

St Mary's News

June 2023



Includes

"See what I see and hear what I hear"

Your New Churchwarden

Making Good Use of the Minibus

... and much more!

“See what I see and hear what I hear”



It began with a conversation I had with our MP, Dean Russell several months ago. It had been an interesting time where I had met with several people who were directly or indirectly effected by the cost-of-living crisis. The most concerning thing about those conversations was the range of people who I had spoken to: I had recently attended a school governors’ meeting; I had had a chat with the lead chaplain at Watford General Hospital; I had spoken with the CEO of a local charity. I could see in each case people I have known for a long time were now facing additional challenges, which may or may not be as a direct result of political decisions. When I said to Dean, “you should see what I see and hear what I hear,” his reply was that I should see what he hears and what he sees. So, the idea was hatched that he would shadow me, and I would shadow him. It took some arranging but on Sunday 14th May Dean came to St. Mary’s and the following day I spent with Dean.

In putting together a suitable programme for Dean it was not a typical Sunday, but more of a snap shot of what I might be involved in throughout the week. The following shows the breakdown of Dean shadowing me.

10.00am meet at St. Mary’s and attend 10.30am service.

12.00noon attend a short PCC meeting

1.00pm meet with Iranian Christians over lunch

2.30pm attend an event with the Hong Kong community in Watford held at Cassiobury School

4.00pm attend a Growing Leaders session held in church

6.00pm meet with Geert Tap, the newly appointed Town Centre Chaplain

7.00pm a brief meeting with Tim Whittaker, the chair of Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Partnership.

The day did not include the time I spend in prayer and preparation at the beginning of the day, nor did it include any home visits or hospital visits that can also form part of a typical day.

I think the first thing to note was how much Dean and I share in common. His observation of the PCC meeting for example, was that it could have been any Tory party committee meeting. The meeting with Iranian Christians was on this occasion a listening exercise but I know that a large amount of casework that Dean's office is involved in relates to asylum seekers and refugees. That said, I think it was good for Dean to listen to our Iranian brothers and sisters and the range of challenges they have to face.

The event hosted by the Hong Kong community illustrated the large overlap between the work that I am involved with that also relates to Dean. I had been asked by Bishop Alan if I could attend as he was unavailable. Dean would probably have been there in his capacity as MP even if he wasn't shadowing me.

The Growing Leaders Session looking at calling, community, competence, character, all resonated with Dean's business background, and it was good to have his input into what was essentially a catch-up session with the group who are attending this current course.

It was good to seek refreshment in one of the bars in Watford and have a conversation with Geert, our new Town Centre Chaplain. It was essentially about life, about people and how we can play our part in developing flourishing communities and especially the spiritual dimension.



The meeting with Tim Whittaker was again an insight into the governance and management of a small but very active charity such as WTRRP.

On Monday morning Dean picked me up at the fairly civilised time of 9.15am and an opportunity to first accompany Dean on a couple of visits locally in Watford, and again there was a striking similarity. We visited *Goods for Good* a small locally based charity that has a huge impact in helping other charities and people in need. They have many contacts in the corporate world and when stock becomes surplus to requirements it is donated to *Goods for Good* who then in turn pass it on to worthwhile causes. It is a simple concept but when you consider that much of that stock would otherwise end up in landfill you can see the value in their work. What is received is sorted and then redistributed where the need is. Other local charities such as New Hope and Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Partnership have benefited.

We then joined girls from Watford Grammar School who are part of an environmental group who are collecting litter from the Watford Fields area. As a school governor and Watford Fields being in St. Mary's parish, and with environmental concerns ever higher on our church's agenda, again made this visit highly relevant.



We then drove into London, and I have to say I am very glad I don't have to do that on a daily basis. The reason for driving is sessions in Parliament can last to very late in the evening and therefore public transport becomes unreliable. I was greeted by Imogen an intern working for Dean and was quickly taken through security. I was then taken to the viewing gallery and watched Dean and other MPs raise questions on matters related to the armed forces and the welfare of veterans. It was clear that many MPs are actively involved with their local branch of the Royal British Legion and other support groups. Again, this is something that is developing locally in Watford and last year's Remembrance Sunday is a good

example as I and others worked to re-establish the parade from St. Mary's to the Town Hall.

