

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)

## MEET THE TEAM

*Continuing to meet the team at St Mary's, this month we meet Brenda, who amongst many other things(!) is our Church Administrator.*

“My job involves providing administrative support for Rev'd Amanda Spence and Yvonne Pickford in her roles as Churchyard Superintendent and Churchwarden.

This includes arranging with people to do readings and intercessory prayers on Sundays and updating the Service Rota accordingly. I also produce the Order of Service and Pew Sheet each week

The website, service register, BANNs register and church diary are kept up to date by me.

I answer telephone calls and reply to the church office voicemails and email. I also provide administrative support to those who are arranging funerals, weddings and interments in our church”.

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Brenda is a vital part of our team and often the first point of contact with our church. Her friendly and knowledgeable response to those contacting us for the first time, to those who are familiar members of the congregation, ensures that all know that they will receive a warm welcome at St Mary's and the caring support that they may require. This is all part of St Mary's revelation of Christ to our communities.

**Rev'd Amanda**

## **CHILDRENS SOCIETY**

Thank you to all the people who helped to make the Christingle service so successful in December. Thank you, Amanda for a lovely service explaining the Christingle. It is wonderful to watch the children build their Christingle.

St Mary's collection from this service raised £217.14p for the Children's Society such a worthy cause.

Thank you

**Pauline Muggridge**

## **THANK YOU FROM THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS**

A message from Katie Powers, the Port Welfare Officer of the Mission to Seafarers arrived too late for the January Hayes Herald but she was wishing us all at St Mary's a wonderful new year.

The 10 scarves, 12 mittens and 31 hats which had been beautifully knitted for the seafarers were well received. "Thank you for your kind



donations. They will love these. The articles will go to the UK or European centres who will take them to the crews visiting the ports"

It is good to hear that your efforts are much appreciated. Please continue to support us and if anyone else would like to knit hats, scarves or fingerless mittens the patterns are on the website [missiontoseafarers.org](http://missiontoseafarers.org). Please let me know if you need any further information.

**Jean Wilson,  
Parish Link**



Hopefully by the time you read this I will have had my knee replacement surgery and will have just started the long road to recovery. I thank you for all your prayers over the past seven months – I have really valued them. On **Monday, 26th February, 10.30** we have our first meeting of the year, in the Meetings Room at church. Debra Lucas will be talking about “**Introducing ‘Wellness’ into your life.**” This will be very appropriate for the beginning of a new year. Please do support us. Members of the congregation are welcome to join us.

We will be meeting on **January 23rd and 13th February, 11.00am** at the New Inn for coffee followed by lunch.

One of the greatest hidden scourges of our society today is the rise in the reported incidences of ‘Domestic abuse’. It occurs in all societies and is no respecter of wealth, creed or ethnicity.

I am pleased to see that ‘Mother’s Union’ is focusing on raising awareness of this situation. For all of us, painful as the subject may be, a better understanding of exactly what domestic abuse, sometimes referred to as ‘domestic violence’ [DV] constitutes, and this must be a positive thing.

So, what is domestic abuse? We define domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening or degrading behaviour, including sexual violence.

In the majority of cases the perpetrator is a partner or ex -partner but can also be a family member or carer. In the vast majority of cases, it is experienced by a woman and the perpetrator is a male.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse.
- Physical or sexual abuse

- Financial or economic abuse
- Harassment or stalking
- Online or digital abuse.

To these I would add, - Spiritual abuse.

I think I will leave it there for this month as we will, in line with Mothers Union all over Britain, be focusing on Domestic Abuse for this season.

Women's Aid (until women and children are safe) and other charities, along with the police and Social Services, have a distinctive role to play in dealing with this problem....but so do we!

### RISE UP Poem

**Respond** don't ignore abuse, you can't let it pass,  
**Inform** someone who can help them at last,  
**Support** those who suffer in silence,  
**Empower** them to leave and find a safe house,  
**Unite** those who've suffered with aid to be safe,  
**Pray** for them always for help by God's Grace.

By **Jim Bradshaw**, Bristol Diocese


### Christmas Appeal Update



Your support enables MU to run savings and skills development groups in Tanzania, through which we aim to support 3,000 women to establish or grow businesses, while gaining confidence and skills to take on leadership roles with resilience, strength, and optimism

## Reflection January 2024

My dear friends,

A portrait of a woman with short brown hair, smiling, wearing a red jacket over a grey top. She is identified as Jenny in the text below.

