



# CULTIVATE

A Newsletter for rural  
parishes across East Sussex

SPRING /  
SUMMER 2024

## Welcome to this latest edition of CULTIVATE!

We know that isolation and loneliness are on the increase. Loneliness can have a profound effect on our well-being. In a rural context loneliness can be exacerbated by physical isolation and difficulty accessing services or leisure facilities. As rural churches we have a unique opportunity to respond to social isolation, not least by interacting with our village neighbours and ensuring our church buildings are welcoming and accessible. It is estimated that there are 15,000 rural churches in the UK and often they are the only remaining public building in many rural communities. It could be as simple as opening the doors, putting a kettle on and welcoming people in. Of course, church members often have good links with the wider community and—along with other residents - can be a lifeline to identify and support those with limited mobility. After all, way back in Genesis we are told *'It is not good for man to be alone...'*

This edition of *Cultivate* focuses on opportunities to interact with our local communities, and to engage with others in similar rural situations to our own. Rogation is an imminent opportunity to do this, while there are details of other in-person and online (if you have decent internet access) events offering support, encouragement and shared insight.

*God bless, Gary Cregeen*

Rural Officer for East Sussex.

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### SAVE THE DATE!

#### **'FAITHFUL AND FLOURISHING'**

**RURAL CONFERENCE - Friday 11 October  
between 10.30 am and 3.30 pm  
at Plumpton College, East Sussex, BN7 3AE**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: The Right Revd. Richard Jackson,  
Bishop of Hereford.**

This Conference, open to all who are interested in rural mission and ministry (lay or ordained), will provide both encouragement and inspiration, as well as practical ideas and advice, on how the churches and communities we represent can be faithful and flourishing.

*Further details about the Rural Conference, and how to register, will feature via the Diocesan eNews, the Rural Officer mailing list or by calling 07749 904887.*



## Rogationtide

'Rogation' is an ancient church festival which seeks God's blessing on the local community. This year, Rogation Sunday falls on the 5th May, being the Sixth Sunday of Easter. While celebrated mainly in rural communities, Rogationtide can be adapted in any context, and is a great opportunity for the local Church to serve and reach out to the wider community, not least those who would not ordinarily attend a church service. This is because Rogation Services tend to be outdoors and, therefore, more visible and accessible, and less intimidating than going into an unfamiliar building.

The word rogation comes from the Latin verb *rogare*, meaning "to ask" and involves making supplication to God for protection, to provide and to bless, while acknowledging His goodness and our dependency on Him. A Rogation Service can 'move around' the 'key' locations within a village, town or local farm, and prayers offered accordingly - outside the village school, overlooking livestock or ploughed fields, beside the village pond, hall or local pub, as well as the church. Prayers and readings can involve people of all ages and enable the local church to get alongside those it serves.

The three days immediately after Rogation Sunday, are called 'Rogation Days', leading up to Ascension Day. These three days sometimes involve 'beating the bounds' of a parish and, again, can be used to pray for the well-being of a local community and to ask God's blessing on agriculture and industry particularly. These 'processions', along with the Rogation Service, are a wonderful opportunity to share our hope in God's goodness and to *'tell and show the people of Sussex that God loves them and wants the best for their lives, not just now, but for eternity'*, as stated in our diocesan vision.

Rogationtide provides us with the opportunity to praise the Creator God, give thanks for our food and those who produce it; to pray a blessing on the villages in which we live and to connect with the wider community. Therefore, let us celebrate in thankfulness for all the Lord's amazing provision.

*For Rogation resources visit:*

[www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk) and search 'Rogation'.

*Also, if you celebrate Rogationtide do please send any photos to the Rural Officer for East Sussex - these could feature in future editions of Cultivate! Thank you!*

## AGRICULTURAL SHOWS & EVENTS IN EAST SUSSEX

12<sup>th</sup> May – Southern Shears UK, Copford Farm, Waldron, TN21 0PN

25<sup>th</sup> May – Heathfield Show. TN21 8UE ( [www.heathfieldshow.org](http://www.heathfieldshow.org) )

7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> June – South of England Show\*, at Ardingly, RH17 6TL

Please check websites for details and why not go along!

