

ST MARK'S PARISH MAGAZINE



DECEMBER 2017

Price 30p

THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARK, REIGATE

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CURATE'S LETTER

Merry Christmas, Friends!

As a child I can always remember the run up to Christmas Day, being so excited. The expectation of Christmas through the eyes of a child was magical and was not complete without the Muppet Christmas Carol! The ending still gets me every time!

As an adult however, I've become more aware of the complex pressures that Christmas brings. Rather than being a time of great joy and real celebration, many people struggle through it - some will fight back tears as they think of family members who aren't with them. Some will worry financially, conscious of not being able to afford expensive gifts for loved ones. Some will spend Christmas cold and alone, unable to put the heating on, eating not a roast dinner by a roaring fire, but rather the warmed-up contents of tins donated by a food bank.

Despite the pressure and expectation that surrounds Christmas Day, the Nativity still brings a message of love, joy and peace to those who, for many reasons, are struggling at this time. Jesus was born in the only place his parents could find shelter; a stable, not in a warm and well stocked home. They were vulnerable and alone, but the love and actions of those around them, namely the innkeeper, meant Jesus was delivered safely in their time of need. The birth of Jesus reminds us that God comes to us and is among us, even in the most difficult circumstances.

2000 years on, God continues to make his presence a reality to those who are struggling through the behaviour and actions of those around them, namely **US**! During this festive season, do you know of someone who is lonely, or bereaved? Have you met a person who cannot properly provide for themselves? Be a present, by making God's presence known to them this Christmas – by simply being a friend.

Christmas is an inspirational time when we celebrate God's love for us; our caring God who is relational and not a distant deity. But this aspect of Christmas can often be marred as we try and live up to the expectations of others around us. Television and tradition pressurize us to have the perfect meal, after opening perfect gifts with the perfect family, then all sitting round to watch a film in the afternoon (sound familiar?). But is this what we **want** or what we've come to **expect**?

The giving and receiving of Christmas gifts and cards gives a heart-warming feeling, especially when someone is not expecting it! It can be the perfect way to let people know you are thinking about them, and care about them. To quote the muppets:

"It's in the giving of a gift to another,
A pair of mittens that were made by your mother,
It's all the ways that we show love,
That feel like Christmas"

'It's all the ways that we show love . . . that feels like Christmas!' Gifts do not have to equate to monetary value, or what others expect: why not try some alternative ideas this year;

Give hand-made presents - and think or pray about the person as you make them.

Give gifts of charity (e.g. you can send someone a card saying that you have given to UNICEF so that they can immunise a child).

Visit friends or relatives instead of sending cards; this can mean the world to someone.

Best of all, giving of ourselves, our time to those in need, just as God did 2000 years ago.

This Christmas why not challenge yourself to:

Explore the values of the Magnificat - 'He has lifted up the humble and filled the hungry with good things'.

Meditate on the simplicity and meaning of the Incarnation, with the freedom, joy and peace that is offered in the coming of the Messiah; a precious gift, freely given to us, the family of God of which we are all members.

May you be blessed with peace and joy this Christmas, and for those who will find this time a particular struggle, remember God is with you – in the love and caring actions of those you meet.

Merry Christmas!

Rev'd Anna Moore

CHRISTINGLE & CRIB SERVICE



On Christmas Eve we will be celebrating with a Crib and Christingle Service at 4pm. The collection will raise vital funds for the work of the Children's Society.

If you are unable to attend the Service but would like to contribute, there is a box at the back of the church containing Christingle collection candles. When filled, please let us have them by 24th December, or any Sunday beforehand.

During the Christmas Eve Service children may wish to place toys around the crib (please label wrapped gifts either 'Boy' or 'Girl' and the age group). These presents are always donated to the local Women's Refuge.

Patricia & Tony Bird

ST MARK'S PASTORAL TEAM

St Mark's pastoral team is available to support and help those in need in our community. If you know anyone that would benefit from a visit from our team, or would like to speak confidentially about personal matters, please feel free to approach members of the team directly, by email or alternatively there are referral slips available at the front and back of the church. All referrals are treated with the strictest confidence.

