

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.

JUNE 2020

In normal circumstances this month's article would have been about the outcome of the vision-building half-day seminar that was planned for the 9th of May. The PCC of St. Mary's were looking forward to Ven. Dr Paul Wright leading us on the day. But due to the lockdown the meeting with the Archdeacon had to be postponed. None of us really knows when the said meeting will now be held as all the focus at the present is to survive the lockdown.

Yet in the middle of the present crisis we still thank God that life's normalities are returning slowly. Recently we held our first ever PCC meeting on Zoom. In the meeting we discussed 'the way forward when the church is open' in anticipation that before too long some ministry may be taking place within the church building. A new date for the APCM 2020 was also agreed. Please mark in your dairies **14th October 2020** for the APCM at our usual time of 7:30pm in the church building. As I am writing this article there are others busy writing or editing reports for the APCM in anticipation that life will be getting back to normal in the near future. I hope like me you too feel good to hear that one of these days we will be back in a place of worship we dearly love.

In the neighbourhood, activities are beginning to take shape as well. Early this morning (18th May) I went out in the Rectory garden to pray and to have a little walk around the garden. I was delighted to hear noises of the tennis enthusiasts coming from the Library garden. I don't think I particularly take joy in people hitting objects but this morning when the players were hitting the poor yellow tennis ball I felt good.

On the faith front things are looking very positive too. The Bible Society has reported a healthy increase in sales of Bibles. Some surveys suggest many more people are turning to prayer or are attending a church service (online obviously) than in normal times. The churches in Hayes have been busy sowing seeds too; let us hope and pray that in

due time these may grow and bear fruit.

Many are asking, 'Will life in the church ever be the same?' No one of us on the front line believe the ministry will ever be the same again, at least in the near future. It is in the light of this fact that the Ministry Team is busy thinking, praying, exploring and planning new ways of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in the days, weeks and months to come. Please continue to pray for wisdom, for understanding, for endurance for us. We do have prayer meetings Monday to Thursday 8:30am; you are welcome to join with others to pray for our church family, for our communities, for our country and for our wonderful world God has given to us.

By now we all know that some children will be returning to their schools in early June. I guess many children will be delighted at the possibility of learning together with their friends and from their favourite teacher/s. But some parents in our community as elsewhere in the country will be anxious to send children back to school. Let us hold our children, their parents or carers as well as their teachers in our prayers.

We also thank God that in the London area the rate of passing on the Covid 19 infection from person to person has come down; at the time of writing this article it is 0.4 which is very encouraging. But let us not forget in our prayers the other parts of our country that are having a bigger battle on their hands to defeat Covid 19. Also praise God that the prospects of developing a vaccine are encouraging.

There is also a buzz in the air that some international travelling may slowly start again, good news indeed for the families who have been living apart for a considerable time without seeing each other due to travel restrictions. These are a few positive developments that indicate life cannot be locked up for ever. This, however, doesn't mean all is well; there remain many challenges within our country, our communities and our church family. The people even in our community continue to be bereaved. May the Lord continue to comfort you if you have lost a loved one in recent days. I guess there are still very many people who live in fear, almost as though on death row. Sorry for the use of such an expression, perhaps here I am talking more about feelings I had at times during the last few weeks. But praise God for the hope we have in Christ Jesus our Lord that nothing in life and nothing in eternity can separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus. May the God of all hopefulness give each one of us grace to live trusting in God's goodness.

Always yours in Christ

Napo

COVID-19 AND THE CHURCH'S FINANCES

A MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY TREASURER

Whilst there are without doubt more important things to be concerned about in these extraordinary times, it would be remiss of me not to consider and report on the financial implications for the Church. With this in mind I have undertaken some "what if" analysis: this was initially circulated to the Finance Committee at the end of March and then to the full PCC at its recent "Zoom" meeting. It was felt at the latter meeting that communication to the congregation as a whole is important, something that I am very happy to undertake - hence this note.

