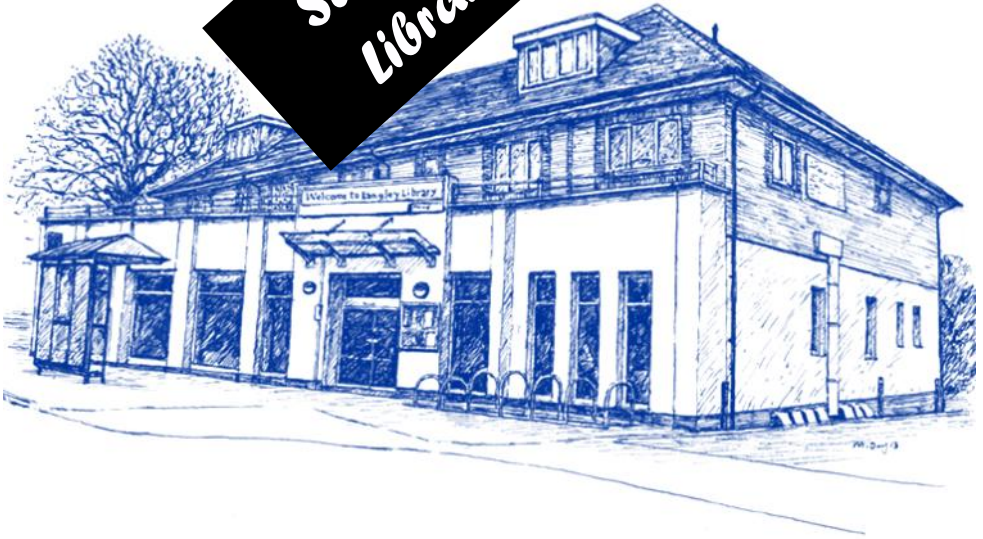


February and March 2025

# Around Langley

**Save Our  
Library!**



**A FREE MAGAZINE**  
*published by the Langley Churches*  
*for the people of Langley*

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## Contacts

### **Editors**

**Anna Thomas-Betts**  
**a.thomasbetts@**  
**gmail.com**  
**01753 822013**

**Tony Randall**  
**antony.randall**  
**@icloud.com**  
**07375 070 105**

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**Cover Drawings**  
Michael Day

### **Advertisements**

Richard Shircore  
07375 070105  
richard.shircore@  
btinternet.com

### **Layout & Publishing**

Anna Thomas-Betts

### **Website**

www.langleymarish.  
com/around.langley

### **Printing by** Print

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## *Around Langley*

Dear Readers,

In the two or three weeks before publication, the editors are normally very busy getting the material together, organising the layout, arranging proof correction etc. Unfortunately, January 2025 turned out to be a difficult time for both the editors, with some health problems. We almost delayed publishing this edition for a week—for the first time in its history—but have just managed not to. We decided to go ahead with the publication but, regrettably, haven't managed to do all the checks and balances (such as thorough proof reading!) that we normally do.

We hope we will do better next time, but in the meanwhile, if anyone out there is able to generate content suitable for publication, let us know, and we would be enormously grateful.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2025,  
Anna Thomas-Betts and Tony Randall

## **Whither Democracy?**

*It is now two days since Donald Trump was inaugurated as the next President of the United States of America. Aside from his stated primary aim of his Presidency this second time round, of Making America Great Again, it has been commented that he wants to be a 'unifier' and peace-maker (in the world). Many of his executive orders in the hours after he was sworn in will send shivers down the backs of many internationalists and liberal minded people, but the world does stand in need of peace, so let us hope and pray that he will strive to be a peacemaker and succeed.*

*Those of us who have always lived in democratic countries cherish the freedoms it brings, especially to change the government if it is not performing as we expect them to. Last year's elections globally was a bit of a shock, when people rejected the ruling parties, feeling disenfranchised—disillusioned with existing party of government and yet not seeing an alternative, or not able to exercise their votes as they wanted to because of corrupt practices, election irregularities and so on.*

*There is also the growth of populism, which in one sense is a kind of democracy—whatever 'people' want determining policies of the party that wants to be in power. Social media encourage us in our natural tendency to be happier with those who think like us, fanning the flames of populism. This is particularly dangerous when the views propagated are shaped by misinformation distributed without proper verification on social media by vested interests and 'fake news'.*

