

UNITED BENEFICE OF

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

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



**CONTACT**

**Church Office:**

01444 400221, [slaughtam@btinternet.com](mailto:slaughtam@btinternet.com)

Office hours: Monday & Thursday 9am-12pm

**Rector, Rev'd Carl Smith:**

01444 400221, [handcrossrectory@gmail.com](mailto:handcrossrectory@gmail.com)

 [@stmarysandstmarks](https://www.facebook.com/stmarysandstmarks)

*January 2023*

## Church Services in January

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.

1 <sup>st</sup>	10am	All Saints	Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7.45pm	All Saints	Prayer gathering
8 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10.45am	St Mary's	Communion
15 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Informal Praise
22 <sup>nd</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	All Saints	Spotlight
29 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Café Church

**Everyone is welcome!**

*All Saints: Horsham Road, Handcross, RH17 6DF*

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

*St Mary's: Staplefield Road, Slaughtam, 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=IwAR2vLqbms97lq9StSwn8qvgX\\_vTF11-tg0LV7z80cVFC8BZE034WNbNHhc4](https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCBQ0W4r1m39ixogQWR3TxoA?fbclid=IwAR2vLqbms97lq9StSwn8qvgX_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/>.

## **Weekly events – come along!**

### **FIRST STEPS**

Baby and toddler group  
9.15am on Wednesdays (term time)  
Upper Room, Handcross Hardware

### **CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS**

Art group  
10am on Fridays  
St Mary's, Slaughtam

# HOPE

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

As we start a new year, Jen and I are struck again by the changes which we have experienced over our 72 years. Apart from obvious things like technological advances (personal computers, mobile phones and digital time-keeping devices were unheard of throughout our school days) there are less obvious changes – like the effects of climate change.

But the changes in our lifetime are insignificant compared with the huge changes in our world over the period of recorded history.

But one thing is absolutely not changing. Human suffering is as grotesque and universal today as it has been since the earliest days of recorded history. In AD 155, Polycarp, aged 86 years, Bishop of Smyrna (modern day Izmir, Turkey) refused to deny Jesus Christ and was burnt to death. In Oxford, England, Bishops Latimer and Ridley were burnt at the stake in 1555.

Today we have the terrible brutal war in Ukraine; unspeakable atrocities committed daily; images of poorly equipped Russian soldiers dying of cold; bereaved Ukrainian mothers and families mourning their loved ones; in other countries, children dying of starvation. I have witnessed appalling suffering in Uganda. Here in 'comfortable' Sussex, a young woman weeps uncontrollably over being abandoned with her young children by her unfaithful husband; a middle aged man struggles with painful terminal cancer.

Suffering is real, immediate, compelling, inescapable and savage.

Different cultures approach suffering in very different ways. A secular view expressed by Richard Dawkins says that there is "no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference".

What's the Christian approach?

**First**, the Bible promises an end to all suffering. The writer of the book of Revelation (chapter 21) wrote:

*Verse 1* Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. *Verse 3* I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them, and He will be their God." *Verse 4* He (Himself!) will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. *Verse 5* Then the one who sits on the throne said, ... "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted."

**Second**, God Himself experienced overwhelming suffering. Jesus, from His birth in poverty, His life as a refugee, His rejection by the religious leaders of His day, through to His death on a Roman cross, identified totally with all who suffer – “God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them... and God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (*2 Corinthians 5:19,21*).

There is sound, historical evidence for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is true, and can be trusted. And He will come again and put an end to all suffering.

Have a great New Year.

*Rob (Morris)*

## Handcross Community Pantry and Café

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 parishes who are in need of help and support.**

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.

You can donate non-perishable items at:

- Handcross Hardware & Craft in the High Street
- The Victory Inn in Staplefield
- All Saints Church on a Saturday morning
- St Mary's in Slaugham
- St Mark's in Staplefield

Financial donations can also be made: cash, marked 'Pantry', to the hardware shop, or by BACS (sort code 40-24-33, account 81842242, account name Slaugham PCC, reference 'Pantry' or 'CP').

If you would like to be a donation point for collection, or need any other information, then please get in touch. For any Pantry questions, please contact Barbara Butfoy at butfoybabs@hotmail.co.uk or on 07853 228605. Thank you.

### Cleaning Help Needed

St Mark's Church needs regular cleaning, and we would be very grateful if any person, or group of people, feel they can help. It involves sweeping and polishing and really is not a big task if undertaken regularly.

If you can help, please contact the church office (01444 400221), Lizzie (07887 637084) or Helen (07540 816170)

Many thanks.

*Lizzie and Helen*  
(Wardens)

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

### **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.