

All Saints Church Marlow

# The Bridge

Autumn 2019 - Free Copy



**Report on a visit to Burundi**

All Saints  
Marlow



four churches,  
one vision

# The God Who Changes Lives - Dave Bull

One of the greatest proofs of God's existence is the evidence of changed lives. If there is a God and we can know him, it stands to reason that his presence in our lives should make a profound difference.

In this edition of The Bridge, you can read about some of the many lives that have been profoundly changed in and through our church family here in Marlow this year.

As you will read, these wonderful changes often come about in the midst of great trials and suffering – so be encouraged, if you yourself are suffering. God does not promise that life will work out just the way we want it to, but he does promise never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

As you read, I hope you will:

1. Be encouraged! - if you are part of All Saints Marlow, then you are part of bringing about these transformed lives. Every prayer you pray, every minute you serve and every penny you give are part of a great blessing to others.

2. Look out! - wherever you are this week, at work, at home, with friends - look out for how you can be a blessing to others. Our extraordinary God is at work surprisingly near. His kingdom is very close to you. Ordinary people like you and me can get involved.

3. Join in! - there are so many teams working in our church to help change lives. This autumn, why not consider (or reconsider) which team you could be part of.

4. Want more! - God never stops changing lives. Why not take a moment to ask him to bring transformation to your own life this autumn?



Coming up ... There are lots of things to look out for in our church life this autumn: To pick out a few:

Alpha is the best way I know of seeing God at work changing lives. We've seen some extraordinary stories so far this year. It runs from 1<sup>st</sup> October (and from 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Marlow Bottom). [4u-team.org/alpha](http://4u-team.org/alpha)

Small Groups 4U - we have 31 small groups running between now and Christmas. Connecting with other Christians in small groups is for most people who do it, the very best part of church life. If you've never tried it before, why not give it a go? [4u-team.org/smallgroups](http://4u-team.org/smallgroups)

Spreading the Fire - on 6<sup>th</sup> October at 5.30pm the Bishop of Oxford is visiting High Wycombe for a Deanery-wide celebration of what God is doing in this area. It's called 'Sharing the Fire' - please come along!

Support our new staff - we are welcoming four new people to our team this autumn. Please look out for them and encourage them - perhaps by asking if you can help with anything? They are: Matt Clark (now permanent Youth & Children's Leader), James Grimwood (Director of Music), Becca Schmeer (Discipleship Year Intern) and Mark Gould (here on placement for 2 years as he trains for ordination).

May we join in with what God is doing to change lives for good this autumn – and in so doing may we find our own lives transformed too!

# The God Who Changes Lives - Anna's Story

I've been a Christian for more than 30 years, I've had drier seasons and fruitful seasons in my Christian walk, but through it all I had always, always been able to stand secure in the deep rooted belief that God is good, and God's love is good.

Several years ago, this security began to erode; slowly and imperceptibly something began to change. The peace morphed into cynicism; the love turned into habit; the joy turned to pain and fear, and ultimately my lifelong gratitude to God turned into a deep rooted and bitter anger. Anger toward God. Anger toward Christians. Anger toward anyone or anything that crossed my path. The anger was rooted in deep pain and resentment and cast a long shadow over many aspects of my life. I knew it was not serving me in any helpful way, but it all just hurt so very, very much. It seemed that God, previously so solid and unshakable, the rock I had built my life around, had just run through my fingers like a million grains of sand and I was left grasping at thin air.

I started to think of myself as an ex-Christian, however, many of my most supportive friends were Christians and they continued to love me. They endured my bitterness; they ignored my rudeness; they loved me and 'held' me in my lashing out. I came to see that it was they who were the 'love' and



'presence' that God promises us in times of trial. I wasn't alone, they were there for me and came through for me despite the fact that at times I was incredibly unlovable.

Then one day quite recently, somehow, I was able to see how my intense anger was not serving me. So I prayed. I told God what I thought of him (generally not good) but also told him that I was so grateful for the people who had faithfully loved me in my pain and ugliness. I offered that mustard seed of hope to God, and asked for a miracle.

In that moment, my anger tangibly fell away in the way you shrug off a heavy, rain sodden coat from your shoulders. Practically, absolutely nothing in my life has changed; my burdens, responsibilities and disappointments remain the same. However, I am no longer carrying the significantly greater weight of my hopeless anger too. Some miracles are bright and shiny, this one is neither, but it has given me peace and hope and I'll take that.

## THE BRIDGE

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# James Grimwood - Our New Director of Music

I am very glad to have followed God's call to Marlow and I am grateful for this opportunity to introduce myself. I have just completed a year as Graduate Senior Organ Scholar at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and become an Associate of the Royal College of Organists (ARCO).

