# **FORWARD MOVE**

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# FEBRUARY 2024

# St Mary Kippington magazine

(Part of the benefice of the West Sevenoaks Team Ministry, which includes St Luke's Sevenoaks and St Mary the Virgin, Riverhead with Dunton Green)

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# Our mission at St Mary Kippington

To be a bridge between God and our community; sharing the love of Jesus and growing in worship, welcome and witness.

# From the Team Rector: Doing Lent this year? Maybe.

This month the Church will be inviting you "to the observance of a holy Lent by forty days of self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word". Aside from the yearly question asked as to what I am giving up for Lent, it is not often I am asked the more challenging question as to why I am doing Lent this year? (Of course you will answer for me that being a Priest/ Vicar we expect you to do it!) . But why?

Is it as a physical self-improvement plan/ course? Similar to ones that you come across in many magazines and through web searches. Detoxing the mind; improving the biceps, etc! Is it because you feel guilty because you feel you have to do it? Or are you ceasing to observe it – not sure why you participate it in these days, being put of by the endless repetition of a call to confession and continue brow beating? Do we need this yearly reminder of our sins and failures? The world is full of sin and failure as it is. And really do we honestly want another reminder of death and mortality? Life is for living! Death can wait. So why do Lent?

Well yes it is still a truth that Lent is about an honest recognition of where I have messed up - though reminding myself where I haven't so it doesn't become a one dimensional season. We're not as bad sometimes as our Anglican liturgy makes out!

Yet Lent for me is also about a journey, a pilgrimage - taking the time it offers to reflect on where I am travelling with the Lord and the sort of person I am that is doing that travelling. It is often the case that since last Lent my character has been distorted, through my own wrong priorities, other people and living. Spiritually my journey and my character is not as I would wish them both to be.

Lent therefore isn't only about giving up or taking on; isn't simply about rightful confession and renewed prayer and opportunities of study and bible reading. It's also about realising that since Lent last year the pilgrimage I have been making and the person I have become may have slightly (or even completely) been knocked off course! I need to right myself spiritually – in both direction and living. That is why I do Lent.

Blessing to you all. Rev Mark

#### **CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2024**

## Thursday 1 st February

10.00am Holy Communion (and all Thursdays this month)

8.00pm Choir Practise. This happens most Thursdays but please check with Len (01732-451632 if interested in joining, before coming.

# **Sunday 4th February Second Sunday before Lent**

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Family Service in the Parish Centre followed by tea/coffee

## Sunday 11th February The Sunday next before Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Holy Communion (Common Worship) Sunday Club and Crèche. Coffee and tea afterwards in the Parish Centre

## Wednesday 14th February ASH WEDNESDAY

7.30pm Ash Wednesday Team Service at St Luke's Church with soup and a roll beforehand at 6.30pm

## Sunday 18th February First Sunday in Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Matins (Bok of Common Prayer). Sunday Club and Crèche. Coffee and tea afterwards in the Parish Centre

## Friday 23rd. February

10am Lent Study Course Week 1 'Beginnings' in Centenary Room

Saturday 24th February: 11am Ukrainian Communion Service

# Sunday 25th February Second Sunday in Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Holy Communion (Common Worship) Sunday Club and

Crèche. Coffee and tea afterwards in the Parish Centre

6.00pm Evensong with SEDICEM Youth Choir from Canterbury. Refreshments following.

## Friday 1st March

10am Lent Study Course Wek 2 'Following' in Centenary Room 2pm Women's World Day of Prayer. Vine Baptist Church

Saturday 2nd March: 2pm Wedding

## Sunday 3rd March Third Sunday in Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Family Service in the Parish Centre followed by tea/coffee 3.00pm Kippington Youth Group in The Centre

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**Kippington Centre:** Managed by Karen Bridgen. For all centre matters please email Karen on

karen.bridgen58@gmail.com

Church opening times: The church is open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Saturday and from 12noon to 6pm on Sunday.

**Forward Move:** Contributions for the March magazine by Monday 19th February. The magazine will be out Sunday 25th February. Send to:

revmarkbridgen@gmail.com

**Live streaming:** We live stream our 10:30am services—apart from the first Sunday Family Service. Great for those housebound, on holiday, not able to make church that morning. Please spread the word! <u>To access the live stream.</u> Go on to your computer on Sunday before 10:30am and type in You tube. When on the You Tube site, put in on the search engine at the top – st mary's sevenoaks

A Live Stream of the service will appear from around 10:15am. Click on the live stream to watch. The service will begin at 10:30am. The Live Stream will end once the service finishes.



