

**Rev'd Amanda would appreciate it if anyone knowing of illness or any other trouble in the Parish would notify her as soon as possible on 020 3940 1897 so that she, or a member of the Church, can call without delay.**

**If you have any enquiry about baptism, marriage or another service, or if there is something else you would like to discuss with a member of the team, please make an appointment, through the Church Office (020 8462 1373) or by emailing:**

**[info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk](mailto:info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk)**

## **EASTERTIDE!**

Lent has gone very quickly, even with all the things that I gave up this year. If you gave something up or took something up, I hope that has been going well; not long to go now.

The church has continued to be open for private prayer and it has been wonderful to welcome the community, not only in our church but our churchyard and church rooms for our various activities, Bereavement Café, Community Coffee, Warm Space, Mothers' Union and Churches Together in Hayes Lent course. It has been so good to share fellowship with those within the congregation and the wider community.

It has also been good to share the Easter story with local schools. Although there were many questions generated that required thoughtful consideration and they came thick and fast! Additionally in another setting, there was the sad face that presented when I had finished telling of Jesus rising again, because they wanted the story to continue! The Gospel story of course does continue, until this present day and beyond.

But the hardest job of this lead-up to Easter was judging the Easter Bonnet competition. There was a glorious array of beautiful and ingenious bonnets. It was really difficult and I am glad I have a year before I have to do it again, God being my helper!

We are now fast approaching Easter and all the joy that this season brings. The first Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, we will have Palm Sunday, where Jesus is welcomed in Jerusalem before he is then rejected and enters his journey to the cross.

Then Holy Week begins, with the special services of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, remembering when Jesus washes the feet of the disciples and shares The Last Supper with them. I will be washing the feet of those who wish to take part in this part of the service.

Then onto the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, where we will start from the Deep Water Baptist Church, at the Hayes Village Hall, moving onto St Mary's, then to Our Lady of the Rosary Church and onwards via Hayes High Street. Finally we will reach Hayes Free Church, where there will be a service followed by hot cross buns, a tradition on Good Friday. After this there will be an opportunity to reflect on the Cross at a meditative service at St Mary's.

On Saturday morning children will be able to take part in an Easter Garden activity in the church. Please contact us. Saturday evening there will be a service where we bring the light of Christ into the church and take part in the Easter Vigil, leading to the wonderful joy of Easter itself. There will be a service where the resurrection of Christ and the new life this means for Christians is celebrated.

All the services' dates and times are listed in the middle of the Hayes Herald as usual and we have an Easter Service Poster on our board and our website. All are welcome to all our services.

It just leaves me to say, have a blessed Easter and may the joy of this season be with you as we continue through Eastertide.

**Rev'd Amanda**



## **TURKEY AND SYRIA EARTHQUAKE DISASTER APPEAL**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the retiring collection in Church. We raised £301.45 for Christian Aid.

Thanks,

**David Rowedder**

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 3 May** at 7.30pm in the Church.

We will be electing a new Churchwarden and new PCC members: Yvonne Pickford, Carolyn Tooley, Peter Wickert, Sarah Willis and Mark Willoughby will be retiring. We are extremely grateful to them for their service and input into our deliberations. We will also be electing three members of the PCC who will represent St Mary's on the Deanery Synod: David James and Mary Whytock have served their statutory term.

If you would like to stand for election please sign your name on the list in the church porch, or do have a word with either Rev'd Amanda or the Churchwardens. Proposers and Seconders are needed. Please consider standing for PCC.

It is important that you make every effort to attend the APCM, to listen to what has been done by many on your behalf. This is your chance to show your support and an opportunity to voice your opinion.

It is intended to have copies of the Agenda and Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting available to members of the Church by Sunday 16 April. They will be at the back of the church or a copy will be sent if required (telephone Mary Whytock 020 8289 9217 – 07973 483557 [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 2022 Accounts will also be available at the back of the Church.

**Mary Whytock**  
**Secretary to the Parochial Church Council**

## **THE CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL FOR 2023**

Every year we have an Annual Parochial Church meeting when all church matters are discussed. This year seems like normality as we are now thrilled to have Rev Amanda Spence, Priest-in-Charge and her husband Stuart with us after 18 months of being on our own.