I then had the privilege of meeting the Ven Patricia Hillas, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons in St. Mary Undercroft, which is the ancient chapel located in the Palace of Westminster and is in many ways the spiritual heart of Parliament. You could say that Patricia acts as the parish priest to the many thousands that work in the Houses of Parliament. Services take place in St. Mary Undercroft on a regular basis, and whilst it is accessible to tourists like me, it is closely guarded as a place of prayer.

A quick visit to Number 10 followed. Unfortunately, I wasn't allowed in whilst Dean attended a function hosted by the Prime Minister. However, it gave me a chance to talk to Imogen and find out more about what goes on behind the scenes and the casework that Dean is involved in and the team that supports him in this work.

I was then fortunate enough to meet up with Andrew Stephenson who is the MP for Pendle in East Lancashire, where I was Team Rector in the Colne and Villages Team Ministry. It was good to see Andrew after so many years, and to see how his political career has developed. I already knew how hard he works for his constituents, even those who clearly didn't vote for him. He would invariably turn up at church functions and from what I see on Facebook still does.

We were joined by Andrew Selous MP who is also Second Church Estates Commissioner, responsible for representing the Church Commissioners in Parliament



l to r: Andrew Stephenson, Tony, Dean, Andrew Selous

and in the General Synod of the Church of England. We often joke about putting the worlds to right but maybe the Church of England is a little more complicated. Andrew is a practicing Christian and there is no doubt he brings his faith into the workplace.

The evening was spent seeing other parts of the Houses of Parliament and getting a sense of what it must be like to work there. At the same time, we had to keep a watchful eye in case Dean was called to vote. Alas this wasn't the case but at least it meant a relatively early finish, but it was still nearly 10.00 in the evening. Just before we left, we bumped into Jess Phillips and Gary Sambrook. The latter is MP for Northfield, Birmingham where I grew up, and he promised me faithfully he would go and visit my mother. It was a lovely moment at the end of the day to be with fellow Brummies in the Palace of Westminster. It was after 11.00pm by the time we got back to Watford.

So, what did I learn from the day? Firstly, what we see on the 10.00pm news is a very small part of what goes on in Parliament. Behind the headlines are 650 members of parliament, each with a dedicated team who work very hard on our behalf, much of their work addressing local needs in the constituencies. Politically we are not always going to agree but that doesn't mean to say we cannot work for the common good. Like all things we begin with prayer, and it really is important we pray for our political leaders, especially Dean as our MP and Peter Taylor our elected Mayor. We are very fortunate to have both serving the needs of the people of Watford.

The Revd Tony Rindl



Your Parochial Church Council for 2023/24

Clergy:	The Revd Tony Rindl
Churchwardens:	Peter Dean Eileen Roby
Deanery Synod: (ex Officio)	Tilly Elliot (Peter Dean)
Diocesan Synod: (ex Officio)	Cathy Honeyman
Elected Members:	Joanna Cooper Roger Courtney Daniella Dan Jumbo Lesley Gray Margaret Greenstreet Marcus Jones (Secretary) Gill Watson Martin Whittick

Thursday Concerts – 12.30pm

8th June Jeremy Chan (WIPC runner up)
15th June to be arranged
22nd June Wind in the Bellows



Your New Churchwarden – Eileen Roby



Having been elected at the last APCM, I have been asked to write a quick note about who I am for those who do not know me. Many will know my husband, Andy, the more sociable of the pair of us who unashamedly goes up to people and introduces himself. If he has not done so yet I am sure

he will do in the near future. I am not like this, but I do like people, honestly!!!

As for me, I did not grow up going to church. I met Christ when I was sixteen and have walked with him since. My first church was a Baptist church and I only started going to an Anglican church when I married in 1985, which was when I started attending St Mary's. I have worshiped at St Mary's off and on since 1985 as we spent some 16 years overseas; Andy working for the government on development and me raising a family and finding work where I could. We have three grown-up daughters and 2 grandchildren who keep us well occupied and remind us of the pleasures that life brings. I am a teacher by profession and will retire at the end of this academic year. I also have a degree in HR which I am sure will come in useful as Churchwarden.