*The dependence on the growth of AI, avowed by both by our Government and the US, as well as China and other countries, is worrying in that the potential for untold damage by AI if not properly regulated and controlled is very real. What are we happy to give over to be controlled by 'bots'? Louis de Bernière's book, *Light over Liskeard*, gives an interesting, but not too threatening, picture of life with 'bots' available to provide for all our needs. (And also about what could happen if networks fail, power supplies shut down...)*

**Anna Thomas-Betts**

# News from Around Langley

## Langley Community Coffee Shop



Well, we have spring time ahead of us when we hope we can say goodbye to the dreary, dark and cold days of winter. People continue to come to our Coffee Shop and newcomers are always welcome regardless of faith or ethnicity. We try to have a monthly speaker with February having a visit from our local Community Police Officer on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February. So, if you have any queries or problems in your area, this is your opportunity to ask your friendly bobby. We also have seated exercises which are good at this time of the year when it's too cold to venture outside much but also good for people with more challenging mobility problems.

Our outing this year will be a coach trip to Worthing but I will put more detail about this in the next issue of 'Around Langley'. We meet every week on Tuesdays from 10am until 11.30am at St Joseph's Hall at the back of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Trelawney Avenue, SL3 7UD. Newcomers are always welcome, and we welcome anyone who would like to be a volunteer just helping with serving coffee and tea, or anyone who would like to be on the committee.

**Sheila Papali**

## Save Langley Library!

Langley Library is a vital centre for the community, in real danger of closing down because of the financial problems of Slough Borough Council. If closed now, it will be lost forever, depriving Langley residents of an invaluable social hub and information resource.

The library is not just a source of books, though there is a wide selection of fiction and non fiction for adults and children; even revision guides, magazines, audio books and e-books. Library staff are there to help.

Readers may recall an article about the Library in the October 2023 edition of *Around Langley*. We then celebrated the Summer Challenge they ran for school children, with over 450 children participating, reading over 10,000 books!

Recent reports about the inability of children to concentrate on reading for more than a few minutes is concerning, with even students on A level courses in English apparently depending on DVDs and summaries rather than reading the set texts. Library closures, where good reading habits are established and encouraged, seem such a retrograde step educationally.

We also listed then some other Library activities, such as the weekly story time sessions for very young (pre-school)



children, the opportunity for reading e-books, and the Reading Well lists provided for diverse readership with different ages and special needs.

Another great amenity the Library provides for the general public is access to the internet, using your own device or on one of the computers provided.

It is a warm, safe, quiet place to be, to sit and work, do homework or meet a friend. There are several schools within walking distance. There is parking nearby and buses stop right outside the library.

I was last there recently one Friday lunchtime, just for a short time, when there were parents with small children, people using computers, borrowing and returning books, consulting librarians and some sitting at a table, all availing themselves of the opportunities it provided.

In passing, I might add that the book I

borrowed was on The Sunday Times best sellers list quite recently.

*Anne Bolton*

## **What We Can Do NOW!**

Take part in the online petition and a survey open at present. **To find out more about having your say visit**

**<https://slough.citizen-space.com/libraries/slough-library-service-public-consultation/>**

**Also there will be one more opportunity to have a say, in person, at Langley library on**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February  
11am-1pm**

# What is it about Banging on Doors?

Last year, in July, one of the most well-known moments in the parliamentary calendar took place. After being sent from the House of Lords, the person who

has the title "Black Rod" knocked on the door of the House of Commons, to summon MPs for the King's Speech. In the traditional way, the door of the Commons was slammed in Black Rod's face. She then had to knock three times on the door with the rod to gain entry, before it was opened and MPs followed Black Rod back to the upper chamber. The refusal to let Black Rod enter at the first knock is widely believed to symbolise the Commons' independence from the Crown.

There is something about doors. Just like the doors of Parliament they can be invested with great symbolism.

In December 2024 the beautiful cathedral of Notre Dame was re-opened after much



of it was destroyed in a fire five years previously. At the very beginning of the re-opening ceremonies the Archbishop of Paris struck the closed door of Notre-Dame de Paris with his crosier. The cathedral "responded" by chanting Psalm 121 three times. *"I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth"*. After being silent for years, the cathedral resounded once again with songs of praise, and on the third chant, the doors were opened.