Before this, I read for a degree in Music at the College whilst holding an undergraduate organ scholarship. Alongside my studies, I was Director of Music at Fisher House (Cambridge University Catholic Chaplaincy), a conductor of the University of Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra and a pianist for the Cambridge University Opera Society. Outside Cambridge, I have played the organ on tours to France, Belgium and Italy and I have deputised as an organist at All Saints' Cathedral, Mong Kok, St Stephen's Chapel, Stanley and St John's Cathedral, Central in Hong Kong, and All Saints' Anglican Church, St Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church and St George's British International School in Rome.

I have deepened my faith through missionary work, volunteering twice with the Anglican Church in Hong Kong. I spent seven weeks visiting cargo ships in the South China Sea with The Mission to Seafarers based at The Mariners' Club in East Tsim Sha Tsui. I visited seafarers with the Chaplains and provided counsel to those who desired it. On Wednesdays, I visited ships in the container terminal in Kwai Chung with the Assistant Chaplain. The placement was challenging for me physically. Climbing ladders up to the ships was, at first, rather tricky, and some ladder types were much harder to climb than others, particularly in the pouring rain! Last summer, I was on placement at St John's Cathedral, based at the daughter church of St Stephen's Chapel, Stanley. This was a fantastic experience and I was glad to raise some money in an organ recital just before I left. I continue to pray for my friends in Hong

Kong most especially at this time.

Before Cambridge, I held organ scholarships at Trinity Cathedral, Miami, FL and St Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church, Rome. I essentially created the St Paul's scholarship out of nothing, which was good fun, and I am glad to return occasionally to deputise in the summer. Whilst there, I conducted All Saints' Anglican Church Choir for an Ecumenical Evensong at the Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls. I was the organist for Ensemble '1678-1791', a repetiteur for The New Chamber Singers, and deputised as Cantor at the Oratory of San Fancesco Saverio del Caravita. Aside from music, I assisted at the Methodist Ecumenical Office, revised the liturgy for the weekly Eucharist at the Anglican Centre, sat on Churches Together in Rome and was invited to attend Ecumenical Vespers, celebrated by Pope Francis. I was lucky enough, aged sixteen, to work as a brief-writer for the Archbishop of Canterbury and as an assistant to the Deputy Secretary for Public Affairs at Lambeth Palace.

And so, after all that travelling around, I am delighted to call Marlow home. What a beautiful town in such sensible surroundings! I have already enjoyed several hours by the River. Like many of us, I am sure, I have been following England's mixed success at attempting to play cricket this summer. As I was listening to Sir Alastair Cook on Test Match Special, I could not refrain from considering his background and how it laid the foundation for his success. The former England captain is, at the time of writing, the fifth highest Test run scorer ever. Whilst his sporting achievements are well documented, perhaps less well-known are Cook's musical abilities. According to 'Chef' himself, his success on the pitch was in part on account of his time as a chorister in St Paul's Cathedral Choir. Cook still claims that singing at St Paul's taught him concentration



and discipline in his life: surely two vital qualities for patience at the crease.

I hope choristers at Marlow will look back at their time here with as much fondness as Sir Alastair and similarly see it as foundational for the rest of their lives. All Saints offers an excellent 'best of both worlds' scenario: the commitment is not nearly as high as it would be at a Cathedral but still hefty enough to allow for musical development to a high level, whilst providing time for other activities and family time.

There are many life-long musical benefits of choristership. My aim is to build confidence and with greater confidence comes an increased enjoyment in singing. I often find that older musicians who have been choristers as children are far more assured in their sight-reading than the average musician. Rehearsal time is finite; in my experience, I have found that choristers often learn the value of punctuality. Upon leaving the choir here, I hope a chorister's musicianship will have developed significantly enough to allow for the enjoyment of further music-making for many years to come. Of course, former choristers can become a Director of Music ...

Many choristers go on to careers in the classical world, but some venture completely outside of church music. Two fellow choristers from my time in Chichester

Cathedral Choir have recently achieved TV fame: one as a finalist in *The Voice UK* and the other finishing fifth on *Britain's Got Talent*. Singing in a choir or learning a musical instrument to an accomplished level takes great perseverance and resolve. It is easy to give up on a task too easily or lack focus.

I would argue that making music with your friends is a much more rewarding experience than watching all the episodes of *All Gas and Gaiters*: not because *All Gas and Gaiters* is bad or because considering the impact of dreaded church politics on daily life is not useful, but because it requires far more investment and effort to sing Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* well than conk out in front of a dated ecclesiastical comedy with a good pint or two of *Rebellion!*

It is fantastic to be here; thank you all very much indeed for such a warm welcome to Marlow. I am immensely grateful to Rhidian for his dedication and expert advice and to Dave for his encouragement. My colleagues have already spent a great amount of time with me and my induction has certainly surpassed my expectations.