I know Peter and I will work together well as Churchwardens. We've worked together before and although we have different interests and skills these are complementary, or so we believe!!

I hope you'll find that I listen well, weigh things up carefully, talk straight, confront and deal with issues where I can and have a strong sense of right and wrong. A rule-follower by instinct I am not rule-bound - although the job has legal obligations it also has

considerable scope for wise judgement underwritten by love and kindness. Forgive me if I my straight-talking ever offends – Andy is the diplomat in our relationship – and please tell me when that happens, and I will endeavour to make amends.

My hope is that I can help, with Tony, Peter, the PCC etc, our amazing diverse and gifted community become the thriving, green and Christian presence based in but not limited to the heart of Watford, standing up for justice, practicing love and mercy, and above all witnessing to Him.

Please approach me about anything. Until I retire at the end of August, my response may be delayed but this does not mean I do not care or have dodged a question or request.

Eileen Roby

Green Global Lunch



Date for the diary: Green Global Lunch on Sunday 9th July

Rosemary and Roger Courtney warmly invite all at St Mary's to a Green Global Lunch in their weatherproof back garden after church on Sunday 9th July. Please bring food and drink to share that is climate-friendly, and from places you have lived in or visited.

Details to follow but please put the date in the diary!

Children's Group Leaders **needed**

Do you ever wonder where the children go after they've been prayed for in church?

We have 3 groups at the moment for ages 3-6, 7-11, 12-18. We must have a Leader and Helper (with an Enhanced DBS Check for volunteering in Sunday School) in every room.

Would you like to help us?

Please come and see us in the rooms near the Coffee Lounge after the service! We will be there tidying up and don't always get into the Coffee Lounge because we need more help!

The leader for each group prepares the activities using the suggestions on the website "Roots On The Web" and this takes approximately an hour during the week. All the Bibles, books, stationery, craft materials, games and lots of other things are kept in a large walk-in cupboard upstairs. We try to arrive at 10.15am to set up.

The helpers are there to help the children understand and encourage everyone to join in reading, talking, crafts, games, prayers and singing.

Thank you! Looking forward to seeing more of you!

Margaret & Caroline (leading the 3-6 group), Jenny (leading 7-11), Lesley & Daniella (leading the 12-18 group)

What's NEW? We will be running a Social after the evening Encounter Service for ages 14-18. Please come along!

Making good use of the Minibus

Eleven of St Mary's Runners and Walkers piled into the St Mary's Community Minibus outside Alison's house last Bank Holiday Monday and headed to Ashridge for some exercise, nature and, most importantly, brunch at the Hill Farm Café - a walk-in café (...or run-in for some of us).

Expertly driven by Dave Hedges, by 8.15am we had quickly escaped suburban Watford, navigated the sleepy regal town of Berkhamsted, and turned up the Ashridge road in Northchurch by another St Mary's Church. We parked up by Northchurch Common opposite the café. 30-minutes drive and we were in deep rural England - we are so lucky to have the Chilterns on our doorstep.



Six runners (Alison, Victor, Phil, Sarah, Maurice and Andy) and 5 walkers (Liz, Ian, Chang, Dave and Anne) strode out across the common towards Aldbury, accompanied by skylarks and red kites, and doubtless some of the shy fallow deer, but we did not see any.

Those with sharp eyes would have picked up traces of the medieval landscape beneath the big skies and May flowers, and even some trenches used for training soldiers in the First World War. Across the common we went even further back in time as we

reached the Icknield Way – arguably the oldest ancient route in Britain and which stretches across East Anglia’s chalklands.

The runners then took off through the woods (some amazing ancient beeches), past Aldbury in the valley below and up the escarpment to The Ashridge Monument, then right to the Ashridge College and right again back down the slope via Coldharbour Farm to our destination. A clockwise 10k run with barely any tarmac and ending with a herd of deer, and no lost runners. Result!



And then the brunch – Hill Farm Café is highly recommended – not cheap but swiftly served fresh breakfast baps made with local bacon, sausage and eggs, and wonderful coffee. With a safe picnic area and farm animals it is ideal for families as well as a place to end your ablutions.