# Giving to the Church without using

cash: Recognising that more people carry little or no cash with them nowadays, we have formed a link with 'Give A Little' who help charities with digital fundraising. So you can see in Church, a symbol – a 'QR Code' – which by clicking on it (and on this one) you can donate Anyone with a smartphone and access to the internet can simply scan this code when they will be

directed to a web page where they will be able to donate to Church funds.

As a church we take our **safeguarding responsibilities** very seriously. If you have any concerns, then please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Wendy Pritchard safeguarding@stmaryssevenoaks.org

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# THE REAL EASTER EGG 2024:

Easter Sunday is even earlier this year falling on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March so, although you may have



only just taken down the Christmas decorations, I will be taking orders for the Real Easter Egg at

the Family Service on 4<sup>th</sup> February. To keep the price at £4.50 per egg and ensure free delivery, the final order date will be Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. As usual a 24-page Easter story-activity book is included with the Egg. As in previous years, we are also hoping to provide Sevenoaks Loaves and Fishes with an Easter Egg for all the children on their books (last year, we delivered 48 Eggs plus Hot Cross Buns for many of the families) so, if you can, please order for them as well as for yourselves and your family. I will be taking orders after the Family Service on Sunday 4th February or you can email me at: jenny.gyte@icloud.com or call me on 07794 70 20 94. Many thanks, Jenny Gyte.

**Ash Wednesday Team Service:** 14<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm. St Luke's Church. Soup and a roll served beforehand from 6:45pm.

Lent Study Course – 'Exploring our Journey of Faith through Word and Music'. A course of five weeks looking at faith, our faith, through Music (well-known hymns) and Word (Scripture, reflection). A time of discussion, reflecting, singing and listening. Fridays at 10am (to 11:30am) in the Centenary Room.

Week 1: Beginnings – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

Week 2: Following – Friday 1st March.

Week 3: Challenging – Friday 8th March.

Week 4: Believing – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

Week 5: Dying – Friday 22nd March.

Please let Rev Mark know if you are attending.

**Ukrainian service at Kippington:** Holy Communion in the Ukrainian language next celebrated on Sat 11am February 24<sup>th</sup>.

1st March: **Women's World Day of Prayer** Service @ Vine Baptist Church. All (especially women) invited.

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**Kippington Youth Group:** The next meeting of KYG Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 3pm in the Centre.

# Church News

# ST MARY KIPPINGTON CHORAL EVENSONG sung by SEDECIM Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm

The Chamber Choir of Kent College, Canterbury Directed by Julian Ross, Director of Music at Kent

College Canticles Dyson in F
Anthem Evening Hymn - Balfour Gardiner

Refreshments following.

The forthcoming Choral Eve song in our church is brought to us once again by Sedecim, the chamber choir of Kent College, Canterbury, directed by Julian Ross.

Whereas over the centuries the tradition of Choral Evensong, also known as "Cathedral" Evensong, has largely been confined to our cathedrals and abbeys, today it is featured in many Parish Churches in recognition of its three intrinsic attributes to worship: holiness, beauty and transcendence.

Sedecim regularly sings in the school chapel services and other events giving performances in several prestigious venues and have sung Choral Evensong in Winchester, Canterbury and Rochester Cathedrals. Members of the choir have also enjoyed an annual Christmas tradition of visiting different countries and very recently have returned from a tour in Venice.

How fortunate we are that through them we can experience this treasured tradition of Choral Evensong here in Kippington. Do come and partake in the worship and support these young singers.

We look forward to a service as uplifting as their previous visit in 2022 which fully realised the sentiment of the Epiphany hymn, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

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# Loaves and Fishes Food Bank for February.

This month the Food Bank needs:

Breakfast cereals (but not Weetabix or

Cornflakes) Tinned fish (but not tuna), stewed
steak, chicken casserole, ham/spam, corned beef, macaroni
cheese, tomatoes, custard and rice pudding

<u>Also needed:</u> Rice sauces, instant noodles, biscuits, cooking oil, sugar, flour, laundry powder, washing up liquid, men's grooming products, women's hygiene products, shower gel

Not needed at the moment as plenty in stock: Baked beans, tinned carrots, tinned peas, pasta, rice, mayonnaise, tea, hot chocolate or peanut butter.

Please leave donations in the Children's corner.



# Frugal Lunch

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024, at 12.30pm



St Mary's Church Centre, Kippington Road TN13 2LL

Come and join us for our annual Christian Aid Frugal Lunch.

Enjoy a simple Sunday lunch with friends and please donate what you would have spent on your Sunday roast!



