

The Rector would appreciate it if anyone knowing of illness or any other trouble in the Parish would notify him as soon as possible so that he or a member of the Church can call without delay.

Rector's Surgery: If you have an enquiry about baptism, marriage or another service, or if there is something else you would like to discuss with Napo John, please make an appointment, through the Church Office (8462 1373), to come and see him during Surgery hours - Monday mornings (except Bank Holidays) 10.30 am – 12 noon and Tuesday evenings, 7 – 9 pm.

EASTER 2020

There is no denying the weather hasn't been very kind to us during the last few months. But look around and see our land is nevertheless adorned like a bride, spring colours in abundance. My daughter, Dr. Sofia John, who grew up in the UK but now lives in Finland, often says, 'When spring arrives I miss England very much.' And that is without doubt due to the fact that our country is exceptionally pretty during the spring time. Hats off to all good people who work very hard on their own gardens and our commons so the others too may enjoy the beauty. Glory goes to God from whom all things come, including you and the colourful plants. May my God keep our country safe so that it may continue to delight our hearts.

Yet there is no denying that for so many of us the spring colours have come with sadness and worry. Sadness due to the destruction flood waters brought to some of our communities during the month of February. And obvious worries over the spread of covid 19, better known as 'coronavirus'. The coronavirus, though, is slowing down where it started but is rapidly spreading in other parts of the globe, including our own beloved country. At the time of writing this article the news is that the World Health Organisation has declared the coronavirus a pandemic and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer in England is saying the UK will see 'many thousands of people' contract coronavirus. Will we too face a similar lockdown to Italy or closer to home in Ireland? No one can answer this question for sure today but a lot of us do live with that fear. Besides, even if the spread of the virus slows down in a short while, what will be the ultimate economic price of it all? Experts tell us that it is going to be huge. The United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development is suggesting that the world economy may take a \$2 trillion hit. Very many other similar fears and worries can be listed here but that is beyond the scope and purpose of this article. I hope this short list will prompt us who

believe in the power of prayer to pray to the Lord of all healing and wisdom to have mercy upon our country and our world. May He give wisdom to someone to find a cure for the coronavirus.

The problem no doubt is huge but let us remember nothing is too difficult for the Lord. I start each day with a hope that He, who in His love provided a cure for the two greatest human problems, will surely not let His children suffer for too long with the coronavirus either.

You might be wondering, as we have cures for very many human problems, which of these two I have singled out? Friends, I am referring to the problems of sin and death! The Bible teaches, '... sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned' (Romans 5:12). But thanks be to God the human story didn't end with sin's reign over us all for all times. But God in due time provided the cure for sin and death. At the start of Jesus' earthly ministry, one day John the Baptist saw Jesus passing by and exclaimed, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.' (John 1:29). In Hebrews we read, '...But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself...' (Hebrew 9:26b). He paid for the sin and by rising from the dead on the first Easter Sunday Jesus defeated death once for all. Now for those who live in Christ, the eternal death has no dominion over them. And that is really in brief the Easter story – the price for sin paid and death defeated by Christ's resurrection! Please come and join us on Easter Sunday to celebrate death's death. A warm welcome awaits you at St. Mary's Church.*

There is another celebration in April too and I want to invite you to that as well. On the 22nd of April your Parish Church will be holding its Annual Parochial Church Meeting.* We had a good year and without doubt it was possible due to God's grace and your unwavering support for your Parish Church. A big thank you to you all who so faithfully and generously support St. Mary's Church. At the annual meeting various members of the Church will be giving out their reports please come and hear what God is doing in St. Mary's Church.

We have a few vacancies coming up on the Church Council please pray and ask if the Lord is telling you to be part of the governing body of your dear Church.

May you always know God's blessing and protection for you and for your loved ones. A very Happy Easter to you and yours.

Always yours in Christ

Napo

*[*Events have overtaken us.
Please see p8 – Ed.]*

SAFEGUARDING: PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

Everyone has the right to be safe, no matter who they are, or what their circumstances. Safeguarding is about protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

Past Cases Review

The Past Cases Review is a comprehensive safeguarding review which is currently underway across Churches within the Dioceses of Rochester. The purpose of this review is to help find out whether all known causes of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults have been dealt with appropriately. Independent reviewers are carrying out the Review which is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

Safeguarding Officers details

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is me, Clare Scriven (details below). Shirley Neal has kindly agreed to be the Non Critical Safeguarding Lead for St Mary's. In the event that you are unable to get hold of me then please contact Shirley who will ensure that your details are forwarded on to me.

