

**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.**

## **GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS, LORD MY GOD!**

It was in January 2020 that the first cases of Covid 19 were detected in our land. At the time very few of us took the virus seriously, but within a few weeks, that is in March 2020, suddenly the virus started to affect our daily routines. But in spite of it we still prepared for Mothering Sunday (March 22<sup>nd</sup>) as usual for no one knew what was just around the corner. The flowers were lovingly prepared by the faithful church members to be given out. But, before children could give these out in the church service, the first national lockdown was announced and church services in person were stopped too. How would we minister to our beloved church family? was the question your ministers were asking, even in their dreams! On Mothering Sunday for the very first time Becky recorded my little talk to upload onto our Facebook page. I sat in the chancel with a bucket full of daffodils by my side, smiling but extremely worried about how we would cope. We hadn't even heard of Zoom prior to March 2020. However, within days many of you rose to the challenge and by God's grace, by your prayers and through St. Mary's team's resilience, the life of St. Mary's church in so many ways functioned very well. It looks as though, after a painful twelve months, things are soon to change, and looking back I feel we have plenty of reasons to thank God for His goodness. As I write this article the news is that over 15 million people have got at least the first dose of the Covid vaccine - well done to our NHS for their resilience. By the time you read this article our church will be open for Sunday worship and for private prayers; we will also have live-streamed services every Sunday.

I also thank God for how quickly people developed the skills needed for ministry, stayed healthy and ministered well. On behalf of us

all I want to say a special thank you to Becky our LLM, Brenda our church administrator, Yvonne our church warden and the live-streaming team for their support and for keeping the church functioning. Wherever and whenever I needed, these wonderful people regardless of the dangers of the virus were there to minister to you.

And who can forget the role our Hayes Herald team played during the difficult months? Every month they made sure that the church magazine reached you online or in a printed form. How about Yvonne's supporting staff, good-hearted people like Peter. These people came out to fix anything that needed to be fixed in the church to facilitate the ministry. If I mention every one of you by name and the role you played during the last twelve months I will run out of space. Instead let me bow my knee to the Father for each one of you and thank Him for you for remaining faithful to your 'calling'.

Like other communities in the land, we too have people who completed their earthly journey in the last twelve months. Yet here again there are things to be thankful for to God. We thank Him for the good name our loved ones left behind. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that in fact very few of our church family members died of Covid 19. This of course doesn't lessen the pain but perhaps we can say God kept us protected against the virus. I want to assure all of you who mourn the loss and are hurting, that we, your ministers, are here to serve and support you during this time when you try to cope with your loss. If you think a memorial service would be an opportunity to celebrate the life of your loved one, please do contact Brenda to book a service. I hope and believe in late Spring or early Summer (obviously the virus situation in the country permitting) we would be ready to hold memorial services.

And finally, I guess by now most of you have heard that our Diocesan bishop has consented for me to resign and retire. The farewell service will be on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am. I am sure between now and July there will be many chances to speak to each other. But I would like to acknowledge that since the day of the announcement your kind messages have kept coming. Many thanks for the wonderful things you have written; you have been so kind and generous in your comments and I feel blessed by them. Perhaps it is okay to say that the decision to leave Hayes was not taken lightly but carefully and prayerfully. I firmly believe my going away will be beneficial for this dear church. I believe new blessings will be yours with my move and I rejoice with that thought. However, until the time we say 'God may remain with you' to each other on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, I am here fully available to the Lord and to you my dear friends whom He sent me to serve. Please, always feel free to write or ring if I can be of any help.

Always praying for you and yours. Please continue to be safe and stay always blessed.

Always yours in Christ

**Napo**

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL**

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 April at 7.30pm in the church. There will also be a Zoom facility to be present, as we did in October 2020 (The code to join will be sent nearer the date). This is a chance to listen to the work which has been carried out during 2020 on your behalf and your chance to voice your opinion on any matter relating to our church.