Likewise, my thanks to John and Jane Gillbe who have been so generous in their hospitality. It has been good to meet some of you already; if you see me, do say hello and remind me of your name!

# The God Who Changes Lives - Jason's Story

*Jason McCarthy is a professional footballer, now playing for Millwall, who participated in Alpha at All Saints over the summer. Here is his story...*

Football WAS my God. Everything associated with my football I was placing in my identity and letting it define who I was. June 2017 I signed for Barnsley who were in the second tier of English football. Up to this point my career had been plain sailing. I'd gone through the levels each year. Within two weeks into my time at Barnsley my grandad and suddenly my uncle had passed away and my life had been threatened at knife point. I was struggling to settle into life up north although things on the pitch were good. Until Christmas time.

I'd lost my place in the team, it felt like I had nothing and all hope was lost. Someone with me at Barnsley who was also out of the team (George Moncur) was handling everything so well. He shared with me his faith and how God has a plan for all of us. He seemed so peaceful and I envied it.

I ended up signing for Wycombe Wanderers that summer. Within the first few weeks I was



seeing the same light that I saw in George Moncur in my new mate at Wycombe, Alex Samuel. I started asking questions. Sure enough he was a Christian. We started meeting regularly. He shared a scripture with me (Psalm 23) The Lord is my Shepherd I have all that I need. So I took a leap of faith.

On November 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 I cried out to God that I would live for him, that I believe Jesus died for me. It seems like overnight but God has now placed a purpose in me, I know who I am in him. He walks with me everyday. I know now I'm not alone, I'm surrounded. I have faith in someone that is never going to let me down!

## Alpha Courses - Autumn 2019

The next Alpha Course starts on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 7.45-9.45pm, in the church building; and runs each Tuesday evening up to 10<sup>th</sup> December (no meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October). Alpha is a chance to explore the big questions of life. Every evening starts with food and includes watching a 20 minute film and then a discussion group. You can sign-up via the Small Groups page of 4U website at [www.4u-team.org/smallgroups](http://www.4u-team.org/smallgroups) from 8<sup>th</sup> September, or contact the Parish Office. For more information contact Rev. Dave Bull, [dave.bull@4u-team.org](mailto:dave.bull@4u-team.org)

### Youth Alpha

Under-18 and interested in Alpha? We'll be running a Youth Alpha on Sundays, 4-6pm, starting on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October. We'll have a shared meal, followed by a video to explore the topic, and a discussion of the video. If you're interested in joining this amazing journey in exploring faith, then contact Matt Clark via [matt.clark@4u-team.org](mailto:matt.clark@4u-team.org)

## Lighthouse 2019 - Sarah Jones

The 15<sup>th</sup> Marlow Lighthouse, was one of the best!

This year we had nearly 300 volunteer helpers, just over 100 of whom were aged 12-17. Most were from the local community and many also attend Marlow churches. Ninety of the volunteers indicated that they attend All Saints Church. Many of these volunteers played leading roles in the organisation and delivery of Lighthouse.

We had applications from over 600 children, and we were able to take 480 children for all or part of the week. What is great to see is that young people who started off as small children in the Lighthouse creche or in the youngest age groups, come back as helpers and gradually increase the level of responsibility they take on. This year several took leading roles in the mainstage drama team, the techies team and as Lighthouse Keepers.

At Lighthouse children enjoy a range of activities including worship, learning about Biblical events, sport, drama, craft, and the ever-popular messy games - with losers ending up in the gunge tank. Everything the children do during the week links back to the theme, which this year was focused on the Great Commission. So, for the children, it was all about going on a journey to spread the Christian message and to carry on the good works that Jesus started.

The journey we took was on HMS Lighthouse, the sailing of which was initially delayed, reminding us to be patient, and later in the week we became shipwrecked because a grumpy lighthouse keeper was not shining his light to warn us of the rocks ahead. Having convinced the lighthouse keeper to share his light with others he is persuaded to help them mend the ship. But where are they going? By Friday we realise that the journey is symbolic of our journey

through life and that the aim is to share God's love. HMS Lighthouse sets off again, with the crew looking for the next person they can help.

New for Lighthouse Marlow this year was a drop-in parent and toddler group called Little Lighthouse. This ran every morning and was very successful, attracting up to 50 children (with their parents, grandparents or childminders) each day. All were able to get a taste of what Lighthouse was like whilst playing, listening to stories, taking part in craft activities and learning some of the Lighthouse songs.