For the Church I have examined the impact on the 2020 finances as a whole based on a six-month closure from April to September inclusive. The overall impact is a downside of c£14,000 based on a projected fall in income of c£18.5k, mitigated by cost savings of c£4.5k. Before I touch base on some of the detail it is important to stress that there are, as I am sure you will appreciate, a number of variables and estimates involved - one of the key ones of course is how long the Church is "closed" for.

Income is expected to be affected across all areas i.e. Loose Plate, Fees, Pledged Giving and Donations. Loose Plate amounts to about £7.5k per annum whilst we are forecasting that our Fees from funerals, weddings and such like will be down by c£3.5k. Donations (for instance, via the orange envelopes) will also be impacted, whilst we are also expecting that our Pledged Giving (and associated Gift Aid) will not be exempt - a worst case scenario could see a fall of some £8k (including Gift Aid) here.

We are of course hoping that the any fall in Pledged Giving will be much smaller than this and we are very grateful that the initial view is that levels are holding up, with only a modest fall seen thus far this year (mostly due to non-COVID reasons). Obviously the majority of Pledged Giving is done through standing orders (85% in 2019) which helps enormously but I would invite anyone who still gives via envelopes to consider if this would be a good time to switch to a standing order. Please contact me if it is - it is a very simple process and I would be happy to assist anyone.

It is difficult to "switch off" much of the Church's expenditure base - for example the Church Office costs are mostly still there even though matters are being done remotely, whilst things such as insurance and fire safety must stay in place. We also wish to maintain our existing charity commitments "as is". Our biggest cost is the c£68k payment we make to the Diocese each year to cover the costs of our Incumbent

(£50k, including all on-costs and housing) and contributions to things such as the Diocesan Office costs, the training of curates and support to some of the less well-off parishes in the Diocese. The Finance Committee, supported by the PCC, have concluded that to reduce this Diocesan payment would not be the right thing to do, especially given our significant reserves.

I do hope that based on a six-month closure, it will be possible to limit the downside to a figure significantly below the £14k mentioned above. However it is clear that if the Church has to remain closed for longer than 6 months, then this figure could well rise.

Once again we are very grateful that existing pledges continued to be honoured and I would encourage anyone who has been unable to “give” in their usual way (be it loose plate, envelopes or whatever) to please be in touch with me in order that we can make some suitable arrangements. Donations are also always welcome - especially as the Church, even in normal times, runs at a loss on a day-to-day basis. Please feel free again to contact me if you wish to discuss this, or indeed anything else.

I will now touch briefly on two other important financial aspects of Church life, namely (1) operations at the OCS and (2) the Church Pre-School. The OCS building has been in “lockdown” since the Government announcement and all usage has ceased. We have again done some modelling on the basis this time of not being able to open again until September. Loss of hiring income for this period will amount to c£20k but we are anticipating savings of c£5k, leaving a net “loss” of some £15k. The OCS however does normally make (post the annual “grant” to the Church) a reasonable surplus each year and has built up reserves in recent years. As such this loss of net income can be satisfactorily absorbed, as a one-off, by these reserves. However, matters will need to be looked at afresh if the closure is prolonged.

Turning to the Church Pre-School the current closure is not having a major impact as central funding for three and four year olds from the Government is continuing - this funding accounts for about 73% of all the Pre-School’s income. There has been a lot of “noise” in the media about how nurseries and pre-schools are suffering but it should be noted that our favourable position is heavily influenced by the fact that the average funding percentage across the country is much lower at below 40%. In line with the latest Government announcements the Pre-School is looking very carefully at both “if” and “when” they will be able to reopen. That though is not a matter for a finance update!

I appreciate that this article is rather lengthy, for which I apologise. I do feel though that it is important to fully communicate with

people in an open manner and I stand ready and willing to answer any questions or concerns people may have.

One final note is that notwithstanding the postponement of our Church AGM until later in the year, the annual report and accounts should be finalised and available very shortly. Once available they will be posted on the Church's website for all to view.

