





October 2026

Sabbath

Recently at St Mark's and St Mary's, I was asked to preach about Sabbath. I have to confess I'm not a very good Sabbath keeper - I'm far more in love with the idea of it than the actual practice. Sunday is just always such a good day to catch up on lots of jobs. So I was challenged.

It's always sobering for me to remember that Sabbath keeping is one of the ten commandments - right up there with 'do not murder'! So not an optional lifestyle choice that we might read about in the Sunday supplements, but something that really matters to God. God knows that we are designed to rest, and that we don't do well when we don't rest. We are not (as I said in my sermon - and who knows if anyone understood) made to be Duracell battery-run rabbits that go on and on and on. (It's still the one with the copper top.)

We have limits, and Sabbath is meant to give us an opportunity to honour those limits. To rest. It's fascinating for me to ponder the fact that God rested after creating the world. For a whole day, not just half an hour. He clearly didn't need to rest - since he is God - but rest he did. The implication is that he stopped and took it all in - revelled in the wonder and beauty of creation. We have a God who delights in all that he has made, a God who stops to savour it. I love that.

I also love thinking about what is 'bidden' on the Sabbath rather than what is forbidden: what we are invited into - practices that help sustain the crazy, busy lives we can find ourselves living, where there just doesn't feel there is enough time to stop and cease our work. Sabbath for sure is a practice that involves trust.

But I think that more than anything, it is an invitation to appreciate the many beautiful things about life. Savouring involves a bit of lingering, I think - not just a 'clock it' momentarily and move on. And in this lingering, this slowing down, our hearts perhaps get a chance to experience God enjoying us, delighting in us at the very point where we are doing nothing - not achieving, earning, accomplishing, being productive, but just being. That surely has to do us good.

Liz Cox, churchwarden, West Weald Parish

Sunday Services in October

4th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
	6.30pm	All Saints	Informal Worship
11th	9am	St Mark's	Morning Prayer
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship with Communion
18th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship with Communion
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship
25th	9am	St Mark's	Common Worship with Communion
	10am	All Saints	Morning Worship
	10.45am	St Mary's	Morning Worship with Communion
	2.30pm	Woodgate Hub Café	Sundays at the Hub

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

Our current plans are as published here, but they are subject to change. Please look out for email communication, and keep an eye on
our social media pages, website, YouTube channel and weekly notice sheet.

The St Mary's services are put onto YouTube, and we hope they will be a blessing to those who cannot attend in person. They can be found here:

https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCBQ0W4r1m39ixogQWR3TxoA?fbclid=IwAR2vLqbms97lq9StSwn8qvgX_vTF11-tg0LV7z80cVFC8BZE034WNbNHhc4

You can subscribe to the sermons as a podcast too. All links are on the website
at https://www.stmarysparish.org.uk/podcasts/ .

Other Events

October

2nd	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
3rd	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
3rd	9.45am	St Mary's	Visiting bellringers
6th	10am	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
6th	7pm	All Saints	Prayer gathering
7th	7pm	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
9th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
10th	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
13th	10am	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
14th	2.30pm	St Mary's	Exploring Prayer
14th	7pm	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
16th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
17th	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
20th	10am	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
21st	7pm	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
22nd	8pm	St Mary's	Choir Practice
23rd	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
24th	tbc	St Mary's	Slaugham Society event
24th	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café
27th	10am	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
28th	2.30pm	St Mary's	Exploring Prayer
28th	7pm	All Saints	What Just Happened to Me?
29th	8pm	St Mary's	Choir Practice
30th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
30th	7.30pm	St Mary's	Bellringing practice
31st	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café

November

3rd	7pm	All Saints	Prayer gathering
4th	8pm	St Mary's	Choir Practice
6th	10am	St Mary's	Creative Expressions art group
7th	tbc	St Mary's	Slaugham Society event
7th	9.30am	All Saints	Community Pantry & Café

