

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

DECEMBER ADVENT!

Here we are again, Advent Season is upon us! And I will have completed my first year here! It has been a privilege to work with all at St Mary's and in the community of Hayes.

Advent, as I shared last year, is a time of watching and waiting, as we await the coming of Jesus in the form of a baby, born in a stable and laid in a manger.

We can look forward to sharing with one another. The early church in Acts 2.42 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers'. We are all called to join together and at St Mary's there are many opportunities, for fellowship, sharing and praying.

And all are welcome to the Advent and Christmas services, for those who might be thinking of coming for the first time, those who may be thinking of a return visit, as well as all who share together at St Mary's throughout the year.

These begin with the first service of Advent on **3rd December at 10.30am**. As well a time to begin the Advent season, this is an opportunity to support Bromley Welcare, a local charity group which aims to provide for families in crisis across the borough, thinking of others during Advent season, as we look towards Christmas.

We will also have our brilliant Twinkles group for toddlers, in **December, the 15th, 10-11am** at St Mary's, where there are stories, songs and time for play. I have even been told that there is going to be a special visitor, (all I know is that as well as the drinks and biscuits, I need to get in some carrots!)

You are all also invited to our Christingle Service and if you do not know what a Christingle is, then come and see! There will be oranges, a red ribbon, and some surprises in a box, but if you want to know the rest, you will need to come to open your box and see and how

all this is linked to the crucial work of the Children's Society, on **17th December at 10.30am.**

There will also be the traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols, **17th December at 8pm**, a reflective service retelling the story of God's people, up until our part of that story as we watch and wait for the birth of Jesus and the joy that brings at Christmas. There is also beautiful music to accompany our journey from darkness to light, as we travel to the light of Jesus, Prince of Peace.

Also, back by popular demand, we are having our Carols by the Tower Service, **Saturday 23rd at 4pm**, as 'it says on the tin' at the base of the bell tower at St Mary's. We are joining with other churches in Hayes, to sing together and hear the story of the very first Christmas.

Christmas Eve there are lots of different ways in which you will be able to join with us. We will have our **8am service**, a quiet and reflective service, with scripture, prayer and communion, **10.30am Parish Communion** and again, back by popular demand **St Mary's Crib service at 4pm**. You are invited to come and see the First Nativity, retold by the children and with the singing of carols.

This will be followed by the **First Communion service** of Christmas, at **8pm** where we welcome the baby Jesus into our midst, to be a light to lighten the world, a beacon of hope for all.

Finally on Christmas Day we will have a Family Communion service, so bring your favourite present to show and tell and we can celebrate the birth of Our Lord together. May we all receive from God the gift of hope, peace and joy and the light of Christ be with us all, throughout the new Christian year.

Rev'd Amanda

THE BIG KNIT

The following is part of the letter received from the organiser of the Big Knit to us:

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to drop you a line and thank you again for coming along on Saturday. It is always so lovely to see you all and from the whole team and myself we wanted to extend our thanks and update you on your amazing efforts!

Our new RECORD OF 3295 squares will now be sewn together by some lovely volunteers. This will make 91 medium sized blankets and if sold at £15 each will generate £1365. We also had people come along with other knitting which we estimate to be around £300 worth. So along with our raffle and refreshment donations we estimate the event raised around £2000. Which is just amazing. This will greatly support families in Kent and Medway who lose a baby.

Kindest regards

Kelly, Sally and Team MM



Melita, Sue and I went down to Rochester Cathedral to deliver the blankets. All the knitted squares were kindly sewn or crocheted by Melita and our newly formed Craft group. We meet the second and fourth Thursday of each month in the church; it is a very friendly group of ladies. You can bring your own projects. We always need knitted squares for next year's Big Knit blankets. We are quite happy to teach people to knit, crochet or sew. Do come along to join in and have a chat, tea and coffee provided, 10.30am to 12-00.

