

**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.**

## **THE GAME-CHANGER**

I sat in my office chair for hours without being very productive. Not good, I thought, and as usual I got myself a cup of hot water and went to sit in the lounge and turned the TV on. (My TV addiction is fairly random; morning and evening news I rarely miss, but apart from that, I end up watching whatever is on when I switch the TV on. Obviously when I know in advance that one of my heroes is going to be on the show then I do make an effort. (A few days ago it was great to watch the Hayes Herald Editor, our dear Clare, on BBC2.) As I looked at the TV screen, the first thing I noticed was the pleasant smile of the presenter. Soon the words followed and like many of you I heard the news of the new vaccine. It wasn't hard now to see why there was such a broad smile on the presenter's face. I too smiled and felt my body relax into the sofa. In fact, I wanted to go out on the street and tell every passer-by, 'The wait is over and at last the game-changer is here.' Pfizer has done it again; they have created a weapon that will very likely defeat Covid 19. (I hope I am correct in believing the same company gave us Penicillin.)

From that day forward (9<sup>th</sup> November) I see faces a little more relaxed and smiles a little brighter. And why not? The news of the vaccine is great news in the middle of the hardships of the lockdown and the economic downturn. Obviously, there are voices of caution too and that is very understandable. Perhaps it is not yet wise to celebrate in public but maybe in the privacy of our homes we can raise a toast to the people who worked and are still working hard on the Covid 19 vaccines. I pray the vaccine may bring about the change we so desperately want to see: an opportunity to be with others without worrying about getting ill or passing on the virus to others. Just to be free to hug and hold our loved ones in our embrace.

All over the world people celebrate various events that are regarded as game-changers for their nation or for human history. Which

event do you regard as a game-changer for your own life, for the life of your nation or for the human race?

The event I regard as the greatest game-changer for myself and, I believe, for the whole of humanity is celebrated in December in most parts of the world. This event was in the planning process from the very start of life on planet earth. Soon after God breathed life into us, we rebelled against Him. But it didn't take long before we realised that the rebel in us had created a 'God hole' in our hearts. Throughout human history people have tried to fill this 'God hole' with all sorts of remedies. Some tried (and still keep trying) to fill this empty space with religious rituals, others by sacrificing to the deity, yet others by disconnecting themselves from the world around them. But without much success. God, too, saw our agony, felt pity for the human race and wondered how to fill this hole with His presence? It was in such moments that the Son of God spoke to the Father in heaven saying, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "see, God, I have come to do your will, O God".' (Hebrews 10:5 -7). The coming of the Son of God into the world meant that filling of the 'God hole' was a possibility.

The prophets and the sages did tell of his coming for a very long time. But the appointed time for the game-changer to enter our world came a little over two thousand years ago when an ordinary young virgin gave birth to a son and they named him Jesus (the Saviour). Even the angels looked eagerly on the mystery of God becoming man unfolding, the Creator being created in a human womb! The sustainer of the universe offering himself as a helpless babe, sustained by an inexperienced mother! The one who was all-dependable was ready to be a dependant!

I guess this year the Christmas experience is going to be different for some of us. For some, perhaps, it will not be possible to be with their loved ones. Some of you perhaps will miss the opportunity to sing carols in your favourite church building. In such a year Jesus is even more willing to come to you to fill any hole in your heart or life. A hole perhaps created because of a loved one's departure, the uncertainty ill health can bring or maybe just the loneliness due to the dark days. At his birth Jesus was given a second name, Emmanuel, meaning 'God with us'. Will you open the door to Jesus and let him in so he may be your companion? A very Happy Christmas to you all.

Always yours in Christ

**Napo**

## SAFEGUARDING SPOTLIGHT ON: MENTAL HEALTH

Lockdown has been difficult for many people. When we were in full lockdown things may have felt more certain as the rules were clear as to what was allowed and what wasn't allowed. The latest lockdown may be less clear and this can cause anxiety and challenges.