Following financial challenges over the last few years we are pleased to have received financial and in-kind support from all the local churches and increased support from the community. Anyone wanting to know more, or to find out how they could get involved, should take a look at our website <https://lighthousecentral.org/lighthouses/marlow/> or e-mail [marlow@lighthousecentral.org](mailto:marlow@lighthousecentral.org).

We are looking forward to next years' Lighthouse - 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Save the date!



Heather Grinyer

# Lighthouse 2019



The Sports Team



Georgie Hill in the obstacle course



The Creche Team



Wendy Beckett, John Rumble & Alison Branch

# Photo Album



Thomas Bull in the Gunge Tank



Lisa Arnold, Ness Hill & Sara Edwardes



Sophie Bowen-Evans, Toby Fry & James Branch



Mainstage Drama

# Are You In The Loop? - Muriel Reynolds

One of the grumbles heard most often in church is "I don't know what's going on". It's a complaint that I've heard consistently since I've been a member of All Saints, some 39 years. So it's not a new problem.

Failing to keep everyone informed is often one of the downsides of success. The more people to be told, the more chance that someone will be left out. As our congregation grows and diversifies so the problem worsens.

Communication takes many forms and at the moment a group is looking at all the methods we employ/could employ across the whole team to improve our communications. One quick easy way to keep you informed is by e-mail. At ASM we now send regular e-mails to alert you to changes, to invite you to events, to inform you about special services or teaching series. Or simply to celebrate our good news.

However the majority of our members are still not in the communication loop. Our database holds 674 people who attend ASM, all having given their permission to add them to our database. Of 674, 202 haven't given us an e-mail address and 181 have actively opted out of receiving e-mails. If you receive our regular e-mails then you need to do no more - you are in the loop - and unless you ask us to stop you will continue to be in the

communication loop. If you are not, we will still try our best to inform you using notices and 'The Other Side' - but better still if you have e-mail then why don't you join our 'loop'?

It's easy to do. The church's database has a mass e-mailing facility so all we need is your e-mail address and your permission to use it as described above. Send me an e-mail at [muriel.reynolds@4u-team.org](mailto:muriel.reynolds@4u-team.org) and I will do the rest. Another advantage of our database is that you can choose to be part of the on-line directory. It's a private contact directory for members of our team congregations.

Like a telephone directory you just look up a person's name and, if they have given permission, their contact details are displayed. How much is displayed is entirely up to them. From name only (not an effective contact list!) to any combination of name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. You have complete control and can change what is displayed about yourself anytime you wish.

Interested? You need to be invited to join the directory. If you receive our communication e-mails then you should also have received an invitation to join and a password to get into the directory (as I said earlier, it is a closed system, only invitees can access the directory).

Area:  Other

Female

Started:

Freelance

01628 123 456

07947 111 111

[anna.ohar@btinternet.com](mailto:anna.ohar@btinternet.com)

### Privacy Settings

Decide what details are visible to others in the church.

- Make my address visible
- Make my telephone visible
- Make my mobile visible
- Make my email visible

Job:

Partner's name:  Fred

Postcode:

Once in, the directory displays your own database record in its entirety. Again you are the only person who will be able to see this. Next to your name is a button with a pencil graphic - this allows you to edit your details. Just click the pencil to go into edit mode.

Once you are happy that the details in the central column are correct you can choose which contact details other directory users are able to see. In the right hand column under the heading Privacy Settings, (see bottom left) click onto any square next to those details you are happy to display. If you change your mind, just click the tick to turn it off - it's an on/off switch.

Save the changes to update both the database and your directory entry.

### ***Now you are in the directory what does it allow you to do?***

Below is a list of the options you see wherever you are in the directory. You will always find the list on the left.

*Clicking ... Home* – will always take you back to the start page with your details

*My Communication* - lists all the e-mails you have ever received via the database e-mailing system

*My children* - there is a hidden children's section, not publically accessible, but you

can see and amend your own child's record. You cannot see anyone else's children's details

*My events* - sign up and view church events and activities

*My Groups* - view members of small groups to which you belong. You can e-mail individual members or the whole group from this option. You can even start group conversations, but anyone not in the loop will not be contactable .