Pauline Muggridge



**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND
BLESSINGS TO YOU FROM THESE
FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S**



Stuart S
Mick and Sally N
Alison, Andrew, Sam and Eliza N
Mary-Ann and Gary C
Brenda, David, Lily and Beth H
Tom and Hilary B
Barbara and Paul M
Yvonne and Jim P
Janet S
Maureen K
Peter, Clare, Christabel, Julian and Florence W

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families



Members of the Mothers' Union wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas, and may the New Year bring you blessings in abundance of love, joy, health, peace and prosperity.

On Friday 10th November Mothers' Union held a charity coffee morning for AFIA (Away From it All) at St. Mary the Virgin church Meeting Room. Due to the generosity of people who attended we raised £110. It was a cosy social event where people gathered and chatted. There was a quiz on the table and all tables participated. All in all, it was a successful morning. Please do look out for future coffee mornings and other events in the Parish Magazine. These events certainly have a buzz.

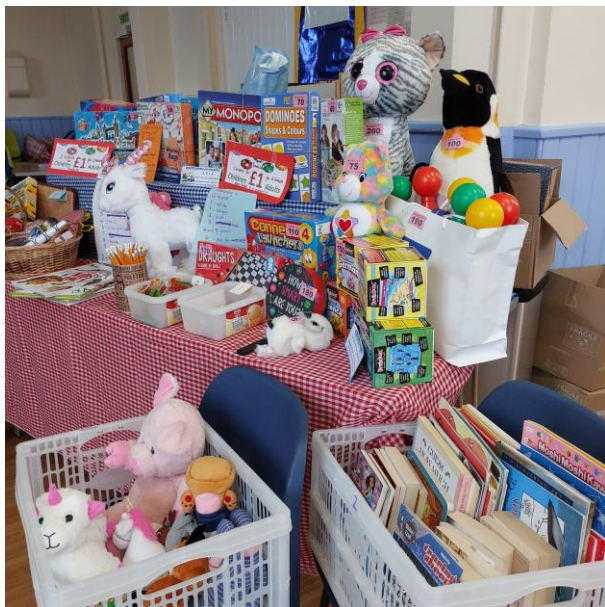
A little bit about AFIA. AFIA is a holiday/day trip scheme funded by Mothers' Union members to help people who would not otherwise have a holiday or day trip. A short break can give families the space and time to create positive memories, build relationships and strengthen family bonds. The day trips have become very popular and can reach many more families. Families can submit an enquiry via the Mothers' Union website www.mothersunion.org/afia-application-form or contact the Mothers' Union at Mary Sumner House.

Remembrance Sunday, on 12th November, was well attended, respectful, thoughtful and gave time for reflection and private prayers. Reverend Amanda's sermon made us think of lives lost in WW1, WW2 and current conflicts. We held in our thoughts and prayed for the men and women that serve us in all walks of life, who keep us safe.

The laying of the wreaths was dignified and watched in silence by the congregation and members of the public. There were several

Mothers' Union members there and thank you to Carol Crouch who laid a wreath on our behalf.

We had a very successful stall at the Charity Fair and managed to raise £80 for the different causes. I especially enjoyed myself as it was the first time that I had been out meeting all my friends at church. I think that you will agree that our 'Tombola' was very impressive! Thank you to everyone who supported it.



We were privileged to welcome Dr David Langford as our guest speaker at our last meeting. He spoke of his life journey, life threatening illnesses and his strong faith. Our members really appreciated Dr Langford's talk. Tea, coffee and cake were served afterwards. The raffle raised £14.

Future dates are: Christmas lunch at the New Inn **11th December (12.00 for 12.30)**; MU Coffee Morning at the New Inn **11.00am on 23rd January 2024**. Some members stay on for lunch.

The next MU Meeting in the church Meeting Room is on **19th February at 10.30am**. I would like to say a big thank you to Christine, Mary-Ann and Barbara for their continued help. I would like to thank you all for your continued prayers. They have certainly helped me through the past six months. Bless you all. Can we also remember Pam, Jo and Peter in our prayers as they have all had nasty falls.

If you are interested in joining Mothers' Union, please contact Avril Ashford on **0208 468 7785** or speak to Mary-Ann Cooper at church.

