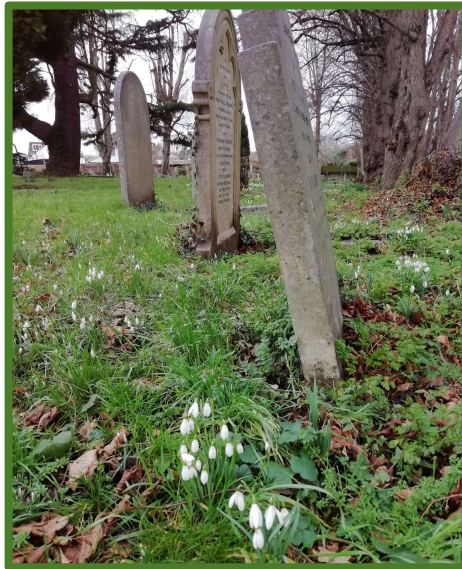


# St Mary's News

February 2023



## *Includes ....*

Living in Love and Faith – the Revd Tony Rindl

The Importance of Talking – Lesley Gray

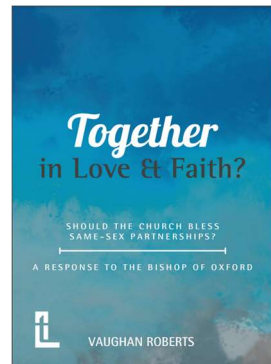
Watford Fairtrade Town News – Brian Mee

*... and much more!*

## Living in Love and Faith

When I first arrived in Watford ten years ago, I was asked on my very first Sunday what my thoughts were on the redefinition of marriage, namely the inclusion of same sex marriages. My reply was along the lines of 'you will not catch me out so early into my ministry in Watford'. I instinctively knew that whatever I said would not have pleased everyone. Ten years on I don't envy the Archbishop of Canterbury as he is pressed with the same question and at the same time has responsibility for preserving unity within the worldwide Anglican communion. Perhaps this was in the forefront of his mind in recently quoting Thomas Aquinas; "We must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject, for both have laboured in the search for truth, and both have helped us in finding it."

A couple of months ago it was suggested by a member of the PCC that we might find it helpful to read Bishop Steven Croft's essay, *Together in Love and Faith – personal reflections and next steps for the church*. Whilst I do think it is extremely helpful, I think the response by the Revd Vaughan Roberts, Rector of St Ebbe's Church, Oxford, is also a helpful contribution to the discussion. (Thank you, Kirsten for pointing this out to me.)



Rather than present the arguments for and against I commend both essays to you. Whilst I am more sympathetic to Bishop Steven Croft's position, I have the greatest respect for what Vaughan Roberts has to say and his own personal integrity. Indeed, if and when, the Church of England allows same sex marriages to take place in its churches then, as Bishop Croft says, we need to *recognise that the holding to the traditional view of marriage and human sexuality remains a legitimate and honourable position within the Church of England.*

In his essay Bishop Steven described himself as having come from an orthodox theological position albeit one generous towards those of differing views. His position has clearly changed and his reasons for doing so are outlined at length in his essay. I think for me what was most helpful were his reflections on Jesus' words found in Matthew's Gospel which come towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

*Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

*(Matthew 7:17-20)*

With that in mind Bishop Steven recognises (and so do I) that many who identify as homosexual and are in loving same sex relationships can and do exercise fruitful ministry. The hurt and pain caused by denying those wishing to enter a same sex marriage and have the same recognition for their loving relationships as heterosexual couples is harmful and damaging. It does not bear good fruit.

In essence at the heart of our theology are our deepest held beliefs in who God is. Making judgement on another human being based

purely and simply on their sexual orientation especially as science seems to suggest that this is something that happens when we are fearfully and wonderfully created in the mother's womb - is for me at odds with my deeply held belief in a God of love. Surely God did not create any of us to be discriminated against or to be condemned. We are after all unique and precious in the sight of God, an unrepeatable miracle.

The Archbishop admits that what is being proposed, namely that we can bless same sex marriages but not conduct same sex



marriages in church will be for some a step too far and for others not far enough. Even those of us who remain uncertain will be baffled by this proposal.