*Search for others* - opens an A-Z contact directory of church members who, like you, have given permission for their contact details to be displayed

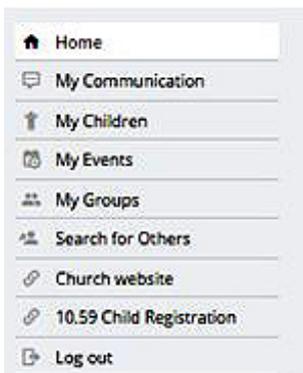
*Church website* - click to access the Team website

*10:59 child registration* – used to speed up young church registration

*Log out* – Takes you out of the directory

It really is that easy. Do try it out. If you have forgotten your password, e-mail [mauriel.reynolds@4u-team.org](mailto:mauriel.reynolds@4u-team.org)

Let's start to eliminate that old grumble and make sure as many people as possible ARE in the loop. It's probably the most effective way of the different tools we use to keep you informed of the many things going on in our team.



## Burundi - Sara Edwardes

### **W**e left out hearts in Burundi

In April this year Harriet Miles, Ruth Frost, Paul Edwardes and Sara Edwardes headed off to Burundi to work with Simon Guillebaud's charity 'Great Lakes Outreach' (GLO).

### **'Be strong and courageous'**

Before we left we knew that Burundi was one of the hungriest countries in the world according to the Global Hunger Index. We knew that only 1 in 2 children went to school, that 1 in 5 adults have AIDS and that thousands of people are homeless. We also knew that they had suffered a genocide during the civil War which ended in 2005 and that it was still politically unstable.



Undeterred, we knew we wanted to visit the country which Simon Guillebaud had talked about with such passion on his visit to ASM in 2016. We took inspiration from Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." What we didn't know was how humbled we would be by the exceptional dedication of the Christian leaders we met.

### **What did we do?**

During our week in this stunning country of

lush vegetation and mountain scenery, we were able to gain an insight into just a few of the projects supported by GLO. Having spent our first night at the Kings Conference Centre in the capital Bujumbura, we travelled to Bubanza to see for ourselves the excellent work that J-Life does to support the widows and children who call this beautiful place home. Home - what do we think of as home? Well, a roof and four walls, but what else? Somewhere to feel loved, somewhere to learn and somewhere to belong? We saw this and much more as we spent time with these people who had nothing - many had fled the country during the unrest, returning to find their homes destroyed, their friends and families slaughtered or missing. Nowhere to live, nowhere to learn, no jobs, no prospects and no-one who cared. Step-in GLO and their partner in this area J-Life.

J-Life has befriended these people, learned about their needs, encouraged and prayed for them. With the help of GLO they have been able to build a community centre where these marginalised people from the Batwa (pygmy) tribe can be educated, cared for and worship together as they learn about God's love for them. We were invited to help members of the community carry the stones needed for the foundations of a new home for a widow and her seven children, two of who were handicapped. We had the amazing privilege of awarding some of the widows who had completed a literacy programme with a copy of the bible in their native language of Kirundi. We saw the area used to teach the Batwa about crop management and animal husbandry. All this demonstrated how J-Life is leading the community down a road to self-sustainment and salvation. The hope that J-Life has engendered here is palpable.

We saw that same tangible hope when we were taken to a field of cow grass in Gitega. Freddy, the founder of Youth for Christ in



A village house

Burundi, had been gifted ten acres by the government and he set about fulfilling his vision of raising up a generation of godly leaders to transform Burundi. With minimal funds, but crazy faith, he dug the land and planted cow-grass. The cow-grass was used to feed cows which produced milk for orphans. That land has now been transformed with the construction of the Homes of Hope orphanage, Future Hope School and a health centre. Children who were abandoned now have a place to call home and we would agree with Freddy when he says they have some of the happiest children alive with them. Their smiling faces which greeted us on our arrival at the orphanage are a testimony to how people can be given new hope when the love of Christ is poured over them.



A modern house

Travelling further north to Cibitoke province we visited another Batwa community where J-Life had just started working with these people. Here we saw that many families have no dwelling to call home, living under banana plants or in mud huts, which were on the point of collapse and offered little protection from the rainstorms. There was no community centre and a distinct lack or absence of access to education or healthcare. And yet ... under a tin roofed,

open sided communal area we heard one after another tell personal stories of how their lives had been transformed by the love and grace of Jesus. These destitute and malnourished people were full of joy as their faces lit up and they sang songs of praise. We couldn't help but be moved by their stories and faith. We were then taken to see a plot of land marked out with the footings for a community centre. We listened as Kiki,



Future Hope School

one of the J-Life team, described the vision of building a centre where the community could meet together, worship, learn new skills, receive education and healthcare. The problem was that there were no funds to build the centre. When we asked “how much?” we realised that the money we raised before we travelled to Burundi would cover the costs!

### ***What now?***

We returned to our comfortable homes and lives in Marlow full of stories and images, and were determined our mission should continue. We knew we had left our hearts back with the people of Burundi but what were we being called to do next?