\*Have you considered being part of **The Sanctuary** at the South of England Show? For more information about **The Sanctuary**, or how you could volunteer, please contact the co-ordinator, Revd Sue Wilkinson, on 07713 097661

## Rural Mission Hub

February saw the launch of a new **Rural Mission Hub** for the South East. Facilitated by **RURAL MINISTRIES**, a growing network of rural churches, pioneers & practitioners, Rural Mission Hubs aim to support and encourage those wishing to explore rural ministry and mission. They are an opportunity to chat, pray, explore, laugh, and cry together. It is a gathering of like-minded people to take 'time out' and, hopefully, be encouraged. There are currently five Rural Hubs across England and each hub aims to meet two or three times each year and has its own character with no set format. The next Rural Hub locally is on:

**THURSDAY 27th JUNE at Ashburnham Place, TN33 9NF**

Visit: [www.ruralministries.org.uk/get-connected](http://www.ruralministries.org.uk/get-connected)



## Online Mission Forum

**Rural Missions Solutions** hosts regular Online Mission Forums for Rural and Village churches to discuss key issues affecting the Rural Church. The objective of the Forums is sharing insights, knowledge and experience, thereby encouraging and supporting rural churches in their mission. The next **Online Mission Forum** will explore the role of lay leaders in rural mission, and takes place on:

**WEDNESDAY 19th JUNE (10 am until 12 noon)**

To book visit: [www.ruralmissionsolutions.org.uk](http://www.ruralmissionsolutions.org.uk)

(Under 'Networking and Online Forums')

*Rural Mission Solutions is an independent organisation with roots going back over sixty years, but with contemporary experience supported by research. Its aim is to encourage and enable rural churches to develop sustainable, appropriate and effective mission strategies tailored to their unique situations.*



## Running Space : Championing Life, Beating Suicide

Running Space, a charity founded here in East Sussex, uses running as a platform to champion life and beat suicide. Teaching people how to run builds hope, mental and physical health, and strong relationships, saving lives and creating suicide safer communities.

Until recently Running Space operated mainly in urban contexts; however, in partnership with The Pelham (a Christian Charity in Sidley, [www.thepelham.co.uk](http://www.thepelham.co.uk)), Ashburnham Church is now hosting Rural Running Space Sessions twice monthly, on Saturday mornings, between 9.30 am and 11 am.

The sessions are free and open to anyone, whatever level of fitness, and include a variety of exercises, as well as running and walking. Overseen by trained coaches Running Space sessions provide a safe, fun, and friendly environment to improve fitness and build relationships. Each session is followed by refreshments (coffee and cake!) in the Church Hall.



*'Fuelled by faith RunningSpace creates active and aware communities that empower people to live. We run, pray and raise awareness for those affected by suicide. We believe a hopeful, healthy life is possible for all of us' –*  
For more information visit the Running Space website ([www.runningspace.org](http://www.runningspace.org) )

## Plumpton College

In the last two years it has been a great encouragement to witness the growing partnership between the College and the Diocese of Chichester. Every Wednesday a team of laity and clergy, from churches in East Sussex, volunteer on a rota basis to offer hospitality and chaplaincy to students and staff, using St Michael & All Angel's Church, Plumpton, (which lies at the heart of the Campus), as a base. Also, there is now a weekly Student Christian Union at Plumpton. For more information, not least about volunteering, please contact the Revd Anne Dunlop (the local Incumbent who oversees the team - [revannedunlop@gmail.com](mailto:revannedunlop@gmail.com) ) or Revd Sam Carter ([rector@barcombe.net](mailto:rector@barcombe.net)). In the meantime, why not visit Plumpton yourself for an **OPEN DAY & SPRING FAIR** on Saturday 11th May, between 10 am and 5 pm. Visit the College website for more details: [www.plumpton.ac.uk](http://www.plumpton.ac.uk)