Best wishes and keep safe

Richard Truelove
Honorary Treasurer
020-8462-1575
richard.truelove@btinternet.com



Looking back over the past 9 weeks of lockdown I begin to wonder where the time has gone. At the beginning I was full of all the small jobs that intended to do, and now on reflection I wonder where the time has gone as so many of the small jobs still need to be tackled! I think one thing is true, having



sproken to so many of you this past week, we have used the time to enrich our gardens, clearing borders

and planting new shrubs. As we spend more time working and sitting in our gardens, we realise how lucky we are to have all God's wonderful nature around us. Many of you spoke of your enjoyment and appreciation of God's world. Some have been observing a woodpecker's nest on their daily walk. Another member has achieved her much wanted herb



garden on her patio. Many have taken the opportunity to



tidy up and plant out their gardens. We are so lucky to be able to relax outside listening to the bird songs. Some members have made use of all the extra time by reading, reading the Bible, doing

crosswords and keeping in touch by phone.

This last month, May, there was 'Thy Kingdom Come', a prayer movement, inviting Christians around the world to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. I listened to Archbishop Dr John Sentamu talking on our Ascension Sunday service who talked about praying for just five people to come to Christ. The Mothers' Union Thy Kingdom Come 2020 service was streamed across the world. The speaker this year was our new Central **Mothers' Union Chaplain**, who is the Bishop of Penrith, the Rt Revd Emma Ineson. Here is a transcript of her sermon.

Thank you so much for watching this online service, and wherever you are in the world I'd like to say "thank you" for tuning in.

"You are the light of the world" says Jesus to each one of us. And that's amazing, that he says you are the light of the world because that's how he always describes himself – "I am the light of the world" he says in John 8 v 12.

And so, what Jesus is telling us is that we should be nothing other than him. Representing him in the world around us. His hands, his feet, his heart, his love, his care. "Be me for the world" says Jesus.

We are living in what will be seen and encountered by many as dark days as the world continues to reel from the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. But into that darkness shines the light of Jesus' words to us, words that are picked up by St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians; "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light, so you can understand the

confident hope that He has given to those who He has called. His holy people, those who are his rich and glorious inheritance”.

So, what is it about light that we can be inspired and encouraged by in these dark days, as God’s church for God’s world?

Well firstly, that light is visible. Apparently, you can see a single candle flame from 30 miles away on a dark night. We’re meant to be shining with visible light. No one lights a light and then hides it under a basket! A city on a hill cannot be easily hidden. And we are to make the light of God visible in the world around us.

And I’ve seen that happening in so many ways in recent days, especially by members of the Mothers’ Union. I’ve seen Mothers’ Union members distributing face masks, some of them made in really lovely Mothers’ Union fabric. I’ve seen them providing food, sewing scrubs for frontline workers, knitting hearts to comfort those who have been bereaved. Doing what Mothers’ Union members just know what to do best – just staying in touch with one another, whether it be by phone or online. Praying from our homes for the light of Christ to break through the darkness.

God has not retreated, and his church has been shining in new ways in these days. And so, to all of you from myself as central chaplain I would really like to say a really big thank you for all that you have done in large and small ways to make the light of Christ visible at this time.

Secondly, there’s that idea that light is attractive. It’s not only moths that are attracted to light. All of us, I think, share that sense of warmth and well-being when we see that lights have been turned on and we see lights glowing – whether it’s a beautiful sunset, a lovely candle, a set of beautiful fairy lights.

And in the same way when Jesus says to us that we are to be the light of the world, he’s saying that there should be something about our Christian faith that is not only noticeable but is also warm and welcoming. Jesus explains “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven”. And when it says good works there, he’s not just talking about being morally good or doing the right thing (although of course we should be good people and do the right thing! I wouldn’t imagine anything other than that of members of the Mothers’ Union)! But he’s also talking about our works being beautiful and appealing. And the point I think Jesus wants to stress here is that if you and I truly live out our Christian faith in the world around us it will be absolutely gorgeous and people will want to worship God as a result. People will see us as individuals and as a Church community, as a Mothers’ Union organisation, and think “you know I’m really glad

that these Christians are in the world, thank goodness that they exist". Literally giving glory to God in heaven.

