August & September 2024

Around Langley

Railway Cottages, Market Lane.

Chequers Bridge in the background (see also p.7)

A FREE MAGAZINE

published by the Langley Churches

for the people of Langley

Contents

General

Editorial	Page 3
Community Coffee Shop	Page 4
General Election	Page 4
Eco-anxiety: what can we do?	Page 5
So what is OK?	Page 6
Cutting and Pasting, 15 th C	Page 7
WRALTH & Market Lane	Page 7
Regular services and activities	Page 10
Activities for all, at our Churches	Page 11

Faith Matters

Is Christianity in Decline?	Page 12
An Old Man Goes on Holiday	Page 14
a new heaven and a new earth	Page 15
Statistics and Mission	Page 17
Khalil Gibran on Fear	Page 18

Church Directory Page 20

Langley Football Basketball Free Hockey Volleyball Youth Table Tennis Pool / Snooker Table Group Table football Air Hockey Weekly Subs £1 Sit & Chat Topical Discussions Are you? Age between 10 & 14 Local Events Religious Discussions In School Years 6-9 Guest Speakers Want somewhere to meet or make new Youth Questions Friends Trips Want somewhere to Meeting With other Churches Youth Group Relax? Weekly on Tuesdays in School Term times from 7:30 to 9pm email: youth.club@langleyfree.org.uk

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Please note: Needles and a Yarn

(Christ the Worker) will NOT meet in August, but will reopen on 10th September

Free Family Fun Afternoon BBQ

Langley Free Church 31st August from 12 to 4pm

Baked Goodie, Bouncy Castle, Colouring Stations, Music, Games Table

Donations accepted

HOLIDAY AT HOME

Wednesday 7th—Friday 9th August To book a place contact Chris on holiday2024@Langley free.org.uk £5 per day to cover lunch and refreshments

Time for a Change?

Little did we realize when we took the last issue to press in May that it would be the last of an era. The Labour party, with its election slogan that it was 'time for a change', has won with a huge majority of parliamentary seats. Even as we ponder on our electoral system that produces a 290 seat difference between two parties with popular votes of 34% and 24% (Labour and Tory parties, and 12% for the Lib Dem party), we hope that the promised 'change' will be for the better for the country as a whole. Especially for those who live in poverty, or are vulnerable otherwise.

Then there are other places, like Palestine and Ukraine, to mention but two, who are longing for change and can't find a way out of their despair.

The USA looks set for a change one way or another as well, even as the presidential nomination process gets underway. As this issue goes to the printers, Joe Biden has just withdrawn his nomination and the Democratic Party has started the search for a new nominee. Another change that will have huge global consequences. Nevertheless, one can't help feeling irritated about its media coverage, so much of it speculative, especially on the BBC.

Those of us who lived through the traffic chaos in the middle of Langley in the 2016/17 period may have from time to time wondered what was happening to the new rail route proposed—branching out from Langley on a spur to Heathrow, affecting Langley, Iver and surroundings with the closure of Chequers Bridge. What a relief to learn that this project has been withdrawn' (p. 7). Thank you to Jack Kirk for reporting this welcome news.



A hover fly: part of our biodiversity (see page 5)

With the weather pattern we have been experiencing through the spring and early summer, I imagine most of us would have found at times our thoughts drifting to global climate change. So it is good to be reminded of the conservation the precious biodiversity we have in Langley by Diane Richards (p 5).

Enjoy the school holidays and whatever else the rest of summer holds for us!

Anna Thomas-Betts

News from Around Langley

Langley Community Coffee Shop



Looking back over our year I think we can say that our Coffee Shop has continued to be a place where people can enjoy each other's company and the exercises we offer. Our numbers have continued to increase and we welcome all people regardless of religion or ethnicity.

In April the happiness workshop used activities which encouraged people to get to know each other. Support from friends is so important.

