

UNITED BENEFICE OF

ST. MARY'S ST. MARK'S
SLAUGHAM STAPLEFIELD COMMON

Serving the communities of Handcross, Pease Pottage, Slaugham, Staplefield & Warninglid

CONTACT

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 **@stmarysandstmarks**

August & September 2022



Church Services

Weekly services are taking place at our churches, and everyone is welcome.

Our current plans are as follows but they are subject to change. Please look out for email communication, and keep an eye on our social media pages, website, YouTube channel and weekly notice sheet.

August

7 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	All Age
14 th	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10.45am	St Mary's	Communion
21 st	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Informal Praise
28 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship

September

4 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	All Age
6 th	7.45pm	St Mary's	Prayer gathering
11 th	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10.45am	St Mary's	Communion
18 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Informal Praise
25 th	10.30am	St Mary's	United Harvest
	3pm	Staplefield	Pet Service
28 th	10.30am	All Saints	Spotlight

All Saints: Horsham Road, Handcross, RH17 6DF

St Mark's: Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, RH17 6EJ

St Mary's: Staplefield Road, Slaugham, RH17 6AG

The St Mary's services are put onto YouTube and we hope they will be a blessing to those who still cannot attend in person. They can be found here:

https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCBQ0W4r1m39ixogQWR3TxoA?fbclid=IwAR2vLqbm97lq9StSwn8qvgX_vTF11-tg0LV7z80cVFC8BZE034WNbNHhc4

Or search for: United Benefice of St Mary's and St Mark's.

You can subscribe to the sermons as a podcast too. All links are on the website at <https://www.stmarysparish.org.uk/podcasts/> .

Fear and Love

As I write this, we are in the middle of a heatwave. I saw a picture online comparing two pictures of how the weather forecast used to be presented and how it is presented today. In the original image from a previous heat wave in the 1970s, it was a map of the UK with bright yellow sunshines scattered around the country – it was a calm, almost happy, image. The image from today, however, is a picture of the UK covered in an angry red colour with warnings and a lot of exclamation marks – almost inducing a sense of fear of the heat. This for me, seemed to reflect a little the way our media has changed and how so much of our media these days seems to be based around fear. We know that bad news is always what has sold newspapers, but today it seems that fearful headlines are what grab people's attention and encourage them to click to read more.

Alongside the heatwave, the England Women's Football team are about to play a quarter final match in the Euros, and I for one am hoping that they progress. It seems to me that when a national team do well in a sport, some of those achievements begin to move a little higher in the headline list. I still remember well the two weeks of the London 2012 Olympics, where every day we woke up to more headlines of gold medals, records broken and unexpected victories. I genuinely believe that the mood of the nation shifted over that two weeks – not because team GB were doing well, but because the top five headlines each day were good news stories (at least until the day after the closing ceremony).

I am not saying that the news should not be reporting the terrible and often terrifying events that are happening throughout the world; in fact I believe it's incredibly important that it does. I am no media expert, but I can't help but feel that using fear as a tactic is less than helpful at such a time as this.

There is such a thing as good fear, and times when fear can even save our lives as it can protect us from harm and keep us from dangerous situations, but there are also times when we can allow fear to grip us and even control us. This can lead us to a huge number of anxieties and depression that can have a huge impact on a person's life. Over the past few years a huge amount of work has been done to remove the stigma of mental health; there is still some way to go, but we are at least heading in the right direction. The difficulty in the church is that for far too long there has been wrong teaching with regard to depression being seen as a sign of weakness of faith – something that couldn't be further from the truth.