Avril Ashford and Christine Leonard

ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY DECEMBER 2023

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

ADVENT 1

Sunday 3rd	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise supporting Bromley Welcare
Wednesday 6th	10.30am	Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)
		Coffee morning for the bereaved and those living on their own**
	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**

ADVENT 2

Sunday 10th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
Wednesday 13th	12.30-3.00pm	Blaze Session** (age 6-10)
		Warm Welcome Space**
Friday 15th	10.00-11.00am	Twinkles – singing, story, snacks**

ADVENT 3

Sunday 17th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	9.15am	Fresh Start
	10.30am	Morning Praise – Christingle
	6.30pm	Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
Wednesday 20th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Saturday 23rd	4.00-4.45pm	Carols by the Tower (CTiH)

ADVENT 4

Sunday 24th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
	4.00-4.45pm	Crib Service
	8.00pm	First Communion

Christmas Day

Monday 25th	Family Service with Communion
Wednesday 27th	12.30-3.00pm Warm Welcome Space**

1st SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday 31st	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)

*Zoom link available
denotes Meetings



from church office **
Room

RECENT FUNERALS IN THE PARISH

Mary Boorman

Joan Martin

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



## HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Coming into December our thoughts turn towards Christmas and New Year. We celebrate this at our monthly meeting by the committee offering mince pies to our assembled members to enjoy with their cuppas, after they will have heard from Bob Ogleby reminiscing about "The Great Storm of 1987", which reduced Sevenoaks to just one such tree left standing. His journalistic career stood him in good stead at the time; you may remember his regular column in years past in the "News Shopper".

A report on his talk will appear here in January, but there will be no outings or walks for December as we take a festive holiday break until 2024. However, can still be contacted by any retired or semi-retired men of any faith or none, who are interested in joining HMF, and seek a social life in our friendly company now free of work commitments. Our website ([www.hayesmensfellowship.org](http://www.hayesmensfellowship.org)) has all the information you may need and our annual subscription remains a modest £20. An e-mail to [secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org](mailto:secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org) will put you in contact with us.

Meanwhile, here are the reports on our recent activities. Our outing to the impressive Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge was our first of the new session. There was so much to see, with the imposing college buildings, the River Cam (with its punts), a market in full swing and even cattle on a small island in the Cam behind some of the colleges.

The Museum itself was founded in 1816 with the legacy of the library and art collection of Richard FitzWilliam, 7th Viscount FitzWilliam. The bequest included £100,000 "to cause to be erected a good substantial museum repository". The Fitzwilliam now contains over 500,000 items and is said to be one of the best museums in the UK. It has an amazing variety of beautiful artefacts and art from around the world set out in 33 distinct galleries. The top floor was largely European art work from Impressionist masterpieces to contemporary items. The ground floor was devoted to sculpture and other artefacts. Here the range was enormous, from 5000 year old Egyptian pottery (and 3000 year old Mummies) through to items from Japan, Korea, East Asia, the near East and Europe. There were many Roman items and a helpful time line following the development of the Greeks, Romans and Etruscans together with contemporary developments in other parts of the world.

There were also two special, and quite moving, exhibitions:-

- **Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance** – Richard Fitzwilliam's generosity in setting up the Museum was only possible because of the wealth his grandfather accumulated in part through the transatlantic slave trade. This is acknowledged in this thought-provoking exhibition. Artists have explored themes of enslavement and racism

using a range of media. Objects are on display that show despair, injustice, violence and exploitation; as well as those showing resilience and liberation.

- **Real Families: Stories of Change** – This exhibition asks the fundamental question, ‘What is family’? Displays show changing attitudes over the past 50 years – single parents, same-sex parents and ‘conventional’ parents. The 120 artworks spanning painting, photography, sculpture, song and film show bereavement, poverty, multi-generational families, happy families, dysfunctional families, IVF and infertility. One moving story tells of a young mother who gave up her baby for adoption in 1963 but never forgot him. Her sketches of that baby, and the accompanying photo of her age 17 were seen by a man who realised the baby was indeed himself - and so mother and son were reunited.