Shirley can be contacted at <mailto:shirley@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk>

There have been some changes to the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese of Rochester and our Promoting a Safer Church posters at the Church are in the process of being updated. The new team details are as follows:

Name: Greg Barry/Claire Langridge

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Telephone Number: 01634 560000

Email: Greg.Barry@rochester.anglican.org

Claire.Langridge@rochester.anglican.org

However, please remember that in the first instance, if you are concerned that someone is at risk of, or being abused, your first point of contact should be myself or Shirley and we will forward on your concerns to the appropriate person.

If there is immediate risk or danger please contact the police on 999.

Noticeboard

There is a new Safeguarding noticeboard next to the serving hatch in the Church meeting rooms. Please take a moment to look at the posters that will be put on there and changed regularly.

Clare Scriven

Telephone: 07512 053 362

Email: clare@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk



**Have you experienced
sexual, physical or spiritual
abuse in the Church?**

WE VERY MUCH WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
You will be taken seriously and there is support we can offer

Please call in confidence either our Safeguarding Team on: 01634 560 000
or the NSPCC on 0800 80 20 20

Visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/past-cases-review/

  The Church of England in Medway, North and West Kent, and in Bromley and Bexley

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING - ANNUAL
MEETING OF PARISHIONERS ON 22 APRIL POSTPONED**

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



I wish you all a very happy Easter! Our Lord gave us the gift of hope when He died and was resurrected at Easter. Let us remind ourselves of this great gift and keep a positive outlook on life and despite the coronavirus, may this Easter fill you with joy and happiness, and bring blessings to you and your families.

At our last meeting in March, the Revd. Alison Smith gave a very interesting and enlightening talk about her journey and training to be a priest and her present appointment. It was fascinating to hear how the Christian Greenbelt Festival had influenced her life. We enjoyed a long session of questions and answers afterwards. It was a lovely opportunity to get to know another of the clergy of the Churches Together in Hayes.

Sadly, I have to report that all Mothers' Union meetings have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. As we come to terms with the situation we now live with, the cancellation of our meetings and events and the suspension of church services, we look to see how we can serve Our Lord in our community and parish. Prayer is what we do best so please pray for those infected by the coronavirus in China, Italy and around the world, for those who care for them, for healthcare specialists and authorities who are combatting the spread of infection and for any who are anxious about family and friends affected. There are prayer resources available from the Mothers' Union website under member resources, and the Diocese of Rochester website also has prayers on line.

At the time of writing this Mothers' Union will be featured on 'Songs of Praise' as it is Mothering Sunday. I look forward to watching the service and hope that many of you might have seen it too.

If any member is in need please contact Avril Ashford on **020-8468 7785**. I will do what I can to help.

Avril Ashford

A message of encouragement from Mothers' Union Worldwide President Sheran Harper

My beloved MU Family across the oceans, and from near and far, I greet you with the love and courage of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour because He is our strength, our hope and our solid rock.

So much has been happening recently as COVID-19 is declared a pandemic and governments are advising that we take the necessary precautions to avoid the spread of the virus. There is so much we have to come to terms with in such a short time.

One of our faithful members, Dianne, went to deliver groceries to her mum who is self-isolating after recent travel. She was in tears as she dropped the groceries at the doorstep and watched her mum through the window with no chance of a hug.

There are so many similar stories including those of people who are ill or afraid, lonely or isolated.

And in times like these I encourage you to take heart and do not fear because the Lord, your God is by your side - an ever-present help in times of trouble.

In the book of Joshua Chapter 1 verse 9 we read, *I hereby command you: be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Amen.*

As members you are bold and brave, full of courage and compassion, and so very loving and just like Esther you stand daily on the frontline calling for an end to injustices and advocating for all that supports stable families and communities.

You have been busy in these acts of love but now many of you are being called to be quiet and to self-isolate in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. You will discover there is still so much we can do as members because as a movement we are ideally placed to support and act in this time, but only within the health advice given by your respective governments.