We have lost a few members through death, there has been quite a lot of illness over the last two years, some have moved away and some have drifted away. So I am asking those of you who have come new to our church and those who have come back, which is lovely, to fill in an electoral roll form which you can find at the back of church.

The form is just asking that you are over 16 years of age and that you are a member of the Church of England and resident in the parish.

If you are not resident in the parish, and a member of the Church of England (or a Church that is in communion with it) and have habitually attended worship in this parish in the last six months you can also be a member.

Being a member on the Electoral Roll entitles you to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Wednesday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and you could be elected to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and take part in its proceedings.

After the meeting a certificate of the numbers of our congregation will be forwarded to the secretary of the Diocesan Synod. A little later I will be putting a box at the back of the church with the forms for you to sign.

**Mary Rowedder, Electoral Roll Officer**

## **WHO WILL DO IT??**

### **Long, long ago in a church far, far away ...**

'There are more than 100 members of our church,  
...but 30 are frail and elderly.  
That leaves 70 to do all the work,  
...but 18 are young people at college.  
That leaves 52 to do all the work,  
...but 14 are tired business people.  
So that leaves 38 to do all the work,  
...but 16 are working mums with jobs and children.  
That leaves 22 to do all the work,  
...but a further 10 have important outside interests.  
That leaves 12 to do all the work,  
But 5 live too far away to come regularly.  
So that leaves 7 to do all the work,  
...and 5 say they've already done their bit for the church.  
That leaves you and me,  
And I'm exhausted.'

**Anon**

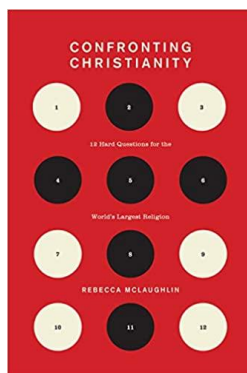
## CONFRONTING CHRISTIANITY: 12 HARD QUESTIONS FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST RELIGION

Why do we believe what we believe? And how can we believe when confronted by so many apparently unanswerable questions? From time to time, chatting with a friend, neighbour, work colleague or even someone from our family, the conversation turns to religion and we are asked how we can possibly reconcile our faith with the amount of suffering in the world, or 'hasn't science disproved Christianity?', or 'hasn't Christianity got a confused view of sexuality' or 'doesn't your faith condone slavery?' etc etc. When this happens, we can be left floundering, perhaps regretting missed opportunities to explain our faith in a way that will be helpful, especially as those questioning are often genuinely searching for something more for their lives.

There have been a number of books written to help Christians (and non-Christians) begin to unpick the threads of these issues and to see how they may not be the stumbling blocks to faith that many assume them to be. What distinguishes this book by Rebecca McLaughlin, other than her impressive academic credentials, is that, throughout, the author is sharing her own personal journey as she has explored these issues. For these are issues that not only confront the Church as a whole, but also us individually, in our own hopes and fears.

The book is packed with hard facts, state of the art research and many myth-busting statistics. But apart from being a very useful reference tool it is also beautifully written. There is an unflinching honesty to her writing, often engaging us with relevant (and sometimes personal) anecdote. There is no doubt about her passion for her faith and her commitment to Biblical truth, but she also writes with compassion and sympathy for those who struggle with these issues. It is a book full of optimism, and hope.

So, if you are looking for a starting point to begin to understand how these issues fit into, and can be explained within, the larger tapestry of our faith, this book is highly recommended. This book, incidentally, won *Christianity Today's* 2020 Book of the Year award. It is published by Crossway and first came out in 2019. If you would like a quick peek, there is a copy to browse in our church library at the back of the church.



**David James**

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

It is lovely to be back and meeting again in the Meetings Room. We had a very interesting and informative talk on AFIA, 'Away from it all' holidays by Jocelyn Wright, project manager. At the end we were able to present a cheque for £150 which the branch had raised over the past few years.



Members have said that they would like to continue meeting for lunch at The New Inn. So if anyone wants to join us for coffee and lunch we plan to meet on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11.00 at the New Inn. All are welcome to join us.

Our main meeting this month is on **Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am in the Lady Chapel**, when we will have a Communion service taken by Rev'd Amanda. Afterwards we will retire to the Meetings Room where Rev'd Amanda will tell us of her Journey. All are very welcome to join us.