Next was our walk from Charing Cross Station, visiting three of London’s fine parks. The walkers made their way to Trafalgar Square and across Green Park to Hyde Park, stopping to chat with a friendly fellow busy servicing a gas light. Later they stopped at the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park by Hyde Park Corner, beginning something of a topical Remembrance theme to our activities. On to the Serpentine and a determined squirrel begging for food – he was out of luck with them - and parakeets eating apples impaled on fencing. After a brief inspection of the Diana Memorial Fountain, they proceeded to a good lunch provided by The Willow Walk at Victoria then back via St James’s Park to Charing Cross Station.

Continuing our Remembrance theme, our November meeting was treated to a very informative talk by Peter Leigh about “West Wickham during World War II”. Peter is a resident of West Wickham (WW) and, over a period of 30 years, has built up a collection of over 700 postcards and photos of the area – a number of which were used to illustrate his talk. He also acknowledged that he had drawn on the books of local historian Joyce Walker, such as *Vanished West Wickham*.

In September 1939, Britain entered the so called “Phoney War” which lasted until April 1940 when Germany invaded Norway. The period was used to build more shelters (children were kept away from schools such as Hawes Down until they were completed). In June 1940 work began on an outer line of defence around London. The local section of this skirted south of WW High Street then turned north and included a number of tank traps (mainly large concrete blocks) and pill boxes (including one on Corkscrew Hill) but relied largely on buildings to slow enemy progress.

The Battle of Britain and the Blitz were to follow. The first bombs were dropped in the area in June 1940 and aerial dog fights were a

regular sight over WW – not surprising with its proximity to Biggin Hill. The area was defended by the Home Guard who had 4000 men at a parade attended by the King in WW. Initially they were poorly armed, relying on improvised weapons like Molotov cocktails, but improving later. Subsequently, Canadian troops were billeted in WW and nearby Shirley.

The heavy bombing continued throughout 1940 into 1941 with damage caused by high explosive and incendiary bombs almost nightly. Up to six locations a day were being bombed in WW and we were shown a series of shocking photos of the damage to houses and business premises. There were numerous fatalities including five local firemen who died when they had been called to other parts of London which were suffering greater levels of damage.

Through 1942 and 1943 bombing continued and Wickham Court become home to an Anti Aircraft Brigade and later large batteries were established at Hayes Common and Bridle Road, the latter also being the location of an Italian PoW camp.

In January 1944 there was a “Little Blitz” but things changed after the June D Day Landings, with the arrival of German V-1 Flying bombs - Doodlebugs. These were jet powered and faster than most of the Allied fighters of that time so were difficult to knock out. This changed later with more powerful engines in Spitfires and the new jet powered Meteor. The V-1’s route towards London was known as Doodlebug Alley and crossed WW. Up to 73 V-1s were launched a day and quite a number fell short of their target and landed in WW. This was a different scale to previous bombing with, for example, one V-1 badly damaging 16 shops and 60 houses – plus many more with minor damage. In September of that year, things got worse with the launch of the V-2 rocket which was unstoppable. 3,000 were fired, first at London, then Antwerp and Liege – but none fell on WW.

VE Day, with the German surrender on 8 May 1945, was celebrated with a Children’s Parade in Coney Hall. VJ Day followed on 15 August. Later the Home Guard put on a Panto for local children and in aid of local charities, a tradition kept alive by the WW Pantomime Society. This was a thoroughly engaging and well researched talk. The Remembrance theme continues with our next visit which is to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

We wish all readers and their friends and families a joyful and peaceful Christmas and New Year. See you in person or in these pages throughout 2024.

**Allan Evison, HMF Chairman**

**Graham Marsden, HMF Secretary**

## HEAVEN AND EARTH

Recently I read an article by Dr. Charles Moseley of Cambridge University which really resonated with me and it seems especially appropriate in the run up to Christmas. Basically, he is talking about angels and the possibility of another dimension to our world. We live in a very materialistic culture and if something can't be seen or proved the tendency is to believe that it cannot exist. However, angels are mentioned in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New, as beings who interact with humans. Perhaps we have even entertained angels unawares as suggested in Hebrews 13 v2.