As announced in the magazine last time, Naomi Hudson from the Arbib education foundation trust, whose objective is to encourage learning through discovery at museums, spoke to us in June. Naomi spoke of her intergenerational project relating to how toys and games have changed from the fifties to the present day, bringing toys and games donated by V & A with her. We were invited to discuss the items and to meet students of Langley Heritage Primary School, as part of the project. We look forward to continuing participation in the project which is scheduled to be completed in November.

The highlight of our year was our trip to Broadstairs which everyone looked forward to just get away to the seaside and to smell fresh sea air. Although the weather was cool it did not rain. We were able to enjoy fish and chips, and the songs of an electric guitar player while waiting for our coach.

Please note that there will be no coffee shop from 30th July until 1st September inclusive, so our first Autumn meeting will be on 8th September in St. Joseph's Hall at the back of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Trelawney Ave, SL37UD. If you would like to make new friends, please come along. We also welcome people who would like to volunteer or be part of our committee. I wish you all a happy and safe summer holiday.

Sheila Papali

General Election

So we now have a new government. Slough still keeps Tan Dhesi as the MP. Congratulations to him! We had 11 candidates and the votes cast, according to the Council website are:

DHESI, Tan (Labour Party) 14,666 CHOHAN, Azhar (Indep. Network) 11,019 KAUR, Moni (Conservative) 7,457 JACKSON, Robin (Reform) 3,352 WHYTE, Chelsea (Lib.Dem). 2,060 The other six candidates each secured fewer than 2,000 votes.

We wish our new government every success in the years to come.

Eco-Anxiety? We can All Help!

We hear so much about how governments across the world are being asked to reduce carbon emissions to combat global warming, by passing legislation to cut down or cut out the use of fossil fuels. But what about our personal responsibility? People find it hard to relate to flooding, landslips, wildfires etc. in other parts of this country, let alone other parts of the world, yet we are all at least partly to blame for these disasters. And there are small changes which each of us can make which will collectively make a difference. The last winter we had was one of the mildest, wettest on record in the UK. Nature reacted to this by creating extensive plant growth (not necessarily of what we'd like!), plus an absolute epidemic of slugs and snails. Many farmers have been unable to sow or plant in season and will have a reduced harvest.

In Langley, many gardens have been razed for hard standing or to build large extensions, thus destroying carbon-





absorbing vegetation. Wildlife habitat has been destroyed and this in turn has affected local wildlife populations. There used to be frogs, toads, newts, grass snakes, slow worms, hedgehogs, thrushes etc. in my garden but they've not been here for many years. The natural balance has gone.

No-mow-May has come to an end but how many people, including local authorities, took any notice of it? Where natural growth has been allowed by local authorities (for financial reasons rather than out of environmental concern) lots of native wildflowers have appeared. We have some beautiful species which would grace any garden. Poppies are bright, cheerful and symbolic, for example, and our native viper's bugloss (also known as blue weed) is beautiful. But there are hundreds of UK plant species, each with

its own dedicated native fauna which might struggle to survive without it. Many could be included in garden planting schemes.

Nature is telling us what to do if only we all observed and listened. Left to itself, Nature fills spaces with carbon absorbing plants. Carbon dioxide is naturally in the earth's atmosphere, but an excess is causing the climate problems the world is experiencing. Creatures then come, which feed on these plants or use them for shelter, and they in turn provide food larger creatures. No chemicals are needed. (As I write a family of blue tits is foraging for aphids on my roses.) Langley has some beautiful green places close by but if we all planted more and destroyed less, our small efforts would make a difference.

Diane Richards

So... What is OK?

Sorry, I am not about to tell you what is the right or wrong thing to do in any situation! In this short piece, you are invited to look at the origin of allegedly the most used word in the world, OK (or should it be okay?)