In the Church of England also the Archbishops and Bishops, at their installation, knock on the closed doors of the cathedral three times and are questioned before they are allowed in.



And in Rome at Christmas Pope Francis opened what are known as "Holy Doors" at the Basilicas of St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major and St. Paul outside the Walls. For Catholics this was the opening of the "Jubilee Year", which takes place every 25 years. People are encouraged to come to Rome (over 30 million are expected) on pilgrimage to



Doors can be used to “shut out”, so that people inside can just stay where they are. Doors can also be places to “walk through”, to experience something new that changes us a little for the better. Whether

mark the year and to walk through one of the Holy Doors.

The opening of Holy Doors is how Jubilee Years have begun since the fourteenth century, but this year Pope Francis did something new. He opened a Holy Door at a prison in Rome and as he did so he expanded on one of the themes of the Jubilee Year, namely, that people should have hope. After walking through the Holy Door himself, the Pope presided over Mass in the church and in his homily, he reflected on the historic reason for his visit, describing it as “a beautiful gesture of opening.” But more than simply opening doors, the Pope encouraged the prisoners present, to open their hearts. Brotherhood, he said, is “open hearts.” The Pope warned against closed, hardened hearts, which keep us from living. He explained that the Jubilee gives us the grace to “fling open” our hearts to hope. Even in the most difficult and challenging times, he reassured, hope does not disappoint.

we are going to Rome or not a Jubilee Year encourages us to grow, to open our hearts and to be “pilgrims of hope”.

**Fr Kevin O’Driscoll**

## ***My Birthday in A&E***

I am very grateful to Anna for taking over this issue of Around Langley, as I have found myself under some pressure for the past couple of months. This culminated in a rather different way to spending my birthday than I had imagined. A story that you might find interesting.

The plan was for one of my grandsons, in between climbing Mount Snowden the day before, and flying to Morocco to surf immediately afterward, to take me out to lunch and then enjoy a short walk together.

Things don’t always go to plan and the morning appointment, that I thought would be routine, at the Health Centre led to my spending the rest of the day until

gp.m. at Wexham Hospital A&E. This 'less than ideal' birthday treat was spent largely in an exceedingly busy crowded waiting room. Fortunately, my GP's concerns were not confirmed and I was allowed to come home and I am now allowed to drive my car.

This short story has demonstrated to me that we have to be prepared for anything, even on planned special occasions. Then, although it would have been nice to spend that day in the company of my grandson, how grateful I am that my son in law was in a position, and willing, to devote his day to quietly act as my chauffer, chaperone and carer. It also put me into a position of experiencing, and seeing, the NHS at work in a new way.

Firstly, that my GP, having taken time in my appointment, and not being certain that she could rule out something serious, made arrangements for my condition to be explored further immediately. She wrote on the notes that 'I strongly advised the patient to go to A&E and not to drive'. She actually instructed me!

Then to observe the operation of an A&E department at work under great pressure where everyone was calmly getting on with their job. And that applied to them all, from the senior orthopaedic doctor to the cleaner.

While I would not have wanted to spend the day the way I did, it has certainly taught me to value more the support I get from others, and how we should be grateful for, and value and protect our under-resourced NHS.

**Tony Randall**



Many happy returns of his birthday to Tony from *Around Langley*

## Did you Know...?



You will know that Slough means a marsh or a swamp from the Old English *sloh*. But do you know the origin of Windsor? It means 'a place at the (river) bank with a winch for pulling up boats', from the Old English *windels*, 'a winch' and *ora* a bank or slope.



## It Makes You Think...



A clear conscience is the sign of a fuzzy memory.  
To steal from one is plagiarism: to steal from many is research.

Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.



### ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

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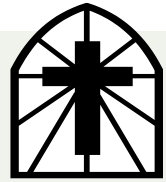
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**SL3 6LP**

**01753 552725**

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# ***Regular Weekly Service Times***

**For Holy Week and Easter Services, enquire at the churches.**

## **Holy Family (Roman Catholic) (Trelawney Avenue)**

We will be having Masses at 5pm on Saturdays and 9.30am and 11.30am on Sundays

The 9.30am Mass is live streamed on our YouTube Channel:  
"HOLYFAMILYCHURCHLIVE"

## **Langley Free Church (Baptist) (Trelawney Avenue)**

Please note that there will be services on all Sundays at 10.30am.

