

CALENDAR

Wednesday	01-Jul-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	02-Jul-25	10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
Friday	03-Jul-25	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Sunday	05-Jul-26	9am All Age Eucharist at St John the Baptist
5th Sunday after Trinity		10.30am All Age Holy Communion Service at St Andrew's
Monday	06-Jul-25	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer 7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets
Tuesday	07-Jul-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	08-Jul-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	09-Jul-26	10.30am Benefice Coffee Morning (The Red Lion)
Friday	10-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Sunday	12-Jul-26	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist
6th Sunday after Trinity		10.30am Holy Communion Service at St Andrew's
Monday	13-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Tuesday	14-Jul-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	15-Jul-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	16-Jul-26	9am Teddy Club at The Wilshere Hall 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
Friday	17-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Sunday	19-Jul-26	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist
7th Sunday after Trinity		10.30am Morning Prayer at St Andrew's 10.30am Holy Communion with Baptism at St Mary's, St Margarets
Monday	20-Jul-26	4pm Make Church at St Andrew's 9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Tuesday	21-Jul-26	7.30pm Monday Life Group at St Mary's, St Margarets 9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	22-Jul-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Holy Communion at St Mary's, St Margarets
Friday	24-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer
Saturday	25-Jul-26	10am Benefice Breakfast at The Wilshere Hall 4pm Patronal Festival Choral Evensong at St James
Sunday	26-Jul-26	9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist
8th Sunday after Trinity		10.30am Holy Communion with Baptism at St Andrew's
Monday	27-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer 12pm Make Lunch at The Wilshere Hall
Tuesday	28-Jul-26	9.30am Prayer Group at Sue Hardwick's house 7.30pm Life Group on Zoom
Wednesday	29-Jul-26	10.30am Community Hub Drop-in at St Mary's, St Margarets 10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall Midday Prayer at St Mary's, St Margarets
Thursday	30-Jul-26	10.30am Life Group at The Wilshere Hall
Friday	31-Jul-26	9.30am Online Benefice Morning Prayer 7pm Preview Evening (cheese & wine): Summer Miniature Art Exhibition at St Mary's, St Margarets



The 3 Churches Benefice

NEWS & NOTICES ~ JULY 2026

The Gospel according to Matthew is going to form much of our reading over the summer, and all the way to Advent, as this is the Gospel for Sundays in this Lectionary year. Matthew wrote his Gospel for a Jewish audience, with the aim of showing who Jesus is and revealing how Jesus fulfilled the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. Matthew doesn't do very much explaining; he lets the stories of Jesus speak for themselves, and this story of healing from Matthew 8 v1-3 is a great example:

When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Leprosy is a contagious skin disease which had huge social consequences. A person with leprosy was considered unclean and a danger to others, so was banished from the community. It was believed that illnesses were a direct consequence of the sins of the sufferer or their parents, so the whole family could be ostracised when someone was ill. In some parts of the world, these beliefs about leprosy still continue.

The man comes and kneels before Jesus and makes his statement. He says 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' The man, with leprosy absolutely believes that Jesus can do this: Jesus can make him clean. The proviso attached is not 'can He?' but 'is He willing?' Repeatedly in the gospels, Jesus performed miracles of healing, and this man knows without a doubt that he has the power to do the same for him, but he knows too that Jesus must choose to do this for him, that he must be 'willing'.

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he distilled down the most important attitudes and understanding of God that we need, including 'thy will be done'. Jesus checked in constantly with God: everything he did was done within the will of God, under God's authority and in God's timing. Even when his close friend Lazarus was ill, Jesus delayed going to see him because God's timing was imperative. God's plan involved Lazarus's resurrection, so that delay was necessary. Martha and Mary were completely right when they said, 'If you had been here my brother would not have died.' It all happened according to God's will, and the end result was both more painful and more glorious than they could have imagined.

Thankfully, this man didn't have to wait. Jesus immediately responded with both words and actions. He reached out and touched the man, this unclean man, and made him clean. In Jewish tradition, touching an unclean person made you unclean as well, but from Jesus that touch made the man clean, and whole and healed.