And that's not often the view of the Church that gets reported in the media but Jesus is saying here that if we are living out our faith in the world, shining his light, that will make others want to join in.

So, light should be seen, and light should be attractive.

Of course, light is most effective when it is shining in the dark. And Jesus asks us to go to the places where we know there is dark and to shine with his light there. Jesus calls his followers, you and me, to take the light of him, Jesus, wherever there is darkness.

I wonder where there might be for you?

Maybe you know people who are in a dark place at the moment personally? Perhaps people suffering from mental health issues and depression? Why not give them a phone call or send them a card or make contact with them and take the light of Jesus with you.

Maybe you know of darkness in your local community? Find out what you can do to bring light and pray. The whole point of Thy Kingdom Come is that we can be praying. Praying for those who don't yet know the light of Christ in their lives. Praying that their eyes may be opened, that the darkness may be lifted and they may see Jesus for who he really is.

And that's something we can do whatever lockdown confinement we might be facing.

Jesus' promise to us is simple; "if you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness". So today, as Mothers' Union members the world over, let us be encouraged to be lights in the world by Jesus who is the light of the world.

Jesus Christ who is the light of the world, help us to be lights who are visible, attractive and shining in the dark places. Uncover the radiance that is within us O God to shine the truth of your love and your light wherever we go. Amen.

Thank you again to Napo, Becky, Brenda and the rest of the team who are working so hard during 'lockdown' to make the church services accessible to us all. We won't be meeting in June, but please keep in contact with each other and myself by phone, and keep safe.

God bless

Avril Ashford

ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY JUNE 2020

As you will be aware, 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.

Sunday June 7th

8am Holy Communion Service via Zoom

A Message uploaded to Facebook and YouTube

6.30pm Holy Communion Service via Zoom

Sunday June 14th

8am Holy Communion Service via Zoom

10.30am Holy Communion "Pre-recorded as Live" Service on YouTube

A Message uploaded to Facebook and YouTube

Sunday June 21st

8am Holy Communion Service via Zoom

A Message uploaded to Facebook and YouTube

Sunday June 28th

8am Holy Communion Service via Zoom

10.30am Morning Praise "Pre-recorded as Live" Service on YouTube

A Message uploaded to Facebook and YouTube

Follow the link below to the St Mary's YouTube channel where you will find our pre-recorded services.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo7KNHYfOiKm95VXyQdFg6g>

If you would like to join a Zoom service please email the church office at info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk

HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

“Back to the Future”? “Paradise Lost”... “Regained”? No, not suggestions for your lock-down viewing or reading and in fact the real title should be apparently “The New Normal” (yet to be written in full!).

Whatever our reality should be now, our members seem to remain locked down in their original category of “Vulnerable”. We are obliged to keep safe by isolating and keeping our distance having regard to our age and possible underlying health conditions. We have kept calm and carried on just as in wartime conditions recalled by many.

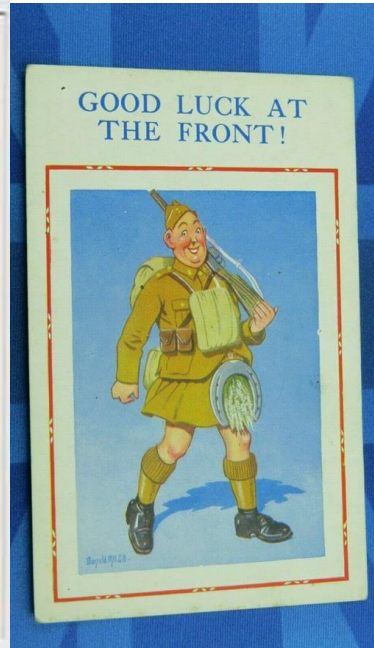
So no confirmed possibility of resuming our usual programme of:

- Talks - in the gathered presence, on average, of 60 or more members within the Old Church Schools which is still in lockdown;
- Outings - while venues and hostelrys for en route breaks remain closed and coach companies face difficulties in operating safely, or
- Walks - given that an integral part is a pub lunch after some 5 miles, all together in convivial fellowship, if the pubs were open and remaining in business.