Best of all was us being able to pile into the minibus – saving the planet a little but also enjoying the journey together and that sense of community you lose in separate cars, and with a generous contribution to the Minibus fund!!!

New Members Welcome

And if you want to join us for future runs and walks why not come along at 8.30am on Saturday mornings. We meet at the Ricky Road entrance to Cassio Park and end with a great breakfast at Alison’s house. Contact Andy on andyroby2001@yahoo.com and 07414 832983 for more info.

St Mary's Pre-School

Two Reasons to Celebrate

Friday 12th May saw a large gathering of staff, children and their parents in party mood at lunchtime. The initial reason for organizing a special morning for the children and a party feast before they went home was to celebrate the Pre-School's 21st birthday. Happily, the date also coincided with Adriana Aitkaci Komorova, the Manager, being allowed to announce officially that Ofsted had rated the setting as **GOOD** in **ALL AREAS** following their inspection in April. This is a particularly pleasing and encouraging outcome for

Adriana who only took over as Manager in September. The rest of her staff (Anita Wenham – Deputy Manager, Lucy Potter, Ahlam Algburi and Bianca Ungurianu) have all joined at various times since September. The most recent only joining at the beginning of this year. We



congratulate Adriana for her professionalism in building such a successful new staff team - a cohesive and happy unit. She has done extremely well to help them achieve so much in such a short time.

Margaret Greenstreet and I were pleased to be able to join the party as representatives of the Pre-School Management Committee. Margaret is the treasurer, and I am the secretary, with Antony Gray also on the committee along with Adriana. The children had obviously had a lot of fun activities during the morning organized by the staff and the room was suitably decorated to provide a party atmosphere with streamers that the children had created and balloons. The children entertained us and their parents with some

lovely action songs before enjoying some wonderful party food that had been prepared most professionally by some of the staff.



Margaret organized a splendid cake which was lit with 21 candles, which of course delighted the children who all wanted to participate in blowing them out.....even before we had a chance to sing “Happy

Birthday”! It was lovely to see the children so happy and settled in Pre-School and to hear how delighted the parents are with all that the staff are providing for their children at such a crucial stage of their development as they prepare them for going on to Nursery school.

It is important that our Pre-School reflects a strong Christian ethos. We embrace its diversity with so many faiths and cultures represented amongst the staff and families, but we are always looking for ways to strengthen the links with St. Mary’s congregation. It was first established in 2002 by members of our congregation, Judith Ballard and Gill Watson following the closure of a playgroup when the leader retired. Since then, the Pre-School has had many ups and downs and changes of leadership but is now in a very good place and future prospects are bright. Do pray for the staff, children and their families. If you would like to be part of the committee or feel able to offer support in any other way you would be very welcome. Margaret, Antony and I will be pleased to speak with you and help you find a way of getting involved.

Keep up the good work Adriana and congratulations to you and all your wonderful staff.

Alison, Margaret and Antony

Olive Mary Knibbs 1922 - 2023

Olive Knibbs was born in Northwood and her family came to Watford in 1926 when she was four years old.

In 1933, aged eleven, she passed the test for the Girls' Grammar School; the fees were three guineas a term. Olive's favourite lesson was P.E., especially she loved climbing ropes. She was in the first netball team and played Centre.

Olive described her academic achievements as "mediocre" but she passed her School Certificate and was very grateful for her Grammar School education.

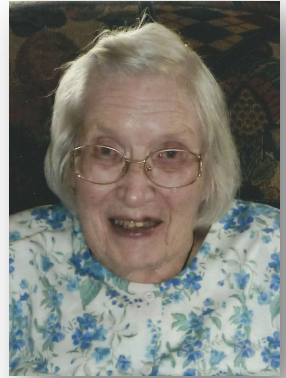
After one term in the sixth form, she found work firstly in the Civil Service and then in several other local offices.

After the war Olive trained as a teacher at Stockwell College in Kent, studying English, Divinity, Music and Art. She taught, firstly at an Elementary School in North London and then for twenty years at Leggatts Way Secondary School in Watford.

