



Ashford Parish Herald

Issue 1 (2018)



Welcome & Relaunch

Last year, some of you may remember we launched a periodical called "Koinonia". While the periodical was well received, the name did cause some debate.

Therefore, after discussion, we took the decision to rename and relaunch. The "**Ashford Parish Herald**" is

to distribute any news around including parish events and services and will be issued quarterly in February, May, August and November.

If you want to submit anything for publication you need to get information in to me by the month before publication i.e. January, April, July and October.

I look forward to hearing your news.

Website

If you have news and can't wait for this publication to come out we also have our parish website, which can be found at www.ashfordchurches.co.uk (go on, take a look....)

Weekly updates are issued around the parish via email, so if you would like to receive these updates make sure your local office has your email address or please email me direct.

Phil Sibbald

Team Development Officer

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Thank You

A great big thank you is owed to everyone who contributes to our life in the parish. The fund raising and donations that have been received have been amazing.

Our Christmas charities raised at least*:

Children's Society	£745.00
Porchlight	£360.00
Embrace Middle East	£241.35
CAP	£196.00
Winter Night Shelter	£196.00

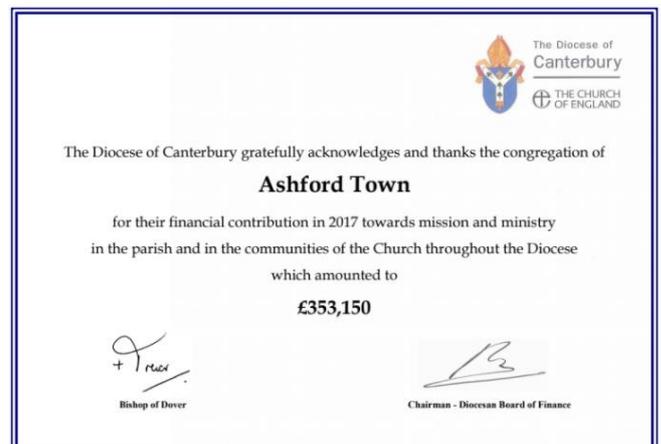
TOTAL £1738.35

*At the time of these figures being issued more monies were still to be received

Since Christmas, many fund raising events have taken place across the parish with many more in the pipeline – **Thank You**

Further great news is that for the **second year running** we have paid our **parish share in full**. This is indeed fantastic news for Ashford. Considering that before we became one parish we were in arrears and to have paid in full is an amazing achievement. If we can continue this and pay 2018's share as well, we will also have cleared all the arrears too and this is all down to you –

Thank You





Mission

The church is about Mission. It's often said that we are God's hands and feet on the earth, and it's our job to look out for where there is a need and respond to it. When we are doing God's work, practically helping others and sharing our faith we

are taking part in God's mission to the earth

Across our town there are many missional opportunities going on all the time, and there is plenty for you to get involved in:

CAP- Debt Help

We are now able to see up to 5 new clients every month needing support with debt. Each client is provided with support from a debt coach, but also a befriender who comes alongside them and supports them through the process. Could you give some time to be a befriender to someone in need?

Nursing Homes

Our clergy are regularly invited into Nursing and Care homes across the Parish to provide pastoral support and services. It is great when members of the congregation can go with them, could this be you?

Street Pastors

On Friday evenings from 10pm-4am you will find the Ashford Street Pastors out in the town centre supporting those working in, and those enjoying, the night-time economy. They would love to expand and be out on the streets more evenings but can only do this with more volunteers. Are you a night owl? Could you give one evening a month?

Chaplaincy

We currently provide a chaplaincy in Towers School run by volunteers, and the John Wallis Academy and Ashford School have paid chaplains. More and more young people are looking to people they trust outside the family home for support and guidance, this is just one of the roles of a School Chaplain. We are hoping to launch a chaplaincy service in Ashford College one lunchtime a week after Easter, please do get in touch if you would like to be involved in this initiative.

Of course, a large part of our individual mission is to our friends and family; our neighbours; our colleagues; those we see at the school gate; and those we sit next

to on the bus. Each of us can be involved in that part of God's mission

We have a lot going on across our Parish, I have only listed a few things to get us started! If you would like to get involved in something already going on please do contact me, or if you have a great idea to reach out to the local community with practical help and the sharing of faith please let me know and it would be great to chat about it.

