Preaching at the Chrism Eucharist on Thursday 5 April, Bishop Brian reminded the congregation that the way we see ourselves is not necessarily the way that others see us. He explained that the service allowed both ordained and lay members of the church to recommit themselves to their respective roles during the most important four days of the Christian calendar.

He said, “Over the next three days, the Church invites us to encounter God as He really is. Life-changing events happened in the darkness - the arrest, the denial and the death of Jesus all happened in the darkness. Christ was seen in the morning but he worked in the dark. This reminds us that there is no place that is beyond the reach of the redeeming power of God. Just as the life-changing events of Good Friday and Easter took place in the darkness, we are encouraged not to be afraid of the dark. New life is often found in the darkness. There is in God, some say, a deep and dazzling darkness. We should not be afraid of the dark because Christ himself has been to the very depths of Hell.”

Bishop Brian emphasised that we need not say yes to everything that comes our way, and urged the congregation to resist pressures to organise the Church like a business, because it is not a business. He said, “We can be sure that God sees us as we really are and though the eyes of love. We may not always love ourselves, but God loves us. These days are so amazing because God can use us as we really are. God places trust in us. We need to recognise God knows exactly what we are doing. All we do for God is small in comparison with what God does for us.” He closed with words from the hymn he described as “the finest in England.”

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all

Words and Music by Isaac Watts

Photos by Louise Whiffin

Bishop urges use of Bible quotations as website passwords

Bishop James is urging people to use Bible quotations and references to help them remember passwords for private accounts and websites.

Bishop James said, “The Bible offers a life-long source of new passwords, that can include both upper and lower case letters and numbers to help create memorable, secure passwords.”

The technique requires the user to choose a favourite Bible passage, remembering the book, chapter and verse numbers. Users need to take the first letter from each word in the quote and then add the book of the Bible, chapter and verse at the end. This will give upper and lower case letters with numbers.

For example, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Luke Chapter 23 Verse 46.

The password created would be: FiyhlcmsL23V46

or further example, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” John Chapter 12 Verse 13.

The password created would be: BihwcinotLJ12V13

Bishop James added, “This is an easy way for school pupils and adults alike to remember new passwords and passages from the Bible at the same time. I like to think it’s a bit of fun with a life-long learning element.”
What's on

May

Saturday 5 May
WATERINGBURY – Annual Plant Sale at the Church of St John the Baptist 10am-4pm. Superb quality nursery plants plus home grown stall, books, toys and homemade cakes. Contact 01689 858465.

Sunday 20 May
TESTON – Plant Sale in Teston Village Hall 10am -12pm. To find out more visit www.brfonline.org.uk/womanalive-cre2012/" two day event for women at CRE at Sandown Park 10:30am-2:30pm.

Wednesday 2 May
BEXLEYHEATH – Civic service at 10am at Christ Church.

Thursday 21 June
ISTEAD RISE - Back to Church Sunday training event at 12:30pm-4pm. Bouncy castle, face painting and crafts for children and live music. All welcome.

Sunday 2 June
PETTS WOOD – ‘Bring and Share’ picnic lunch at St Francis Church for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. All welcome from 12:30pm. Contact 01689 829971.

Monday 4 June
WATERINGBURY – Jubilee guided walk round the village and churchyard fete. Musicians Tony Pepper and Peter White at the Church of St John the Baptist 2pm-4pm.

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Sunday 19 May
WEST MALLING – Pianist, Junko Kobayashi will give a recital at St Mary the Virgin at 7:30pm. Junko will be playing works by Beethoven, Schubert and Weber. Tickets £10 on the door. Children free.

MEOPHAM – 2012 Christian Aid Sponsored Walk from St John’s Church. The morning walk will start at 8:30am and the afternoon from 1:30pm. Visit www.cadswalk.co.uk or contact Peter Kettle on 01474 813832.

Saturday 25 May
SOLESHAW – An afternoon and evening of popular and light classical music by organist Nigel Ogden. 2:30pm at St John’s Church, Welling. Tickets £8-£7, 7pm at Christ Church, Bexleyheath. Tickets £10-£9. Under 16's £1. Contact Doug Snow 020 8304 5229.