Now that the church is without a minister, services will continue to be led by members of the congregation. Speakers will be drawn from within the church and from outside, including representatives of Christian charities and missionary organisations.

Communion will be taken on the second Sunday in the month.

## **The Anglican Churches**

### **St Mary the Virgin (St Mary's Road)**

**8am** Holy Communion (BCP, said)

**11am** Family Communion

### **Christ the Worker (Parlaunt Road)**

**9.30am** Holy Communion on Second and Fourth Sundays

**11am** Service of the Word on First, Third and Fifth Sundays

### **St Francis of Assisi (London Road)**

**All Sunday Services start at 9.30am (unless specified otherwise)**

Holy Communion First, Second and Third Sundays,

Service of the Word (all-age) Fourth Sunday,

Fifth Sunday, no fixed format

# Regular Activities at Langley Churches

## Bible Study

On Zoom Bible Study was due to re-commence in January,. **Please check with [diana.iller@gmail.com](mailto:diana.iller@gmail.com) for more information.**

**Langley Free Church:** Thursdays 7.30pm at church and mornings at a house. (Contact [secretary@langleyfree.org.uk](mailto:secretary@langleyfree.org.uk) or phone 01753 540771)

**Christ the Worker:** Mondays, 1pm (Contact: [shola\\_aoko@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:shola_aoko@yahoo.co.uk))

## 'MONDAYS' at LFC

If it's company you're after, why not join us at Langley Free Church on a Monday for a cuppa—any time between 11am and 2pm. (**NB we do not meet on 24<sup>th</sup> March.**) Come for an hour or two, or longer. Please bring your own lunch with you. There will be a Fish and Chips option on the first Monday of the month. Entry charge: £2.

## Oasis at Langley Free

Wednesdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm  
Midweek Fellowship and occasional guest speakers.

Contact: Ann Portsmouth 01753 585845

## Messy Church

Langley Free  
(including a light lunch)

Please check LFC website for meetings in 2025.



## Christ the Worker and Shamrocks Friendship Club



Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) at the Shamrocks pub, 10am—noon, 12 Parlaunt Road, Langley, SL3 8BB. Tea, coffee, useful information from guest speakers and more... Everyone welcome.

## REFRESH! at St Francis

Third Thursday of every month

Join us for tea and cake and fellowship with a talk or maybe a quiz or even a surprise activity! A warm welcome awaits you!



## Craft Afternoons at LFC 12–4pm

Bring your hobby along and join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month. Next meetings are on 15<sup>th</sup> February and 15<sup>th</sup> March). Contact: Chris on 07789 838 500. (Suggested donation £2 towards refreshments)



# Faith Matters

## What does dignity really mean?

In November, the House of Commons voted for the first time to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales.

In the weeks leading up to the debate, and during the debate itself, we often heard the term 'dignity' equated with assisted dying. Indeed, it's a term that has long been associated with assisted dying. The famous Swiss euthanasia clinic is called Dignitas; Oregon's assisted dying law is called the 'Death with Dignity' Act; and here in the UK the leading campaigning organisation is called Dignity in Dying.

But what does 'dignity' actually mean?

Before the debate, I explored this question in a report for the think tank Theos, entitled *The Meaning of Dignity*. I drew on insights from philosophers and theologians, as well as conversations with palliative care professionals who would have to implement assisted dying, and MPs voting on the issue.

Campaigners for assisted dying argue that dignity lies in autonomy, independence, and choosing when we die, especially if we are facing suffering we find it hard to bear.

But while some philosophers have used

'dignity' in this way, its original meaning is 'worth' or 'value' (via the Latin term *dignus*). And in Christian thought, dignity is viewed as something that every human being has – based on the belief that each one of us is loved and valued by the God who made us in his image.

This view of dignity is, in my view, much more compelling – for three reasons.

Firstly, if dignity is based on having independent choice and autonomy, where does that leave people who don't have this – those with severe physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or in the later stages of dementia?

Secondly, where assisted dying has been legalised, it has often been chosen by people for reasons that do not seem particularly dignified – because they feel like a burden, or even pressured (if not coerced) into choosing this option to save the money that would be spent on their care (both MPs and care professionals I spoke to were worried about this happening in the UK).