People may be concerned about getting ill, government restrictions and are struggling to see when the pandemic may end. The charity Mind has reported that common feelings are feeling worried, stressed or scared, lonely and isolated, angry or frustrated. They suggest that if you are experiencing these, try to remember that *'Things might feel hard right now, but this situation is unusual. And it won't last forever.'*

Mind suggests to help with your feelings you should, among others, try to:

*Talk to someone you trust*

*Find support*

*Seek help for your mental health*

*Look after your physical health*

*Make choices to control what you can.*

Further details regarding this can be found on the Mind website [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) under their information and support pages.

If you are concerned about yourself or a loved one, the mental health charities/organisations below can offer expert advice. A full list of the support services can be found on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) - Health A to Z – Mental Health and Wellbeing.

**Samaritans** – confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)  
[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

**SANE** – emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers. [www.sane.org.uk/support](http://www.sane.org.uk/support)

**YoungMinds** – information on child and adolescent mental health.  
Phone: 0808 802 5544

**Men's Health Forum** – 24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email. [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

**Clare Scriven, Parish Safeguarding Officer**  
[Clare@StMarysHayesKent.co.uk](mailto:Clare@StMarysHayesKent.co.uk)



I think that we will all be pleased to see the back of 2020. What a year it has been so far! There is so much uncertainty at the moment. With Covid-19 we are not sure what we will be allowed to do at Christmas. Will we be able to celebrate it with family? It is usually the time of year when we can see our children / grandchildren and delight and celebrate all their achievements. Thanks to modern technology we are able to communicate with each other via Zoom, Teams, Skype, Messenger, What's app etc. and hopefully you will be able to have some face to face contact, albeit over the airwaves.

All this aside, we can celebrate as we have done in a traditional way the meaning of Christmas. The clue is in the word, CHRISTmas. Wherever you are on December 25th I wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Thank you to Carol and Peter for laying the wreath for us on Remembrance Sunday. Also thank you to Carol, Eleanor and Gilly for all the knitting they have done for young babies, the homeless and Seafarers.

As promised here is a short report on our Zoom meeting of the Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union Autumn Members' meeting. The Bromley and Bexley archdeaconry meeting was on 4th November. Julia Jamieson welcomed us and introduced herself. She stated it was her pleasure and privilege to have served almost 600 members in Rochester Diocese for the past five years. These meetings were a less formal way of gathering as the second lockdown started. It was not the year that we intended, some members had lost loved ones, freedoms were curtailed, and jobs had been lost. The theme for the meetings this year of 'Hope and Confidence' and for next year, 'Rebuilding Hope and Confidence', were fitting. The gatherings were an opportunity to share, affirm and

encourage one another. By holding each other up we will then in turn be able to continue looking outwards to our communities, seeking and enabling ways we may serve in order to rebuild the hope and confidence of families and communities everywhere.

Members present at the meeting introduced themselves before the Revd Jacqueline Littlewood led the opening prayers.

Julia introduced a clip, “Building hope and confidence in a Covid world” by Sheran Harper, our Worldwide President. She had visited Rochester diocese and spoken at our Spring Members’ meeting in 2019. A link to the meeting and transcripts of the speeches can be found here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/news/online-member-update-2020>.

Julia informed the meetings that due to increased workload because of the pandemic, Mark Jamieson, the Diocesan Treasurer, had resigned. He sent his good wishes to the meetings and prayed that MU would continue to flourish in Rochester Diocese. Susan Brooker would take on the role until the end of the triennium. I have sent a ‘thank you’ card to Mark, from our branch, for all his hard work.

Our subs were discussed. There will be a change in the way in which subs are collected. Every member would in future get a copy of a new publication (replacing Families First) to be issued twice a year. It will have stories from B&I, and world-wide, resources, ideas for branch activities and more. It will show the reach and impact of MU to those who may not have taken ‘Family First’ previously. Members will still receive the Annual Prayer Diary. We were told that insurance was included in the RDMU part of the subs.

The branches reported what they had been doing since the last Members’ Meeting.

