

UNITED BENEFICE OF

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

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



February 2024

Services in February

4 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship with breakfast
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
6 th	7pm	All Saints	Prayer Gathering
11 th	10am	Handcross Parish Hall	Parish-wide worship service
14 th	7pm	Seaforth Hall, Warninglid	Ash Wednesday service
18 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship with breakfast
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
25 th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship with Communion
	5.15pm	All Saints	Meal & Informal Worship

All Saints: Horsham Road, Handcross, RH17 6DF

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

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

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

Our current plans are as above 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.

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

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/> .

It all comes down to love

It was Wednesday 27th December 2023 and I was in a supermarket to pick up a few essentials, and it had already happened. The seasonal aisle was no longer full of Christmas decorations and chocolate. In place of all the golds, greens and reds was a wall of pink...Christmas is over, Valentine's day is coming (a little further up the aisle were Easter eggs but let's not go into that!).

St Valentine is commemorated on 14th February each year, and long before the advent of cards and roses being sent to loved ones, the day was used to remember the care and dedication that Valentine showed to persecuted Christians in ancient Rome. Due to its fast growth, Christianity was considered at the time to be a huge threat to the Roman empire, and so many people claiming to be followers of Jesus were persecuted for their new-found faith. Often having to worship in secret and use codes and hidden symbols to talk about Jesus, many in the early church would have felt fearful, lost and at times alone. Their faith and commitment to Jesus was unwavering and they would do all they could to share the good news that they themselves had received – that Jesus was alive!

Saint Valentine was a clergyman (thought to have either been a priest or a bishop) who had a particular calling to support those who were facing persecution. As is the case with many of the Saints we remember today, Valentine's story has been embellished over the years and it is hard to separate fact from fiction, but one of the stories that has led to him being remembered in connection to love is that he is rumoured to have conducted secret weddings for Christian couples – something that would have been a huge risk for him personally.

Regardless of how we remember him, and regardless of which part of his story is true, the stories show something of the love of God, because any love that we show to others or that others show to us is a reflection of God's love. We are all made in the image of the God who is love. And as the writer of the letter of John says so beautifully: 'let us love one another, for love is from God...we love because he first loved us.'

You were made because of His love, and in His image, you have the ability to love others. And it matters what we turn the attention of our love to. God's ultimate desire is for the love that He has shown you to be shown back to Him – this is why we have that as a choice rather than a command – but it's also His heart's desire that we seek to love others well. Our love won't always be pure or perfect, but God's love always will be, and His perfect love is the only power great enough in this world to cast out all fear.

So, may you know His love for you today and may you share that love to those around you.

Grace and Peace

Rev'd Carl Smith

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.**

We invite anyone in need to get in touch via our rector Rev'd 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.
- All Saints Church on a Saturday morning.
- St Mark's Church in Staplefield.
- St Mary's Church in Slaugham.
- The Victory Inn in Staplefield.

Financial donations can also be made: cash, marked 'Pantry', to the hardware shop, or by BACS (sort code 40-24-33, account 22095041, account name Slaugham Parochial Church Council Pantry Account – please note the recent change of account details).

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.

CONTACT

Church Office:

01444 400221, slaughtam@btinternet.com

Office hours: Monday & Thursday 9am-12pm

Rector, Rev'd Carl Smith:

01444 400221, handcrossrectory@gmail.com

 [@stmarysandstmarks](#)

Parish Magazine

If you are passionate about editing or design and would be interested in being involved in future production and development of the parish magazine, please contact Carl Smith or Fae Widdowson at slaughtam@btinternet.com.