We have received the following 'Calling Letter' to our Diocese AGM:

*Dear MU Members*

### **Annual meeting and Spring Members' Meeting**

*The Annual Meeting of the Rochester Dioceses Mothers' Union will take place on Saturday 22 April 2023 in the Main Room at St Paulinus Community Halls, Manor Road, Crayford, Kent, DA1 4ET. Please park in Church Hill.*

*The Hall will be open from 9:30am for refreshments before the Annual meeting starts at 10:00am. The Members' meeting will start after a short break at 11:00am. The day will end at 2:00pm.*

*At the Annual Meeting, the Annual Report will be presented and adopted. The Report will be sent by email before the meeting and will be available in print at the meeting.*

*The programme for the day will be sent out later.*

*Members should bring a packed lunch and a re-useable cup with them. The Trustees look forward to welcoming you all on 22 April 2023.*

If anyone would like to attend, please let me know and I will try and arrange transport.

If you have any requests for someone to talk at a meeting, please let me know and I will try and arrange it.



When Cardinal Hume wrote this before his death in 1999, he went on to say "Christian HOPE gives us the confidence in God, in His ultimate triumph and in His goodness and love that nothing can shake."

As we prepare for Easter week and the different events that occur, we realise that they have been very much part of our individual Christian experiences for many years. From the triumphal ride into Jerusalem, the throwing out of the money lenders and traders in the Temple to the celebration of Jesus's last supper with his friends, the tension builds. The betrayal of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and His violent arrest cause us to feel a myriad of emotions. The unfair and rigged trial coupled with the sense of abandonment that Jesus must have felt, as first His earthly companions and then His Heavenly Father seem to forsake Him, is painful to contemplate. His cruel death on the cross evokes feelings of hopelessness and despair. Then nothing!

But on Sunday, the impossible has happened and not just one but several of Jesus's disciples have seen Jesus, alive and risen from the dead. And, it doesn't end there.....on the road to Emmaus two other friends encounter a travelling companion who expounds on the Scriptures. Suddenly they realise it is Jesus, their friend and teacher.

They race back to Jerusalem to tell the others that Jesus had defied death and that there was HOPE for eternal life and a future!

In short, Jesus, though sinless, took all our sins on His shoulders, was crucified, died, was buried and descended to hell. On the third day, Jesus rose again and through his resurrection has brought HOPE to all of us. His death has purchased for each one of us HOPE for eternal life.

**Avril Ashford**

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY APRIL 2023

**Morning Prayers take place daily at 9.15am Monday to Wednesday on Zoom\* and Tuesdays to Saturdays in Church throughout the year (except Bank Holidays).**

### PALM SUNDAY

<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	10.30am-12.00noon	Coffee Morning for the bereaved and those living on their own**
	12.30-3.30pm	Warm Space**
	2.45pm	Hayes Men's Fellowship in OCS

### Maundy Thursday

<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00pm	Holy Communion
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### Good Friday

<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	9.30am	Procession from Village Hall
	10.30am	Service at Hayes Free Church
	1.00-3.00pm	Good Friday Service

<b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	10.00am	Easter Garden activity for children aged 3-6
	8.00pm	Easter Eve Vigil

### EASTER DAY

<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	10.30am	Mothers' Union Communion Service
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	12.30-3.30pm	Warm Space**

### 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

<b>Sunday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
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9.15am	Fresh Start**
10.30am	Morning Praise

### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

<b>Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
	5.00-6.00pm	Illuminate**
<b>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	10.00-11.45am	Community Coffee Morning**
	12.30-3.30pm	Warm Space**

### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

<b>Sunday 30<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	All Age Youth-Led Service
	12.15pm	Baptism: Henry Taylor

\*For Zoom link contact the church office \*\* denotes Meetings Room

The church is also open for private prayer on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10.00am to 12.00noon unless there is a wedding or funeral taking place. Details of these will be given in the weekly pew sheets.



### A RECENT FUNERAL IN THE PARISH

Ronald Stone  
Louis Cartwright

## HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

As we move into April we are increasingly confident of our HMF future.