Sunday 26 May
WELLING/BEXLEYHEATH – An afternoon and evening of popular and light classical music by organist Nigel Ogden. 2:30pm at St John’s Church, Welling. Tickets £8-£7, 7pm at Christ Church, Bexleyheath. Tickets £10-£9. Under 16's £1. Contact Doug Snow 020 8304 5229.

THE Postcard Exhibition and Auction

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee there will be an exhibition of original postcard art, created by local artists, in St Helen’s Church, Cliffe from 2 – 21 June. On 23 June some of this work will be auctioned and other pieces will go on sale at a fixed price. You can submit original work on a postcard (150mmx100mm) using any medium except photograph. Mount your piece on a piece of card and put your name, address, contact number, title of work and medium used. Send your work to Linda Jones, 11 Green Lane, Cliffe, Rochester, ME3 7UF by 21 May 2012.
Faith engaging

By Bishop James

Spending time after Easter with friends who have very little church connection, I find myself intrigued by their interest in the ‘runners and riders in the Canterbury stakes’ as some put it. Intrigued because, if we believe what we’re told in much of the public media, the Church is increasingly irrelevant to life in our society, numbers are declining, etc.

And yet, Archbishop Rowan’s decision to step down, and the question of who his successor might be, has been front-page news and continues to feature quite regularly. Perhaps then we aren’t as marginal or irrelevant as some would suggest.

Of course the ‘marginalisation of Christianity’ issue is itself fairly prominent, at least in some parts of the media. And various public debates, including those on House of Lords reform and the nature of marriage, play into that discussion. The fact that there may be ‘only’ 12 bishops in a reformed Lords is quoted as further evidence for the decline/irrelevance argument – without of course mentioning the awkward fact that 12 is a greater proportion of the proposed new House than 26 is of the present one. The marriage debate is interesting and important for all kinds of reasons, including (whatever your views on the substantive issue) the oddity of government proposing a major change in one of our most significant social institutions with no mention of it in either coalition party’s manifesto. More interesting still is the polling which suggests (I suspect to government’s surprise) that society as a whole (including parts of the gay and lesbian community) sees no great need for this change at all. It is important for all of us to participate in this debate in its own right – and the House of Bishops is working on a considered national response. But behind it lie some equally important questions such as how we as a society understand ‘equality’ and where faith fits into public policy.

These reflections come in a month when (on 19 May) Archishop Rowan joins us for a diocesan day on our contribution to our communities – “Beyond the Big Society: we can make a difference”. It is also a month in which we celebrate the Ascension, with its great theme of the rule of Christ over all things in earth and heaven. In the ascended Christ, the life of humanity is drawn into the life of God, thereby affirming the value of our human living as well as God’s sovereignty over it. Therein lies a sound basis for our continued engagement in the things of this world, and for a quiet confidence that ultimately all things are held in the hand of God.

The Diamond Jubilee

The Diamond Jubilee weekend is an opportunity for churches to join with members of their local community in celebrating 60 years of faithful service by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Many villages and local groups will have been planning for some months, but it is not too late to get involved. The Big Jubilee Lunch will be happening all around the country and across the Commonwealth on Sunday 3 June. Some of us will remember the street parties from the Silver Jubilee. We now have an opportunity to involve a new generation in experiencing this sort of national celebration. There is still time to make some bunting and start planning the menu!

Hospitality and community are at the heart of the way we live out our faith so this is an ideal way to bring together people in your neighbourhood to make new friends and strengthen your connections with the people living in your parish. A full instruction pack is available from www.churchengland.org if you follow links to “Clergy & Officeholders” then to “Themed Services & Events”. The video has been produced by Hope, a Christian organisation that is helping churches make the most of this opportunity. From www.hopetogether.org.uk you can download useful resources including the Diamond Jubilee Grace, a Treasure Hunt pack, an all-age Quiz, and various ideas for building community on that day.