For much of the information on the possible etymology of OK, I am indebted to Melvyn Bragg's book, The Adventure of English: the Biography of a Language, a fascinating book to be treasured if you are interested in languages. English as a language probably has its origins in the Germanic language of Frisian, in the Indo-

European group. However, through the migration of 'the English' to other lands near and far, English has constantly absorbed, and made its own, thousands of words from other languages.

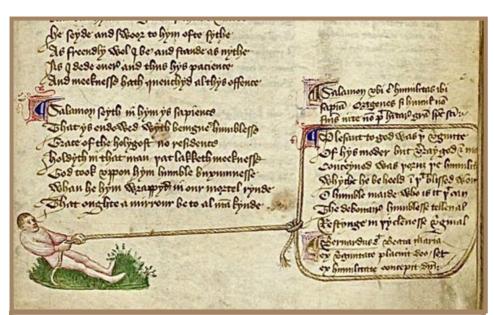
Did you know that Shakespeare had a vocabulary of over 20,000 words and King James Bible (1611) used 10,000. Now there are hundreds of thousands of words in the English language, although for most of us the vocabulary is limited to around 10,000.

The word OK was in use in America by mid-nineteenth century, possibly from *okeh* (it is so), an American Indian word. But the Liberian word 'oke' or the Burmese word 'hoakeh' are also contenders as the origin of OK in America at that time

It could have emerged from Cockney 'Orl Korrec'. Or it could have come from Lords Onslow and Kilbracken both having to initial approval on all Bills going through the House of Lords. Teachers of Latin have long since graded work as OK (Omni Korecta). And the Scots cannot be left out as a possible contender: what about 'Och Aye'?

The list could go on, but the most likely reason for popularity of its usage is USA. Suffice it to say that 'OK' provides us with a great example of how language develops by absorbing, sometimes modifying and integrating, new words of diverse origins.

Anna Thomas-Betts



A scribe correcting a 15th C manuscript: the accidentally omitted text within the loop of rope is being dragged over to where it should be!

Source: Medieval Military Medicine / British Library

Remember WRAtH (later WRLTH)?

Remember the threat of closure of Chequers Bridge in Market Lane in 2016? It all started with the admirable aim of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow project creating a new connection with the nearby Great Western Mainline providing a more direct rail route for passengers travelling to and from Reading, Oxford and further west up to Wales. The downside of this to Langley residents was that Chequers Bridge would be closed to allow the building of the link to Heathrow, depriving them of the Market Lane route.



The traffic normally using Market Lane would have come through Langley High Street creating gridlock in Langley. We know because Slough Borough Council, for unfathomable reasons, decided to close Market Lane for several months in order to assess the grip of the gridlock on road users in Langley! SBC was eventually persuaded to curtail their experiment in early 2017— and *Around Langley* celebrated in February 2017!

And now...we can say again **STOP PRESS:** The Network Rail website has just one sentence under the heading, Project Status for WRLTH:

"This project has been withdrawn".



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Residents are always welcome to enjoy afternoon tea with friends and family or relax in our peaceful gardens with a chilled smoothie and a favourite book. Our cinema is perfect for movie-goers, and our hair and beauty salon is popular for those who love a pamper.

We recognise the importance of staying connected to local life. We're often visited by local schools, societies, and faith groups, who love to join in with our busy activities schedule. Recently, residents have enjoyed a seated Zumba session and getting creative at their knitting club.

Wish upon a star

Is there a wish or goal you've always wanted to achieve? Hang your wish on our wishing tree, big or small, and our team will do our best to make it happen. Recently, residents have taken a trip to the Windsor theatre to see Dennis' daughter perform on stage. Something Dennis was unable to do on his own due to health challenges but the team were determined to

make his dream to see her perform again a reality.

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Regular Weekly Service Times



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. Communion will be as pre-Covid with no restrictions.

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 Sundays11am 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 Wednesday afternoons, 2pm NB No meetings till 11th September (Contact: diana.iller@gmail.com)

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

Christ the Worker: Mondays, 2pm (Contact: Shola Aoko, 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 (NOT 5th August or BANK HOLIDAYs) for a cuppa—any time between 11am and 2pm. 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.