Of course, any shift in how we interpret Scripture is never easy and indeed should never be taken lightly or without serious thought. However, I do wonder how much of our interpretation is down to social

conditioning. Not that this is wrong as such - an interpretation may well have seemed appropriate at a different time in history, but surely Scripture and traditional teaching has to be accompanied by experience and reasoning especially when society's understanding on subjects such as human sexuality develop. There are times when the Bible is very clear as to how we should act but at other times there is an element of ambiguity that invites interpretation and reflection - the opportunity to work out what it means for us in our own time and context. The Living God's Love prayer which has accompanied us over the past decade speaks of generosity and joy, imagination and courage perhaps that is what is required here.

Please do pray for the members of General Synod as this matter is discussed this month recognising that the impact will be challenging for many. Let us also remember that we are called to live as people of grace and truth. The Lord Jesus is faithful! Let's keep our focus, too, on the 56 million people in England who need to encounter Jesus.

*The Revd Tony Rindl*



*Extra note from Tony:*

Living in Love and Faith: in 2022 the Church of England completed its biggest ever consultation on sexuality and might soon change its stance on gay marriage. The PCC recently noted that Steve Croft, the Bishop of Oxford, has written a booklet *Together in Love and Faith: Personal Reflections and Next Steps for the Church* which sets out the reasons why he has changed mind on the issue, examines whether the relevant scriptures support gay marriage and explains possible next steps for the Church of England. It can be purchased for £2.50 from [Together in Love and Faith](https://www.anglican.org) [anglican.org](https://www.anglican.org)

I have also found the response by the Revd Vaughan Roberts, the Minister at St Ebbes Church, Oxford, to be a helpful contribution to the discussion. Maybe you have already read his response? I hope that you will be able to follow the link below:

[https://2713aced-d665-4866-bcd0-8f7d81f2f5fe.usrfiles.com/ugd/2713ac\\_4f9a3958db324778b807e9507fb7c1b3.pdf](https://2713aced-d665-4866-bcd0-8f7d81f2f5fe.usrfiles.com/ugd/2713ac_4f9a3958db324778b807e9507fb7c1b3.pdf)

## Report of Parochial Church Council

The following report summarises some of the matters considered at the Council's meeting of 9th January.

*Christmas Flowers:* The Council was grateful to all those who made donations. Thanks to their generosity there was not only enough to buy flowers for Christmas but a surplus of £15 which will be put towards flowers at Easter.

*Finance:* Efforts to bring St Mary's book-keeping fully up-to-date continue to be made. The financial report up to the end of August showed that while there had been a substantial increase in income for hires of the Church Centre, planned giving was lower than forecast and expenditure on items such as gas and electricity had increased. Consequently, St Mary's remains on course for another significant deficit at the end of 2022. Following our request for financial advice and assistance to the Archdeacon in December, the Vicar, our Churchwarden Peter Dean and others had arranged to meet with Colin Bird from the Diocesan Board of Finance on 16th January. The Council also passed a number of resolutions to improve financial governance.

*Budget 2023:* As records were not yet fully up to date for 2022, the Council would ask Colin Bird for advice on the budgetary process for 2023.

*Pre-School:* Watford Council had been approached to see what action might be taken to deal with the risk of children climbing over the low fence in the garden area, given the conservation restrictions. It had no objections of principle to the hedge being taller and the Pre-School Committee will consider and put forward solutions (e.g. internal willow screening, higher fence).

*Climate Change:* Following a conversation Roger Courtney had at the launch of Watford Council's sustainability strategy, the firm that Watford Council use for insulation and solar panel installations has visited St Mary's and will be submitting a proposal for a solar panel array here.

*Audio-visual issues:* Two church members wrote to the Council raising issues about the updated AV system that will replace the present system in the Spring. An aspect of particular concern was whether ZoomChurch would be continued for the sick and elderly who can't attend church. The Council agreed to discuss all these issues nearer the time when the updated system is installed. ZoomChurch will continue for the time being. The Video-Conferencing Policy was revised and approved.

*Churches Together in Watford:* The Council joined the *Snapshot Scheme* which is designed to help churches in Watford get to know and support one another better.

*Health & Safety:* Anthony Gray will set up a new Health & Safety Committee.

Once approved, full minutes are normally available on the St Mary's website: <https://www.stmaryswatford.org/pcc>.