Olive's final teaching post was at Nower Hill High School in Harrow. She was Head of the Department for Religious Education and she also had responsibility for assemblies and the Christmas Carol Service.

Olive was a deeply committed Christian and on most Sunday afternoons she was leading a Bible class for the Girl Crusaders' Union. She was very much involved in St Mary's Church and for many years she was a member of the Church Council, also a House Group leader. She was a member of several prayer groups and she has been described as a "Prayer Warrior".

Reflecting on her life and work, Olive said "I think I should have spent more time making my lessons more interesting and less



time on committees and such. Your daily work is where you should be; don't take on too much!"

Olive had very high standards, but she was full of kindness and understanding for all who came her way. One young lady said of her "She was the kindest person I have ever met".

"A long life, well lived."

Barbara Cutler 1933 - 2023



Barbara was born in Watford in 1933, lived in St. Mary's Road and was baptised in St. Mary's Church in March 1933. She had an older sister and twin younger brothers so considered herself to be the middle child. Her association with St. Mary's stretches across her entire life during the past 90 years. She was confirmed at St. Mary's in July 1947. However, her family's connection with this church can be traced back 125 years or more.

Growing up in Watford during the challenging period of the second world war Barbara retained clear memories of events including damage to the East window at St. Mary's. She used to take tea to her father who was a fire warden at the Town Hall. Barbara attended Watford Grammar School for girls, leaving in 1950. One of her school reports summed up well the qualities we remember in Barbara - someone who was "helpful, reliable and courteous".

After leaving school Barbara attended Teacher Training College in Bath and loved her student accommodation in the Royal Crescent. During her teaching career Barbara taught at several Infant schools and was then appointed Deputy Head of a school in

South Oxhey before becoming Headmistress of Belswains Infants School for 20 years until retirement in 1993. She had a passion for books and obtained an Advanced Diploma in Teaching of Reading in 1983.

Barbara has been an active member of St. Mary's serving in many capacities. From 1956 she was an assistant leader of St. Mary's Girl Covenantors and was a faithful servant of this church working with the children. She served on the Parochial Church Council for many years and became a churchwarden. Following retirement she became lay chair of Watford Deanery Synod, a role that she held for several years. She also continued studying during retirement obtaining the St. Albans Certificate of Theology in 2006.

Barbara was also an intrepid traveller and had many adventures. She visited her sister and family in Africa several times, Israel at least three times including a pilgrimage in Jordan and Sinai. Other travels included Santiago de Compostela, the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Norway and the WW1 battlefields.

Barbara embraced all the changes and challenges of the 20th and 21st centuries, including all the new technology as she quickly got to grips with an iPhone and iPad. She enjoyed her independence driving around the country to visit friends and family in various places. Her niece described her as "generous and supportive, interested in all their lives, a great listener and confidante, with a wicked sense of humour at times".

Most of all Barbara had a deep, abiding living faith in Christ as her Lord, which sustained her through some dark times and helped her to stay positive through the last few years of limited mobility and loss of independence. It was lovely to be able to celebrate her 90th birthday at the beginning of the year, but her health was obviously deteriorating.

Well done good and faithful servant!

Welcoming Space

St Mary's has opened the Heydon Chapel as a Welcoming Space on Thursday mornings. Following the rise in gas and electricity prices last year churches, community centres and other public buildings opened their doors to allow people to sit in a warm space rather than paying to heat their home, as well as being able to have a chat with a friendly face. Liz Allan started this at St Mary's, first as a Warm Space, but as the weather has improved hopes to continue it as a Welcoming Space. There is a jigsaw available all week and on Thursdays, between 10.00am and 12.00 noon she adds cards and other table games, as well as offering tea, coffee and chocolate with porridge and fresh fruit. All are welcome - pop in to see her one Thursday - and she can always do with an offer or two of help!



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 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday only each month;

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

5.30pm Encounter in church
on 4th Sunday of month only
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

(for Zoom links please contact the Church Office)

Thought for the Week

on our website - 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, Instagram
or the website www.stmaryswatford.org

Who's Who at St Mary's

Vicar

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