Do we have that certainty about God's healing power? Do we muddle up the 'can He?' with the 'will He?' and miss the more glorious thing God is doing? Should we question the plans of God? Or do we need to believe and trust in His saving love?

I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!' Matthew 9:24

Vicar of the Benefice: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
25 Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St Margarets, Herts. SG12 8EG
07488 914972 / Email: vicar@3churches.net

NEWS & NOTICES

The Three Villages Magazine

Our FREE local community magazine publishes quarterly in March, June, September and December. If you or someone you know is not be able to get out and collect a copy of the print magazine, you can now call or text (07488 914972) for a copy. Copies are available to collect at the back of each church.

Make Lunch: CHANGE TO DATES

In a change to previous information, Make Lunch will meet in the summer holidays, but **ONLY ON MONDAYS**. Join us for fun, friendship and some yummy food too. Meeting 12–2pm at The Wilshere Hall on the following MONDAYS: 27 JUL • 3 AUG • 10 AUG • 17 AUG • 24 AUG. Be sure to book your place by emailing: makelunch@3churches.net.

Bishop's Garden Summer Opening

Bishop Andrew has graciously agreed to the Bishop's Garden being open to the public for four Sundays: 28 June, 5 July, 12 July and 19 July. Entrance £5, dogs on lead welcome, no toilet facilities. All money raised will be donated to the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust.

Benefice landline

Please note that we no longer have a landline. If you wish to contact the vicar, please email or call her mobile number. Thank you!

Notice of annual leave

Rev'd Sarah will be on annual leave from Saturday 8th August to Saturday 29th August. There will be some changes to regular services during this time.

SUMMER MINIATURE ART EXHIBITION & SILENT AUCTION

You're warmly invited to a special art exhibition and auction at St Mary's, St Margarets

Preview Evening (cheese & wine)

Friday 31st July, 7–9pm

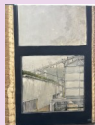
Exhibition Days

Saturday 1st August, 2–5pm

Sunday 2nd August, 2–5pm



Discover a collection of unique miniature artworks by local artists, then place your bids! Highest bidder takes home the artwork, with all proceeds going towards supporting the church.



Interested in taking part or want to know more?
Get in touch: admin@3churches.net



FROM THE CHURHWARDENS

Summer Sunday afternoons at St John the Baptist

Throughout July and August, St John the Baptist will be open from 3–5pm on Sunday afternoons, with refreshments available. Everyone is warmly invited to come and enjoy conversation, refreshments and the beautiful surroundings of the church.

Helpers needed

We are looking for lovely volunteers to help at the Summer Miniature Art Exhibition at St Mary's, St Margarets. We ideally need 4 each day: to man the welcome desk and to cover refreshments. Please do get in touch if you can help!

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following people and their loved ones in your prayers this month:

Baptisms

- Hannah Dewbrey & Daniel Snook on 19th July at St Mary's, St Margarets (during 10.30am service).
- Joshua Lester & Ffion Rampersaud on 26th July at St Andrew's (during 10.30am service).
- Jaxson & Luka Taylor on 10th August at St John the Baptist.

Weddings

- Lynsey Walls & Andrew Jones on 17th July at St Mary's, St Margarets.

Deaths

- Kathleen Parperis on 2nd May.
- Jennifer Perkins in May.
- Harry Alvey in June.



UPCOMING DATES IN AUGUST

2nd ~ NO BCP Evensong

11th, 18th and 25th ~ Make Lunch, 12pm at The Wilshere Hall

16th ~ NO Make Church

1st and 2nd ~ Summer Miniature Art Exhibition & Silent Auction, 2–5pm at St Mary's, St Margarets



USEFUL LINKS

Online Zoom Services & Events
www.tinyurl.com/3churcheszoom

A Church Near You
Benefice Page
<http://tinyurl.com/3churchesBenefice>

The 3 Churches Website
www.3churches.net