Paid up membership is now in excess of 70 and growing – this figure including several new members who we have been delighted to welcome. Also we are encouraged that additional members are stepping forward to support our admin and activities. You can read about examples in the reports which follow.

But you don't have to do anything extra, just enjoy taking part in our activities with like-minded people who relish meeting up regularly for our talks, outings and walks, and for any shared interests. Our website is regularly updated with latest details and can be accessed at [www.hayesmensfellowship.org](http://www.hayesmensfellowship.org). All retired or semi-retired men of any faith or none are eligible to join. For a friendly chat and introduction give us a call on (020) 8654 0872 for Graham or (020) 8249 0070 for Allan.

That's the recruitment bit, now for the really enjoyable part, reports on what you could have already taken part in recently, as a member.

After our Annual Lunch in January, our programme of outings proper started in February with a splendid day out at Dover Castle. Thanks to light half term traffic, we arrived at the castle slightly before they opened at 10.00am. As we were arriving by coach, we were dropped off close to the Constable's Gate at the opposite side of the site from the car parking. But the walk up to the entrance was pretty steep – especially challenging if you were pushing a wheelchair! This was a harbinger of things to come on this large site high up on the cliffs with commanding views over Dover and the English Channel – everything was up or down, nothing flat! A brilliant location for defending the country from invaders and controlling traffic in the Channel – ironically the Castle was developed shortly after the invasion of 1066 and the site was in continuous military use until





after WWII. The site is enormous – 80 acres and it takes an hour to walk round the battlements – with a huge range of things to see and do. We were free to take our pick of as many (or as few) of the opportunities available including:-

- Operation Dynamo – Rescue from Dunkirk – Located in the WWII tunnels below the Castle. We were guided through displays that explained the background to WWII and the initial stages of the war leading to the evacuation from Dunkirk. We saw the tunnel where Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay directed operations and where his staff worked safe from enemy bombing.
- Underground Hospital – Also in the WWII tunnels where our guide led us through an audio visual display. This was brought to life by describing the progress of an imaginary RAF pilot shot down and badly injured over the Channel as he is brought to the hospital, triaged and operated on.
- Henry II's Great Tower – Under Henry II the Castle as we know it began to take shape with the Great Tower at its heart. The inner and outer baileys and the great keep were built between 1179 and 1188. We were able to see re-creations of the rooms as they would have been and had live interpretation.
- The Medieval Tunnels – Dating from just after the siege of 1216/7 these are winding and rather eerie. That siege was part of the Baron's War when a group of rebel Barons invited the future Louis VIII of France to take the English Crown.
- Prince of Wales Royal Regiment Museum – This covers the history of the Regiment, and the many others that merged into it since 1572. It showed how many battle honours the Regiment, and individual soldiers, had won. One of the displays had a local link with a photo of a cadet officer at the East India Company College in Addiscombe – he went on to serve in an Indian Regiment that was later absorbed.
- Roman Lighthouse – This is the tallest and most complete standing Roman structure in England. It was one of Dover's two Roman lighthouses (or pharos), and is one of only three surviving Roman-era lighthouses in the world.
- Arthur's Hall – This provided us with an introduction to the Great Tower.

- And there was much more too! Including catering facilities such as the Regimental Institute NAAFI Restaurant – but a cut above the traditional NAAFI fare!

We had a full day at Dover, leaving as the site was closing. The journey home was as straightforward as the outward leg and we were home in Hayes at dusk. What a good start to our 2023 outings; plenty to see and do, and a lovely sunny day – albeit a bit cool!

Even as this article was being put together to meet publishing deadlines our March outing was departing to Brighton. In May's Herald we plan to report back, and so on each month for the destinations in all directions from Hayes, through to August when our traditional Boat Trip will lead to our summer break. Notably the April venue, to Hastings via a visit to Battle Abbey, will be organised by a new member, David Smith, whom we gladly welcome to the Outings Committee.

The February Walk was in the Eynsford and Farningham areas.

The eight walkers were lucky as the weather was good for the time of year, not cold, occasional light drizzle with very little wind. From the car park opposite St Martin's Church in Eynsford we followed the High Street a short distance before



proceeding to open fields affording panoramic views. Crossing the M25 using a farm bridge we walked to within sight of Horton Kirby, then Westwards to the River Darent which led us to lunch at "The Lion Hotel" in Farningham. Afterwards, it was 1.3 miles back to Eynsford (total walk distance 5.8 miles).