Team members are:

Ian & Jenny Archer, Marilyn Assender, Patricia Bird, Sarah Cousins, Stephanie Lawrence, Ken Packer, Alison Stagg, Louise Wallis, Reverend Martin & Reverend Anna.

For more information Email:

Reverend Martin Colton vicar@stmarksreigate.co.uk
Reverend Anna Moore curate@stmarksreigate.co.uk



A Very Happy Birthday to:

Kaia Hessey	2nd
Alice Corden	3rd
Benjamin Hodges	6th
Ella Mosley	15th
Rachel Perkins	15th
Emma Packer	21st
Issac Woods	27th
Oliver Woods	27th

THIS MONTH'S CALENDAR

Sunday 3 December

Advent Sunday

3.00pm Wreath Making Event

6.30pm Confirmation Service (St Philip's)

Wednesday 6 December

10.00am Vintage Tea

3.25pm T-Time Tales (last of term)

Thursday 7 December

2.00pm SMART Christmas Party

Sunday 10 December

Advent 2

10.00am Sung Eucharist

1.00pm Community Lunch

4.00pm Messy Church Christmas

Sunday 17 December

Advent 3

10.00am Sung Eucharist with
Junior Church Production

6.00pm Festival of Lessons and Carols

Saturday 23 December

8.00pm St Mark's Christmas Social Dance

Sunday 24 December

Advent 4 / Christmas Eve

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Sung Eucharist

4.00pm Christingle & Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Monday 25 December

Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Sung Family Eucharist

Thursday 28 December

Holy Innocents

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)

Sunday 31 December

Christmas 1

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Sung Eucharist

6.00pm Evening Prayer

JANUARY

Thursday 4 January

12.45 Holy Communion (Iona)

2.00pm SMART

Sunday 7 January

Epiphany

Wednesday 10 January

3.25pm T-Time Tales (First of term)

Thursday 11 January 12.45 Holy Communion (Iona)

Sunday 14 January Epiphany 2

12.30pm Holy Baptism

1.00pm Community Lunch

6.00pm Taize Prayer

Wednesday 17 January 3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 18 January 12.45 Holy Communion (Iona)

Saturday 20 January Kitchen Project Event

Sunday 21 January Epiphany 3

4.00pm Messy Church

Monday 22 January 8.00pm PCC Meeting

Wednesday 24 January 3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 25 January 12.45 Holy Communion (Iona)

Saturday 27 January 8.00pm St Mark's Social Dance

Sunday 28 January Epiphany 4

5-7pm ROOTS Youth Group

Wednesday 31 January 3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 1 February 12.45 Holy Communion (Iona)

CHRISTMAS AMERICAN-STYLE

I never know what to give my father for Christmas. I gave him \$100 and said, 'Buy yourself something that will make your life easier.' So he went out and bought a present for my mother. *Rita Rudner*

My wife said, 'We're going to have a baby. That's my Christmas present to you.' All I needed was a tie! *Woody Allen*

SMART

SMART warmly invites you and your friends
to our Christmas meeting in the church hall
on **Thursday December 7th from 2-4pm.**

An afternoon of Christmas carols, fun
and all sorts of Christmas cake and goodies,
all for the cost of £1 per head.

Please bring a friend or two
and please let us know in advance for catering.
If you've never come before, this is a lovely opportunity
to see what we are about.