I look forward to a Mission-filled year across our Parish, and hope you will share in it too.

Nathan Wilson

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Hall Hire

Our hall hires are increasing and in January we employed a new Hall Hire Administrator, George Wheeler.

We have 6 halls for hire for parties and events as well as regular bookings throughout the parish.

If you are interested in hiring a hall for an event, please visit www.ashfordchurches.co.uk/hire-a-hall or email George on hallhire@ashfordchurches.co.uk

Healing

Ashford Town Parish Service of Healing
Kingsnorth Church 29th April at 6pm
Speaker: Rev Sarah Chapman
Chaplain, Canterbury Diocesan Centre for Healing and Wholeness

A quiet, reflective service with an opportunity to receive the laying on of hands and healing prayer.

Pentecost 2018

The John Wallis C of E Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford, Kent. TN23 3HG
Date: Sunday 20th May / Time: 10.30am

The Venerable Darren Miller, The Archdeacon of Ashford will be preaching.
This is a joint parish wide event

All are welcome

Gifts and Injuries

On Saturday 17th February, representatives from every place of worship within Ashford Town Parish attended a day titled 'Gifts and Injuries', led by Revd. Canon Sarah Chapman and two other Assistant Chaplains from The Living Well, Canterbury Diocesan Centre for Healing and Wholeness.

We are one parish of Ashford but within that are various separate church fellowships with their own distinctiveness. During the day we looked at what everyone was both contributing into the greater whole and what injuries were sustained in that. Facilitated by the team, people shared something of each church's story if it was hurting, where, why.

We were then also encouraged to share and celebrate the gifts and distinctiveness that each church brought to the whole parish.

The day began with a short act of worship during which Daniel 9: 3–19 was read. Sarah talked of Daniel's prayer of confession on behalf of his people. We were encouraged to take a dirty stone, placing it in a cross formation. Having placed the stone, a team member washed our hands, symbolically cleansing us of the sin we had confessed, like Daniel, on behalf of ourselves and others.

After sharing homemade soup and a ploughman's lunch together, we listened to Luke 10: 25–37, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We chose pictures that best represented the gifts the churches brought and once again, placed them around the cross. The picture was complete; our gifts and forgiven hurts and injuries bathed in God's sunlight through Kennington church windows.

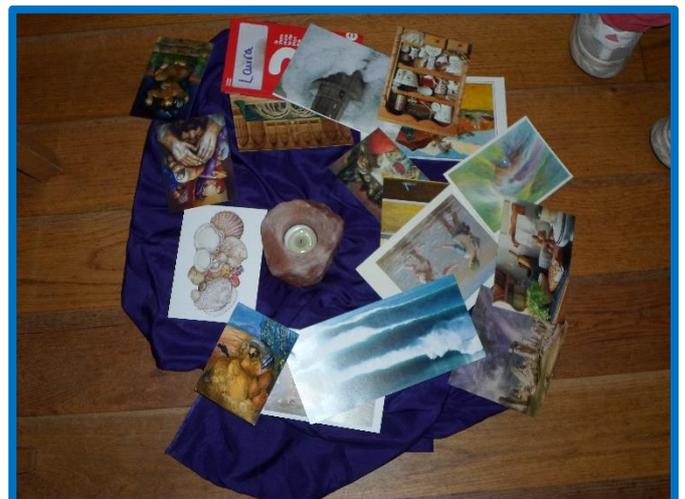
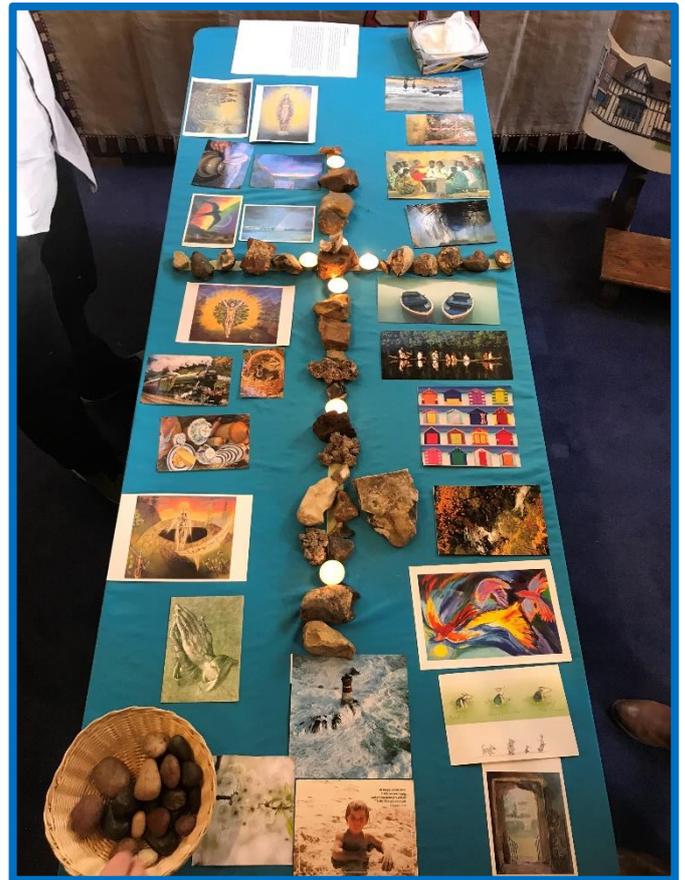
At the end of the day, Sarah reminded us that this was the start of a healing journey; there would be other events, facilitated by the team from The Living Well. Dates, themes and local venues for future events will be published in the coming few months; in the meanwhile, we continue to pray for God's guidance as to how best we share the Good News of Jesus to the communities we serve across Ashford Town.