Peter Kettle, an experienced
Christian Aid
Volunteer who has spoken at
our lunches before,
will be talking about Christian

Aid and the particular needs at present.

Every gift, every action, every prayer, every one of us can change lives.

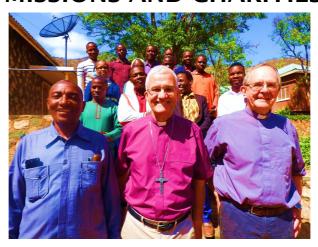


It would be helpful to have an idea of how many are coming, so please email: Jean Day at day@kent2.co.uk to let us

know. Last minute decisions fine!

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# MISSIONS AND CHARITIES



In the above photo most of you will recognise the familiar figure of Revd David Kitley, our former vicar; also in the photo are Bishop Jonathan, the Bishop of Rochester and the Revd Agripa Ndatila, the Principal of St Philip's Theological College, Mpwapwa, Tanzania. Some of the students at the college appear in the background.

David was asked to accompany Bishop Jonathan on his first visit to Rochester's Link Dioceses in Tanzania.

Readers of Forward Move will be interested to hear that the PCC has recently authorised a number of grants to various missions and charities; included in this list was a sum of money earmarked to provide a scholarship for a student at St Philip's College.

Stephen Day

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Matthew 28: 19 - 20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

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# **Kippington Youth Group**

As I write this I am remembering the fun and excitement of yesterday's KYG meeting (21<sup>st</sup> January) in the Centre. Nine young people (from age 11+) came and spent the afternoon playing games, working together in teams, listening to a short 'God Slot' from the Vicar and cooking and eating pancakes! It is encouraging that they are bringing their friends along. Below are details of our next meeting ...

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#### **KYG**

St Mary Kippington Youth Group (for young people from Y6 onwards)

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 3.00-4.30pm 'Pizza and games, taking care'

Bring along your friends
Contact Jean Day: <a href="mailto:day@kent2.co.uk">day@kent2.co.uk</a>
to let us know you are coming.

Icebreaker activities
Egg-citing games
Short God slot and time to be still
PIZZA!



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# Christmas Fete—some photos to remember the great time of fellowship we had and raising more than last year!









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Our Gardening Pages Janet Eilbeck Tel 07710 397523

Not many of us enjoy the thought of going out into the cold to do the dirty chores in the garden, but we do feel better for it, if we do. So what are those chores for February?

Turning compost

Cutting down (probably to ground level) any leftover perennials whose stems look rotten

Cutting back hedges, shrubs (not those that flower in spring) and shrubby perennials like roses and salvias, perovskia and buddleia

In mid Feb your grasses will be starting to look tatty and windblown. They can be cut to ground level, or to the level of the new growth if it is already coming.

This makes the garden look satisfyingly tidy and fills the green bins quite quickly! It will also enable you to appreciate the coming of snowdrops, crocus and daffodils that might otherwise be hidden.

But it is also a time for stocking up, which is a much more agreeable pastime! That well known nursery in Dunton Green has wonderful offers to keep people coming through the doors at this time of year. Last year I stocked up on small shrubs such as deutzia, weigela and cornus, rhododendrons, pittosporum and acers. You have to be confident as most will not be in leaf and some of them do look, well, dead.... But they aren't, and at under £6 rather than closer to £20, they will be a treat to look forward to in summer. And of course stock up on peat-free compost at less than half price. Mine all did well last year and I will be going back for more this year, space permitting.

Winter is a good time to plant trees so this is also a last call for new trees. Again, there are good deals available.

Last month I offered some design tips and this is a good time for clearing old or unsatisfactory beds.

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The wet ground and plants in hibernation makes it easier to clear the soil (though do try not to compact it too much) and you then have a clear space for your new plantings, remembering to mix deciduous and evergreen and read the labels for preferred soil and aspect, colour and eventual size. I replanted a bed near the house last year with all my winter bargains and I have been delighted with it. The only issue was that the birds ate a lot of my new camellia buds, so I am hoping for better luck this year.

If you have a greenhouse, keep an eye on it for rotting leaves that need to be removed before they affect others. By the end of the month you will also need to look out for insect damage. Very little watering should be needed. Most plants will do better if kept slightly dry. If you have succeeded in keeping cuttings going over winter, it would be a shame to lose them now, so put them somewhere warmer if necessary during very cold spells, especially once they have started to shoot.

And finally, move your pots around to keep the untidy ones out of sight and bring out the pots of bulbs and, later, perennials so you can enjoy watching them grow away over the next



month or two. Spring may not be around the next corner, but perhaps the one after, and you will not want to miss those exciting moments of growth and rediscovery.