Now here are a few practical ideas to start with and there are seven of them:



1. Pray and intercede for everyone including the health care professionals, the sick, the isolated, the bereaved and all those directly involved in finding a cure for this coronavirus.

2. Pray and spend time listening to God, strengthening your relationship with him, reading his word and sharing it with others.

3. Families Worldwide is an excellent resource to guide your prayers for members across the globe and the stories in Families First can open a good conversation. I can assure you that using these two resources will give the feeling of love and togetherness.

4. Our trustees have been using WhatsApp to encourage, support and pray for one another – you can use it in the same way and additionally even share a new recipe, prayer requests and messages of encouragement.

5. Facetime and Skype are other options so the family can still feel near to each other ... even with physical distance. Board games and other activities can keep the children and grandchildren occupied too. Even saying hello to neighbours at a particular time each day could bring great excitement.

6. For those who are able to - delivering groceries, medication and running errands within the parameters of keeping safe is very useful for those who cannot go out

7. Your church may start streaming services and mid-week online prayers. Why not join in. You could even start streaming a Branch Meeting if you're feeling very adventurous! And that is one I would certainly do!

As I close, I leave you with the encouraging words from 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 reading verse 9 and 10. Such reassuring words.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Brothers and sisters let us pray together

Lord Jesus Christ,

you said to your disciples,

I am with you always, even to the end of time

Be with me today Lord, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself,

And keep me in your tender loving care always. Amen.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY APRIL 2020

As you may well be aware, for the foreseeable future, no public gatherings including Public Worship or Events will be allowed to take place in any Church of England churches including St Mary the Virgin, Hayes until further notice.

Please be advised that, at the moment, the church will remain open Monday - Friday 9am - 4 pm, for people to come in and pray, and leave when they have finished. On Sundays at 8am until 8.30am and 10.30 until 11.30am, a member of the ministry team will be available and anyone can come and pray and leave once they are finished; however no public worship will be taking place.

At all times while in church, please do follow the Government Guidelines, in particular keeping a safe distance from one another.

The church office will also continue to be open at the usual times.

We will continue to keep you in our prayers.



A RECENT SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Ken Truss

HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

At the time of writing, in mid-March to meet printing deadlines, we cannot echo the boast of "back to business as usual" for two reasons.

We had three funerals to attend of former members who gave valued service and support to the Fellowship over many years, and more than deserved our wish always to honour the memory of everyone who passes on from HMF.

The second reason is of course Coronavirus. Thus far we were cautiously trying to "Keep Calm and Carry On" hoping that changing Government advice and regulations did not cause us to have to change or cease our planned activities entirely. Nevertheless, our entire membership comes within the category of vulnerable.

The Committee has considered Government advice and the risk to members before coming to the hard decision to cancel all Outings, Meetings and Walks until and including our meeting scheduled for June 3rd. This correlates with the 12-week isolation now recommended by the Government for "vulnerable" people which includes our membership. We shall continue to review the position going forward and make further announcements as necessary.

We were unable to proceed with our March Outing to Bletchley Park nor a Walk in the Kingston/Hampton Court area. At the beginning of the month the Talk took the form of **President's Afternoon** as usual. This is when Reverend Napoleon John surprises us with a speaker who is announced on the day. Sometimes he unearths hidden talent within our membership but on others it is an outside guest speaker. On this occasion, Reverend John was delighted to introduce Jean Wilson, a expert on local history, to talk to us about "**The Inns of Hayes**".

Jean first mentioned **The Admiral Vernon** situated in what is now Hayes Lane and known particularly for prize fighting. This was quite a common name for pubs as Admiral Vernon was a successful naval officer involved in the War of Spanish Succession and the War of Jenkins Ear. However, he was best remembered for his invention of "grog", a mixture of rum and water that he provided to the sailors in his fleet. Perhaps that fond memory encouraged former sailors to name Inns after him. The precise date for the Inn was not clear but it would have been around the 1750s given that Admiral Vernon died in 1757.

Next was **The George** (but not the one we know today) set up on land owned by the Shotts family in 1744 - but it was relatively short lived. In 1757 Pitt the Elder bought Hayes Place and was none too happy with a rowdy Inn and a road nearby, so he bought out the Inn (which

became a private residence) and had the road moved. Oh to have such power!