Rev Cathie Aldis

Asst Curate

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Pictures from "Gifts and Injuries Day"



Ashford Deanery Communion & Confirmation Service:

On Thursday 8th March, five news Christians took the next step in their journey of faith and were confirmed by Bishop Trevor.

The service was held at Kingsnorth Church. A very large thank you goes to Kingsnorth Church for their hospitality and welcome.



From The Wardens

Earlier in the year, our Parish Wardens Jerry Fox and Phil Coles, wrote to us all as church family. For those of you that did not see their communication, please see below.

“As we look ahead to 2018, as Parish Church Wardens we are privileged to be in a position where we can see reasonably clearly what is happening in the Ashford Church and there has been much to be thankful for in the last twelve months.

The ministry team which leads the pastoral care, outreach and worship across our five local church areas is now complete, and we are extremely fortunate that we receive external funding for the posts held by Phil Sibbald and Nathan Wilson, and that Ashford School pays half of the cost of our town centre priest. This gives us the opportunity to reach a position where our income will cover our running costs by the end of 2018. Our strong ministry team will also enable us to work out God's purposes both in our local church areas and across the Parish, particularly in the areas of mission, ministry and spiritual & numerical growth.

Throughout the last year we have regularly celebrated and worshipped in our local churches and we have also met together as a whole parish at Pentecost and Advent which were both joyous occasions. We have offered loving care and practical support to those in need in Ashford through visits to the sick and bereaved, through baptisms, marriages, funerals and through our debt centre (in partnership with Christians Against Poverty). We have had an active presence in many schools throughout the town and our parent & toddler and youth groups have continued to offer young people of all ages a chance to have fun in a safe environment. Our two community cafes have enabled new friendships and good conversations over a tea or coffee, and many excellent social events have been held in the various local areas. For the third year running we have supported the Winter Night Shelter for the homeless, providing food, warmth and a place to sleep on Monday nights in South Ashford.

We are sure that you will know of many other initiatives and work in your local church that we can give thanks for.

On the financial front the Diocese has agreed to write off the balance of our historic debt. In 2019 this will release us from a financial burden which came about because, in the past, we didn't pay the full amount towards the cost of our local priests.

In 2017 we were close to covering our Parish running costs with our income. As Church Wardens we have a responsibility for keeping an eye on the finances and so we felt we needed to let you know that we do expect a loss in 2017. We will know the exact amount of this loss when the annual accounts are prepared over the next few months. We are fortunate that we will be able to use some reserves and Trust funding to cover the loss but this practice is not sustainable in the long term and so, as the New Year starts, we (your Wardens) will be reviewing and increasing our giving towards God's work in Ashford.

We ask you to consider doing the same. We hope that you will be inspired by all the good work that is going on, and that you will raise your financial support to the Ashford Parish, which includes your local church, in grateful thanks for God's saving grace and provision. Once our income covers our costs we can all fully concentrate on building God's kingdom across our town.”

Jerry Fox & Phil Coles