We have stayed in regular communication with J Life and GLO. We continue to support them in prayer and are continuing to spread the news of their great work and to fundraise for their projects. Very excitingly, we have recently received news that a plot of farm land had been secured for the Batwa community in Cibitoke. This is such an amazing answer to prayer! With the help of J Life, the Batwa have devised a planting scheme to grow food for themselves and also hopefully to produce a surplus they can sell. So we are

launching a new fundraising campaign to raise the money they need to buy the seeds and farming implements they need. We also plan to contact the agricultural colleges to see if we can inspire them to sponsor a project there and perhaps get the students involved in solving the farming challenges and increasing crop yields in Cibitoke.

Some of the team are thinking about signing up for the GLO 2020 bike ride in Rwanda. A 7-day bike ride in this beautiful country across mountainous terrain. By all accounts, it's going to be physically demanding but also a truly amazing and wonderfully inspiring experience. The funds raised will be going towards the lifesaving work of GLO.

If you want to know more, or if you fancy joining the bike ride across Rwanda, or if you would like to be involved in our fundraising activities please do get in touch via [missionburundi2019@gmail.com](mailto:missionburundi2019@gmail.com) If you wish to make a donation to our fundraising please go to [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mission-burundi](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mission-burundi).

*This article was written by Sara Edwardes with contributions from Harriet Miles, Paul Edwardes and Ruth Frost.*

# The Parish Giving Scheme - Paul Taylor

## **R**ecent growth and planning for the future.

We are so grateful to God for the ways in which All Saints Church has grown over the past few years. Thank you for being part of that growth and for your commitment and contributions to the life of the church. As we each commit our time, money, prayer and love, we are seeing our church and community change - one life at a time.

We are determined not to rest on our laurels but to continue to build up the church for the next generation, as the Holy Spirit leads us. As you will appreciate, everything we do, and want to do, has a cost in terms of resources required; whether time, skills, effort or money. The day-to-day running of our church adds up to about £300k per year. We receive no income from the national church: we are entirely reliant on giving from our congregations (plus some funds from hiring out the church hall and fees from weddings and funerals). Because our income depends almost entirely on voluntary donations, it can be hard for us to plan for the long-term when we do not know what our income will be. Planned financial giving by our members therefore plays an absolutely crucial role in helping the Church Council to make plans for the future. We are so grateful to everyone who contributes to the Church.

### **Parish Giving Scheme: Increasing confidence, decreasing the administrative burden**

A key part of our strategy and foundation for future growth is the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which we launched in 2018. It is a simple and easy way for anyone to support our on-going work financially. The PGS offers a secure way to give by regular Direct Debit, helping the church to receive money and Gift Aid payments in a timely manner, thus improving cashflow. The Parish Giving



Scheme has increased our confidence in long-term planning and decreased our administrative burden.

### **What are we asking you to do?**

If you consider All Saints Marlow to be your home church, we need your help if we are going to continue to see growth in the future. Through your generous giving via the Parish Giving Scheme, we can plan more confidently for the future with a regular, admin-efficient source of income to help support the on-going mission and ministry of the church. However small the amount you give may seem to you, it will be a significant contribution to the future of All Saints.

To get more information about the Parish Giving Scheme, you can:

- Pick up a PGS information sheet and gift form from the leaflet rack at the back of the church building
- Watch a one-minute film which explains how the PGS works at <https://vimeo.com/267777327>
- Find further information at [www.parishgivingScheme.org.uk/for-donors/](http://www.parishgivingScheme.org.uk/for-donors/)

If you already give financially to the church by Standing Order or via Blue Envelopes, please could you switch to the Parish Giving Scheme, if at all possible. If you do not already give in a planned way, please prayerfully consider making a regular financial contribution to the church - when you do, you will discover the joy of giving and of the spiritual benefits it brings, on top of the resources it releases to the church.

## Matt Clark - Our New Youth Leader

I grew up in Holtspur, Buckinghamshire and am the eldest brother to two younger sisters, Sarah and Rachel. My Christian life started thanks to my step-mum, Zoe, who introduced the family to Holy Trinity, Penn when I was a young teenager. I got involved in the youth group and later helped run and lead sessions there. I was also involved in bell-ringing with my Dad, Gary. G3, Penn's Christian youth group, was where I first started praying and met with God and it was on a summer trip to New Wine United that I gave my life to God (for the first time).