Therefore, it is with great regret that the committee have taken the difficult decision to cancel the remainder of the activities for this programme year (up to and including the August boat trip) as a result of the latest advice from the Prime Minister on 10 May. These events include our AGM so our plan is to deal with the necessary formal business, such as electing the committee, after the annual service in October - so long as we are able to meet again at that stage. Our committee continues to work hard to put a programme together for the new year despite all the uncertainty about what we will be able to do and when!

We do continue to try to enthuse and entertain our members with special newsletters which feature background on the scheduled activities now postponed, such as “The D-Day Story” which was to be visited in Portsmouth in June, and May’s talk on “Seaside Sauce” about the saucy postcard king Donald McGill, illustrated with many examples of his work.

Our plans for resumption will include rebooking of the talks and outings which have had to be cancelled this year. We have made a start by booking Bletchley Park for a visit in October, always assuming the “New Normal” permits such outings by then!



Let us see what hope July brings..... “Brave New World”?

Allan Evison, Hon. HMF Secretary
(Contacts: t- 020 8402 7416; e-
secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org)

GOD'S SPARROWS

Today I have a great sense of sadness. Daily I hear of hundreds dying of Covid-19. On Saturday there were poignant and extensive reflections on those who died in World War 2. A huge loss of life. We say they died for our freedom and gave their lives freely, but maybe not so freely and probably not happily for our freedom, which makes their sacrifice all the more amazing.

I look at our world and wonder what we have done with this freedom delivered to us by so much bloodshed and suffering. The poor seem to get poorer and the rich get richer and some spend time in expensive playgrounds with "celebrities" and have multiple homes around the world. The world's poorest exist and die in slums and makeshift homes with insufficient food, medicine or opportunity - some denied even clean water or sanitation. I am part of this western world which holds most of the world's wealth and I feel ashamed.

I am reminded that Jesus had no home, no money and relied on friends and family for shelter and food. And yet, he built a worldwide 'church' of believers who love him and, although they are human and sometimes fearful, are willing to give their lives for him, should it be asked of them, because they know that he is alive and in their hearts. I also remember Jesus' teachings that God our Father sees every sparrow that falls, that we are of much more value than many sparrows and that even the hairs of our head are numbered! He hears every prayer offered up in faith by believers AND the cries of those who suffer and don't know where to turn or what to do. He is everywhere, all the time and never sleeps and is right beside us always, until the moment our life on earth ends. We cannot understand how great and powerful and compassionate he is. He can hear the cries of everyone on earth all the time, day and night. We should reflect on these things.

So, I may be downhearted today, full of sadness for those who have lost loved ones, snatched away before their time by a virus and by a war which ended in 1945, but we live in a fallen and damaged world with disease, violence and greed, all part of sin, and God's heart aches with the same sorrow. But he has provided the solution to it all through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, before whom we shall all one day bow in worship with the angels of heaven. Not all of us have much hair (especially men!) but the message of God's care for us is clear from the analogy spoken by Jesus. I must learn to value God's love for me and rest in his constant presence throughout my days while weeping and praying for those who are ill or bereaved or struggling to cope with life. His ways are not our ways and prayer is a mystery, but he is the only one

who sees what is best for us. Sometimes he heals, sometimes we continue to learn from our suffering and sometimes he takes us out of our suffering to be with him in heaven. Let us trust our God who loves us enough to die for us.