We will be electing two Churchwardens and PCC members. Mark Willoughby is standing down as Churchwarden and Shirley Neal retires by rotation as a PCC member. Richard Truelove retires after 12 years as our Treasurer. We are extremely grateful to them for their service. Carol Crouch, Tudor Griffiths, Francesca Laurie, Barbara Marsden, Clare Scriven, Carolyn Tooley and Peter Wickert will continue as PCC members.

If you would like to stand for election to the PCC please sign your name on the list in the church porch or indicate to the Rector your willingness to stand. Proposers and seconders are needed. Nomination forms for the post of Churchwarden are available from the Rector. Please consider standing for one of these positions.

It is intended to have copies of the agenda and minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting available to members of the Church from the 28 March. They will be at the back of the church or a copy will be sent if required (telephone Mary Whytock on 020 8289 9217 – [mary.whytock@ntlworld.com](mailto:mary.whytock@ntlworld.com)). Remember it is only members of our Electoral Roll who can vote at this meeting. Copies of the 2020 Accounts will also be available at the back of the church or a copy sent on request.

**Mary Whytock**  
**Secretary to the PCC**



How we miss our Mothers' Union meetings! This time last year we had just enjoyed the companionship of our fund-raising auction followed by a fish and chip lunch. We were always able to celebrate Peter's birthday on 'auction' day. This year I gave him a 'birthday treats' hamper instead!!

However, there is now a light at the end of the tunnel! As I write this the sun is shining brightly, flowers are bursting into colourful arrays



and Boris has just outlined our coming out of lockdown timetable! We look forward to the time when we will be able to meet in person again!

This month is a 'busy' month as not only do we have International Women's Day of Prayer on 5th March, we have Mothering Sunday on March 15<sup>th</sup>. We are being asked to join together in seven days of prayer, reflection and action between the two events. Although apart, we can come together in prayer and empower women all around the world.

Each year, Mothering Sunday gives us the opportunity to thank God for the women who have had the greatest impact on our lives, and to celebrate motherhood for the unconditional love and great sacrifice it can mean. For others, however, Mothering Sunday can bring mixed emotions, and it can take real tenacity, strength and trust in the Holy Spirit to give love and to feel loved.

## **A brief history**

Social togetherness is more important now than it ever was. Traditional festival days and related celebrative events in the calendar bring people together and strengthen communities. Mothering Sunday has come a long way from its origins but remains a means of fostering closeness.

## **In the Middle Ages**

Back in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, on Mothering Sunday, people used to return to the church where they were baptised, or the local parish church. This was known as their 'mother church'. The essence of this practice was that people remained in touch with the community that they had grown up in. The actual service took place on the fourth Sunday of Lent and symbolised the coming together of families.

## **Further changes and challenges to the Observance**

As practices gradually changed, it became the day when servants of large households and country estates were allowed home to visit their families. The traditions associated with the day were changing too. The day itself became less focused on the religious roots and more about specific relations within families.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of returning to one's 'mother church' had become so neglected in the UK and Ireland that there were calls to revive it and decisions were made throughout the country to incorporate wider practices from across the Christian faiths and bring back a festival.

During the 1950s figures in business spotted commercial opportunities on offer. This secured its endurance and altered its significance in the minds of the population.

## **The modern Mothering Sunday**

The modern Mothering Sunday has become very much a recognition of the role of a mother in contemporary society. Gifts are sold, flowers are bought and cards are sent.

Mothers of all kinds wake up across the country knowing that it is their day. A day when they will be 'treated' and receive cards from loved ones. Despite the commercial forces driving the recognition, it is an important day for families coming together.

Those people lucky enough to find themselves in the role of a mother to another person can spend their time on Mothering Sunday feeling cherished. Stronger bonds within families lead to stronger bonds within communities. In potentially fractious times, this is more vital than ever.