Lifts available - please contact Louise Wallis (01737 242129)
Sarah Cousins (01737 789443) or Marion Wall at Wraymead

READINGS FOR DECEMBER

Sunday 3rd	1 st of Advent	Isaiah 64.1-9 Mark 13.24-37
Sunday 10th	2 nd of Advent	Isaiah 40.1-11 Mark 1.1-8
Sunday 17th	3 rd of Advent	Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11 John 1.6-8,19-28
Sunday 24th	4 th of Advent	2 Samuel 7.1-11,16 Luke 1.26-38
	Christmas Midnight	Isaiah 52.7-10 John 1.1-14
Monday 25th	Christmas Day	Isaiah 9.2-7 Luke 2.1-14
Sunday 31st	1 st of Christmas	Isaiah 61.10 – 62.3 Luke 2.15-21

REGULAR SERVICES AT ST MARK'S

SUNDAYS

8.00am	Each Sunday	Holy Communion (said) Book of Common Prayer
10.00am	1 st Sunday	Parish Eucharist (with Junior Church)
	2 nd Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Junior Church)
	3 rd Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Story Telling)
	4 th Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Junior Church)
	5 th Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Junior Church)
4.00pm	3 rd Sunday	Messy Church
6.00pm	1 st Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)
	2 nd Sunday	Taizé Prayer
	3 rd Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)
	4 th Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)
	5 th Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)

MONDAY TO THURSDAY

9.15am Morning Prayer

WEDNESDAYS (during school term-time)

3.25pm 'T'- Time Tales

THURSDAYS

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)
followed by tea or coffee

ARCH'S WAY

Alison and I met Alison's sister Lizzie and husband Tom for coffee in the Garden Centre during our usual frantic search for Christmas presents for family and friends. Lizzie was despondent; "I look at the amazing displays of sparkling and peculiar articles that my friends wouldn't give houserom to, and it quite depresses me." "Oh come now," I said, "T'is the season to be jolly, Fal la la, etcetera. We're all here, in reasonable health, and ESH isn't far away if we're not. We can afford to eat, drink and be merry (in moderation, of course). Please don't depress me - I have to write an article for the magazine, and at the moment I'm feeling quite cheerful and optimistic." Tom looked at me mournfully. "Well, I don't know how you're going to manage it. The state we're in, shouldn't you be writing something about today's problems." "You think so?" I replied; "Not very Christmassy. Alright, I'll say something about today's problems. Here goes:-

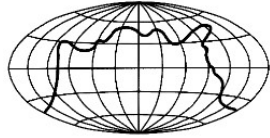
Austerity, Brexit, Korea, Putin, productivity, plastic bags, robots, hacking, Green Belt, diesel fumes, Claude Junker, HIV Aids, heroin, global warming, death and taxes . . . Do you want more? My thought for the day is 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' I'm determined to think myself into a thoroughly good mood for Christmas."

Of course, things were simpler in the old days. Did you know that 'T'is the reason to be jolly' (from the carol 'Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly') was written in 1862? That is, in the times of Charles Dickens, *Scrooge* and Workhouses for the poor, or those who couldn't pay their bills, who could be kept busy breaking stones or crushing bones for fertilizer in return for their keep. So if they could be jolly so, surely, can we, even if our Internet connection stops working for two hours or the 40 inch television develops a nervous tic.

I read that British shoppers would spend an estimated £7,000,000,000 during the so-called Black Friday weekend. I also read that one in ten items, such as clothes and kitchen gadgets is never used. According to the Environmental Services Association, an extra two million tons of waste is buried in the month of December, compared to November, as old and unwanted items are thrown away. What can one say? My own conclusion is that Reverend Anna has hit the proverbial nail on the head - see Page 2 - think 'friendship', think 'welcome', think 'charity'. And something to give up over Christmas? I suggest, the newspaper headlines!

Have a happy time!

Roman Arch



S · M · O · A · T

ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Organisations We Support

I thought you might be interested to read a little bit about organisations we support and this month I have chosen Village Water. As you know, we put in a lot of work to scrutinise organisations before we commit our funds to them and Village Water fits within our criteria. It isn't too big, it works with local communities and it provides suitable projects and feedback.

Let me first give you one or two statistics about Zambia, where Village Water started out: the population is 15.7 million and 9.3 million of those people live in rural areas, where only half of them have access to water and 36% to sanitation. 40 children die each day from diarrhoea. Pretty bleak figures, I'm sure you will agree.

