

18 June 2026

The Mount
Hawes Lane
West Wickham
Kent, BR4 9AE

Dear house-party guests

Stewards' Trust Malvern Hill House-party – Thursday 9th to Sunday 12th July 2026

We are very much looking forward to seeing you at the house-party in just a few weeks now. We are delighted to welcome Geoff Maughan back to lead our teaching over the weekend. For those of you who don't know Geoff, here is a short introduction:

Canon Geoff Maughan is a retired Vicar living in Oxfordshire. Before ordination he was a hospital manager at Westminster Hospital in London. He was Director of Ministry at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford for 9 years where he was the Pastoral Chaplain and taught pastoral studies. He has also been Vicar of Christ Church Abingdon and of Cumnor in Oxford. In retirement he is still involved in training people for ordained ministry, serves as a spiritual director and continues to preach in his local area. He was married to Jenny for nearly 40 years until her death from breast cancer in 2014. They have two daughters who are both married with children: Sarah is a research doctor in the blood cancer myeloma and Ally is a business owner/entrepreneur in Human Resources consultancy.

We are also absolutely delighted to welcome back Luke Hamlyn who will co-lead our morning sessions with Geoff as well as other times of prayer. Do pray for Luke and Geoff as they prepare for our weekend together.

I am joined by Lis and John Watson and Ann and Chris Start as hosts. I'm also so glad to say that we are welcoming Sarah Hamlyn (married to Luke) to the host team for the first time. For friends returning, you will notice that Andrew (Cornish) is not listed as a host. He has major surgery at the Royal Marsden on Tuesday 30th June and so regrettably won't be able to join us. He is in good spirits and sorry to miss everyone this year. I will keep you posted on how he is.

I attach an outline timetable that will give a sense of the weekend. Two important points to note: first, a reminder that our first session starts at 4.30pm on Thursday and second, everything is optional although we do hope that you will want to join us for meals!

Our theme

Our theme for this year is '**Entering Bethlehem**', which on the face of it might seem strange for a house party in July! Geoff writes the following by way of introduction:

"We are preparing to arrive at Malvern Hills, some for the first time, many returning. Crossing a threshold is a moment, fraught with excitement and potential, terror and risk. Standing on an unknown doorstep, not knowing what may lie beyond it, holds deep memories of our primal

entering into the world, when we were born. It is a response of faith to the one who himself entered our world, but to a hostile reception. He stands at our door and knocks. We can welcome him afresh into our hearts and into our family circles; and we can enter his holy presence, drawn by the cry of his Spirit in our hearts, to worship, to present ourselves, to come home to the Father's embrace.

Our theme this year is 'Entering Bethlehem'. We will be looking at four stories of people arriving in Bethlehem and entering this little place where God was drawing them into his purposes.

Many of us are having to contemplate the challenge of entering new stages of life, letting go of the familiar to embrace the new – and sometimes difficult - steps of getting older. Ruth and Naomi, the prophet Samuel, Jesus of Nazareth, wise men from the east, all enter Bethlehem as they are called. What can we learn about our own call to step out into new spaces? We will explore this together... ”

Geoff and Luke will lead our morning. There are optional small discussion groups to review Geoff's daily reflections. We trust that you will feel free to use the time in a way you find most helpful.

We also include optional times for early morning Lectio Divina reflection/prayer and evening Compline. On Friday and Saturday late afternoon we will hold some optional additional times of discussion and reflection.

Apart from that, we are in a beautiful setting with stunning grounds and surroundings and many interesting places to visit. So, we hope that you will have a restoring and inspiring weekend.

And now for some details:

Arrival time

Please aim to arrive after 2pm and before 4pm on Thursday if you can. In a few cases, your room may not be ready until 3.30pm, but refreshments will be available from 3pm (tea and cake). We will greet you at the main Conference Centre reception with your key and point you in the direction of your room, and the refreshments.

If you plan to arrive after 4.30pm, please may I ask you to let me know in advance. If you are delayed on the day and want to let us know, our mobile numbers are as follows: Karen Cornish 07710 063361; Lis Watson: 07900 212384.

Starting time

Our **opening session will start at 4.30pm**. It will be an opportunity to meet / greet one another, settle into the presence of God amongst us, and give Geoff time to bring us into the theme and his first session. We will have a short break between the session, and drinks going into dinner.

Other information:

- **Address and directions:** the address of the Elim Conference Centre is: De Walden Road, West Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 4DF. Phone number: 01684 588967. We attach road directions and a number of maps and directions to the Conference Centre.
- **Diet and mobility:** if you have any dietary requirements or mobility limitations, please let me know as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- **Kit:** we are very casual during the day and marginally smarter for the evening – the key is that you are comfortable. We suggest that you may want to bring: a Bible and notebook, swimmers and towel, walking shoes if you are keen to walk on the Malvern hills just behind the conference centre, and a few coat hangers if you have clothes to hang up. Also, we are aware that it is the last week of Wimbledon. Unfortunately the TVs in the rooms are still not able to pick up BBC1 or 2. If you are a committed watcher of the tennis, there will be a TV on in the coffee lounge in the afternoon/early evening. You may want to bring an ipad, tablet or laptop to watch if you'd like to do so from your room. WIFI should be good enough.
- **Interesting books you can recommend:** if you have read a book recently that you have found particularly encouraging to your faith and feel happy to do so, it would be great if you could offer to do a very brief review (c. 2-3 mins) and leave it out on a table for others to browse. Do please let me know.
- **Photographs:** we would love to capture a few moments of the house party in photographic form to use in the Stewards' Trust brochure next year. Please can you let me know if you would rather not feature. Otherwise we will assume that you don't mind.
- **Swimming pool:** we will share the rules for the lovely outdoor swimming pool when we arrive. Just a reminder: you will see that you are not allowed to swim alone.
- **Local places of interest:** some suggestions are:
 - Ledbury – an old market town with interesting church and shops
 - Worcester – the Cathedral and the river
 - Hereford – the Cathedral
 - Great Malvern – the Priory church
 - Lots of walking directly from the conference centre as well as the extensive grounds and gardens
- **Check-out and Departure:** we are required to vacate our rooms by 10.30am on Sunday. You are welcome to leave luggage with reception (particularly if travelling by

train). The house-party ends after lunch.

- **Outstanding balance to pay:** I will send a separate email to you in the next couple of days with your outstanding balance. Please can you pay your outstanding balance ideally online by 7th July:
Account name: 'The Stewards' Trust Adult Events E'
Sort code: 30-98-97
Account number: 65715363
- **Insurance disclaimer:** slightly less exciting and a more formal necessity - everyone is asked to take great care generally. Neither the hosts nor Stewards' Trust can accept any liability for any accident, illness or loss or damage of any kind occurred during the house party. Please ensure that you take care of yourself, your belongings and you have adequate insurance.
- **Safeguarding:** if you have any safeguarding concerns about yourself, another guest, or in the venue, please speak directly to Ann Start or Lis Watson who are designated safeguarding leads.
- **Problems / concerns during the weekend:** if during the weekend you have any issues or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to me or another host as soon as possible so that we can resolve the issue quickly.

And finally, on a cheerier note ... Lis, John, Ann, Chris, Luke, Sarah, Geoff and I are very much looking forward to being with you for this weekend. We are praying for the weekend, for our Heavenly Father's rich blessing on us.

Grace and peace to you,

Karen Cornish

Attached to email • Draft timetable • Directions and parking for Elim International Centre • Map of Malvern and surroundings • Elim site map