The licensee of the George set up another Inn, **The Red Cow** in Pickhurst on land that was part of the Hayes Place Estate. Reverend Till took a local census on a regular basis before we had a national census. By 1820, this no longer showed the Red Cow at all.

Then we heard about **The Fox and Hounds** from the 1760s near Pickhurst Green and Pickhurst Farm. By 1848 this had become a private residence.

Located quite close to the Old Church Schools where the Fellowship meet was **The Alma**, a beer house named after a battle in the Crimean War. This was popular with soldiers from Woolwich barracks on exercises on the Common but was known as a “dust hole”. But it was again short lived when it was bought out by the Hambro family who by then owned Hayes Place.

Then we moved on to some more familiar establishments that still exist or folk could remember.

The licensee of the Alma went on to open **The New Inn** by Hayes Station to cater for passengers visiting the Common. This was redeveloped in 1934 in a grand style but bombed out in 1940 only being fully functioning again in 1962.



The Pickhurst Green Hotel (now Miller & Carter) was opened in 1937. Despite objecting to the new establishment, plenty of locals turned up for the free drinks at the opening!

Much more recent but now replaced by housing was **The Beacon** in the new build Farleigh/Old Vale area.

Finally, we came to another **George Inn**, one that we still know today in its latest incarnation. There has been an inn on this site for some 400 years. In late 1700s it was apparently involved in smuggling that high value and highly taxed item – tea!

We learnt that quite a few Inns (and breweries) have come and gone – which seems to mirror the rest of the country. As you might imagine, this “guided” tour of the historic pubs and inns of our area was a very popular topic for a room full of men!

Sadly, at the March meeting there were a lot fewer handshakes than normal. Instead, there were quite a few “elbow bump” greetings to avoid skin contact but I think that will take time to catch on! We wait to see what future months will bring. Any developments will be available on our website accessible at www.hayesmensfellowship.org.

Hopefully, there may be much positive to report in May.

Allan Evison, Hon. HMF Secretary
020 8402 7416; e-secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org

MINI MUSIC

Every second Thursday of each month, pre-school age children and their grown-ups get together in the meetings room for Mini Music. It is always a lovely, lively time of singing and fun with a chance for a cuppa while the children have story time. Each month we ask if there are any birthdays and then of course, if there are, our fabulous music makers are only too happy to sing a chorus of 'Happy Birthday'! I do always ask how old the birthday boy or girl is and the answer usually ranges from just 1 up to the ripe old age of 4. This month, however, we sang our hearts out and shook our tambourines to celebrate a very special birthday. It was the turn of our dedicated helper Elizabeth George, who kindly makes the tea and squash for our group. When I asked Elizabeth how old she would be at the end of March, the parents were taken aback to learn that Elizabeth would be 99, just 95 years older than the oldest child in attendance that day. It was a real joy to share in this celebration. Happy birthday Elizabeth!

Becky Willoughby



FEBRUARY 4th PCC MEETING – Main points discussed

Taize Evening Service: The first service had gone very well and was enjoyed by the good number who attended. It was described as 'extremely soothing'.

Cleaners: Two young cleaners had been recruited and were doing the work as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The churchyard would be helped by Community Service.

Electrical work: This will commence on 17 February.

Financial Report: The Church Accounts will be presented at the March PCC meeting.

Sound System: Work will commence in one week's time.

GDPR Update: Monitoring of compliance with GDPR processes was continuing. A new laptop which enabled data is to be purchased.

2020 and beyond: PCC members were encouraged to submit ideas and suggestions.

Outreach: There will a 'Thy Kingdom Come' activity in May.

Churchyard: New repairs to the gate are in hand.

Churches Together in Hayes: The quiz had raised £730 for Chartwell Children's Cancer Trust. The Christmas Tree Festival raised £3200 for Bromley Talking News. Easter Cards will be available from the church. The Bible Study is going well; Rosary Church has a lunch club for over 60s. Confirmation classes are being arranged.

Children Youth and Family: The younger groups are going well, covered by the Youth Team. It was agreed that the appointment of a new Youth Worker should be pursued.

Pre-School Play Group: PSPG would be happy to be involved in Fresh Start Services.