*As we light this candle:*

*We pause to remember with gratitude all those who have truly mothered us throughout our lives.*

*We give thanks for the gift of mothering, nurturing, deep within us, and pray for the grace to let its flame burn bright.*

*We pray for all those whom we are called to mother, for the courage to love deeply, and to let go freely.*

*We ask for forgiveness for the times when our hearts have been closed to the love, and need for love, of those in our care.*

This year, with Covid restrictions, our celebration of Mother's Day will be different. At the moment the Covid guidelines say that from March 8th, there will be a small change to the outdoor exercise rules and you will be allowed to meet one-on-one to socialise outdoors in public places and have a picnic or a coffee on a park bench. The other key change that could affect Mother's Day is an easing of care home visiting rules from March 8th. Residents will finally be allowed a single regular visitor, provided they have a negative Covid test and wear protective equipment. Holding hands will be allowed.

## **Make a Mother's Day appeal. Give a gift of togetherness this Mothering Sunday**

Mothering Sunday is a special time to say thank you to all mothers and caregivers for the selflessness with which they nurture, love and help us to flourish.

This year, you can celebrate or remember someone special by giving a gift of togetherness. At a time when the chance to come together has become more precious than ever before, your donation can help to strengthen kinship in communities and empower women and girls to flourish.

You can make a gift of togetherness by visiting [www.makemeamothersday.org](http://www.makemeamothersday.org)

## **March 25<sup>th</sup> is Lady Day – (The Feast of the Annunciation)**

It is a significant day of prayer, intercession and thanksgiving for Mothers' Union since 1897. It is a time when we give thanks for another year of Mothers' Union service to families and communities. On this day we remember Mary and the angel who came with a life-changing announcement – she had been chosen to give birth to Jesus, God's Son. It is the Annunciation, Mary's Day, and used to be known as Lady Day.



*In 2018 St Mary's Hayes MU held the Lady Day service.*

*As we are inspired by the obedience and faith of Mary, so we also remember the obedience and faith of our founder, Mary Sumner, who, in her day, followed the calling of God upon her life. We pray that we, too, will be willing to follow God in obedience and faith, with thanksgiving and praise.*

Please keep in contact with other members of Mother's Union and contact me if there is anything that I can help you with. Remembering you all in my prayers, and looking forward to the day that we can meet again.

**Avril Ashford**

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY MARCH 2020

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Church open for prayers  
by appointment

### LENT 3

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
10.30am Morning Praise  
**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Church open for prayers  
by appointment

### LENT 4

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
9.15am Fresh Start via YouTube  
10.30am Mothering Sunday\* including  
Parish Communion CW  
**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Church open for prayers  
by appointment

### LENT 5

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
10.30am Confirmation Service\*  
5.00-6.00pm Illuminate via Zoom  
**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am-12.00 noon Church open for prayers  
by appointment

### PALM SUNDAY

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP  
10.30am Parish Communion CW

\* Please book in advance to attend the **Mothering Sunday and Confirmation services** by contacting Yvonne E-mail: [yvonne\\_pickford@hotmail.com](mailto:yvonne_pickford@hotmail.com) Phone: 020 8325 6504



## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN, HAYES, KENT**

### **Brief Summary of the Minutes of a Meeting of the PCC**

### **Thursday 11 February 2021 via Zoom**

#### **1. The Rector's Retirement**

The Rector's retirement at the end of July had been announced in Church. NJ said that sadly he felt the time was right for him to retire and be able to give more time to his family. He owed an enormous debt of gratitude to Becky for her ministry during the past year and her support. The Churchwardens would be meeting the Archdeacon shortly to embark on the quest to find another incumbent for St Mary's.

#### **2. Church now has an Improved Internet Connection** to the Church Office.

#### **3. Postcode** – The Church now had its own postcode – St Mary the Virgin Church, Hayes Street, Bromley **BR2 7LH**

#### **4. Financial Report**

There was to be a Finance Meeting on 15 February and a report will be presented at the PCC Meeting on 9 March.