In 2003, David Dixon, the founding trustee of Village Water, visited Zambia for the first time and after seeing the desperate need for safe water, he enlisted the help of his friends to start fund raising. In 2005 they supported their first communities in Western Province in Zambia, repairing 20 broken water points.



In 2006 they registered as a UK charity. Ten years later, they spread their wings a little and in 2016 they started a new programme in Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world, where they supported ten communities with safe water, sanitation and hygiene. They also set up and trained a manual drilling team. In 2017 they will complete their 1000th water point in Zambia – a huge achievement from small beginnings.

They ensure that solutions are locally appropriate. Local people know what works for them and Village Water provides them with the skills, knowledge and equipment they need to manage lasting change. Their monitoring system allows them to track improvements in health, whether water points are working and the difference it is making to

people's lives. Indeed, their data shows that there is an 82% decrease in the cases of diarrhoea, an 81% decrease in girls' absenteeism and that 98% of their water pumps are working.

We have supported them many times in the past and based on what we know of them, we will continue supporting them into the future.

Barbara Perkins (Chairman SMOAT)

Letter to the Editor, St Mark's Magazine

Dear Sir,

Greece, The UK and the World

I found the article "Greece Revisited" in the November magazine most interesting. I hope you still have it! It gives a very well supported account of the "Greek problem". For me it also provided inexact but uncomfortably close parallels with the UK.

As the article says, a prime problem from the economic point of view is the replacement of local currencies, here the drachma, with the Euro. Flexible local currencies like sterling enable relatively quick changes between international prices through changing exchange rates, to rebalance economies **in difficulty**. They allow most countries with depreciating currencies to achieve cheaper and therefore more sales of exports and reduce the now higher priced imports. This checks a downward exchange rate. This should not be seen as a panacea.

In the UK the much heralded advantages of the recent fall in the value of sterling as a floating exchange rate thereby increased the volume of exports. However, in time the higher sterling price of imports, coupled with stagnant wage rates, has increased the cost of living so that with static general wage levels living standards fall. Furthermore, in our case, as an international trader, many exports have high import content and as the sterling price of imports rises this adds disproportionately to the costs of producing the exports. The exporters are then not doing so well and are having to run faster.

It also needs to be remembered that falling export prices means that much more has to be sold to earn the same gross level of foreign currency than before but now with compressed profit margins in the UK. We have forgotten that a fall in the value of currencies signals not

success but failure. So, although our position in this respect is different from the Greek experience, in the longer term a lower exchange rate does not get us out of the wood.

(For present purposes I will leave aside the complications of the elasticity of demand for currencies and commodities and also the effects on the movement of capital between countries, and interest rates).

The article goes on to point out that the Greeks have long term been shy of paying taxes to fund public expenditure on pensions, health and social services. Evasion and avoidance of tax are endemic but it is also true that to impose taxes you have to have a tax base. That is, sufficient people with sufficient income to be able to afford to pay tax.

As the article points out, and it is well worth a second read, one in five Greeks find it difficult to meet their daily food expenditure. Even the Greek doctor does not sound like a good target for taxation. Greece, like many poor countries, may not have much of a tax base in the bulk of the population. Movement away from employment to self employment such as took place here first in the seventies and also more recently, as the article implies, also fosters further evasion. Looser rules for calculating the income of the self employed, the absence of PAYE and the difficulties in establishing real levels of income, encourages evasion. This also lowers the tax base and tax take.

Incidentally, how much better off would the doctor be in the UK or US? Why would middle class Greeks stay to be milked by new tax rules? Such further movement of labour makes the country concerned in an even greater difficulty.

In this total context what sense does it make to introduce credit and cash cards to force expenditure through traceable conduits? It will encourage a society living on debt. Nor is it likely to produce much more than a paltry sum. Who devised this? Was it directly or indirectly the Greeks or the EEC?