By the way, the March Walk was led by a new member in the absence of Tony Archer. You will be able to read how the walkers got on in the next HH edition.

That's not the only substitution in our activities, as we come to report on the March meeting which is always our President's Afternoon. Sadly, our President, Rev'd Amanda Spence, was unable to attend in person but arranged for a talk by Peter Cheshire whom she has known for 22 years. Peter had been billed in our Newsletters as a "Mystery Speaker"! In his talk, he shared his experience of Cold War Berlin during 1977.

To provide some context, Peter explained that control of Berlin was divided between the Soviet Union, USA, Britain and France – as with the rest of the country. The city was completely surrounded by East Germany and geographically was closer to Poland than West Germany – thanks to post-war border changes. Soviet control areas had Communist Party led economies with prices and wages set centrally and full employment guaranteed but this meant that the East German currency had no value on the open market.

Initially West Berlin was linked to West Germany by one rail corridor – limited to ten trains a day – and three air corridors. The aim was to persuade the Western powers to surrender their Sectors in Berlin. When this did not work, these links were closed to force the issue but the Western powers did not concede and began the Berlin Airlift (1948/9). 2 Million tons of freight had been delivered, and 70 Western servicemen lost in the process, before the Soviet Union relented. The Airlift changed the perception of West Berliners who began to see the Western Powers as allies rather than enemies.

It was still possible for individuals to leave East Berlin if wealthy relatives in the West could afford the fares for them to relocate. This caused an exodus of professionals who were automatically granted citizenship by the West German Government. After a few years this led to hard borders being established all around West Berlin including the Berlin Wall.

In 1977 Peter was part of a small group of British students who spent six months in West Berlin to improve their spoken German and learn more about the City under a scheme by the West German Government to raise its profile in Western Countries. Just getting there seemed to be an adventure taking about 24 hours with a train from London and a ferry to the Hook of Holland. But the real adventure seemed to start there on a train heading East with carriages destined for East Germany (and West Berlin), Poland and Soviet Union. Peter was in Communist East Germany's carriages which were very old and decrepit - and remarkably marked "German Imperial Railways". Before setting off along the transit corridor to West Berlin the train spent a long time while security staff scrutinised the train and its passengers thoroughly – including dogs checking the underside of the carriages. The train ran through derelict stations without stopping en route to West Berlin.

Peter worked in a bank during his stay in West Berlin. He found Berliners to be quick-witted, resolute, warm-hearted and forthright. His colleagues were very keen that he should not financially support the East which included not using services they controlled such as the suburban railway (or S-Bahn) or the shop at one of the stations on the underground

railway (U-Bahn) that was in the East. Interestingly some of the underground lines crossed the dividing line between East and West which would have complicated things!

Britons were able to make day trips to East Berlin through the limited crossing points such as Checkpoint Charlie but it was a “palaver” taking up to an hour so visits were limited. He was struck by the contrast of “Toytown” currency (aluminium coins!), drab concrete blocks and very light traffic (mainly tiny Trabants) in the East and the busier and brighter West. In the East you were not allowed near the Wall but in the West public viewing platforms were erected! There was not a lot to buy in the shops in the East but things like beer were cheaper there. People generally were cautious about contact with Westerners because of the overbearing influence of the STASI Secret Police, but he did on one occasion have the opportunity to talk with brave young dissidents – I wondered what their fate was. We heard that West Berlin was attractive to youngsters from other parts of West Germany because of its more liberal licensing laws and the absence of a requirement for National Service.

Peter said that it had been a privilege to have been in West Berlin at such an important time. His stay there had taught him a lot about life in general and Germany in particular.

The members present appreciated the opportunity to learn a little more about their new President’s background. They also enjoyed Peter’s talk about Cold War Berlin – a period that we were all familiar with. The insights he was able to give on the differences between East and West were fascinating.