Locations for services and events
All Saints: Horsham Road, Handcross, RH17 6DF

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

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

Woodgate Hub: Grace Holland Avenue, Pease Pottage, RH11 9SL

Seaforth Hall: Cuckfield Lane, Warninglid, RH17 5UB

More dates to note

8/11 Remembrance Sunday

11/11 Armistice Day

5/12 Advent Retreat Space

9/12 Carols in Warninglid

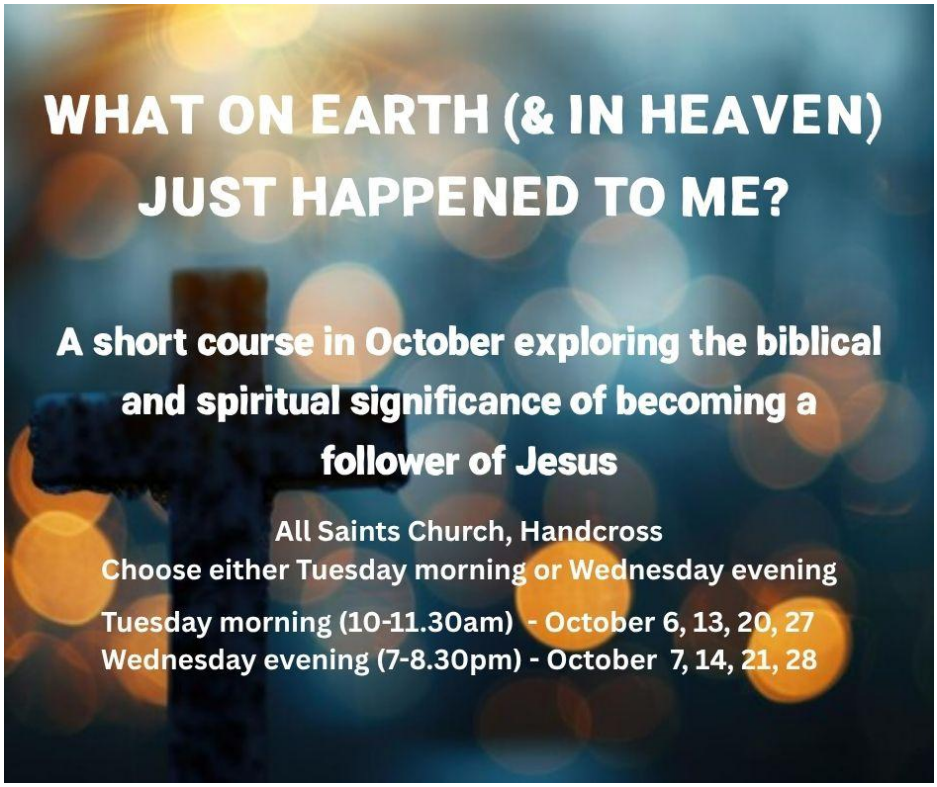
13/12 St Mark's Carol Service

19/12 All Saints Carol Service

20/12 St Mary's Carol Service

What on Earth Just Happened to Me?

During October, Phil will be running a course which looks at the biblical and spiritual significance of becoming a follower of Jesus. Everyone is welcome. Contact Phil for more details: philhawksley@westwealdparish.org.uk.



Exploring Prayer

Once again, we are running a series of Exploring Prayer meetings at St Mary's from 2.30pm to 4pm on the following Wednesday afternoons: 30 Sept, 14 Oct, 28 Oct, 11 Nov, 25 Nov, 9 Dec.
Do feel free to come along on any afternoon. If you would like to know more, please chat to Liz Cox or Gina Howard.

Ernie Arnold Bell Fund

On Tuesday 8th September, a full peal of Lessness Surprise Major was successfully rung by an expert team of ringers at St Mary's Slaugham in the outstanding time of 2 hours and 47 minutes, led by David Kirkcaldy. The superb team of ringers came from London, St Albans, Croydon, Brighton, Eastbourne and beyond and several ring regularly at towers in the City of London and Westminster Abbey. This was a complex method, where a full peal consists of over 5,000 different changes of the bells (sequences).

The day commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ernie Arnold who was Tower Captain at St Mary's for over 70 years, and lived in Handcross all his life. It is a huge privilege for us as a parish to have had this team ring a full peal so expertly, the first full peal at Slaugham for nearly 10 years. Ernie Arnold's family are most grateful to the ringers for the peal and for making this such a special occasion.

The Ernie Arnold Bell Fund was launched on the same day to assist with bell maintenance and repairs, as well as to promote bellringing. It is hoped this will pay for running repairs to the bells and some significant work that needs to be done in October 2026, for which there is still a shortfall of about £3,000. If you wish to donate to the fund, please send a BACS transfer marked 'Bell Fund' to Slaugham PCC 40-24-33, 81842242, or you may use the QR code in the church. Thank you!

Our verses for 2026

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:22-23



The **West Weald Community Pantry** continues strongly, as it has for the past six years.

The Saturday event is welcomed by so many people, and we call it our 'reducing food waste' event. Several stay for the free tea, coffee and biscuits, and it has become a lovely meeting place for people.

Why not come along and see for yourself?