Christ the Worker and Shamrocks Friendship Club



Every Monday 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!

Oasis at Langley Free

Wednesdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm, but not in August.

Next meeting 11th September Midweek Fellowship and occasional guest speakers.

Contact: Ann Portsmouth 01753 585845

Messy Church At Langley Free

Sunday morning, 15th
September

10-30am to 1pm (including light lunch).





Craft Afternoons 2024 at LFC 12—4pm

Bring your hobby along and join us on the 3rd
Saturday of every month (not in August).

Next meeting 21st September

Contact Chris on 07789 838 500. (Suggested donation £2 towards refreshments)

Faith Matters

Is Christianity in Decline?

What has prompted me to explore this topic is the fact that after the COVID pandemic a number of churches in predominantly Christian areas, did not fill up again. Another worrying fact that I see happening is that some young people stop coming to church just after sacrament they receive the confirmation! What is bringing this about? Is this a universal phenomenon? Are people losing their faith? Another question I ask myself is, what precisely makes a person a Christian? reminded of the saying of St Augustine in the context of his time: "there are many in the Church who should be out of the church and many out of the church who should be in the church". Karl Rahner too, one of the foremost theologians of the 20th century calls non-Christians who follow the dictates of their conscience 'anonymous Christians'.

The Vatican publishes every year what is known as the *Annuario Pontificio*, a book of statistics about the number of Catholics in the world and other information about who's who in the Catholic Church. So do other Christian denominations. The total number of Christians worldwide at the moment is about 2.4 billion out of a world

population of 8.4 billion. This number of Christians worldwide increases marginally every year, notably diminishing in Europe. In Poland, Catholics diminished from 88% to 71% in the last ten years. A Dutch bishop, in a country with currently only a 2.5% Sunday mass attendance, plans to close 100 of the 164 churches in his diocese. however are significantly increasing in Africa and Asia. These statistics take into account the present day Christian martyrs. It is estimated that the number of Christians killed for their faith rose to 5898 last year, up from 4761 in 2021. Afghanistan, North Korea, Somalia, Libya and Yemen saw the highest number of persecutions globally. Statistics of course, do not tell us everything about Christianity. Pope Benedict preferred a smaller church made up of good Christians to a church full of nominal Christians.

One view of Christianity in terms of numbers can be formed by looking at its geographic expansion and contraction over time, and by its interaction with the secular non-Christian world, two very fluctuating historical realities. In spite of the initial persecutions by the Jewish establishment followed more widely by the Romans for the first three centuries, the whole of north Africa, the middle east, Syria and Turkey had to a large extent become Christian. All that is



practically wiped out today. But Christianity kept spreading and established itself in most of Europe including Holy Rus'. The European conquistadores later, brought Christianity to the people of the Americas. In terms of relations with secular states, the first country in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion was Armenia in 301 AD, probably to highlight its alternative identity from that of the Roman Empire which was then still persecuting Christians at the time! But then surprisingly by 323 AD Christianity became the official religion of the vast Roman Empire, to the extent that the Emperor himself presided at the great councils of the Church which defined the creeds we recite in our churches today! Reflecting on the vicissitudes Christianity in world history can only strengthen our perception, indeed our belief, that God's ways are indeed mysterious.

The history of Christianity must not be looked at as one of progress or decline but as an open drama, a constant

struggle between grace and sin, faith and unbelief. waged in every human heart. think Pope Francis' description of the Church as a field hospital, from which no one should be turned away even though they struggle follow its to teachings, is spot on. Moreover, if we engage with any non-Christian in the

world in this way, we discover our common humanity, the wider 'church', sustained by the 'creator Spirit', God's work.