Revd Jacqueline Littlewood closed each meeting with prayer and the Grace.

**16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence: Global.** Mothers’ Union campaigns around the world, through our 4 million members in 84 countries, for an end to gender-based violence – violence carried out most often against women and girls because of their gender. 16 Days of Activism against **gender-based violence** is an international campaign. It takes place each year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

***Let us pray** Lord, during these 16 Days of Activism we pray for the confidence to raise our voices and speak out against the injustice of gender-based violence.*

*We pray that eyes, hearts and minds may be opened during this time – that Lord, it is your will that women are treated with respect and dignity.*

*We give you thanks for the many members around the world who campaign against gender-based violence in the name of Mothers' Union.*

*Through our work may we touch the lives of those we meet, that they, too, may know your love. **Amen.***

Please continue to keep in contact with each other by phone, letters and at church. If you need anything or just want someone to speak to please phone me, Avril Ashford, 0208 468 7785. As soon as I am allowed, I will arrange a meeting. May the blessings of love, peace and happiness be with you all this Christmas and throughout 2021. We look forward to a year of fellowship as faithful members of Mothers' Union.

**Avril Ashford**

## **UPDATE ON MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Many of us, including myself, have missed having the children in church and hearing them share what they have learnt in their separate session. The feedback we have received from parents is that the children also miss being in with their church family and learning more about God.

In the last few months, we have been working hard to reintroduce our ministry to children and young people in a safe and age-appropriate way. This is just a quick update to reassure you that our children and young people, and their families, are still very much a part of St Mary's.

As of last month, on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month, we are sending out an activity sheet to families prior to and based on the theme for the 10.30am service. In November the young people got to think about and discuss Beatitudes (as part of their activity sheet) with their family, while the younger children had "BEE- attitude" bees to decorate and place on to a garden that they had drawn. The older children and young people were asked what they thought it meant to be "Blessed". Their insightful thoughts were shared with the congregation at the 10.30 service by Becky followed by a wonderful "All Age" talk on the subject. A few children were in the service while other families joined online.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month a new bible story presented by various different people from our congregation, aimed at Fresh Start and Sunbeams families, is added to the St Mary's YouTube channel for

all to watch and enjoy. We occasionally also add a song too. These are still available to watch.

Illuminate, which is a Bible Study for young people from school year 7 and upwards, meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in November to discuss topical issues of their choice from a biblical perspective.

In terms of our plans for the future, in the new year, when it is allowed and safe to do so, we hope to reintroduce face to face sessions initially with the Blaze children on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month. Once the weather improves, we will also aim to do a few more “Outdoor Family Services” in the Rectory garden.

As we all know, Christmas will not be the same this year; however we plan to include the children and their families, in some of St Mary’s plans for Christmas. In particular making the church look as festive as always, with some special Christmas displays so please do look out for those in December!

If you, or anyone you know, have children or young people who would like to participate in any of these activities or would like to know more, please do email me on [info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk](mailto:info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk)

May I take this opportunity on behalf of the children and young people’s ministry team, to wish you all God’s richest blessing at Christmas and for the year to come!

**Brenda**

## **THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS**

Several people have said that they enjoyed the Sea Sunday service provided by the Mission to Seafarers. From 9 December there will be the opportunity to watch “A virtual Christmas Festival of Light and Hope” which will replace the Annual Seafarers’ Service that normally takes place in December. The details are on the Mission to Seafarers website - [missiontoseafarers.org](http://missiontoseafarers.org) - where you can also read about its continuing efforts during the difficult past months. The new ‘Chat to a Chaplain’ service has been very successful.

A big thank you to all who have continued knitting hats etc. for the seafarers. I will be taking them up to HQ as soon as restrictions allow together with any other donations I receive to help the Mission to Seafarers. Your prayers and support for the Mission’s work are much appreciated.