Giving thanks is an essential aspect of worship. Everyone who comes to church on 3 June or to the Big Jubilee lunch is also invited to sign The Big Jubilee Thank You Letter which will be sent to the Queen. The format of the letter can be downloaded from the Hope website. Also available there is a link which allows you to download a full Common Worship Service of the Word which can be used for a Diamond Jubilee Thanksgiving Service – a way to encourage people to come to church for a once in a lifetime special event. The Queen will be attending a service at St Paul’s Cathedral on 5 June.

Another way to celebrate is by lighting a Diamond Jubilee Beacon on Monday 4 June at 10pm. This would be an ideal way to involve people or it might be a way to improve links with local scout groups who also love making fires! Do you have a public place on a hill where a beacon could be lit? Your chance to help your church shine as a light in the world!

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Live below the Line

Claire Whitmore, a member of St John’s Church in Sidcup is taking part in Christian Aid’s Live Below the line during 7–11 May.

Live below the Line is a campaign asking people to live on £1 a day for 5 days to raise awareness of extreme poverty.

Claire said, “I wanted to do Live Below the Line in solidarity with the 1.4 billion people who have no choice but to live on £1 a day. For me, this is a temporary inconvenience which limits the variety of diet I am used to. For them, it’s an ongoing reality which endangers their health, curtails their choices and prevents them from living a full life.”

She added, “My best buy has definitely been a big bag of flour – from that I’ve made chapattis, pastry for jam tarts, some sort of ‘scones’ and pizza dough. The thing I’m missing most is fresh fruit. I’ve got 43p left and I think I’m going to spend that on a tin of peaches!”

Claire set up a stall with her friend Hannah to tell people about what she is doing. She also wanted to raise money for Christian Aid and encourage others to take part. Claire created some great recipe cards to sell on the stall that she had made with meals you could make and eat over 5 days with ingredients costing just under £5.

Claire works as an intern with Christian Aid, she said, “I was lucky enough to visit some of Christian Aid’s partners in Sierra Leone last October. When I’m tempted to grumble about my restricted food this week, I remember the amazing people I met living in really tough conditions. Any money I can raise in sponsorship will go towards helping people like them around the world to pull themselves out of poverty.” For more information visit www.livebelowtheline.co.uk

Christian Aid Sponsored walk - 19 May

This year’s sponsored walk from St John’s Centre in Meopham will raise funds for Christian Aid’s Partnership Scheme Project in Lebanon and Bethlehem, the ancient town in the occupied Palestinian territory. It will be a great day out in aid of some of the most disadvantaged people in a troubled region.

The Middle East Project: Overcoming Barriers aims to improve the lives of thousands of people with disabilities, directly benefitting over 30,000 people. However, its wider impact will boost the prospects of many times this number. There are presently are presently 500,000 people living with disabilities in this region.

Christian Aid has been working in the region since the early 1950’s and the work will be carried out by two long-standing local partners, both of whom have a great deal of experience in working with people with disabilities: the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU) and the East Jerusalem YMCA.

The new project began work on 1 April 2012 and the money raised through the sponsored walk will:

• Provide training and careers guidance for people living with disabilities.
• Improve prospects for jobs and help them improve the skills needed to set up their own businesses.
• Improve working conditions, including workplace adaptation.
• Increase awareness of issues facing disabled people – particularly among employers.
• Improve laws protecting the rights of people living with disabilities.

What’s more, sponsor money and donations will be matched by the European Commission at 3:1, so the £5,000 that the CADSWALK committee has pledged will be worth an incredible £20,000 to the project. Donations can also be Gift Aided.

Walk Details:

The morning walk commences at 8.30 am at St John’s Church, Meopham (registration from 8.15 am). The route leaves Meopham through farmland to Longfield Hill, then through countryside to churches in Longfield, Fawkham, Ash, Ridley and back to Meopham. This is approximately 4 miles. Checking-in and refreshments are available at several churches, plus a light lunch at St John’s for those doing the afternoon walk. Registration for the afternoon walk is at 1.00 pm for a 1.30 pm start. This goes via Cobham and Luddesdowne churches back to Meopham and is 6 miles.

If you are unable to take part, please consider sponsoring Paul Thomas, who is able to obtain matched giving from his employer, Microsoft UK, visit www.justgiving.com/meophamwalk2012.

