extremists. The conflict in the Holy Land is a case in point. As he remarks, before 1982 there was no Hezbollah, before 1988, there was no Hamas. The seeds of the present conflict

were sown far earlier – events such as the Balfour declaration of 1917 have to be taken into account.

Mitri concludes by arguing that religion can be part of the problem or part of the solution. What is needed is a just political programme supported by politicians and civil society. Religion never replaces political accountability. Religious thinkers must work for a just peace.

Swedish environmental activist, Greta Thunberg called her autobiographical memoir *No-one is too small to make a difference*.

At the other end of the scale, David Attenborough has demonstrated that no-one is too old to make a difference. At the age of 99, he produced a remarkable documentary just before the 2025 international conference on the oceans showing the tragic damage done by huge bottom-trawling factory ships. It is wonderful that such people do not settle for the comfortable life or rest on their achievements.

From Brazilian social movements, I learned the saying: “One stalk of sugar cane is nothing, but together we make a whole field.” In the crises of today, to continue Australian biologist Charles Birch’s Titanic metaphor, “It is all hands on deck.”

When we were at a recent demonstration someone I know stopped and asked me: “What can one person do?” I do not seem to run out of ideas – but I do not know which may work. Faith means doing things in spite of the fact that you cannot necessarily see the positive impact.

Roger Williamson

Supreme Mental Health Involves a Spiritual Dimension

After formal baptism as an infant, raised in a family adrift of religion, I was blessed in childhood to come under the influence of four devout Christian women. My godmother, Emmy, offered sustained support and guidance. A neighbour, whose last name was in fact 'Christian', took me under her wing and taught me to read before I had even entered nursery school. Miss Laura Sparshott, my class teacher at the age of seven, taught us the hymn *Firmly I believe and truly, God is three and God is one, and I next acknowledge duly, manhood taken by the Son*; and bid us sing it every day. Finally, for four years at boarding school, our scripture teacher, Elizabeth Waddy, took her class through the Bible, making the Old and New Testament stories come alive. Miss Waddy, clearly in love with Jesus, had no difficulty in making us love him too.

Like many people raised in the Anglican faith, I stopped going to church in my teens, after leaving school and starting my medical studies at Cambridge. Like only a modest percentage of those who do this, however, I resumed attending services in my thirties, and continue worshipping regularly to this day.

In my twenties, in Australia, as a doctor training to become a psychiatrist, I was struck by the apparent absence anywhere of a comprehensive overview of good mental health; but knew intuitively that this was more than a lack of symptoms. In attempting over the



The Christening party. Larry is in the arms of his godmother, Emmy Weisters. His mother is next to her. The photograph was taken by Larry's father

ensuing years to develop a better understanding of the issue, I delved further into the wisdom of several world faiths, and became convinced early on of the need to include a spiritual dimension of human experience and understanding in my overview; if only because, from the psychological perspective, spirituality is important in giving a person's life meaning and a sense of purpose.

As a Christian psychiatrist, living in a predominantly secular, materialist society, alongside colleagues and working with patients from all the world's different religions, or with no religion at all, it has been necessary to be circumspect; and it helped to develop a neutral kind of language, one of universal spirituality without direct religious connotations. It also helped to differentiate the other dimensions of human experience that make up the

whole, so I adopted a scheme consisting of five in total:

- Physical (energy and matter) – the miracle of existence
- Biological (organs and organisms) – the miracle of life
- Psychological (mental activity) – the miracle of consciousness
- Social (relationships) – the miracle of love
- Spiritual (souls and the sacred) – the miracle of unity

These are distinguishable but not separate, being seamlessly interlinked, overlapping and flowing into one-another, with the spiritual dimension pre-eminent as an originating principle, creating, linking and shaping the other four. Supreme mental health cannot therefore be separated from physical, social and spiritual health.

Another strand of my scheme evolved from James Fowler's work on faith development throughout life. The crunch point for many revolves around this dilemma: whether to be guided in one's thoughts and behaviour either by a strong desire to conform and retain a sense of belonging, or by the need to feel independent and make up one's own mind about things, including about religion and spirituality.

Beset by curiosity, I was and remain in the latter camp. In one sense, supreme mental health can be thought of as the goal of spiritual growth, characterised by emotional stability and resilience, by joy, compassion and wisdom. As a result, spiritually mature individuals are guided at all times by virtues like kindness, honesty, tolerance, gratitude, forgiveness, humility, courage and hope.