Peter Wickert

COPING WITH LOSS

When I was about 8 years old I taught myself to play the harmonica in just the key of C. When I sat in front of the coal fire and played, my lovely mongrel dog, Scamp, used to join in with a wonderful howling singing that only dogs can produce. He had been with me all my life until I was eleven but one wet Saturday night he didn't come home from his wanderings. The milkman found him on Sunday morning in the gutter of the main road, having been hit by a car during the night. My parents didn't want me to see him so they sent me upstairs to my bedroom while they buried him in the garden. I wanted to see him and cuddle him so much but just stayed in my room broken hearted.

Not long after this, I was promised a bicycle for passing (or failing) the 11 plus examination, as was my close friend. It was a beautiful bike with butterfly handlebars and four-speed derailleur gears. Within weeks I heard that my friend had been killed riding his new bike, falling under a lorry. I could hardly believe it and it has been in my memory all my life. My father met my friend's father one day and expressed sympathy for the loss of his son. With tears in his eyes he said "What do you mean? He's fine," being unable to acknowledge his terrible loss.

These two losses in my life at such an early age were the foundation for learning to live with the wrenching heartbreak of such events. We often liken the life of faith during difficult times to being in a boat in a storm at sea. We sing "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?" with gusto, but when the storm arrives we may wonder how we can anchor ourselves in a place of safety and peace. We sing "Fastened to the rock that cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love," but in the midst of life's storms and crises we can feel completely lost at sea. In our peaceful, rational moments we know that there is no other helper in life - only Jesus. Friends and family can show love and sympathy, which is great, but we face these things ultimately on our own with our Lord.

I found my Saviour when I was about fourteen and he has held my hand throughout the storms of life and has promised to bring me safely to heaven to be with him forever, regardless of my failures in this life. I really hope and pray that if you face storms today, you will reach out to him and catch hold of his strong hand and let him carry you through to a place of peace.

David Langford

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN WELBY ON RESPONDING TO CORONAVIRUS

As we continue responding to Coronavirus, a lot of us are wondering how we can walk in faith, resist fear, and support those who are most vulnerable.

The first thing to say is that following the advice of experts – especially about washing our hands regularly and self-isolating if we have cold or flu symptoms – is a really important place to start.

But what else can we do? Well, the thing about having hope, faith and courage is that although they are gifts from God, we can do our bit to nurture them.

We can take some time to sit quietly and pray, letting God know about those things that are on our hearts and minds. When we do that, we make that connection with God that nourishes and sustains us.

We can pray for those who are physically vulnerable. Those who are financially insecure and worried about needing to take time off work. Those who live in countries without public healthcare systems. Those who do not have family or friends and are facing this situation alone.

We can pray for healthcare workers and political leaders who are responding to this crisis and bearing the incredible responsibility of trying to keep us safe.

That brings us to resisting fear. One way to avoid being overwhelmed by fear is turning our attention to helping someone. Is there a person in your life, or your community, that you could call on the phone and see if they're okay? Maybe it was someone that you prayed for?

Perhaps they can't get to the shops – could you pick up some groceries for them? Perhaps they are self-isolating and feeling lonely – could you call them on the phone and see how they are?

If you have some spare income, or some spare food, could you donate to your local food bank?

Let's remember that we are in this together. Let's look after ourselves and our communities, gain courage from each other, and walk together in hope and faith.

As it says in Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

A message to school leavers from Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, the Bishop of Tonbridge and lead bishop for Schools in the Diocese of Rochester.

"Goodbyes come in different shapes – poignant, awkward, moving, perfunctory. The ones we fear are sudden, emotional, unplanned. We feel cheated. There's no shape to them, nothing crafted to remember them by.

"Today, a cohort of school leavers are waking up to this farewell. Deprived of the purpose and dignity of the end of year rites of passage that shaped every generation before them, they will leave school dazed and a little fearful.

"At their most careless, adults don't perceive the depths in the heart of a child. But they are there. So today, we want to say to those leaving their school, probably for a final time and in a rush:

Be confident. Be kind. Share hope. Show your gifting. God loves you with an everlasting love.

What you feel you're losing today will be re-shaped within you and made into something that lasts. You won't be forgotten and your voice will be heard."



Items for the May magazine by 16th April please. Copy to the Editor – see below.

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We have been advised to suspend distribution of all parish magazines. The May edition will instead be on the Church website.