**Jean Wilson, Parish Link**

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY DECEMBER 2020

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Open Church for private prayer

### ADVENT 2

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
10.30am Morning Praise: Toy Service  
**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>** 8.00pm Bible Study via Zoom  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Open Church for private prayer

### ADVENT 3

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
9.15am Fresh Start  
10.30am Parish Communion CW  
5.00-6.00pm Illuminate via Zoom  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Open Church for private prayer

### ADVENT 4

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
10.30am Morning Praise  
6.30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols  
**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>** 8.00pm Bible Study via Zoom

### Christmas Eve

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>** 8.00pm 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas aka 'Midnight' Communion





Is it really December? Seems more like a sense of déjà vu from last March doesn't it, lockdown and all? Back then we believed it would be three weeks to the end and it became many months.

At the time of writing – mid-November – we are uncertain again of the future. There is still hope of that better tomorrow but immediate prospects remain grim. That also means actual Fellowship activity remains non-existent.

There are signs of hope. We were able to hold our Annual Service in October. There was a good turnout for a walk later that month. We continue to make plans for resumption of outings, meetings and walks for some time in 2021 but, and that is a very big BUT, all is dependent on the progress of the pandemic and of the restrictions designed to control it.

The walk in October was our first in more than six months so it proved popular. This was more local than usual, from the Rosary Church car park in Hayes to Shirley (for some via the Apple Tree Pub) and back. The aim was to avoid the need for sharing cars or using public transport as part of the Covid precautions – along with social distancing on the walk. There could not be another walk in November due to the lockdown but our appetites were whetted for more walks soon.



At least e-mail and telephone enable personal contact and reassurance as each member battles through as we hope and pray for opportunities to meet up again.

Our regular coach operator, Premiere, had been running taster trips to test and demonstrate their Covid-safe precautions. Our Chairman, Colin Vivian, together with one of our outings organisers, Ray Lyddall, and his wife Jackie, report now on their experiences on a day trip to Cirencester and the Cotswolds.

*At the invitation of Premiere Travel we joined 23 members of the Beckenham and Bromley National Trust for a day trip to Cirencester and the Cotswolds with some free time at each location.*

*We had our temperature taken upon boarding the coach and used the hand sanitizer both getting on and off at all times and of course we all had to wear a mask. We were limited to 26 on the 54-seater so everyone had a window seat. Couples if they wished could sit together. It all felt safe and comfortable as indeed did our stop at Reading Services and the pubs in Cirencester where everything was*



*done to make us feel as safe as possible. This was an enjoyable day out and to see new surroundings was a psychological boost.*

On a later trip to Henley and Marlow completed just before the lockdown took effect, Ray and Jackie confirmed the feelings of well-being a second time. These experiences will be used to help shape our future Outings Programme, so please “Watch This Space” for optimistic developments as we try to tempt our members to congregate safely and freely once again.

Meanwhile we can share the delights of our November Extra Newsletter designed to entertain and encourage our members during lockdown which include:

- A report on the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton visited recently by one of our members.



- Part 2 of our photographic wander down memory lane of walks over the past two decades reminding us all how we may enjoy such simple pleasures again, one day

- The usual range of brain teasers and puzzles to keep members alert.

All that can be added is to wish everyone as joyful and hopeful a Christmas as your circumstances allow.

Until next year, stay safe, alert and optimistic.

**Graham Marsden, Hon. HMF Secretary** and **Allan Evison, Assistant Secretary**, still working together in swapped roles as the **Secretarial Team**. Contact by e-mail at: [secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org](mailto:secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org)

## THE BIGGEST MOMENT IN HISTORY

There have been many big events in the history of the world. There was creation itself in all its complexity, which exists, as far as we know, on only one tiny planet called earth among all the constellations of a vast universe. Dinosaurs became extinct about 65 million years ago probably because a massive asteroid hit the earth causing climate change and widespread volcanic activity and eruptions. Then there was the creation of man as the most intelligent creature on the planet when God breathed into him and declared him to be in his image and that all he had created was very good. The next big event was the entry of sin through man's disobedience which corrupted the perfect creation. Since then there has

been the rise and fall of many empires, and the struggle for supreme power continues today.