Jesus' desire for all His people is for them to know the wholeness of the healing He offers us. That is a healing inside and out. The Greek word for this, often used in the New Testament, is 'Sozo' which is best translated as 'saved' or 'made whole'. Jesus doesn't want us to live with fear, because He knows that isn't wholeness, but that doesn't mean that those who are living with fear can't or won't be accepted by Him. He invites us all, warts and all, into relationship with Him, and it's with Him that we can work towards being made whole. His perfect love alone has the true power to cast out fear (see 1 John chapter 4), but to know and experience that love, we need to know and experience Him. The more we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and filled with His love, the less space there is for crippling fear. That may require help from others, counselling, wisdom of others who know Him and know us, and maybe even medication – but all these things are an outworking of love casting out fear.

Given that our news headlines would make us believe that there is much to be afraid of, it is understandable that so many are struggling with fear and anxiety today, but too many are struggling alone. Many people who have suffered from anxiety would say that things began to change for them when they talked to someone about their struggles, when they were accepted by someone else, loved into getting the help that they needed – this is all an outworking of God's perfect love casting out fear. For some the healing may be instantaneous, for many, however, it may be a journey, but a journey that Jesus invites you to make with Him and with others and to not have to face alone.

If you are struggling with fear and anxiety as you read this then know these three truths:

1. You are not alone and you don't have to face it alone,
2. Jesus' invitation to you is to come to Him as you are,
3. His perfect love, on display in many different ways, has the power to cast out all fear; as you seek the help you need, open yourself up to that love.

Grace and peace

Rev'd Carl Smith

Rector of St Mary's & St Mark's

Handcross Hardware - New Opportunities

Do you enjoy getting to know people in the area? Do you want to be able to contribute to re-building community after months of isolation? Could you spare some time to help serve customers in the store, or co-run a weekday or evening group meeting of your interest?

As society has almost completely re-opened, and we have begun to feel more settled in our new role managing the store, we feel it is the right time to re-start some community groups from Handcross Hardware's Upper Room.

We have many opportunities of varying commitment and are interested in moulding the future of the Handcross Hardware Project based on your interests and needs. Please call the store on 01444 400212 and ask to speak to Asher, or email dudleyhoustrust@gmail.com, if you have any ideas to put forward or would like more information about volunteering opportunities.

We are excited to see how the project will develop over the coming months and years.

Asher and Damaris (Joint Project Managers)

Parish Magazine

We are in the process of reviewing how we communicate to the wider community through the Parish Magazine. If you are passionate about editing or design and would be interested in being involved in future production and development of the magazine then please speak to Carl Smith or Fae Widdowson on 01444 400221.

Handcross Community Pantry

The Pantry was set up and is run by the churches in our Parish: All Saints in Handcross, St Mary's in Slaugham and St Mark's in Staplefield. Pease Pottage, Woodgate and Warninglid are also in the parish. We offer weekly provisions of food to those within the parish who are in need of help and support.

Many of you have supported us and have been involved, for which we are very grateful. We appreciate all you have donated. During lockdowns, we received food items, Easter eggs and Christmas gifts; new books and games were donated too. We are also part of the Fareshare Scheme where we receive the reduced fresh items from local supermarkets one day a week.

As financial pressures increase, there are more families reaching out for our help and support (including our Ukrainian families).

As a Parish Church, we invite anyone in need to get in touch via our rector Rev Carl Smith at handcrossrectory@gmail.com or on 01444 400221.

You are very welcome to call in to All Saints on a Saturday morning between 10 and 11.30am. Stay for free tea, coffee and biscuits, and chat to someone on our friendly team.

How can you help?

You can donate items at the Handcross Hardware & Craft shop in the High Street, at All Saints on a Saturday morning, or at our churches – St Mary's and St Mark's are open all day.

Items needed: canned meat, tuna, long life milk, cereal, biscuits, tinned vegetables (baked beans, tomatoes, peas, carrots, etc.), custard, rice pudding, tinned fruit.

Washing detergent, washing up liquid and toiletries are very welcome too.

Warninglid is collecting pasta, rice and sauces.

If you would like to be a donation point for collection, or need any other information, then please get in touch.

Thank you again for your support.

Grace and Peace,

The Handcross Community Pantry Team