When I left school, I moved to London and worked in management of cocktail bars and clubs in Soho and Shoreditch and unfortunately drifted away from my faith. At age 21, I moved back to Bucks and was working in bar management projects at large events, Royal Ascot and The Royal Chelsea Flower Show, to name a few. It was at this time I became involved in volunteer youth work, attended Lighthouse and New Wine again and started to rediscover a relationship with God. Keen to grow this relationship, I joined the New Wine Discipleship Year programme which encouraged and enabled me to give a year to God by volunteering with All Saints, Marlow and The Lantern, Marlow Bottom. The Discipleship Year has brought me right back to God. God has humbled and is still humbling me and has given me new purpose for a life with Him - to love and minister the next generation of faith. This has led to me applying, and now taking up, the post of Children and Youth Leader at All Saints, Marlow.

My outlook on the year ahead is one of opportunity. There is so much opportunity in Marlow to connect with our children and youth! We have amazing volunteers who consistently go above and beyond to do awesome things for God and our young people, and I'm delighted that I'm able to continue working with them. I want to unite



all this fantastic work being done under one banner and with one purpose - for our young people to know that God made them, loves them and wants a relationship with them!

How are we are going to do this? I don't have all the answers yet, and I would welcome ideas, feedback and prayer from everyone. What I do know is that God has a plan and my plan is to follow Him to the best of my ability in whatever way He leads me and those I have the joy of ministering to. If you feel called to help, please talk to me - I'd love to invest time, coffee and cake in anyone willing to help.

## Churches Together in Marlow - Tony Threlfall

Christian Aid Week raised £5,545 by the house-to-house collection in Marlow, Marlow Bottom and Little Marlow. An additional £750 was raised by the concert at Christ Church. A further £1,812 was raised by 21 sponsored walkers from Marlow in the Walk the Country event at Bix.

As a thank-you to Christian Aid collectors and supporters, Jean Ashford organised a very enjoyable coffee morning at her home. As it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new house-to-house collectors, church coordinators met with the CA regional coordinator to discuss other ways of raising funds, which will be tried next time.

As usual, volunteers from all the churches were heavily involved over the summer in the Love Marlow festival and Lighthouse Marlow. Love Marlow continues to grow with helpers from the churches, voluntary organisations and local businesses combining to put on more than sixty events. One of the changes being considered for next year is to replace the service in Higginson Park on Regatta Sunday by a combined celebration involving church, schools and the community.

Cooinda (Aborigine for 'Happy Place') first opened its doors to visitors 20 years ago, and has been welcoming them ever since. It continues to be held in the Wesley Hall of the Methodist Church on Tuesday and Friday mornings, and is run by a loyal band of volunteers from Marlow churches and elsewhere. Dennis Conomos was the church minister in 1999 and his wife Jenny was instrumental in setting up Cooinda, as she had been involved with a similar activity at their previous church in Brisbane, Australia.

Many of the regular guests are isolated at home and are glad of the opportunity to meet up with friends in the same situation. Word of mouth attracts new people and tourists visiting Marlow sometimes drop-in

for a cuppa. Would-be helpers are always welcome to come along and add their names to the rota for one or two sessions a month.

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September, John Richards was the guest speaker at a men's breakfast held at Harleyford Golf Club. John and his wife Nuala have taken temporary leave from River Church and their home in Marlow to move to South Wales. John is Chief Operating Officer for the Al Massira charity, producing video resources to be used by trained Christians in small group settings with seeking friends, particularly from other faith traditions.

The video provides a chronological presentation of the Bible's message, beginning with Genesis and highlighting the signs and prophecies of the Messiah. It is available in multiple languages, including Arabic, English and Farsi, and is particularly useful for groups in refugee communities.



The annual Harvest Supper will take place in the Wesley Hall of Marlow Methodist Church on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 pm. Admission will be by ticket at £5 available from representatives.

The evening will feature Christian Aid's focus on farming in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where the EcoVeg project is helping the excluded Dalit community to break free from poverty.

## The Organ Voluntaries - Rhidian Jones

**V**oluntary - adj. spontaneous, free; without compulsion or obligation; a piece of music played before, during, or after a church service; an unwarranted fall from a horse. (The Chambers Dictionary, 2003 ed, p.1706)

I expect you are familiar with the monthly Music List, which sets out the music to be prepared by the choir and organist and sung at the 9.15 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Sunday services. I won't bore you here with the intricacies of juggling the needs of the different choirs with appropriate music for the day, taking into account the exigencies of rehearsal time and judgment of the complexity of the music: let that be a subject for another Bridge.

You'll have noticed that one of the items is the outgoing organ voluntary. Some might say that this is a piece of music intended to speed members of the congregation on their way and deter people with any thoughts of a peaceful few minutes in church after the service. Nothing of course could be further from the truth, and as we are authoritatively assured above, there is nothing compulsory about listening to it, whatever some organists may say.