Larry's baptism certificate

To expand on this, let me share a personal experience. My grandfather was cheerful in the hospital when I visited, looking surprisingly well after treatment for a chest infection. As I was leaving, intending to visit the next day, he smiled broadly, held up the four fingers of his right hand, and said, "See you in four years!"

Grandad died peacefully two hours later. What did he mean? Had I only four more years to live? I was only 26 at the time.

As the four year mark approached, increasingly deeply concerned about love, life and death, I had a powerful dream. Reflecting on it the following morning led to a breakthrough in which I felt overwhelmed by love – the unconditional love of a grandparent, his essence lodged blissfully forever in my heart.

Yet, I sensed something more. This was God's love flooding my consciousness, bringing not only utter joy and serenity, but also the incontrovertible awareness of my seamless connection to everyone else; past, present and to come, despite any

and all apparent differences. I felt equally connected to all living creatures, to the fabric of the planet and to the entire universe. For days, I was in a state of grace, fully attuned to the wisdom afforded by a profound epiphany that all was sacred, inviolable, and to the logic that bringing harm to anyone or anything, even intending such harm, inevitably has destructive consequences for the perpetrator. Likewise, intending and doing good, helping others and caring for the natural world, loving God and all creation, these bring benefits

aplenty. As Saint Paul says, “We reap whatever we sow.”

After this dream-induced experience, all fear of death left me, and I was much better orientated to living in the moment. The Holy Spirit had, I would say, set me free.

Larry Culliford

Events and ideas described here can be found in more detail in Larry’s autobiography, ‘Happy as Larry: A Psychiatrist’s Quest for Mental Health and Wellbeing’ (New Generation Publishing, 2025).

Steyning History Society

The last meeting of the Steyning History Society’s current programme year will be held on Wednesday 13 May 2026 and will start with our short AGM, after which there will be a talk entitled ‘Legacy of Empire’ by Peter Crowhurst. Our meetings are held at the Steyning Centre (on the second Wednesday of each month from September through to May). You are welcome to arrive from 7:30pm. Our AGM will commence promptly so that we will be able to start the presentation around 8pm. The talk will run through for about an hour, with no break. Visitors are welcome to come and listen to the talk (visitor’s fee £5). Steyning History Society will then take a break until September 2026, when our new programme of talks for the Society year will commence.

Steyning Society

15 May, at the Steyning Centre,
7:30pm
Dr Janet Pennington

SIDESADDLE TRAVELS IN ENGLAND WITH CELIA FIENNES

Celia Fiennes, an independent-minded lady, travelled on horseback round England between 1682 and 1712 – including a couple of trips into Sussex.

She noted the local industries and enjoyed her beer and wine, staying with relatives and friends, or at inns.

She usually had a maid or two with her, and always had her own sheets. Was she the ‘fine lady upon a white horse’ of Banbury Cross?



(note: The talk by Chris Hare on Folk Song which was originally scheduled for 15 May will now be given on 19 June)

The Sussex Kelp Recovery Story



Kelp and juvenile fish © Dan Smale

Five years ago, the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project was born. The story starts with seaweed.

Kelp, a large brown seaweed, used to be plentiful off the Sussex coast. Imagine this forest of the deep, creating a habitat for marine wildlife. Black Sea Bream would dig and spawn in gravel nests. Blue Mussels would provide a grounding for the kelp to attach to, and engineer further resources for others, like starfish and plaice.

The chalk reef outcrops would writhe with life; scuttling spider crabs, swaying ethereal-looking piddocks and the occasional fin-flap of an Undulate Ray. Seals would benefit from these supreme hunting grounds. From above, gannets would spear the surface to take their fill

of the abundant beneath-the-waves buffet. And so, safely and sustainably, could we.