#### **5. New Treasurer**

Ed Roberts had agreed to be the next Treasurer of St Mary's.

#### **6. Quinquennial Update**

Summary of report from David Pullen (Independent Surveyor).

- **Crack behind the Altar** – this should be monitored by the placing of markers.
- **Drains** – There was a problem with the drains, which would necessitate exposure of a certain section to denote the problem.
- **Porch** – To eradicate the damp problem plaster needed to be removed to enable the stonework to dry out for several months and then replastering and decoration. This work was already in hand.
- **Vestry Extension** – Movement was detected and should be monitored.

- **Kitchen** – Plans to improve the Church Kitchen were approved. New Dishwasher, new work-top, with it being extended on the other side of the kitchen, and new taps.

## 7. **General Data Protection Regulations**

The process continues of documenting our GDPR policies and procedures, which are already in place and operate.

## 8. **Safeguarding**

The PCC should all now complete an online Safeguarding Foundation (C1) course.

## 9. **Sub-Committee Reports**

- **Outreach** – some interesting 'webinars' are to be led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Tonbridge with the focus on Lent and the post-pandemic church. Our own Lent Course would commence on Wednesday 24 February.
- **Churches Together in Hayes** – (i) **Foodbank** – has been kept busy with 40 families receiving support; (ii) **Churches** - All churches conducting house-groups by Zoom; (iii) St Mary's plans to open their Church on 28 February. (iv) Darren Street had set up on YouTube Bible Stories using Lego; (v) **HVA** - wanted to hold a big get together in March, with a film involving the incumbents on Hayes during COVID.
- **OCS** –PSPG only group using the OCS Complex at present; HVA Magazine now being published on-line; it had been agreed for OCS to advertise its hiring facilities on-line.
- **Children Youth & Family** –There were plans for a virtual 'pancake party' on Shrove Tuesday.
- **PSPG** –the PSPG was running well.

## 14. **Any Other Business**

- **Opening of Church** – It was planned to live-stream the Ash Wednesday service on 17 February. It was hoped to start the Lent Course on 24 February. The 8am service on 28 February would be in the Lady Chapel. From 4 March the Church would be open for private prayer but by appointment only.

(The full minutes are available to read in the church porch.)

**Peter Wickert**

## HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Meteorologists regard the first day of the month in which a season is located as the start of that season, rather than the equinox some twenty days later. If that is confusing then perhaps the first vestige of Spring appearing in February is welcome news that change is in the air. If you



have been out of doors lately, perhaps only to attend your first virus inoculation whilst isolating, then you may have noticed the daffodils and crocuses already flowering.



And no doubt, like us, you found that rare excursion a positive life-affirming adventure. Give it time

and patience and continuing caution, we can hope for easing of restrictions and anticipation of some kind of freedom in our new normal. We are preparing these words in February to allow for publishing deadlines and so ahead of the Government's announcement of their "road map" scheduled shortly and providing first for planned gradual opening of schools not currently open except for children of front-line and essential workers, and then a gradual but planned opening up of the economy.

For our part in HMF we have made provisional plans to resume our usual activities just as soon as we are permitted.

That will now include special thanks to Napo as he makes his arrangements to retire from ministry in July. We shall miss his interest and support as our President during the past eight years, especially his presence each March to conduct President's Afternoon. He has unfailingly found an interesting speaker to come and speak to us and kept the secret until the moment of revealing the speaker and their topic in the OCS. Each July he has chaired our Annual General Meeting (except in 2020 due to Covid restrictions on our activities!). Napo was delighted to lead our Annual Service in St. Mary's last October in that brief period when the church was able to be open for communal worship.

More important to us is Napo's commitment to be available to all HMF members, Anglican worshippers or otherwise, believers or not, who have needed help and listening support. Believe me, Napo will be missed personally and corporately.

