

UNITED BENEFICE OF

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

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



*May 2023*

## Church Services in May

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.

2 <sup>nd</sup>	7.45pm	All Saints	Prayer Gathering
7 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	All Age
14 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10.45am	St Mary's	Communion
	6.30pm	All Saints	Informal Worship
21 <sup>st</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Informal Praise
24 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	All Saints	Spotlight
28 <sup>th</sup>	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
	5.30pm	All Saints	Meal & Worship

**Everyone is welcome**

*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=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/> .

# THIRST

Dear Friends,

Have you ever been *really* thirsty? We all know what it means to feel thirsty, but not many know what severe, life-threatening thirst feels like.

UN statistics show that around two-thirds of the world's population experience severe water shortage for at least one month in a year. 2.2 billion people have no regular access to safe drinking water, 4.2 billion people have no safe sanitation, and 3 billion have no basic handwashing facility.

60% of the human body on average is made up of water (ranging from 22% in our bones, to about 85% in our livers), so water is physically vital to us!

There are thousands of people around the world who are, as you read this, feeling desperately thirsty.

I have experienced quite severe thirst. In 1992 I was a member of a team carrying out cataract surgery in a remote place called Bundibugyo, just inside Uganda on the border with Democratic Republic of Congo, at the northern end of the majestic Rwenzori Mountains ('Mountains of the Moon'). At that time, the road to get there was very rough, dusty and slow, and when it came to the time to travel back to a town called Fort Portal (about eight hours by road then) I decided to walk over the northern end of the mountain, going up to about 11,000 feet above sea level, instead of going in a minibus with the team on the long road round.

I made the mistake of not taking water with me, thinking I could always drink from streams along the way; this was OK until I discovered, as I descended on the East side, that the streams were heavily polluted by habitations above me. Water-borne disease was (and still is) very prevalent, so I struggled on until I got down to where there was a small mud walled 'duka' (shop), and to my enormous relief (I was desperately thirsty!) was able to buy bottles of Pepsi-Cola!

I have had the great privilege of being part of teams supporting CHASE (a children's hospice) running the London (x10) and Brighton (x1) marathons. On warm sunny days, in spite of frequent water stations, quite severe thirst was part of the experience!

BUT on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Mina Guli completed her 200<sup>th</sup> Marathon in one year. She did this to draw attention to the world's desperate need for safe water. What an achievement!

There are many references in the Bible to man's universal need for water. The strategic importance of good wells, invitations to drink, and God's invitation to 'all who are thirsty' to come and drink freely are all referred to.

The Bible's references to water and thirst refer to far more than just our physical need for water. Look at some of the references:

**Isaiah Chapter 55, verse 1** "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy ... without money and without cost."

In **John's gospel chapter 4, verses 13-14** Jesus was speaking to a woman whom He met as she came to draw water from a well, and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Then again in **John Chapter 6, verse 35**: "I am the Bread of Life", Jesus told them. "those who come to Me ... who believe in Me will never be thirsty."

Finally, right at the end of the Bible, just four verses from the end of the last chapter of the last book (**Revelation Chapter 22, verse 17**), we read: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

In these contexts, what is the meaning of the 'thirst', and the "free gift of the water of life"?

It is clear that the thirst is our universal human need for forgiveness, and the free gift of water is the unconditional free gift of forgiveness paid for by Jesus when He died on the cross that first Good Friday. "God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (**John Chapter 3, verse 16**)

I'm thirsty for that.

With very best wishes

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](mailto: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](mailto: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)*

## 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.

## Our verses for 2023: Romans 12:9-13

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality.*

**CONTACT**

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

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