Every week, Tesco at Broadbridge Heath donates its reduced produce, meat and bread products, as part of the FareShare scheme. We have now carried out 539 collections from Tesco, which is the equivalent of 48,768kg of food saved, as well as the saving of 140,541kg of CO_2!

On Wednesday mornings, we open a foodbank. From the very generous Harvest Thanksgiving donations from schools and churches, as well as those from the Warninglid monthly coffee mornings, we are able to help families and adults who are struggling due to the high cost of living increases and unemployment.

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in collecting food, sorting food, helping run the café, chatting to those who come on Saturdays, and generally spreading the message about what we are doing!

We work with schools and the GP surgery to offer a targeted service to those in most need of food, and we have helped several people in this way. Thank you to everyone who has donated food or money, or who has helped with this aspect of the Pantry.

The Pantry is a key ministry for our church, and we are seeing God at work in many ways!

We would like to increase our team of helpers so if you would like to join in and can spare an hour on a Friday evening to help with food collections, time on a Saturday morning to help in the café and chat to those attending, or an hour on Wednesday mornings to help with our targeted service, please talk to Barbara, Phil or the church office, and find out how you can become part of this amazing team!

West Weald Schools Team

Please pray for Carl and the team as they undertake the vital work in our schools, as well as for the staff and pupils.

Regular assemblies are: Monday, 11am, Brantridge, and Tuesday, 9am, St Mark's Primary.

Our local schools and headteachers are: Brantridge (Mr Dafydd Roberts), Handcross Park (Mr Jonnie Besley), Handcross Primary (Mrs Sharon Bondonno), St Mark's CofE Primary (Mrs Laura Kelsey) and Woodgate Primary (Mrs Sarah Neller).

Handcross Rosemary Club

The Handcross Rosemary Club has been bringing together the people of Handcross and its surrounding villages for 64 years. It's an informal chance to meet, chat and enjoy a variety of entertainments and talks, with a homemade afternoon tea!

We meet every third Wednesday of each month at 2.30-4.00 in the Parish Hall, Handcross. Yearly membership is just £15 , with £2 on the door at each meeting which includes tea, sandwiches and cake. As well as the monthly entertainment, we have occasional outings, a fish-and-chip treat during our AGM, and a much-anticipated Christmas Lunch.

The goal of the Rosemary Club is to keep our community connected, especially those who are less physically able or isolated. Chat, laughter and listening are powerful and welcome tonics in this increasingly complicated world.

Please come along to any of our meetings to see if you would like to become a member. We would love you to join our welcoming group.

For more information please contact our Chairman Karen Baker at klb2755@gmail.com or on 07747 741684.

Regular Notices

Safeguarding
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility!
If you are worried about the wellbeing of a child or vulnerable person, please contact us.

- Our Parish Safeguarding Officer: Helen Arnold
- Contact: safeguarding@westwealdparish.org.uk

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child ring Police on 999.
Safeguarding information is in all our churches and on the website.

Hardship Fund
Financial support is available from the Hardship Fund if you or someone you know (living in the parish) is in need. Forms can be collected from the hardware shop. If you cannot go out, please email Carl (rector@westwealdparish.org.uk) and he will send a form electronically.

Gift Aid
Claiming Gift Aid on donations to our churches provides an important contribution to our income. If you are eligible under Gift Aid rules, please let our treasurer Jane Moss (treasurer@westwealdparish.org.uk) know. Regular giving is most efficient via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), so please consider using that if you do not so do already. Please speak to Jane or Fae to know more.

Notice sheet distribution
If you do not already receive the notice sheet and other notices by email and you would like to do so, please email Fae at churchoffice@westwealdparish.org.uk.

Contact

During September, October and November, Carl will be on sabbatical, so please contact the churchwardens instead.

Rev'd Carl Smith
Rector, West Weald Parish 01444 400221 rector@westwealdparish.org.uk

Rev'd Monique Mendes da Costa curate@westwealdparish.org.uk
Curate, West Weald Parish – **on maternity leave from mid-September**

Phil Hawksley
Lay Apostolic Leader, All Saints philhawksley@westwealdparish.org.uk

Fae Widdowson
Parish Administrator 01444 400221 churchoffice@westwealdparish.org.uk

Office hours: 9am-12pm Monday & Thursday
(term time only)

Helen Arnold
Safeguarding Officer 07540 816170 safeguarding@westwealdparish.org.uk

Churchwardens
St Mark's Helen Arnold mrshelenarnold@gmail.com
St Mary's Liz Cox lizcox1@gmail.com

Website: www.westwealdparish.org.uk
Facebook: West Weald Parish | Facebook
WhatsApp:





All details are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change.