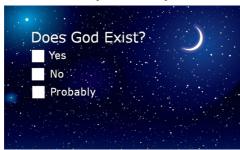
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# Talking about gardening ... a thank you!

We would like to take this opportunity of passing on our thanks to Anne Cadwallader for her many years of tending, weeding, digging, cutting and caring (along with lan) the church garden—the shrubs around the church and the general area around. Anne is downing gardening tools this March. Thank you Anne for your years of helping to beautify and tend the church's grounds. We remain thankful to lan for continuing to tend an care over many years. If you would like to help—an hour or so each week (as it is important to have a few volunteers) please do have a word with Mark.

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# Some WHY questions posed to Christians.



Can the existence of God be proved? No. These things are unknowable in this life. Beyond death all will be plain. Until then everyone has the same evidence in front of them, and we try to make the best sense of it that we can.

Christians very often reach a point of settled conviction within themselves that there is a God, which is entirely satisfying to them even when others disagree. Throughout history people have tried to find a way of being sure that God exists. The ideas have not changed for a thousand years. However, they get expressed in new ways each century.

Historically people looking for proof have thought hard about the universal awareness of morality. Those who find this a persuasive argument for the existence of God believe that our sense of right and wrong must come from an ultimate objective source of justice. After all, the atoms from which we come have no morality of their own. People of faith call that ultimate source of justice 'God'.

Another idea is called 'the cosmological argument'. Everything that happens is caused by something. So, a chain of events must lead back to a 'first cause' that set it all going. Obviously, people do not have to call that first cause God. Scientists researching the origins of matter, for example, call it the Big Bang. But Christians believe that even the Big Bang had something that caused it, and use that as evidence for their belief in God. Everyone knows that the sky is blue. However, on some occasions a sunset in the sky takes one's breath away. There is nothing magical about a sunset. It is a natural phenomenon caused by circumstances that have the scientific name Rayleigh Scattering. What is not known is why a sunset makes a person think, 'Ah, that is so beautiful!' no matter how often he or she sees one. That sense of wonder, a Christian would suggest, is where God is making himself known.

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Life is not meaningless. And life is not an accident. Christians believe that God created the universe, the earth and all that lives on it.



Planet Earth is unique, statistically improbable and very different to the rest of the known universe. It is a planet very specifically designed for life.

Six hundred or more years before Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote: '[God] did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited.' Science can take our understanding only so far, as scientists themselves make clear. Science tells us what exists and how, but not why it exists or what it all means. It is known that nothing in the universe exists as an isolated or independent entity. The universe is a continuum of matter and energy in space and time, but it has not always existed. It had a start, but the cause of the start is unknown. Scientists know that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, but cannot identify the action that caused the existence of the universe. Christians identify God as that cause.

But God is more than an impersonal force creating a universe. God created human beings for them to share in his own existence. Human beings and all of creation, exist to show God's glory.

The Bible describes human beings as singled out for special status. It describes humans as made 'in the image of God'. It is not in any sense a physical likeness, but a capacity to engage in life mentally, morally, creatively, socially and spiritually. The 'image of God' distinguishes humans from the remainder of the animal, mineral and vegetable world and enables them to enter an active relationship with their maker.

The whole Bible tells the story of God's relationship of love with his creation. Jesus Christ spoke of the overwhelming significance of love when he was asked to say which was the most important of God's commandments. He selected two – to love God and to love other people. Everything that gives life meaning follows from those.

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#### **Celtic Prayer**

In the second week of December, Rev Mark led a session about Celtic Prayer. We learnt that the Celtic way of praying was simple, and it consisted of old wisdom handed down from one generation to another. It was based on the premise that anyone can write prayers, there is no need for an academic, theological education.



What ordinary tasks in your daily life could be transformed by asking God to be present as you do them? Waiting for the bus, preparing a meal, doing housework, weeding the garden. Mark asked us to work in pairs and then individually to compose some simple prayers. Here is a small selection of those that we composed, with grateful thanks to fellow attendees who gave me permission to publish their prayers:

'Lord, I see the berries on the holly tree. I see the berries and think of Christmas. But then the birds come and eat them. Lord, thank you that you feed the birds and can feed me. Amen'

'Lord, I have seen the postman and I am so grateful for the letters he brings. It is great Lord for the messages of comfort they contain. Amen'

'Please, God, watch over me as I walk during the day for exercise and to buy food. Helping me to live life to the full, both in body and mind. Amen'

Another prayer about walking,

'Please, God, help me to walk in not too much pain and not to fall over. Walking was my favourite activity but now it is fraught with difficulty. Amen'

'Thank you, Lord, for the gift of sewing, the needles and the thread, the materials, and the way that it is both practical and meditational. Amen'

Lastly, an amalgamation from three prayers about a speeding car: 'Lord, today, I have seen a speeding car. Help me, Lord, to move speedily through the problems of the day to reach a peaceful evening. Amen'

**Sharon Fishwick** 

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#### Some Symbols of Lent.