Alternatively should you wish to make a donation please make cheques payable to Christian Aid and send to Peter Kettle, 12 The Beecles, Sole Street, DA12 9BT.

For more information and to download a Sponsor Form please visit the website: www.cadswalk.co.uk, or contact Peter Kettle at twokettles@hotmail.co.uk or 01474 813632.

I’m inviting you

What am I inviting you to?
To join with at least 4,200 churches in Back To Church Sunday 2012 on Sunday 30 September. Last year at least 76,911 people returned to 4,200 churches which means on average 19 people returned to each church! 12 – 15% of the people invited were still going to church some 6 months later which means that 11,536 people were added to church.

How do you participate?
Go to www.backtochurch.org, register your church and you will be directed to the Traidcraft website to order and pay for Invitation Packs, T-shirts or Hospitality Packs all at the same time as registering. You will receive confirmation of your order which will arrive within 14 days. Also on the same website there will be additional resources to prepare for the day:

Training date -
This year it will be on 27 June at St Barnabas Church, Upper Avenue, Istead Rise, DA13 9DA – Time 7.30 until 9.30pm

Even if you have been before, we would love to see you again and I am sure you can teach us something about your experience of BTCS. If you have any questions or wish to register for this, please email Veronica on btcs@rochester.anglican.org

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Textile art in the Cathedral

The story behind Creation

By Andrew Parkinson

If you’ve visited the Cathedral in recent years, you’ll probably have noticed a variety of textile art displays. They’re the work of Jacqui Parkinson, and the displays have been touring cathedrals across England, sponsored by the Deo Gloria Trust, for five years.

At the moment, the Cathedral is playing host to one of Jacqui’s most spectacular displays – Creation. Hundreds of thousands of visitors of all ages have enjoyed it. Take a good look at it, and you’ll find plenty of interest, beautiful words, vibrant colours and lovely designs.

Here’s what Jacqui says about it: “For thousands of years, people have been inspired by the Creation story. I love it. It’s awe-inspiring yet fun. Its scope is unimaginable, yet it is brought down to a very human scale.

“When you are thinking about the mind-boggling wonders of creation, it’s rather daunting to have to distil them onto a few linen screens! So I stuck quite close to the original story in Genesis, and picked out just a few images and words. “God was pleased” is the central message. I aimed to make a celebration of creation, for all visitors to enjoy.

“It’s a pity that adults tend to wave the wonder away from something that really is wonderful! We take the world for granted, we explain it all away. We often forget how totally extraordinary life is on this unique planet. The Creation story may or may not have scientific elements to it, but what’s undeniable is that there’s truth in it that touches people’s hearts across the world.

“The Creation story is a great sequence of ideas, and among the most wonderful parts of the Bible. Everyone can be uplifted by it. It’s truly amazing. Like many people, I see it as a wonderful celebration of life and beauty all around us. The display here is designed to be shared, to delight eyes and hearts – just as God delighted in what he’d made, and shared it with Adam and Eve!

So who is the person behind the artwork?

Jacqui was born in Manchester. From a totally unreligious, tough background, she became a Christian as a teenager, having been cajoled into going to church events by a close friend at school. “My home was what nowadays might be called dysfunctional. Certainly my parents weren’t very good at showing love. And then, through church activities and prayer I came to understand what a Father’s love could be.”

Jacqui was married very young, to Rob Frost, who in due course became a leading Methodist minister. She was involved in his ministry, but also wanted to explore other ways of reaching out to people. She taught drama, and then ran a Christian Arts Centre. She lived in London for 20 years before
moving to Devon after Rob died in 2007.

And what drives her in her work? Jacqui is someone who likes people to respond to her work, to stop and think, and ask questions about the underlying messages. “I want people to learn about the Gospel, but I don’t really like standing on a platform and telling people things. I prefer conversations to speeches, and think that as Christians we’re truly blessed in being able to have real conversations with God.”

So Jacqui aims to set up a kind of conversation in her work with different viewers. “I’ve always wanted to establish two way contact with people. I’m not a great evangelist who can find just the right words for the right occasion – far from it! But in my work I see the chance not to preach or evangelise, but simply to come alongside all kinds of visitors; those with some faith; those with none; those who know something of the Bible; those who know none.”