Whilst referring to the EEC it is worth saying that a single currency, the Euro, combined with free movement of labour means, and was intended to mean, that labour becomes mobile, flowing from less successful countries to those flourishing with a demand for more labour. Whilst perhaps desirable from the narrow economic point of view, we are well exercised on the social and cultural perceived losses in coping with larger numbers flowing in. But what about the failing countries, perhaps

with few raw materials and fewer industries beyond tourism, which see their sons and daughters having to move elsewhere, leaving plenty of elderly requiring help but no tax base?

On the question of a tax base, there is a worrying parallel with the UK. The consequences of the movement from employment to self employment on the tax take are set out above. Furthermore, here today 20% plus of those in employment earn so little they have to depend on Social Services (not quite a parallel with the Greeks who cannot fund their weekly food bills). So our tax base too has been eroded. Youths lying idle produce no tax and impose more costs.

But the telling point in the article is the reference to 80 billion Euros deposited in Swiss banks by Greeks. The first question is how very much more is there in the many other tax havens? The second question is how very, very much more lies in tax havens not only from those moving their residence from the UK but also from European and other countries? As I write this is breaking news but don't expect an official answer.

It has long been the case that Greek shipping magnets, for example, but many others too, have moved their residences abroad to avoid being taxed. This is a major factor in the erosion of the Greek tax base. The parallel with this country is that here too many large companies and rich individuals have moved their residences abroad to tax havens (historically sponsored by the Bank of England when the Stirling Area collapsed). I understand that in recent years the UK tax take from companies has fallen steeply. This has significantly reduced the tax base leaving the richer middle class to carry the burden of health, education and Social Security. These latter costs have been further increased by what is now called "Corporative Welfare" which, in one form or another, is government subsidies or tax breaks to the productive sector, some of which will not, as mentioned above, pay tax. Is it true that without this assistance UK business would founder? How long can a country survive by subsidising some business without even a tax flow to mark success?

All this is so unfair as to be scandalous. But wait a minute. On all these issues, to a greater or lesser extent, the same can be said of other countries. Europe, the United States and Russia, not to mention poorer countries, also foster tax avoidance or at best turn a blind eye. Poorer countries faced with the power of multi-nationals often have little choice. There, worse still, when those exploiting the raw materials and cheap labour of Developing Countries take their profits where they are not taxed, this not only deprives those countries of revenue, which they

desperately need, but circulates the resulting income elsewhere so that core investment does not generate further income and growth in the Developing Countries of need. On these rules development can only take place at the whim of predators.

To add to the adverse effects of such avoidance of taxation one must add that further finance to companies in the "home" country may well come by way of loans from subsidiaries in the tax haven with consequent, sometimes high, interest charges. These are treated as valid deductible commercial costs here, further reducing the tax take from companies still resident in the country of origin.

Where the UK differs from Greece is that now we have the beginnings of excess inflation. You may think this the result of pay claims following a period of wage freezing, but the more likely explanation is that the "quantitative easing" (pumping of cash into the economy) has resulted in too much cash chasing too few goods especially since UK productivity has stayed low. The reaction is a rise in interest rates which although tiny it is hoped will reduce demand by debtors. It may well raise the interest on long term loans such as mortgages and the long term costs reduce further the demand for houses. (Here the question is whether the market will just go dead or prices actually fall). However, the arithmetical effect of a half percent rise in interest is minimal for short term buying, unlikely to deter either business or those buying cars beyond their means.

None of this is good news for a trading country where the need, especially during a recession and when changing trading partners through Brexit, is to modernise production, produce new goods or services and existing goods at lower costs than our competitors through innovation, so that exports boom. Building more Supermarkets does not do this.

So, whilst the parallel between this country and Greece is not close, the similarities in some of our basic problems are too near for comfort. The UK is a bigger player with a much stronger and broader economic base, but its dependence on international trade makes it very vulnerable to economic shocks. It is easy to see from the above that capital has no patriotism. It flows to the higher return. This may suit the non residents well enough but with the movement of industry elsewhere, what about the rest?