Lent is a forty-day penitential season spent in preparation for the highest holy days of our Christian faith – Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter. Over the centuries many symbols have evolved represent key spiritual aspects of this season.

**Ashes**. In the Old Testament ashes represent death and sorrow for sins. Ashand dust are synonymous. Our bodies are



made of dust (Gen 2:7), and upon death they return to "dust and ashes" (Gen 18:17). Ashes serve as a stark reminder of human mortality which is a compelling reason to do penance. In biblical times, once people admitted their sins they covered themselves with sackcloth and ashes (Jer 6:26; 25:34; Dan 9:3; Jonah 3:6,10) as a public admission of guilt, a plea for God's mercy, a promise to reform, and a pledge to resist future temptation. The ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the burning of palms from previous Palm Sundays, and then applied to the forehead with the word: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel" (Mk 1:15) or "Remember you are dust and unto dust you will return" (Gen 3:19).

**Purple/ Blue**. Is the liturgical colour for the season of Lent. It is a sombre colour which symbolizes mourning, suffering, humility, regret, and the willingness to do penance. The colour's association with suffering is based upon Jesus' Passion when the soldiers clothed him in a purple cloak and tortured him (Mk 15:17-20; Jn 19:2-3).

**Barren stones**. Jesus went out into the desert where the landscape was parched and the surface covered with loose stones. The stones are a symbol of austerity and rigor, desolation, severity and sadness. The devil used stones to tempt Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread" (Mt 4:3), but Jesus made them a symbol for overcoming temptation, "One does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4;)

**Praying Hands**. Praying hands represent prayer, the activity that ranks first among the other three traditional penitential practices: fasting, almsgiving, and works of charity. Prayer is the premier way to strengthen one's relationship with God, and in so doing, to turn away from sin.

**A Money Bag** symbolize the Lenten penitential practice of almsgiving. Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness.

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# Exploring the books of the Bible.

# The Old Testament:

## **Book of Proverbs**

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The book of Proverbs is simple to describe and understand –

consisting mainly of Proverbs, pithy sayings on a whole host of subjects. The book has a few parables (stories) and poetry also.

The book is said to be written mainly by Solomon, the wisest king ever to rule, though there are other names attached to it as well.

The date for the book is conjecture, but as Solomon's reign was 970-930 B.C, so the book is thought to belong to this time period.

The main purpose of this book is to teach wisdom to God's people. Proverbs are short clever explanations, which are easy to remember, being things which are typically true. For example, "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread" (12:11). It is typically true that one who works his land will have bread but it is not a guarantee to always be true. Mostly the proverbs deal with such subjects as life, principles, good judgment, and perception. They often draw distinctions between a wise man and a foolish man.

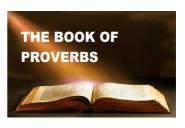
The book of Proverbs can be spilt in three sections.

Chapters 1-9, Solomon writes about wisdom for younger people, written from the perspective of a parent. We have the valued passages which reads: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7). "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, And He will make your paths straight" (3:5-6).

Chapters 10-24, applies to different ages of people, covering various topics. Many of these parables contrast a righteous man and a wicked man, and urges us to commit our way to God, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (14:12).

Chapters 25-31, is about wisdom to leaders. They contain many warnings and instructions to assist in walking and seeking a Godly life when in leadership.

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# Who's Who at St Mary Church Kippington

(Part of the West Sevenoaks Team Ministry)

Rev Mark Bridgen. Team Rector, with special responsibility for St Mary Kippington and (currently) St Mary the Virgin, Riverhead with Dunton Green. (01732) 452112/07375299944: revmarkbridgen@gmail.com

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Rev Stephen Osei-Mensah. Associate Curate across the Team.rev.stephen.osei-mensah@outlook.com

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Youth Group—KYG: Jean Day

Pastoral Assistant: Sharon Fishwick (01732) 459349

sfishwick1960@gmail.com (also prayer group co-ordinator)

Forward Move magazine: revmarkbridgen@gmail.com

Church Website: www.stmaryssevenoaks.org
Parish Safeguarding Officer: Wendy Pritchard

safeguarding@stmaryssevenoaks.org

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