Science has shown us that there is much we don't know. Thirty years ago there was no knowledge that trees could communicate with each other via strands of underground fungus. New discoveries are being made all the time and the many nature programmes and those about the planets and stars which we see on television help us to understand how completely amazing our world is.

As Christians we believe in the resurrection of Jesus and so it seems there must be more than we can know and it is very probable that there is another mode of existence and that spiritual beings exist. Dr. Moseley goes on to say that God created all beings with the free will to choose good or evil and evil can present as being very attractive. In 2 Corinthians 11 v14 Paul warns that Satan can appear as an angel of light.

Dr. Moseley concludes that the holy is all around us and is often unnoticed. When we say the Creed we state that we believe in all that is, seen and unseen. There is a reason for that comma which makes us pause and think of everything which exists and which God has made and then we go on to elaborate with the words seen and unseen. Sadly when we recite the Creed the comma is so often ignored. So we praise God for all his creation in what we see and know and understand and also the spiritual world of angels and the unknown.



*The Virgin with Angels* 1881  
William-Adolphe Bouguereau

**Hilary Burtonshaw**

## DOMINION

“The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there”. This famous opening to a novel by L. P. Hartley struck me as an equally apt scene-setter for *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind*, a book by Tom Holland, first published in 2019.

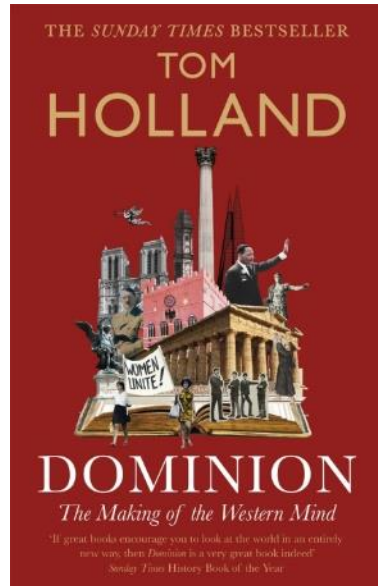
It is the sort of book which merits periodically picking up and re-reading, as I have recently done, not least because as it threads its way through two thousand years of Christian history, Holland’s brilliant skill as a story teller brings to life each successive development.

The central message of the book is also I would suggest very relevant to us as Christians today. Paradoxically, the author confesses to no Christian commitment or allegiance other than to acknowledge his debt to Christianity. And therein lies the message: that Christianity when it arrived 2000 years ago was a ‘disruptive and subversive’ phenomenon that totally changed the world of antiquity, saturated the mindset of Latin Christendom and today in the West remains the lifeblood of our most basic instincts and thoughtforms.

Tom Holland is an historian, presenter of TV documentaries and podcaster. He has written several popular and best-selling books on ancient Persia, Greece and Rome. His interest in antiquity grabbed him early on, because as he says he was intrigued and fascinated by its heroes and heroic tales.

Yet he had become increasingly aware of the gulf between his own liberal, western cultural outlook and that of the ancient Greeks and Romans; he was also suddenly aware that he would not have liked to live amongst them!

Although brought up as a Christian, he had long since drawn a line between himself and the faith that he had grown up in. Yet he now became aware that all his thinking and perspectives, conscious or subconscious, were deeply Christian. He was not (and is not, I believe) a confessing Christian but he realised that even the intellectual tools he



was using to assess and reject faith and the supernatural derived from the Christian faith.

Holland's breath-taking tour, from antiquity to the present day (from 'Babylon to The Beatles') shows the extent to which ancient culture was changed by the coming of Christ.

The dominating culture in Rome (and of course also the Anglo-Saxons, Vandals, Vikings and Goths who followed) was power, violence and military success. Throughout the Roman empire crucifixion was used to threaten and eliminate those who resisted Roman power. In fact, the cross was used as a symbol of Rome's power and dominance across the empire.