Jacqui is unusual as an artist because she doesn’t use her skills to promote herself, but rather to promote a message. “I want my work to be a channel for touching people. I hope to create a human and spiritual connection, even if very slight. And I hope that my work is memorable, rather like many other pieces of work in a cathedral: memorable for the wonderful message we can share of a loving Father, a risen Lord and a present Spirit.”

Particularly because she came from an unchurched background, she is very aware of how many visitors do not feel at home when they visit a cathedral. “I aim to make my work accessible to a very wide range of visitors. The tricky thing about cathedrals is that to very many visitors they are quite alien places. Inscriptions in Latin mean nothing to most people. Pictures from Bible stories are usually only understood by those who have already learnt them. Signs and symbols, words and images – so many of them in churches and cathedrals are puzzling or completely unintelligible to many visitors. “That’s not to say that everyone can understand my displays! However, each one - there are now eleven displays touring cathedrals - is designed to have some parts understandable to most people. Some have designs specifically for children. I like to think that my work is welcoming, interesting, and though-provoking. Cathedral guides often tell me that visitors enjoy the displays and that my work provides useful talking points. And if visitors simply get enjoyment from the looking, think of their visit as enjoyable, and are left with some spiritual questions in their minds, I think that’s a good outcome!"

There is a book of Jacqui’s cathedral exhibitions – “Threads through Faith and Life”, available from the Deo Gloria Trust – see www.cathedralexhition.org.uk. For details of Jacqui’s other work, see www.jacqui-textile.com.
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The hamlet of Hempstead, as it was once known one hundred years ago, has grown to become a sprawling community in the Parish of South Gillingham. As the population and buildings increased substantially, seemingly overpowering the little mission church of All Saints, one would assume that the church has become insignificant. But this is not so. Little it may be in structure, but big is its heart and commitment of its congregation. Situated in the heart of the village of Hempstead it stands firm and witnesses much going on around it. Three years ago a few residents in Hempstead got together to organise a village fayre. Its purpose was to bring the community together and raise funds for charity and local community projects. They call themselves the Hempstead Village Fayre Group. After a successful first fayre in 2010, the village fayre was in danger of ceasing because of insurance cover issues. In the first two years the residents had taken out insurance themselves to cover the event. However this was exposing them to significant personal financial risk, which in the worse case could mean their homes being lost. This caused much sadness. The thought that all they had achieved would have to be abandoned.

So…what has all this to do with a little church? All Saints’ Church became aware of this situation and, after taking advice from Ecclesiastical, was able to step forward to join forces with the Village Fayre Group in organising the event. As a church event our public liability insurance is able to provide the requisite cover required.
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St John, Beckenham: During the interregnum St Paul, Beckenham: The new Alpha Course
Christ Church, Beckenham: For the witness of and protection for Street Pastors

Orpington Deansery
Church of Unity at Ramsgate: For the way forward as the Bishop’s Mission Order is taken forward
All Saints, Orpington: For the Drum Head service with the British Legion on 26 May For Jubilee Community Service.
St Mary w St Paulinus, Cray: For Rev Stephen Betson and family
St Barnabas, Cray: For the Stewardship commitments made recently

Christ Church, Orpington: 1 June the ‘Big Band’. 3 June, the Big Jubilee Lunch.

Sidcup Deansery
St John, Sidcup: For the unemployed
St Mary, Sidley: For Rev Alison Letscha, licensing on 30 May
Holy Redeemer, Lamorbey: For guidance in growing our church.

Northumberland Heath: Messy Church, Men’s breakfast meeting and our Parade and
enrolment service; our Lighthouse Parenting programme
Christ Church, Beddesham: For our confirmation candidates

Rochester
Cobham Deansery
Nursted: Thanks for encouraging worship
Meopham: For confirmation classes. For Meopham School.
Fawkham and Hartley: For our Stewardship Appeal
Snodland w Lower Belling: Developments after our Future Vision morning. For the new Pathfinder group
Coulsdon and Ludsdowne: For launch of Messy Church

Dartford Deansery
St Mary, Swanley: For all our families.
Wilmington: That the work on the church will remain on schedule.