David Langford

1ST HAYES GUIDES GO VIRTUAL

As with many organisations Girlguiding suspended unit meetings in the middle of March following Government advice. We felt it was important to keep in touch with the guides during this challenging time and also give them an opportunity to see their friends. Having been inspired by other units meeting online we decided to start catch-up meeting on Zoom. These were initially fortnightly but soon changed to weekly at the guides' request.



We started by doing scavenger hunts round our houses. We looked for items with every colour of the rainbow, items for each letter of 'GUIDES' and also items for each letter of our own name (easier for some than others!). We have run a quiz with the guides contributing rounds to this. We have played bingo and various games including 'Kim's game' and '20 questions'. We also shared some jokes as well as introducing each other to our pets.

The guides (and leaders) also joined in a county-wide sleepover at home for VE Day. The challenge was to sleep somewhere which was not their bed. Some guides made dens to sleep in, others slept on the sofa or the floor. One leader set up her tent and slept in the garden! On that week's catch-up we shared pictures of us in our uniform sitting on our makeshift beds.

It has been lovely to be able to continue guiding and hopefully provide some continuity for the girls. It definitely brightens up my Monday evenings and we continue to look for ideas for future meetings!

Helen Jordan

JOHN GOLDBY 1922-2020

Born in June 1922, John grew up in Sidcup with two younger sisters. In every spare moment he played golf, winning many trophies in his lifetime. On leaving school he joined a merchant bank, then in 1941 enlisted in the RAF. He trained as navigator and bomb-aimer, then was an instructor in navigation. He served in Bomber Command and took part in the second of the "1,000 Bombing Raids" on 25 June 1942. That December an engine caught fire on take-off for an operation over Italy causing the aircraft to ditch in the North Sea. The crew were rescued by fishermen. More serious was an attack on John's Halifax by anti-aircraft fire in September 1944. One engine was hit, three petrol tanks were holed and a shell entered the bomb-aimer's compartment, damaging his equipment. "Despite intense physical discomfort and shock (John) continued to direct the Pilot-Captain on to the target (a synthetic oil-plant). This determination and skill resulted in a successful attack ... (John) has been a source of inspiration for his section as Bombing-Leader ... ", part of the wording in the citation with the DFC John was awarded. His war was cut short on the night of 6 December 1944 when his aircraft was hit over Germany and broke up. John and three of the seven-man crew survived, parachuted down and were arrested. John was sent to Stalag Luft 1 POW Camp, remaining there until 13 May 1945.

Back home John served as an Air Traffic Controller until demobbed in September 1946. He disliked civilian life, first with an air-freight company, then in insurance, so he rejoined the RAF with a permanent commission as a navigator. On 3 June 1953 he marched with the RAF Coastal Command contingent in the Queen's Coronation Parade. He married Jean in October 1955, Richard was born in 1957, and John was appointed Assistant Air Attaché at the British Embassy in Paris, where Vanessa was born in 1961. Retiring from the RAF in May 1962, John joined Shell (UK), and the family settled in Keston, where Michael was born in 1966. At Keston Parish Church John served as sidesman, a member of the PCC and ten years as Church Warden. He retired in 1982, and golf remained his passion. For a spell he was on the committee of the local Conservative Association. He and Jean enjoyed walking their Miniature Schnauzers around the Common, and he was a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for many years. He and Jean organised annual appeals for clothing and other goods for the charity Bless the Children (UK), helping deprived children and their families in Romania. In 2010 John broke a hip, then the other in 2015, resulting in his inability to walk, confined to a wheelchair. Latterly his eyesight was

failing, but his mind remained keen, and he delighted in his three granddaughters. He would have been 98 this June.



LOCKDOWN LIFE

Members of St Mary's congregation were recently invited to reflect on their experiences of lockdown, both positive and negative, using a series of questions as a springboard if necessary. There are some responses below which you may find helpful.

The closure of churches has affected the way we all worship. How have you dealt with this change? Are there any ideas or resources that you would recommend?