So when Paul and those early Christian missionaries preached a divine Saviour who died on a cross we can begin to understand why, as Paul said, the Romans found the message of the cross so bizarre and crazy, grotesque even. Yet within 250 years the faith they had so violently suppressed had become the faith that was transforming culture across the known world. The cross had become a symbol of a different realm, a God who so loved the world that He allowed His Son to die on a cross for the world.

Holland writes with verve and wit. And he does not let the Church off the hook for its many failures; nor the times it appeared to be losing its way, or almost being wiped out. But Christians continue preaching the gospel message across the globe; confronting us with that most basic of questions: how is it that the message of the cross, the message of love, succeeded in a world dominated by violence and power?

Today in the west we look at the emptying churches and the rejection of Christianity. We look at the increasing violence and power grabs in the world. This book is therefore a timely reminder of the grand sweep of Christian history, particularly at this time of the year as we remember and meditate on the advent of our Lord.

**David James**

## **CHRISTMAS CHARITY FAYRE**

The Christmas Fayre on November 18<sup>th</sup> raised £1,814 for the following charities – St Christopher's Hospice, The Children's Society, Christian Aid and CASPA. A great result and a tremendous team effort from all those involved.

## ENEMIES

Who are our enemies? A dictionary defines an enemy as a person (or a group of people or a nation) hostile to you. Jesus said 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' Some say that this is a challenge too difficult for most people, depending, in a large part, on the level of persecution experienced. Taken at its face value and including everything from verbal criticism to murder it is not entirely helpful to most people. Firstly, however, we must say that loving your enemies does not mean that we love what they do. Secondly, and most importantly, this 'command' of Jesus is not usually taken in context with his final words on this (Matt 5:48 ) which are 'You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect'. In other words, if you were perfect, you would be able to love and forgive and pray for your enemies whatever they may have done to you, as indeed Christ did on the cross. The only way we can ever be perfect is when we are totally Christ-like and this will only be fulfilled when we are in heaven, sin-free and saved by his blood on the cross.

So, Jesus' words are a challenge to us to *try* to love our enemies and forgive them and pray for them. While we struggle in frail flesh here on earth, we may sometimes be able to forgive those who sin against us in relatively minor ways, such as saying unkind things about us or being angry with us over issues which are not true. *But* if we watch the news, it is difficult, if not impossible, to love the perpetrators of violence against children such as we have seen in the holocaust and now in the Middle East. If your child has been murdered it must require amazing faith to be able to forgive the murderer, leave alone to pray for him or her. I have seen such faith a couple of times on TV news when a mother said that she forgave the murderer of her child. I found it astonishing and Christ-like. I also know a lovely Christian man whose daughter and female friend were murdered in her flat by a 'boyfriend' and left in a car in the road outside. He was heartbroken and obviously so angry but Jesus held him in his arms and he came through the shock, the court case and the terrible loss and kept his faith. In the end he was left with great sadness and I have often wondered how I would have coped in that situation.

The poet Longfellow said 'Enemies are people whose stories you have not heard'. Presumably he was implying that you may not *begin* to understand the actions of violent or hostile people unless you know their life stories. I suppose there is some truth in this because in our better moments we may wonder if a violent person had a sad or violent childhood and we may make allowances for that and pray for them as well.

Just as you may think you are getting somewhere with understanding all of this, St. Paul chimes in with a quote from the Old Testament (Deut32:35) and says 'Beloved, *never* avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God for it is written 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'. This also fails to take into account the qualification of this 'ideal' principle which we mentioned earlier viz. You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. AND we are not perfect! Nor will we be until we reach heaven. All we can do is try to love our enemies as Jesus asks but knowing we may fail.

So, in conclusion, don't beat yourself up too much if you feel very angry when you experience bad things happening to you, or see others suffering from violence and injustice. Jesus was angry when he threw the money-changers out of the temple and he acted on his anger. Whatever life brings to us we are all lost without our Saviour who is the only one who can walk with us through our days and all that life can throw at us as well as sharing the many joys and happy events that life can bring.

**David Langford**

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HALLS FOR HIRE

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

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**Items for the January magazine by 17<sup>th</sup> Dec please. Copy to the Editor. January magazines will be ready for distribution on 31<sup>st</sup> December.**

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