There can be problems explaining to visiting speakers the exact location of the OCS, where we hold our meetings, and which door to use etc. But Peter had spent about 20 years living in Hayes prior to his first teaching job – so he knew exactly where to find us. He attended Hayes Primary School and recalled the names of several of the teachers there. Later, he went to Eltham College and his favourite subject at school was German, so it was perhaps not surprising that he became a German teacher himself, working at Eltham College and more recently at the City of London School. And hence the stay in West Berlin to practise his German.

Join us here again next month.

**Allan Evison**, HMF Chairman    **Graham Marsden**, HMF Secretary

*(Accompanying photos by Graham Marsden and Tony Archer.)*

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH AND PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP AT THE OLD CHURCH SCHOOL

The children of Hayes have been taught at the site of the Old Church School in Hayes Street for over 230 years and it is now the home of St. Mary's Pre-School Playgroup and other community groups.

In 1791, the then owner of Hayes Place, Lord Lewisham, later the 3rd Earl of Dartmouth, provided a property to be a school-house and the Hayes Charity School opened on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1791 with thirty-eight children. Lord Lewisham became a trustee along with John Till, the Rector of St. Mary's Church. A school master and mistress were appointed to teach the poor children of Hayes parish to read. Lady Lewisham provided books and bibles were given to children when they left the school but only if they deserved them!

John Till, Rector of Hayes for nearly fifty years from the year 1777, was a man much beloved by his parishioners, and his memory was cherished with deep respect and affection. To an amiable disposition he added a considerable share of pleasantry and dry humour. The following impromptu toast which he gave at the village school feasts, in which he much delighted, are worth preserving and the words seem appropriate again this year as we approach the coronation of a new King;

*"May our School be the friend of the Church and the Crown:  
May it often break up; May it never break down.  
May virtue and learning still thrive in our School,  
And our duty to God and the King be our rule.  
May we keep to this rule to the end of our days,  
And always remember we learnt it at Hayes.  
May our School be kept by the wise and discerning,  
And always be famed for plum pudding and learning."*

You may have walked past John Till's final resting place, not far from the South Door of the church and he is also remembered inside. Lord Lewisham would later become the 3rd Earl of Dartmouth, as residents of Dartmouth Road may be interested to discover. (Fans of the TV series Game of Thrones will know one of his descendants, Kit Harrington, also known as 'Jon Snow').

For almost one hundred and fifty years, from 1791 until 1937, this was the school for the village of Hayes and it played a major part in the life of the community. Hayes Place was demolished in 1933 and the old estate made way for new housing in Hayes. With many new houses built in the 1930's, the Old Church School was no longer large enough

for the increased population and so a new school was built in George Lane in 1937, now Hayes Primary school, where most of the St. Mary's Pre-School Playgroup children move on to still. In 1938, the Old Church School building was passed over to the church for their use as a church hall and this is still the case today.

In 1963, the Rector, Reverend Eric Smith and the then churchwardens wanted to start a Nursery School at the Old Church School, to cater for children near St. Mary's Church and to "provide something good, as cheaply as possible, to help young mothers who couldn't pay enormous fees". So with specific guidance and oversight from the Church, St. Mary's Nursery School, as it was called then, started at the Old Church School on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1963, from an initial donation of £20 and it opened in September that year with 19 children.

St. Mary's Pre-school celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2023 and retains today its very close links to St Mary's Church. The children visit the Church for Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas and also until recently the Rectory garden was used for their annual Sports Day. The Playgroup is a registered charity, governed by a group of Trustees, including the Rector of Hayes Parish Church. Reverend Amanda Spence was appointed as a Trustee in January 2023.

St. Mary's Pre-School Playgroup currently has around 80 children, aged 2 to 4 and has an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding'. New children are always welcome, where available places allow. The Group Leader is currently Gina Goddard and Ella Skipp is Deputy.

For more information see:

[www.stmaryspreschoolplaygroup.co.uk](http://www.stmaryspreschoolplaygroup.co.uk)

**Nick Goddard**

**The Old Church Schools, Hayes, has 3 halls – two large and one medium, and a committee room available for hire.**

**For further information please contact Julie Clark on 07538 254508 or email [ocs.hayes@hotmail.com](mailto:ocs.hayes@hotmail.com)**

**Items for the May magazine by 20<sup>th</sup> April please. Copy to the Editor.**

**May magazines will be ready for distribution on 30<sup>th</sup> April**

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