Jesus founded the Church giving her one sole mission: to evangelise. As church post-Vatican II documents increasingly emphasize today, proclamation of the Word and dialogue with non-Christians are two aspects of the one evangelising mission of the Church. The question today is not to impose unity, impossible task, but it is how we, the People of God, can walk forward together humbly, generously and respectfully engaging with our partners in dialogue who live, think and believe differently. Underlying this picture is the wider picture of the interconnectedness of everything, human and non-human in the universe of which the creation story in the Bible is a model. In the document on the climate crisis Pope Francis writes: 'all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family.'

I would like to round off this article by highlighting that Christianity is the work

of God. It is 'the light on the mountain', 'the salt of the earth'. The Father has planted it, Jesus is its first fruit, the Holy Spirit nourishes it. Our role is, in the words of St Boniface, the 8th century English Benedictine monk who evangelised the Germanic part of France, "not to abandon this ship (the church) but to keep her on her course." Christianity is growing, how, we do not know. (Mk 4:26-29).

Alfred Agins

An Old Man Goes on Holiday

I took a holiday a few weeks ago – my first for 5 years – recognizing that as a sometimes too busy old man I had run out of steam, physically, mentally and spiritually.

I took a two-centre break on the South Coast, firstly at a Christian Centre (Retreat) and then in a seaside hotel. The aim was to thoroughly relax and then try and reenergize. That was helped by the laptop I had taken in case I wanted to use it: wouldn't work as a connection had shaken loose in my travels. My plan worked reasonably well as, in the first four days at the Centre, I was able to share in short morning services, potter around the garden, and engage in occasional



conversation with other guests, sit and read, or just sit. Perfect!

In the second part I was more alone and undertook more exercise. including climbing, with some difficulty, to the top of Corfe castle, while and there were less conversations, a couple of them were most interesting.

But what I would like to share with you is the Welcome Card left on my bed in the Centre when I arrived.

It was a Scripture text written out for me from 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 14 'Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of his knowledge in every place'.

It is a verse that I had never seriously contemplated before, and only did so during my break in a fairly perfunctorily way. But since coming home I have reflected on it and read the surrounding verses that gives it context, and I find it amazing.

Firstly, that Paul, the writer, should consider that what a group of Christians can spread throughout the community is knowledge that can be compared to a presumably pleasant smell or odour infiltrating the neighbourhood. Wow!

This verse is set in the context of Paul longing to get to see the people in the church at Corinth, and he describes his frustration that, when preaching and teaching in Troy, he fails to meet up with Titus, who he hoped would bring news from them. In consequence he, decides to travel to Macedonia in hope of meeting up with him there.

So, my second lesson was to realise the lengths to which an early evangelist and teacher would go in his care of a group of fairly new Christians.

A couple of challenging thoughts for us Christians.

Tony Randal

... a new heaven and a new earth...

A few months ago, I had the privilege of returning to St John at Hackney where I was Associate Rector and Chaplain to the Urswick School over ten years ago. I was invited to speak at the memorial service of one the pupils who was shot dead in 2014, I had taken her funeral in a packed church and cared for a school community grieving for a friend and pupil. She was only 15 years old, a life cut short by a pointless act of violence. Staff and pupils were forever changed, as was I.

I will never forget the Saturday evening when I received a phone call from the headteacher telling me something had happened, I rushed to A and E which was a 3-minute walk from where I lived and met the mother who told me her daughter was dead. There were teachers and pupils also there, social media already had the story.

Returning ten years later filled me with a mixture of emotions; it was good to see colleagues, past and present as well as pupils I had known who were now in their 20's. Hackney is an incredible place in which to minister and live; the people are amazing, but it is also a vulnerable community, with immense poverty. In my three short years there, my whole attitude to faith and priestly ministry changed completely.