If you wish to send correspondence to the PCC please send it to the PCC Secretary, Marcus Jones (email: [ttekcos@aol.com](mailto:ttekcos@aol.com)).

*Marcus Jones*

# The Importance of Talking



The month of February marks 'Time to Talk Day' and 'Children's Mental Health Week', so for this month my Safeguarding focus is on mental health and how we can build a more mentally healthy community.

*Time to Talk Day* is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February. It is run by *Mind* and *Rethink Mental Illness* and was launched in 2014. The day is all about creating supportive communities by having conversations with family, friends, or colleagues about mental health. We all have mental health, by talking about it we can support ourselves and others. Recent research shows how important open conversations in communities are to support everyone's mental wellbeing. One in four of us will experience a mental health problem in any given year. Can we create a church where it is 'ok to not be ok'? The more we talk about mental health, the more the stigma around mental health problems is reduced, empowering others to seek help when they need it. How often are we honest with each other about how our week has 'really' been and how often are we ready for someone to respond to our questions with anything other than 'good' or 'alright'. The depth of our conversations are important and we should be seeking to ask someone how their week had 'really' been.

Here are some top tips for talking about mental health from the organisation:



- Ask questions and listen
- Consider the timing and location of the conversations
- Don't instantly try and fix it
- Treat the person the same as always
- Be patient
- Revisit the conversation

*Children's Mental Health Week* runs 6-12<sup>th</sup> of February. This year's theme is *Let's Connect*. Encouraging children and adults to look at how we can build better connections with those around us in healthy, meaningful, and rewarding ways. When we have healthy connections – to family, friends, and others – this can support our mental health and our sense of wellbeing. And when our need for rewarding social connections is not met, we can sometimes feel isolated and lonely – which can have a negative impact on our mental health. Many resources can be found on the organisation's website for both schools and families to use at home.

Connecting with the children in our church family, letting them be heard and allowing them to feel connected is important and something many of you do so well already. I know from a safeguarding perspective some may be cautious to approach or speak to the children in our congregation. But, be reassured, that in a public area, in the presence of other adults, this is welcomed (although do not be offended if they are more interested in the biscuits or running around).

Here are some top tips to connect better with children:

- Connect with the child in an everyday way eg over a drink and snack
- Talk to the child about their friends
- Take an interest in the child's world
- Find time to connect

My hope is that in February we can all take some time to talk to others, perhaps deepen the connections we already have, get to know people we have not spoken with before, spend time enjoying each other's company and acknowledge the importance of mental health and wellbeing for all of us, however young or old.

If you ever feel like you need extra support for you or someone you know, then please do speak to me and I would be happy to help and signpost you to relevant, specific resources for further help.

*Lesley Gray*  
(Parish Safeguarding Officer)

*Some suggested resources:*

*Time to talk:* [www.timetotalkday.co.uk](http://www.timetotalkday.co.uk)

*Mind:* [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

*Rethink:* [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

*Children's Mental Health Week:*

[www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](http://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)



## Watford Fairtrade Town News

**Fairtrade Fortnight** is coming:  
Monday 27th February to Sunday 12th March!



**The Fairtrade Foundation** recently renewed Watford's status as a Fairtrade Town by accepting that our campaign is still viable and making progress.

**Several events** are planned for Fairtrade Fortnight and all are invited to join in.

Just as the fortnight begins **Albert Tucker, Fairtrade Champion**, will speak at the 5.30pm Evening Encounter Service at St Mary's on 26th February. He will address the issue of Climate Change and its effect on the Fairtrade system. Producer Farmers are being impacted already as temperatures rise and rainfall becomes more and more erratic. Pests and plant diseases spoil crops, reduce harvests and impact incomes for farmers.

**West Herts College Training Restaurant** will lay on two meals with Fairtrade ingredients. Lunch at noon on Friday 3rd March for £10 and Dinner at 6.15pm on Tuesday 7th March for £18 including Fairtrade wine. Call 01923 812464 to book. Menus will be published nearer the time.

We have a **Fairtrade Awareness Raising Stand** in the Harlequin (atria) on Saturday 4th March from 10.00am to 4.00pm and everyone is invited to come and help to raise awareness of Fairtrade for customers or just come for a chat!