I started to read my Bible. Looking for stories that I had difficulty in understanding. I started looking for passages that would help me to understand what was being said.

How can we be good Christians/good neighbours in a time of lockdown?

We are all suffering in one way or another. We have our good days and bad days. When I phone friends and family and hear them telling me how lonely and isolated they feel, I try my best to cheer them up, and by doing that I also feel better myself. You just have to believe that it will.

What habits have you developed to help you deal with isolation/uncertainty?

I get up at the same time each morning and go to bed at the same time at night. Structure throughout the day helps you to focus, I think. I try and keep busy most days at home.

Are there any blessings that have come out of this difficult time?

Yes - it makes you realise that the freedom we had re. social life will never be the same.

Are there any changes in your spiritual life that you would like to carry forward into the future beyond Covid19?

Put time aside for prayer make it special.

Eleanor Brooks

I feel one of the biggest changes has been being unable to actually go into church and worship with other members of the congregation. It's one thing choosing not to attend and knowing it is always there, but quite another to have that choice taken away - makes us think about the importance of our faith and our church in a different light.

I think it's been wonderful how the Ministry Team have addressed this issue and put so much effort into 'electronic worship' so to speak, thereby keeping as many people as possible informed, involved and able to join together with other members of the congregation not only for worship, but also for meetings and admin tasks to keep everything running smoothly.

Another big change is not being able to see our family. I have found that really hard, and have been so glad for things like Skype, FaceTime and Zoom to be able to keep in touch. It has certainly made us improve our technology skills pretty quickly!

I'm sure a great many people across the country have had to think about what is really important to them and their lives, not to sweat the small stuff, reconsider their priorities and think of others.

Hopefully some good will come out of this, I saw something this morning which indicated more people are looking to the church for guidance and support; maybe some people will think more about their spiritual lives and not just their everyday life from now on.

Rosemary Smith

How much more peaceful the world seems now. We have been blessed with a great deal of sunny weather which has enabled those of us fortunate enough to have gardens to spend a lot of time outside. We have been working hard in ours and it has had more attention than usual. We now have coal-tits nesting in two of our bird boxes and, as we walk down the garden, we hear the baby birds twittering. I love to watch the parents flying in and out to feed their babies and I love to see the plants and flowers as they develop – here is God for me.

Each weekday morning, we have a walk of about two miles, often incorporating one of our green parks, and then the afternoons are spent either gardening or pursuing a hobby or playing table-tennis on our dining room table. We have discovered that a number of people have these little sets and it really does provide surprisingly good exercise, not just playing but moving the furniture about to make room, or retrieving the ball from underneath various pieces of furniture!

On Sunday mornings we watch the service on television and then Songs of Praise later. It has been really good to slow down and I hope we can maintain this to some extent in the future. I miss my little Sunbeams and the friends at St. Mary's but I have been very fortunate in that some Sunbeam mothers have kindly been getting shopping for us and as a result I see them for a brief chat, and also their children, at a distance of course. Other than that, we have been keeping in touch with various church members by email and telephone.

Some days are up and some days are down which I am sure is the same for all of us. It is difficult to keep positive when there is so much uncertainty about the future and hard to trust and believe that God is still in control. However, as someone said to me, we must 'keep on keeping on' both in terms of dealing with the pandemic and also as we struggle with our faith.

I look forward to the day when we can all meet up once again.

Hilary Burtonshaw



Items for the July magazine by 22nd June please. Copy to the Editor – see below.

Editor: Clare Wickert, 3 Hayes Garden, Hayes.

Tel: 020 8462 7161 wickerts@hotmail.co.uk

Business Manager: Gordon Barclay, 29 Hurstdene Avenue, Hayes

Tel: 020 8462 2568 gclarclay@hotmail.co.uk

Church Website: www.stmaryshayeskent.co.uk

We await instruction about when distribution of parish magazines can resume. If lockdown restrictions remain in force the July edition will be on the Church website.