Thirdly, the law that is due to be passed will only enable assisted dying for people with less than six months to live (leaving aside that this is not always easy to predict). But if dignity simply means choice, why should that choice only be given to people approaching the

end of life? Shouldn't it be given to anyone who requests it?

This isn't simply a hypothetical question. In Canada, the Netherlands and Belgium, to name just three examples of countries that have legalised assisted dying, the criteria have gradually expanded. Indeed, only in 2016 Canada legalised assisted dying for the terminally ill – yet it is now available to those who aren't dying, and is due to become available for those living with mental illness from 2027.

It is hard to reconcile this with a view of dignity as being loved, valued and cared for.

So what does this view of dignity look like at the end of life? It means health and social care professionals, and those who are important to a dying person, showing them that they – and the things that matter to them – are important. Palliative care professionals explained that people's priorities at the end of life can be physical (like avoiding pain and incontinence), but also practical, psychological, social and spiritual – from getting finances in order, to resolving conflicts, to having counselling to cope with dying.

If we invest in this vision as a society – both by properly funding our health and social care system, but also being relatives, friends and neighbours who truly care for each other – we can bring about true dignity for dying people at such a significant moment. In the words of Dame Cicely Saunders, who founded the modern hospice movement, we can

show them that 'you matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life'.

**Andrew Grey**

Read the full report at [www.theosthinktank.co.uk](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk) or scan this QR code:



*[Andrew Gray was a member of the congregation at St Mary, Langley, in the early 2000s, until he moved to London. One of the initiatives he started while at Langley was running a 'Death Café' where people could gather and discuss anything to do with death and dying. He has continued with his interest in end-of-life matters and writes about associated issues.]*

*Readers may also recall that the last edition of Around Langley from December 2024 had reflections by the Rev. Chris Ferris on the Assisted Dying Bill.]*

# The Nicene Creed

I am writing this in the middle of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme this year is the Nicene Creed, in celebration of 1700 years of its creation. It was in 325 AD that the leaders of all the Churches met at the First Council of Nicaea and produced the Creed. The reason for that meeting was the divisive theological differences between various Churches.

Legend has it that the Apostles themselves gathered together and agreed on a credal statement, only to find as time went on, that they were adding their own clauses to the agreed statements! It is more likely that Apostles' Creed as we now know it was written around 200 AD .

However, the need for some formulation of what it meant to be, or to become, a Christian, would have become obvious as Christianity spread through the Middle East and north Africa. Inevitably there would have been influences of other dominant cultures and philosophies on Christian thought.

The Apostles' Creed is succinct, most of it simply a statement of the baptismal vows: *'Do you believe in God the Father? Do you believe in Christ Jesus the Son of God...? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church and the Resurrection of the body?'*, which the candidates affirm.

The Nicene Creed, in contrast, is far more elaborate, and was meant to clarify how to avoid many of the



The first Council of Nicaea

heresies of that time, now probably baffling to many of us. For example, Jesus is described as *"eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made."* The church fathers meeting in Council in Nicaea, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, agreed on these words to counter debate raging at the time among different theologians about the nature of Jesus (truly human and truly divine?)

So why do we in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century still use it? The fact is that millions of Christians, every Sunday and, whenever the Eucharist is celebrated, affirm their faith by saying the Creed. Obviously it is a reminder to the Christian of the fundamentals of what makes them Christians. Although the Creeds don't mention the Holy Trinity explicitly, that is a basic assumption in it. But we also

go on to affirm our belief in the Forgiveness of Sins, Resurrection of the Body and Communion of Saints.

The beauty of the Creeds is that they don't go into explanations— the 'how' and the 'why'— of things that people may find hard to believe. Not just the Virgin Birth or Resurrection of Jesus, but also Forgiveness and Communion of Saints. Of course it is because we cannot rationally explain them that we say we 'believe'. We, the Church, believe because as Hebrews Ch 11 says, "Now faith is the assurance *that* what we hope

for will come about and the certainty *that* what we *cannot* see exist". Or as Paul says, 'For we live by believing and not by seeing' (2 Cor.5: 7).

It is also worth reminding ourselves how strong a unifying factor the Creeds are. Another reason why the theme of the Nicene Creed is appropriate for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at this present time when the churches are riven with ideas and practices that divide us.