The bible reading at the memorial

service was Revelation 21 which speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. There is no concept here of the human 'soul' floating off to some kind of ethereal heaven, rather heaven comes to earth and at the centre of it all is Jesus. I often have an image of Jesus walking through the streets of Langley, and he is beckoning us to see Langley through his eyes, I wonder what he notices that we do not. The familiar can blind us to reality.

Revelation offers us the hope of new creation, a new creation where there are no guns, drugs, knives, nor young people having their lives ended by needless violence. Jesus beckons us to join in his story, keeping alive the rumour of resurrection life in a world which was promised a utopia by the 'New Atheists' but instead we see a crisis in mental health, a crisis of confidence in political leadership and hunger for meaning.

It was good to be back in Hackney, to see old faces, to encounter the power of grief, which is unrestrained and recognises no rules; but is a desperate cry of the heart to a God who seems to allow such violence

But in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3: 13

on a catastrophic scale. No parent should have to bury their child. The memory of that funeral still keeps me awake at night sometimes.

It was a painful visit for many reasons; but was good for my soul to be reminded of God's generosity and his immense grace which provides sustenance in the darkest of moments.

Chris Ferris

Statistics and Mission

What has Statistics to do with mission, you may be asking. The truth is that while we all have anecdotes we can recount from our own local contexts, it is good to be able to see how they fit into a wider context. And besides, those who have to make decisions, on resource allocation for example, need to have a broader, factual data base. So, I was fascinated to see the analysis of some of the (2023) attendance figures analysed by Dr Bev Botting for the Diocese of Oxford. See

https://oxford.anglican.org/october-

attendance-2023.php. (I am fairly confident that her conclusions will not be hugely different for other churches and denominations.)

As Alfred Agius points out (p.12), we should not equate declining church attendance with failure, quoting Pope Benedict. Church attendance is *one* good indicator, nevertheless, of how and where the church could effectively fulfil its mission (in all senses of the five marks of mission that the church has signed up to).

Some of the conclusions derived from figures from across the whole Diocese are interesting to see. As most of us have noticed, after the Covid lock down, Average Weekly Attendance (AWA) had started to recover by 2022; this continued into 2023, and by October 2023 was at 84% of the 2019 level, a further increase on the 81% seen in 2022. This represents an average of an extra 3 people attending each church each week

The smallest churches are the only ones to have now recovered back to their 2019 attendance level. This may not be surprising given the likelihood that these would be close-knit communities.

Dee S Clark



B.Sc(Hons) MChs Dip.pod.med.

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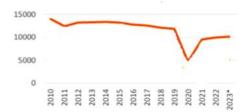
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Churches that have maintained or increased the number of services they offer have largely recovered to their 2019 attendance levels. Many churches haven't. Increasing the number and types of services offered would be a path we could follow. These could easily be layled if the clergy are hard pressed.

However, see below a graph of adult weekly attendance for our Archdeaconry



Average Weekly Attendance, 2010-2023, Archdeaconry of Buckingham

from 2010 to 2023. The pattern is pretty much the same for other areas, and for plots of baptisms, weddings and so forth. The dip in 2020 is what we expect and there is recovery thereafter as well. When we say we haven't returned to the prepandemic levels, it is important to remember that the graph was sloping down throughout this period and the current numbers are not very different from what we might have expected, had there been no pandemic and lockdown.

We can take heart from the churches that have grown, that growth in the coming years is not impossible. Offering different kinds of services and planting new congregations are certainly options for us to explore.

Anna Thomas-Betts

On Fear

It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.
She looks back at the path she has travelled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.



And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to
disappear forever.
But there is no other way.
The river can not go back,
Nobody can go back,
To go back is impossible in
existence.

The river needs to take the risk of entering the ocean

because only then will fear disappear, because that's where the river will know it's not about disappearing into the ocean, but of becoming the ocean.

Khalil Gibran

FUNERAL DIRECTORS & MEMORIAL STONEMASONS

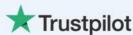


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Parish Directory

St Mary's Church 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

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/

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

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