Churches Together in Swanley: For the Swanley Jublympic Festival on 27 May.

Gillingham Deansery
Thanks for Ann our new prayer co-ordinator

Gravesend Deansery
Parishes: Diamond Jubilee celebrations. For

APCC meetings, PCC members and Treasurers
Strood Deansery
St Francis, Strood: For plans for joint summer children’s Holiday Club. For the Gossip the Good News Course
St Helen’s: For The Big Lunch and Postcard Exhibition
Tunbridge
Sevenoaks Deansery
St Nicholas, Sevenoaks: Confirmations, Women’s Banquet, speakers from Banamab Fund and Parenting Course
St Mary’s Kippington: Our Jubilee Fete
Wealgh: For Christian Aid 11-19 May Knochol and Halstead: Service on 3 June and the Big Lunch

Shoreham Deansery
Wrotham: For new Church Warden and PCC members

Tunbridge Wells Deansery
Burntwood: New Chief Executive Office
Christ Church, Southborough: For Messy Church
St Paul, Rusthall: Confirmation Candidates
St Thomas, Southborough: For PCC’s and Churchwardens.

L Suka, Tunbridge Wells: Spring Fayre
St Mark, Tunbridge Wells: Bank Holiday Ramble and Supper

Prayer Requests
For JUNE LINK to Jenny Smith, Flat 1, 52 High Street, Chislehurst. BR7 5AQ.
jenny_mary@btinternet.com,
0208 467 6499 by 26 April

Intercession during May

1 May: St Andrew, Sidcup
2 May: St John the Evangelist, Sidcup
3 May: Diocesan Fellowship of Evangelists
4 May: Evangelists in Training
5 May: Those who offer Pastoral Care, Counselling and Listening
6 May: Diocesan Co-ordinator for Spirituality and Spiritual Accompaniment
7 May: The Advisory Council for Mission & Unity
8 May: Rochester Archdeaconry
9 May: Cobham Deansery
10 May: Ash
11 May: Churches Together in Kent

12 May: Cobham with Ludsdowne and Dode
13 May: Fawkham and Hartley
14 May: Pray today for the Bishops day on Community Engagement on 19 May
15 May: Longfield
16 May: Meopham with Nursted
17 May: Ridley
18 May: Snodland with Lower Belling
19 May: Pray for our preparations to celebrate Pentecost
20 May: Dartford Deansery
21 May: Crockenhill
22 May: Chois, Organists & Music Groups

The Cathedral Quire Stalls

The Stalls in the Cathedral Quire, mostly occupied by the Honorary Canons of the Cathedral, are each named after significant characters in Rochester’s long history.

Bertha - Bertha was King Ethelbert of Kent’s queen. Her parents, the Christian King Charibert of the Franks and Ingberga, made a condition of her marriage to the Odin-worshipping Ethelbert that she should be free to practice her family’s religion. She came to Kent with her chaplain, Liudhard, and they restored the Roman church of St Martin in Canterbury. Christianity therefore already had a toehold in Anglo-Saxon England when Augustine arrived in AD597. Bertha’s influence over her husband no doubt accounted for his lack of hostility to Pope Gregory’s Roman mission and his

envoy Augustine. Indeed Ethelbert, by then the most powerful king in southern Britain, converted and was baptised on Whit Sunday AD597. As many as 10,000 of his people soon followed his example. He founded churches in Canterbury and Rochester and was influential in ensuring that the former remained the metropolitan see. Bertha received a letter of thanks from Gregory in AD601, which is still preserved, for her part in Augustine’s favourable reception. She can be claimed with some justification to be the mother of our Cathedral, founded in AD604. Bertha died in AD612. The current Canon to occupy this stall is the Rev Canon Liz Walker
It was a great moment for Great Britain when the men’s 4 x 100 metres relay squad beat the Americans in Athens at the 2004 Olympic Games.

I was particularly pleased that Darren Campbell finally won an Olympic gold medal after many years of hard work. I had a particular interest in Darren’s career as his mother was our church treasurer when they lived on the Racecourse Estate in Sale in the early 1990s.