On Saturday 11th March at St Luke's in Langley Way, WD17 3EG, a **Quiz Night** with Fairtrade prizes will be held at 7.15 for 7.30pm

start. Our Quiz Master is Graham Hall. Tables of 6, bring your own refreshments, cost is £5 per person, pay at the door. Book a table with Fran on 07909 904872.



**Remember to Choose the World you want by buying Fairtrade products whenever you can! On behalf of Fairtrade Producer Farmers and their families, thank you!**

*Brian Mee*

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## Defibrillator

The Preschool has invested in a defibrillator which is a great addition to not only the preschool but also the Church. It has been mounted to the wall between the Church and the Church Centre. We pray it's not needed, however, should the worst happen it is easily accessible. The machine is very simple to use and when switched on will talk you through what to do. Using the machine increases the chances of survival from just 6% with CPR alone to 74% with a defibrillator, an incredible and potentially life-saving difference.



*From the PreSchool Committee*

## Barbara Cutler

### 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Congratulations

Those of you who have been attending St. Mary's for a few years will remember Barbara Cutler very well. During her years at St. Mary's, she has been very active in the children's work, as a PCC member and churchwarden, and for many years she was also the Lay Chair of the Watford Deanery....and probably many other roles as well! She celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at Brunswick Court Care Home with a select gathering of family and friends. She had a delicious celebratory cake intricately



decorated with trees to reflect her support of the Woodland Trust. Barbara has been a member of St. Mary's all her life, but since moving to Brunswick Court a few years ago has been unable to attend church services. However, she appreciates the regular services of Holy Communion held at the care home. She is so grateful to all those who remembered her birthday and sent cards and gifts.

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Answers to the photos (see back page):

- 1 a fabric leaf from the altar frontal
- 2 part of the old clock mechanism in the Essex Chapel
- 3 detail from a wooden chair back near the high altar
- 4 a brass cross from the font
- 5 a silhouette of a WWI soldier in the Essex Chapel
- 6 an alcove in the south wall behind the piano
- 7 a knob on the end of the organ bench
- 8 part of a brass figure displayed on the north wall

# The Effects of Climate Change on World Coffee Harvests



Climate Changes such as drought, higher temperatures, erratic rainfall and floods cause damage to coffee plants world-wide. There are two main coffee varieties, 'Robusta', used to make instant coffee and 'Arabica', which constitutes about 70% of world coffee production.

**In Central America**, a significant coffee producing area, an outbreak of a disease called "leaf rust", which is also endemic in **Africa**, is linked to the climate becoming wetter and warmer at altitude. It has severely damaged coffee crops. **Peruvian** coffee farmers' plantations at high altitude in the Andes are having to change to growing tea, which is more resilient at warmer temperatures, but not so profitable. A prolonged period of drought and some unseasonably cold weather in **Vietnam**, the world's second biggest coffee producer, has cut back crop forecasts for 'Robusta' beans.

Climate related events in **Brazil**, the world's biggest coffee grower responsible for about 40% of global production, are causing major problems. Last year only 10% of usual rainfall in **South-Eastern Brazil** accompanied by unusually high temperatures caused much reduced coffee harvests.

## **Climate Change also threatens African coffee production**

The future for coffee is gloomy. About 60% of wild coffee strains worldwide are in danger of extinction, according to a study by the US journal *Science Advances*. About 170 million bags (each of 60kg) of coffee are produced annually according to the International Coffee Organisation.

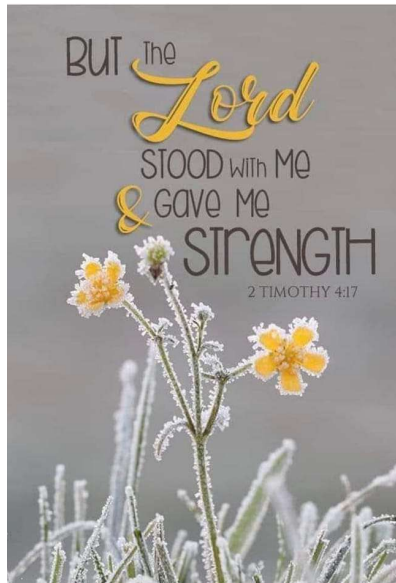
Coffee farmers like Mercy Njambi in Kenya have long felt a worrying downward trend: “We used to produce a lot of coffee,” she said pointing to the red coffee cherries dotting the plants on her farm in Muranga County in central Kenya. “What we are harvesting now is nothing compared to 10 or 20 years ago.”