One defence of this condition was publicly voiced in the context of the Vesty enquiry many years ago. It was that this was necessary for the prosperity of the country and the continuance of trade. Another defence is that if it is not illegal, which in this context means hiding the truth and manipulating round the imperfect law, then it's ok.

To the voting man in the street all this may sound mysterious and hardly credible but to the corporate sector and tax avoidance industries, as well as governments of all colours, this is old hat. I hope it is clear that dealing with tax havens is far from easy and is a problem of international dimensions. That is no excuse for not dealing with it. Similarly, improving economic efficiency especially in export trades, rather than relying on lower wage costs, is very difficult to achieve but in the context of Brexit is essential.

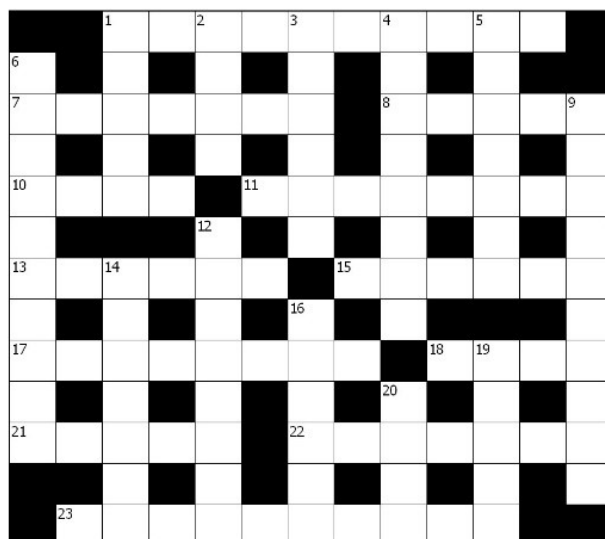
What is all this to me in the parish of Reigate? Firstly as individuals we need to be clear on what is right and what is wrong. Secondly, although most of us may be helpless in this situation, at least we should be aware of the forces which shape our lives and that of our children and grandchildren.

Harry Ingram

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD (There is no Sudoku puzzle this month)

Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14,15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)



- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels,
Nurse Edith (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread,
was the Passover menu for anyone unclean (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace
in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

Down

- 1 and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous
are as ... as a lion (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married
a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family
and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19,20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 Offer your bodies as living , holy and pleasing to God
(Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual
(Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 You are to give him the name Jesus,
because he will ... his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21) (4)

Political Quip:

The rhinoceros is an animal with a hide two feet thick, and no apparent
interest in politics. What a waste. *James Wright*

Contributions for the January magazine
should be sent to Malcolm Toye
at 10 Raglan Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0DP,
Telephone: 01737 247016 or email: mctoye@hotmail.com
by **10th December** please.

PARISH ACTIVITIES AND GROUPS

DAILY BIBLE READINGS – 'NEW DAYLIGHT'

Parish Office 210785

CHOIR PRACTICE

Each Thursday in Church - all parts at 7.00pm - other practices as notified

CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

Contact: Mrs Valerie Jones 246538

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP

*Contact: Mrs Anne Millington
anneandash@btinternet.com*

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

*Mrs Rosemary Absalom 240351
Mrs Kate Lovegrove 226776*

SMART - St Mark's Afternoon Retirement Team

*Contacts: Mrs Sarah Cousins 789943
Mrs Louise Wallis 242129*

ST MARK'S COMMUNITY LUNCH

*Contacts: Mrs Angela Daniels 247162
Mrs Alison Stagg 243992*

ST MARK'S HALL

*Letting Secretary: Mrs Jean Hatton, 139 Carlton Road, Reigate 765759
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ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST - SMOAT

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YOUTH WORK

*Junior Church Contact: Mrs Leonora Corden, l.corden@btinternet.com 224534
'ROOTS' Youth Group (4th Sunday of each month 5.00pm until 7.00pm)
Contact Reverend Anna 07939 388607*

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