**Anna Thomas-Betts**

Around Langley published a series of six articles on the Creeds in 2021, which have been collated and is available from [a.thomasbetts@gmail.com](mailto:a.thomasbetts@gmail.com). They cover the different groups of affirmations from the Creeds. The photo below is of a late 16<sup>th</sup> Century tapestry illustrating the Apostles' Creed from the Met Museum <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collectionsearch/468567>



# Lent in 2025

We start our liturgical season of Lent as usual on Ash Wednesday—on 5<sup>th</sup> March this year: a season of repentance, characterised by self-discipline exercised in the form of fasting, for example. Days set apart specially for spiritual revival, especially fasting and praying, is a feature of many world faiths. In the English Language, the origin of the word Lent is *lencten*, springtime in Old English (which is appropriate in the Northern hemisphere, of course). But in his poem below, Bill Birmingham, plays on a pun for 'Lent' to draw us closer into what Lent could mean to us. (The poem is taken from *Divers, Converse and in Verse*, written by Bill, with kind permission of Austin Macaulay Publishers Ltd.)

## LENT

*It's Lent*

*Is it Lent?*

*What is Lent?*

*If it's 'Lent', someone must have borrowed it.*

*40 days by God are lent, 40 days by someone has borrowed.*

*Why?*

*God lends us time.*

*Time to choose.*

*Time to spend with him.*

*Time to face the test.*

*Time to face the accuser.*

*Time to reject the evil one.*

*Time to find the true bread of life*

*Time to reject all personal power.*

*Time not to put God to the test.*

*After 40 days, return what's borrowed.*

*After 40 days return what's Lent.*

*After 40 days we come to Easter*

*So we no longer need to borrow.*

*He no longer needs to lend*

*As we and our time have both been paid for.*





Join our  
'Big Dementia  
Conversation'  
event

## Adjusting to a diagnosis of dementia

Thursday 27th February 2025  
2pm - 4pm

Join us to hear dementia specialist Barbara Stephens, CEO of Dementia Pathfinders, share insights into how your journey with dementia might unfold following a diagnosis. Learn how to live positively, while making emotional and practical adjustments along the way.

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or email [tracey.vanzyl@careuk.com](mailto:tracey.vanzyl@careuk.com)

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## QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
Iver Village Hall  
2 Grange Way, Iver SL0 9NW  
Doors open at 6.30 pm

Come and test your wits and have a fun filled evening  
in good company.

**Fish, Chicken, Vegetarian Burgers or Saveloy and  
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Get together with your friends and family to form a  
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night.

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# Parish Directory

## St Mary's Church

[www.langleymarish.com/stmary](http://www.langleymarish.com/stmary)

Team Rector: Rev. Chris Ferris 07910 077885 rectoroflangley@gmail.com

Hall Lettings: Simona de Gregorio. tel. 07968 408813

churchcentre@hotmail.com

Parish Administrator: Angus MacKenzie 01753 350444 langleymarish@gmail.com

## St Francis Church

[www.langleymarish.com/stfrancis](http://www.langleymarish.com/stfrancis)

Team Rector: Rev. Chris Ferris 07910 077885 rectoroflangley@gmail.com

Rev. Shola Aoko 01753 547025 shola\_aoko@yahoo.co.uk

Hall Hire: Mrs Joy Raynor 01753 676011 joyraynor@aol.com

## Christ the Worker Church

[www.langleymarish.com/c-t-w/](http://www.langleymarish.com/c-t-w/)

Rev. Shola Aoko 01753 547025 shola\_aoko@yahoo.co.uk

Hall Lettings: Barbara Soko tel. 07894 535522 christthe worker@gmail.com

## Holy Family Catholic Church

<http://www.holyfamily.co.uk>

Parish Priest: Canon Kevin O'Driscoll

Deacon: Rev. Graham Jones

Hall Hire: Mrs. Lisa Chong

All contactable at 01753 543770, parish.holyfamily@northamptondiocese.org

Parish Worker: Mr Kieran McKeown 01753 543770 kieranmckeown50@yahoo.co.uk

## Langley Free Church

[www.langleyfree.org.uk/](http://www.langleyfree.org.uk/)

Secretary: Paul Noyce 07831 428013 secretary@langleyfree.co.uk

Hall Hire: Jenna Kralyik 07927 175182 bookings@langleyfree.co.uk