We now face a period requiring patience and care, continuing to observe social distancing, wearing of face-coverings and restricting our movements, even as the weeks pass to build up our antibodies to resist catching the virus. We can remain cheerful at the speed and efficiency of the massive vaccine roll-out, bringing nearer the prospect of actually meeting together freely and without these hindrances.

Meanwhile we continue to communicate with our members through brief monthly Newsletters at the start of each month together with mid-month Extras, usually running to eighteen pages, designed to uplift and entertain, including exercising our brains. The current issue includes:

- A selection of brainteasers and quizzes, including a topical one looking at things that happened in February;
- A continuation of the series of virtual outings at a time when we cannot have the real thing! This month we "go" to the Old Moor RSPB Reserve in the Dearne Valley, Yorkshire (featured in the last BBC Autumnwatch series) and the National Railway Museum, in York (the largest such museum in the country);
- A couple of light hearted and topical articles about St. Valentine (of whom there are several) and Shrove Tuesday (including "what is your favourite pancake topping").

Like the season, our future is beginning to shine with more light each passing week. Indeed, British *Summer* Time begins again on 28 March! Once again we have shared with our members reminders of things we have done in the past – and hope to do again before too long!



*Outing – Polesden Lacy, July 2019*



*Walk – Crockenhill, Swanley, May 2019*

We return with increasing hope next month and every month.

**Graham Marsden and Allan Evison, HMF Secretarial Team  
(contact by e-mail: [secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org](mailto:secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org))**

## **THE GREATEST ENTRANCE EVER**

I was sitting in my lounge listening to a CD of early church choral music recently - something I do in lockdown in the afternoon to stop myself from trying to be constantly busy. I suppose I was relaxed and staring into space when, for some reason, I thought of the disciples, gathered in secret with the door shut, seeing the risen Christ appear from nowhere as if he were a ghost! Nobody has ever walked into a room without opening the door or being able to pass through a wall. Jesus seemed to 'materialise' and the disciples must have been more than surprised. But a ghost he was not. He showed them his wounds and gave them the opportunity to touch them and then asked for some food to eat. He ate some fish to finally convince them that he was living flesh and the living Christ. Eight days later he appeared again in the room when Thomas,

who was absent on the first occasion, was present so that he could also be convinced of his resurrection, having expressed doubts of its validity.

There are various accounts of his appearances after the resurrection. In one he appeared to two disciples 'incognito' on the road to Emmaus and was only recognised when he broke bread at a meal but then he vanished. There were many other miraculous appearances during this time before he ascended to his Father.

So, I'm staring at the wall of my lounge and imagining the figure of the risen Christ appearing to me in my room and thinking how amazing it would be to see his face and his loving eyes and to be embraced by the Son of God. I thought how wonderful it would be if such an experience were open to everyone in the world but then I remembered the words of Jesus to Thomas - "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." The implication of this statement is that there is greater blessing in not seeing him in the flesh but still believing through faith.

So, instead of imagining Jesus appearing to people in houses during dinner, I realised that he appears everywhere in the world as his Holy Spirit - the Spirit of Christ. As the Holy Spirit he can appear to every one of the eight billion people in the world at any time, whether they are living in comfort and luxury, or poverty, or on the streets, or in prison, or in total despair, or in the process of dying. He is the universal Christ, the image and the fullness of the invisible God and we should rejoice that we can come to him at any time of day or night whether our lives are joyous and good or desperate and painful. He can open our eyes which are clouded by sin and suffering, and we can 'see' him, not in the flesh, but through his Holy Spirit and experience his love and tenderness. He can give us strength for our lives knowing that nothing can separate us from his love. He is the only hope and Saviour for our fallen world and we have a big story to tell!

**David Langford**

**Items for the April magazine by 16<sup>th</sup> March please. Copy to the Editor. We return to printed magazines next month.**

**April magazines will be ready for distribution on 27<sup>th</sup> March.**

**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 [gqbarclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gqbarclay@hotmail.co.uk)**

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