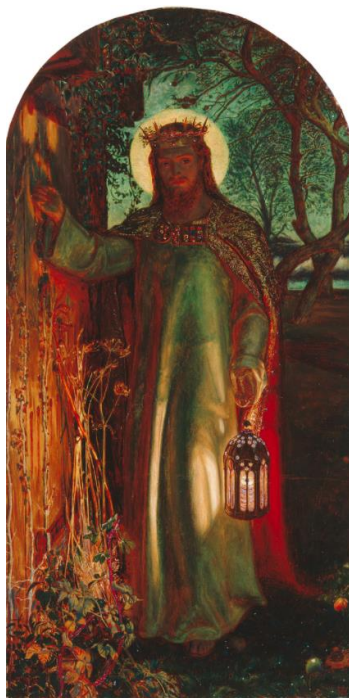
Before God made the world, however, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit knew that sin would spoil the creation and that the Son of God would need to save the world from its sin.

So, at Christmas, we remember and celebrate the biggest moment in history which occurred as the God of the universe chose to be born as a helpless baby, taking on human flesh. He wasn't born as a prince in a royal family, or as the son of a rich man, but as the first-born child of a virgin who was pregnant by the Holy Spirit and had to marry her 'husband-to-be' to prevent shame being brought on the family. I never cease to be amazed that Mary and Joseph and many others must have kissed the face of God as they watched him grow up and that they must have been full of wonder as they saw him grow into a perfect young man who committed no sin.

He was destined inevitably for greatness, being the Son of God, but not greatness as the world expected. He was hailed by many as a great teacher and healer but his fame did not prevent his death on a cross of shame.

This was prophesied in the Jewish scriptures but not understood. Only when God sent the Holy Spirit to open people's eyes to the truth of his resurrection did the purpose of his life and death become clear to his disciples and to all who subsequently committed their lives to him.

All this is why Christmas is such a special time of wonder and celebration for me. The birth of Christ was the turning point in the world's history and two thousand years later the Son of God still comes and stands knocking on the doors of our hearts. I pray that I will open my door wide and let him in afresh this Christmas. That can be a cause for celebration for all of us if we hear him gently knocking on our heart's door, asking if he can come in and share our life.



*'The Light of the World'*  
William Holman Hunt

**David Langford**

## THE QUAKERS IN HAYES

It was interesting to read Brian Hatton's article on the Quakers in the October magazine. There is a wide variety of views within the Religious Society of Friends as there is within the Anglican Community. I know there are some Friends (Quakers) who are not pacifists and that many Friends today (unlike in their early history) keep Christmas with family and friends. It is part of their wider testimony *'to remember and celebrate the work of God in them and for them whenever God calls them to this remembrance and this joy.* (Janet Scott)

It was not until the 18th century that we find records of Quakers in Hayes. Revd John Till in 1788 refers to one Quaker family *'remarkable for their peacefulness, industry and good behaviour.'* When a survey was carried out in 1872 the Revd George Reed indicated that there were about 20 nonconformists in the parish including seven Quakers using an Iron Room belonging to Hon Arthur Kinnaird of Pickhurst Manor as a place of worship. This place of worship does not appear to have continued after Charles Devas took over the lease in 1873 and Quakers are not mentioned in the next report in 1880.

With the beginning of housebuilding in the 1920s and an influx of newcomers, Canon Percy Thompson supported the activities of the Religious Society of Friends who met for worship in the Parish Room at 3 St Mary Cottages (Baston Road) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Their Correspondent was Christina Yates who lived in Queensway, Coney Hall. The next rector, Revd McClintock continued to encourage them and they used the Hut in the Rectory Gardens. Dr Colville Barrington of 7 Pickhurst Lane was a pupil with Christina at Sidcot, a Quaker school in Somerset. He was a prime mover in setting up the Meeting house in Hayes and his Garden Room became the meeting place from the late 1930s. With the outbreak of World War II Dr Barrington enrolled with the RAMC and was sent to West Africa. Later he was one of the first doctors to render medical assistance when Belsen Concentration camp was liberated at the end of the war.