A relay race is particularly challenging as there are several opportunities to drop the baton and lose the race. As Christians in Kent this summer we have an opportunity to engage with people from our local communities as we celebrate the Olympic and Paralympic Games on our doorstep. It is a chance to meet with people and pass on the baton of faith.

Last Autumn the Mission and Unity Department sent an information pack to every baton of faith. This summer we have an opportunity to

Some of the churches in the Diocese have a particular opportunity to bless their neighbours by organising breakfast or other food and drink as the torch relay passes through their town or village. See www.london2012.com/olympic-torch-relay for a detailed route map.

Events do not need to be huge. Anyone can register as a Local Leader on the following website www.london2012.com/get-involved/local-leaders/ Ideas include the possibility of running a Olympics Quiz Night using a downloadable set of questions and answers. Another idea is to host an "Opening Night In" and invite your neighbours round.

Finally, don’t forget to pray for the safety of the athletes and spectators at the games, and pray that all our church members will have opportunities to share the good news of Jesus this summer.

Bishop Brian’s Diary – May

2 May 1000 Confirmation at Trinity School, Belvedere
3 May 1200 Public latency of Friends of Meopham Church
8 May 1000 Faith and Order Commission at Church House, London
11 May 1000 Visit to Weald of Kent School
13 May 1830 Confirmation at St Matthew, Bostal
15 May 1000 Consultation on “Reflecting on the New Atheism” – Lambeth Palace
16 May 0930 Bishops Staff Meeting
17 May 1930 Confirmation at Lambeth
18 May 1930 Church Leaders’ supper (CTK)
19 May 1000 Diocesan Day – Christ Church, Beckenham
20-27 May Deanery Visit to Sidcup
20 May 1000 Holy Communion at St Mary, Bexley
1515 Installation of new Dean, Rochester Cathedral
22 May 1000 Visit Orchard Primary School, Sidcup
1100 Visit Contact Group – Christchurch
1430 Chapter Meeting, St Barnabas, Joydens Wood
1915 Meet Community Leaders at Joydens Wood
23 May 1100 Visit to Royal Park Primary School, Sidcup
1230 Attend Sidcup Rotary Lunch
1430 Queen Mary Hospital, Sidcup
1600 Kick Off Football Tournament, Burt Oak
1915 Attend Deanery Synod – Holy Trinity, Lamorby
24 May 1215 Visit Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School
1530 Visit to Hope Free School
1900 Visit to Bowes Close Sheltered Accommodation - Blendon
25 May 0930 Visit to Blackfen School, Blendon
1400 Visit Bexley Toddler Church – St John
1500 Meet with MP for Old Bexley & SidcupSunday
27 May 1500 Meeting with Evangelists, PAs & Readers – Holy Redeemer, Lamorby
1645 Tea with Confirmation candidates, St John, Sidcup
1830 Confirmation at St John, Sidcup

Olympic Chaplain

By Rob Ryan

A long while ago, back in early 2011, I applied to be a volunteer chaplain at the 2012 Olympics and after a successful interview I have been offered a place on the chaplaincy team.

I will visit various venues as part of a multi-faith chaplaincy team to support the spiritual needs of the various groups involved in the Olympics, ranging from the athlete teams, spectators, workers, the press and other games maker volunteers.

I'd love to tell you what I will be doing every day … but until the role starts and I'm actually ‘out there’ I'm not entirely sure … so maybe The Rochester link should interview me after the Olympics! I can say, though, that I am looking forward to serving a variety of people in a variety of settings, although I am daunted by the sheer scale of the event! I'm looking forward to the great privilege and hard work this will be. I think my experience of getting alongside various people from different backgrounds in coffee shops and pubs in Rochester has given me a unique set of skills which will enable me to support a wide range of people throughout the Olympics. Clearly the Olympics is a massive event and so I am also looking forward to the many things I will learn and new skills that I will acquire as a games maker chaplain for my ongoing ministry.

During the Olympics, please do remember to pray for the 200 or so chaplains that will be working lots of hours under quite a lot of pressure with a united desire to provide the best chaplaincy ever seen at an Olympics …(so no pressure there then)!