



St Paul's Church



Dear All

The celebrations have only just died down in my house following Maidstone United's historic win against Ipswich last weekend when they became the first club outside the top five tiers of English football to reach the FA Cup 5th round since 1978. It's so nice to have Maidstone portrayed in the local and national media in a positive light, sadly an all too rare event these days. What struck me the most though from the coverage was the person and character of the manager, George Elokobi.

Born in Cameroon, Elokobi was just 11 years old when he lost his father and grandfather. His mother moved to England to study that same year. When she had gained her qualifications and found work, she was able to send money back for her son's schooling, and at 16, George joined his mother in the UK where he continued his education. Soon after arriving here, he began to play football in youth leagues where he was spotted and eventually became a professional player and most recently, the manager of Maidstone United.

Watching him speak of the victory last weekend, I was awestruck by the man's humility and generosity of spirit. He was very keen to credit the whole team, the staff of the club and especially the fans. He played down his own role saying that he sees his main function as encouraging and empowering everyone around him. Asked what advice he had for anyone who wanted to achieve great things in life, he listed hope, faith, self-belief, respect for others and humility.

I did some research and discovered that Elokobi is indeed a person of faith which did not surprise me. Following a hideous accident on the pitch some years ago which threatened to end his career, he said, 'I put my recovery down to my religion. I'm a believer. Without God I wouldn't be playing any more. Once it happened on the pitch, I put everything in God's hands...With God's blessing and hard work and dedication...I knew I would come back better.'

I don't know whether Elokobi is a Christian or a Muslim (I assume it's one or the other given that he is from Cameroon), but I do know that a deep faith in God is evident in the way he manages Maidstone United, and I think that's really good news for the club and for this town...and it's something to celebrate whatever happens in the next round.

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 4th FEBRUARY – 2nd Sunday before Lent

10 am Café Worship – Gwyn

SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY – Sunday next before Lent

10 am All-Age Worship – Rev Anthea

WEDNESDAY 14th FEBRUARY – Ash Wednesday

7.30 pm – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 18th FEBRUARY – Lent 1

10 am Experimental Sunday and Bubble Church (for congregation) – Rev Anthea/Gwyn

SUNDAY 25th FEBRUARY – Lent 2

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

EVENTS

THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY @ 2.30 pm

Mothers' Union: 101 Anniversary

MONDAY 12th FEBRUARY @ 7.30 pm (St Paul's Church)

Prayer Evening - Beyond the Interregnum - St Paul's & St Nicholas'

THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY @ 2.30 pm

Fellowship: Beetle Drive

FRIDAY 23rd FEBRUARY @ 7 pm

Church Crafts

NOTICES

With effect from 3rd March our Sunday Services will commence at 10.30 am.

FOOD BANK

The next food bank delivery is Friday 9th February.

PRAYER RESOURCE

Week beginning Sunday, 4th February 2024

'Prayer transforms our vision of the world, and makes us see it... in the light of God.' (Thomas Merton)

This week we give thanks for:

- The wonder of prayer; and when darkness dulls our wonder, may the light of Jesus lead us on.
- The life of Helen, for whom we have been praying each week, and pray for her family and friends at this sad time.

Please pray for:

- All people to know that the love of God reaches out to every part of our world.
- The babies and young people orphaned by the war in Gaza: give thanks for those who care for the children - often injured, hungry and alone – whose families have been killed or have lost contact.
- Those who work to care for, and improve our world – monitoring our planet and its resources – and whose decisions have a direct effect on people's lives.
- Our nation, knowing that hope lies in our capacity to look to the future in a spirit of openness towards each other, even amid great challenges and changes.
- The residents of towns along our coast who are looking for ways to tackle climate change due to the imminent threat of rising sea levels.
- A deepening of our prayer life at St Paul's; let us be obedient to God's call and grow in us wondering souls, alive to the joy of discovery.
- Our Church family: especially Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor (who has been very unwell), Maureen, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth and Meaghan.

You may like to use this chorus as you pray this week:

Lord, the light of your love is shining. In the midst of the darkness, shining. Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us. Set us free by the truth you now bring us. Shine on me, shine on me. Amen.