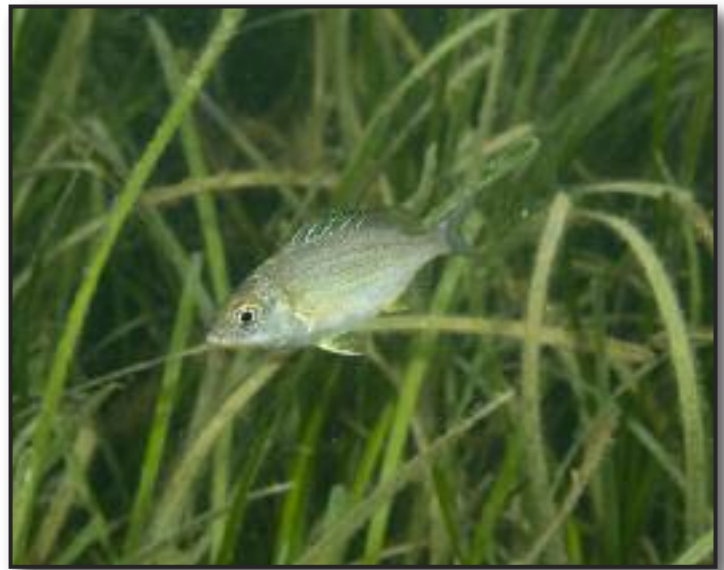
In the 1980s things changed. Storms, marine heatwaves and poor water quality had a negative effect, and persistent damage has been caused by intensive trawling for commercial fishing. This indiscriminate practice decimated the biodiversity of the seabed. By the end of the century, 96% of Sussex kelp was lost, and with it, a whole ecosystem wiped out, in repeated, traumatic acts of destruction. All happening under the waves; beneath our noses, yet out of sight.

But some people did notice. Sussex IFCA formed a case for a Nearshore Trawling Byelaw, and production

company Big Wave created *Help our Kelp*, a film narrated by Sir David Attenborough. Other organisations joined the fight, and a campaign of the same name was launched.

It worked. In March 2021, trawling was prohibited from 304 square kilometres of the Sussex coast. The byelaw is one of the largest in the UK. The collective became the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project: twelve organisations*, co-ordinated by Sussex Wildlife Trust, who have continued to monitor and advocate for the recovery of our seabed.

Benefits are underway; Black Sea Bream and Blue Mussels are on the increase. But nature takes time to recover. These five years have been focused on laying the groundwork to enable the steady return of these great



Black Sea Bream © Paul Naylor

forests and their inhabitants. Rewilding our ocean, piece by piece. With patience and collaboration, the story of our Sussex shores gets wilder each year. Although it started it all, really, kelp is just the beginning.

Kerry Williams: Communications Officer - Conservation, Sussex Wildlife Trust



Spiny Starfish on kelp © Paul Naylor

*Sussex Wildlife Trust, Blue Marine Foundation, Zoological Society of London, Queen Mary University of London, University of Brighton, Adur & Worthing Councils, Sussex Underwater, Big Wave Productions, Sussex IFCA, University of Exeter, University of Sussex

STEYNING PARISH CHURCH - Services for May

Every Sunday

- 8am 1662 Holy Communion Service
- 9:30am Sung Eucharist each Sunday with choir, **except on** Sunday 17 May, with the Music Group: a simpler communion service for all ages, and on **Sunday 31 May**, when there will be an Ecumenical Steyning Festival service (see p5).
- 6pm Evening service:
First Sunday (3 May): Reflections, a quiet, peaceful evening service, entitled 'Thankfulness'
Second Sunday (10 May) Fire Pit service (outside by the tower, in the porch if wet)
Second (and Fifth, 10 and 31 May) Sunday: said BCP / 1662 Evening Prayer service
Third Sunday (17 May) Choral Evensong, BCP / 1662, with choir and organ
There is *no Taizé service on 24 May* (Steyning Festival – and because of the Festival service, no 9:30am service on 31 May)

Every Wednesday

- 11:30am Said Holy Communion (Common Worship)
(Last Wednesday, 27 May; with prayers for healing)

ST JAMES'S, ASHURST - Services for May

Sundays

- 11am First Sunday (3 May) Zoom Matins
- 10:30am Second Sunday (10 May) Family Service with Baptisms
Fourth Sunday (24 May) Holy Communion

VICAR OF STEYNING ST ANDREW'S & ST CUTHMAN'S AND RECTOR OF ST JAMES'S ASHURST

The Revd Mark Heather LLB BA , Tel: 01903 879877

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01903 813276; office@steyningparishchurch.org; www.steyningparishchurch.org

Office Manager: to be appointed

Parish Office open: Monday to Thursday 10am to midday