**Fairtrade coffee production** is affected by climate change and will seriously affect sustainability of coffee co-operatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**They need our support by buying their products.  
Please choose Fairtrade if you can!**

*Brian Mee*

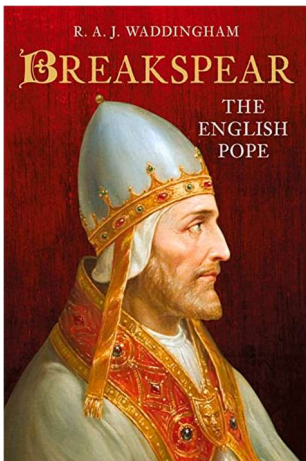


## Book Review

# Breakspear – The English Pope

It's one of those quiz questions you come across occasionally – who was the only English Pope? Well, you may know the answer – he was born Nicholas Breakspear and became Pope Adrian IV in 1154 but only for five years as he died in 1159...and he was born in Bedmond in the Parish of Abbots Langley.

Last year a book was published about his life from humble beginnings – he was allegedly rejected as a postulant by St Albans Abbey – to the very top of the medieval church. He went to France and joined the Augustinian order rising to become an Abbot in the 1140s. He was noticed by Pope Eugenius and sent to Catalonia, Denmark and Norway as Papal Legate. On his return in 1154 Pope Eugenius had died and, probably due to his diplomatic skills, he was elected the new Pope by the College of Canons. But it was not an easy ride and he spent much of his pontificate struggling for control of Rome, caught between conflicting claims of Frederick II, the Holy Roman Empire and William, King of Sicily. But he did make significant achievements during his short reign.



Space doesn't allow it here, but if you want to find out more about both Breakspear's life but also the history of the time, then please do read this book by Adrian Waddingham – and then wonder if there will ever be a second English Pope!

*Breakspear: The English Pope*  
RAJ Waddingham  
The History Press (£25)  
ISBN 978-0-7509-9954-0



## Church Flowers

Caroline Jones, Rosemary Courtney and Hilary (Tilly) Elliott would like to say a very big 'Thank you' to all those who so generously gave donations for the purchase of the Christmas flowers for us to arrange.

We are so blessed. From having nothing, money came in for us to purchase the flowers and the shortfall in the cost came in after we had bought them with £15 to spare. Hallelujah! This will be put aside for Easter.



## Services

The Church is usually open each week

Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 3.00pm  
and on Saturday between 12.00noon and 2.00pm

### Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said) in church  
*on 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday only each month;*

10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom  
*every Sunday;*

5.30pm Encounter in church  
*on 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of month only*

(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

### Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

*(for Zoom links please contact Church Office)*

### Thought for the Week

on our website and on Facebook - based on a bible verse or passage,  
it is a short reflection by one of the leadership team  
for you to think about during the week.

It can be downloaded and listened to whenever and wherever.

Please keep up to date with what is on offer  
via our Facebook page  
or the website [www.stmaryswatford.org](http://www.stmaryswatford.org)

# Who's Who at St Mary's

## Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl  
01923 225189 / 07792 505480  
[tony.rindl@gmail.com](mailto:tony.rindl@gmail.com)

## Churchwarden

Peter Dean  
07876 154387  
[peter.dean@stmaryswatford.org](mailto:peter.dean@stmaryswatford.org)

## Facilities Manager

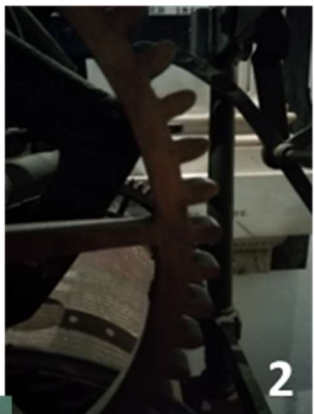
[stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com)

## Church Office

[office@stmaryswatford.org](mailto:office@stmaryswatford.org)  
St Mary's Church, Church Street,  
Watford WD18 0EG  
01923 225189  
Monday and Thursdays

[www.stmaryswatford.org](http://www.stmaryswatford.org)

How well  
do you  
know  
your  
church?!



*Answers on  
page 13*