From the mid 1930s the Religious Society of Friends held Public Meetings in the Village Hall to explain their beliefs, to appeal for relief work with Spanish and German refugees, discuss the response to the worsening political situation and to stress the importance of the Peace Movement. This included a talk from a personal friend of Gandhi.

After the war Christina Yates was able with others to set up the Bromley Meeting House that still exists today.

**Jean Wilson**

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN, HAYES, KENT**  
**Brief Summary of the Minutes of a Meeting of the PCC**  
**Wednesday 5 November 2020 via Zoom**

**Co-option to PCC - Richard Truelove (Honorary Treasurer)** is to be co-opted on to the PCC.

**Appointments**

The following appointments were confirmed for 2020-2021:

**Vice-Lay-Chairman** - Mark Willoughby

**Hon PCC Secretary** - Mary Whytock

**Verger** - Yvonne Pickford

**Assistant Churchwardens** - Julie Clark, Carolyn Tooley

**Sidespeople** – Pat Aste, Ann Bartlett, Pam Cahill, Lorelei Colbeck, Katherine Fishlock, Janet and David Langford, Claire McKeogh, Cathy Price, Jo Roberts, Mary Rowedder, Carolyn Tooley, Jean and Barry Wilson and Elizabeth Woodman.

**Community Food Bank** – The CFB bucket at the Harvest Service had yielded a disappointing amount in donations.

**Christmas Services** – Since the recently imposed restrictions there is a suggested update to services:

**Remembrance** – 8am would be a Zoom service and the 10.30am Live Streaming. **Toy Service** – hopefully this would work by asking for monetary donations. **Nine Lessons and Carols** - the service would be led with a small singing group. **Crib Service** - this service would not be possible. **Christmas Eve** – An earlier service than midnight could be arranged. **Christmas Day** – Anticipated 2 services, 8 am and 10.30am.

**Community Bus** – It was hoped to use the bus twice a month for the 10.30am Services with Communion.

**Bellringer** – Bells would be rung at funeral services etc. when social distancing could be observed easily.

**Appointment of Youth Worker** – when matters return to normal discussions on the desire to make such an appointment could resume.

**Carol Page**, the Independent Examiner of the Church's Accounts for many years, was standing down. A gift and flowers with a letter of thanks would be sent to Carol.

**Financial Report** - RT reported that there was to be a Finance Committee meeting on **12 November**.

- **General Reserves and Charity Giving** – as collections had suffered a great deal during the past few months when the Church was closed, an appeal for donations from members of the Church and congregation for charities should be pursued. People could mark their donation ‘Charity’ if they made an electronic donation into the Church’s bank account.

### **General Data Protection Regulations**

These will require an internal management review and the aspiration is to have this finished by Spring 2021.

### **Church Health and Safety**

Following the fall of an attendee at the APCM, tape would be put on the edge of the Chancel Steps.

- **Crack behind Altar** – A Chartered Surveyor should be asked to have a look at it and advise.
- **Insurance** – MW (Churchwarden) reported that Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (Insurers to the Church and OCS) had advised that the Loss Limit which had previously been £10.4m was being reduced to £8.69m, with a reduction in the premium to £5,688 pa.
- **Handrail for Chancel Steps** – careful consideration would be given to the matter, and the project pursued when the Church was open again and returned to normality.

### **Peter Wickert**



Items for the January magazine by 16<sup>th</sup> December please. Copy to the Editor – see below.

January magazines will be ready for distribution on 3rd January.

Editor: Clare Wickert, 3 Hayes Garden, Hayes.

Tel: 020 8462 7161 [wickerts@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wickerts@hotmail.co.uk)

Business Manager: Gordon Barclay, 29 Hurstdene Avenue, Hayes

Tel: 020 8462 2568 [gcb Barclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gcb Barclay@hotmail.co.uk)

Church Website: [www.stmaryshayeskent.co.uk](http://www.stmaryshayeskent.co.uk)