

and we are therefore considering whether the format might need to look a bit different once it is able to re-start, hopefully in September. If you have any ideas, please do share them with Judith Round. We are hoping that in early September there will be an opportunity to come together – hopefully over tea and cake – and discuss the shape of Afternoon Club for the future.

July Services and Events

If the Government's revised roadmap runs according to plan, July will now be a hybrid month.

Until Sunday 18th, unless otherwise indicated, all services are available both in Church and on Zoom. **Numbers in church are limited, so it is necessary to book a place.** To do so, please email Theresa (theresaricketts@hotmail.co.uk).

After Monday 19th, our Group meetings should be gradually restarting.

Please be prepared for things to change.

Sunday 4	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Holy Communion
	11.00	Sunday Club on Zoom
Sunday 11	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 18	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Holy Communion
	11.00	Sunday Club on Zoom
Wednesday 21	20.00	PCC meeting on Zoom
Friday 23	18.00	Men's Group Barbecue at Jason's
Saturday 24	10.30	Women's Group (tbc)
Sunday 25	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Holy Communion

Morning Prayer is said every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome — Use Zoom Code 909 037 180

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)*

For two days last month, I was challenged to put down my phone, not look at my computer and step away from the usual demands of daily life. Eight of the Vicars from across the Epsom Deanery spent a couple of days in Wychcroft, a retreat house near Godstone, and we were invited to explore what Sabbath really means.

I wonder how good you are at taking Sabbath rest. I wonder what it is that gets in the way.

As we all know, the last 15 months have been very unusual. While there is no doubt that we would not have chosen to experience the restrictions that have been placed on our lives, whenever we are thrown into a new reality, we have an opportunity to re-assess what we have always taken for granted.

Perhaps there are aspects of lockdown that you actually enjoyed. Maybe you discovered something about the things that you appreciate most – and the things that you can willingly live without.

For some people lockdown brought enforced rest – either because of being furloughed from work, or because those things which usually fill our time were no longer possible. If this was the case for you, I wonder whether you were able to find proper rest – Sabbath – or whether the time wasn't actually restful at all. That could be because you had too many things on your mind; because you felt you had to find productive ways to fill the time; or perhaps because uncertainty made rest feel impossible.

Whether or not we find it easy to take rest, Sabbath is an important aspect of our lives. In order to be all the wonderful people God created, we need to take time to replenish ourselves, body and soul.



Relax and enjoy God

Our Future After Covid-19

On a Saturday afternoon in April, some members of the Standing Committee attended an online “Big PCC Awayday.” I realise that this may not be everyone’s first choice for a sunny Saturday afternoon, but it was an opportunity to remind ourselves of the days when we used to be able to plan ahead.

You may remember that the PCC put together a Church Development Plan in 2019. We identified the following priorities:

1. Develop the depth and breadth of our spiritual life (our focus was initially on House Groups)
2. Establish a secure financial situation (which has included setting up the Stewardship Committee)
3. Enable our children and families to grow in faith and a sense of belonging (we had been intending to start Messy Church as part of this)
4. Develop and grow our relationships with the wider community (our intention had been to use the 125th anniversary celebrations as our focus for this)

One of the positive aspects of the Big PCC Awayday was that we all agreed that these remain our priorities in 2021. What is a little less clear is when we will be able to crack on once again as the pandemic eases. Yet it is certainly helpful to know that once we get the green light, we will be hoping to launch Messy Church, as well as reaching out to the local community in new ways, and exploring ways to deepen our own faith.

During the Big PCC Awayday, we were asked to identify all of the things that we did as a church community before the pandemic, which are not currently happening. As you can imagine, there was quite a list. However, one thing that our Annual Report was so good at demonstrating was the ways in which so many individuals and groups have adapted to these challenging circumstances. Gradually, different groups have been experimenting with ways to get together which conform with the latest government guidance.

The Women’s Group, for example, have held a number of meetings on

Zoom, trying out talks and even a quiz; the Men’s Group invited Martin Wainwright from St. Paul’s Howell Hill to give a talk on Zoom about army chaplaincy; the St. Mary’s walkers have just started going out again for local walks; and of course our regular Sunday worship continues, albeit with face coverings, no singing and social distancing.

Part of the purpose of identifying activities that had been halted by the pandemic was a recognition that sometimes we keep on doing things just because we have always done them. One of the reasons I have been so encouraged by people’s ingenuity in finding ways to continue activities, even if it has to be in different circumstances, is that it indicates that these activities continue to be valued and appreciated.

Nevertheless, we do have to recognise the opportunities presented by the disruption of the pandemic. As the unlocking continues – albeit with some continued uncertainty – it will be important for us all, as individuals, and as a community, to consider where God is calling us now. Probably for each of us there have been both positive and negative aspects of lockdown. Perhaps this is a good time to pause and reflect on what we have learnt as a result, and what that might be telling us about God’s call.

It was a worthwhile experience for the Standing Committee and subsequently the PCC to re-visit our priorities as set out in the Church Development Plan. As the last year has shown us, the best laid plans do not always come to fruition, yet if we understand the underlying purposes, we can continue to make progress even in unforeseen circumstances.

We probably know better than ever that our plans will always need to be flexible, and we will always need to be open to listening carefully to wherever it is that God is calling us next.

Afternoon Club

For many of us, Afternoon Club is something that we have been missing over the past months. Since arriving at St. Mary’s, I can honestly say that in terms of opportunities to sing, laugh and eat cake, Afternoon Club has been second to none.

Sadly, though, some members of Afternoon Club died in the last year,