In compiling the list of voluntaries for September, from four organists including me, not for the first time was I struck by the richness of the fare. Music by J S Bach (1685-1750), unsurprisingly, appears several times, in the form of preludes, fugues and a chorale prelude. The fugue, where a theme is presented on its own and then imitated at a different pitch in another line, has been a staple of organ and church music for centuries. In September we hear one of JSB's most mature works, the Fugue in E flat major (from his snappily-titled 'Keyboard Exercises'), a solemn but optimistic exploration in three sections of an austere theme, culminating in a grand

peroration. In the Allabreve we hear two themes presented simultaneously combined with varying ideas in a most fluent Italianate outpouring of imagination.

A Prelude is usually just that: a composition to precede a Fugue, but a movement in its own right. JSB's C minor Prelude is a large-scale tragic work, alternating heavy chordal passages with fugal interludes. A Prelude and Fugue in G minor attributed to JSB combines these qualities in miniature. And we hear a Prelude on the hymn 'My soul doth magnify the Lord', a piece whose alternative title is the Fugue upon the Magnificat. It's just that: an immense fugue taking the traditional plainsong theme of the Magnificat, for hands only until the last page, where the plainsong enters in long notes played by the feet, truly a fugue on top of the Magnificat melody.

The principle of thematic imitation appears elsewhere in September too, in the form of music by the early seventeenth century composers Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623), Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656) and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621). Though called by other titles (such as Fantasy and, even, A Voluntary) these magnificent compositions employ the imitative characteristics of what later was to be known as the Fugue.

The odd one out is a violin concerto by the Italian composer Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709). Not well known today, he was influential in his own day in the development of the structure of the concerto (in particular, the alternations of lengthy passages in different keys of orchestra and soloist). His concerto in C minor was arranged for the organ by Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748), a cousin and friend of J S Bach, and we'll hear this at the end of September. Historically, it illustrates an significant stage in the development of musical structure (technically the 'ritornello'), which was to

reach one of its final flourishings in that tragic C minor Prelude by JSB mentioned above.

All of us who play the organ at All Saints Church are gratified that members of the congregation take the trouble to listen and to comment afterwards. In turn we hope that we may adorn the services with suitable and worthwhile music. (And your listening forces us to practise, too!)

Finally, I recall, years ago, being asked to play part of the William Tell Overture at a wedding. As you know, the mark of a musician of an older generation is that he or she can hear this piece by Rossini without thinking of The Lone Ranger. The famous bit (you know it: diddle-dum diddle-dum diddle-dum dum dum) is a superb example of the musical style known as the galop (yes, only one letter l), which Chambers defines as 'a lively dance or dance tune

in double time; a lively sideways slipping step used in dancing'. It is standard fare in the dance music of nineteenth-century Vienna - music by the Strauss family and their contemporaries and rivals - and was a popular dance amongst the terpsichorean cognoscenti.

I diligently practised this, hoping that indeed most people would have left the church by the time I got to the difficult bit. Well, they didn't. And that day, two things came home to me: first, the truth of the adage that unless you have learned something really thoroughly, when you come to play it to a congregation, it can fall apart at the awkward bit; and second, that a voluntary can also be a fall from a horse, which is most certainly what it felt like that day.

And so back to the practice of scales and arpeggios .....

## The ASM Sleepout - Muriel Reynolds

For the past four years ASM has hosted a Sleepout in aid of Wycombe Homeless Connection - a Christian charity which helps those who are homeless or threatened with eviction. During that time the Marlow sleepout has raised a whopping £50,000.

Although the Sleepout is not able to replicate the feeling of hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness that accompanies sleeping rough, it does give our intrepid volunteers a brief insight into the some of the challenges associated with finding shelter from the elements. It's also a night of fellowship and ingenuity as cardboard city takes shape. We have seen cardboard tents, churches, kennels, terraced dwellings and many more.

It's a sad fact that nearly 5,000 people (official number) have nowhere to sleep tonight and will be spending it in a doorway or stairwell - anywhere they feel safe and can get some shelter. That figure has more than

doubled since 2010. For them the continued experience of sleeping rough is anything but enjoyable.

October 31<sup>st</sup> is national homelessness day. So as you draw your curtains against the dark, cold nights spare a thought for those who are not as lucky and will spend the night without somewhere they can call home. Our housing crisis is not going to disappear soon. So homelessness is going to be around for a long time. So how can we help?

There are three things you can do immediately:

- Wycombe Homeless Connection is a Christian charity working with homeless people and those threatened with homelessness - please pray for the work it does.
- Join this year's volunteers by taking part in our sponsored Sleepout on Friday November 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Sponsor a Sleepout volunteer for the night.



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