I send greetings as we begin another year, which in His grace, our heavenly Father has given us so we can share His love with others. In Mothers' Union terms this is a big year, because it is election year, the last year of the triennium, a time of change, a time when we get the opportunity to think about the future of MU. Sometimes we can get too comfortable and set in our ways, and, where new beginnings can be a challenge they are always times to have a positive attitude. As we go through this year let us pray that the right people will come forward to take this wonderful organisation into new growth. There is much work to be done and we need people with the right skills and the given strength to enable us to help even more vulnerable people in the years ahead. In thinking about this I am reminded of the Bible passage about the harvest being plentiful but the workers few. We can read this in Matthew 9: 35-38. Here it says, Jesus was visiting towns and villages and preaching in the synagogues sharing the Good News about the Kingdom and healing. But with a heavy heart, because as he told His disciples, they do not have the correct or enough leaders to bring in the harvest. I am further reminded of the chorus, which I first learnt as a Girl Guide, which is 'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine' which is about not hiding our 'light' or talents, but making sure we use the talents God has given us. So, at the beginning of this year please look around you and speak to members about who in your part of the world may be ready, willing and able to take on roles such as Diocesan President, member of a Trustee board or even Worldwide President. The staff at Mary Sumner House do such a wonderful job working long hours and visiting many of our Dioceses to help and encourage, we need to have the right leaders to support the work they do. Of course, each one of us has our part to play whether we are able to join others at a meeting or we welcome MU friends to the place where we live, we need to start now speaking together and praying that the way forward will be Spirit led and in line with God's will.

With love & prayers  
Jenny

## Let us pray

### *A prayer of dedication*



Father, at the beginning of this new year, we dedicate ourselves to serve you faithfully and to follow Jesus, to face the future with him, seeking his special purpose for our lives and the lives of all MU members worldwide. Touch the hearts and minds of all whom you are calling to stand as officers for the coming triennium. Enable us to work and witness freely, gratefully and full of hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit and for the honour and glory of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### *Mary Sumners Personal Prayer*

All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee, and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Amen



If any other members of the congregation would like to join us you would be most welcome.

Please contact **Avril Ashford 0208 468 7785** or speak to **Mary Ann Cooper**.

## JOIN OUR CHURCH

I hope you all enjoyed Christmas here in church. I think the various services pleased everyone. I must admit I have not seen so many children in church for a long time and it seems that the church came alive as it should.

I wondered if you would like to become a member of our church by signing a form with your name and address. I hope some of you will, although you have to be over sixteen years of age. By signing the form it gives you the opportunity to vote for the members of the Parochial Church Council, comment on something the PCC has decided to do, or not to do, and also joining some of the social groups. You can find me

standing at the back of church by the radiators after the service with the forms.

**Mary Rowedder, Electoral Officer**

## **CAROLS BY THE TOWER**

As many of you will know we started to hold this event due to Covid restrictions, as we were unable to have 300+ people in the church for a Crib Service.



It has proved to be a very popular event, with many passers-by joining us. The decision was made to hold a Crib Service again on Christmas Eve (*and please see below, page 13, for separate report on the Crib Service*), but many enthusiasts still wanted Carols by the Tower so we held it on the 23rd

December, and by God's grace, the weather stayed dry. We had been blessed with a generous legacy which enabled us to purchase our own electronic keyboard (as our Baptist friends Darren and Ruth have since moved away) and with the help of some tech savvy friends we were able to hook it up to our own hymnal speaker. Our organist Alan Hinton played for us, and just about managed to hold on to his music as the bell tower was initially a wind tunnel, until we shut the inner doors, through which could be seen our church Christmas Tree beautifully lighting up the chancel.

Some of our young people were wandering around with charity buckets in aid of Welfare Families in Crisis and this enabled us to donate a generous amount to help those families.

The service was led by our Revd Amanda (complete with Santa hat) and the singing was supported by St Mary's Singing Group. What a wonderful descant we heard at the end of 'Oh Come all Ye Faithful'. It sent us all on our way to really begin our preparations to celebrate again the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Yvonne Pickford**

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY FEBRUARY 2024

**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).**

### SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion BCP Morning Praise Sunbeams** (age 3-6)
<b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup></b>	11am – 12.15	Bible Study**
<b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	10am – 12 am	Coffee morning for the bereaved and those living on their own
	12.30 - 3.00 pm 2.30 for 2.45	Warm Welcome Space** Hayes Men's Fellowship in OCS
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	10.30 – 12.30	Craft Group

### SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00am 10.30am	Holy Communion BCP Parish Communion CW Blaze Session (age 6-10)
<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	10 – 11am	Prayer Group
<b>Ash</b>		
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	10.30 am 12.30 - 3.00 pm 7.30 pm	Holy Communion CW Warm Welcome Space** Holy Communion CW
<b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	10 – 11 am	Twinkles

### FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00 am 9.15 am	Holy Communion BCP Fresh Start
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	10.30 am	Morning Praise
<b>Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	11 am – 12.15	Bible Study**
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	12.30 – 3.00 pm	Warm Welcome Space**
<b>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Craft Group**

### SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	8.00 am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30 am	Parish Communion CW
	5 – 6 pm	Illuminate** (Bible Study age 10-15)
<b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	10.30 – 12.30	Mother's Union**
<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup></b>	10 – 11	Prayer Group
<b>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	12.30 – 3.00 pm	Warm Welcome Space**

\*Zoom link available from church office    \*\* denotes Meetings Room

**The church is also 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.**




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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](mailto:ocs.hayes@hotmail.com)

## HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Hayes Men's Fellowship February already?! Perhaps difficult to accept when we are writing these words in January to meet printing deadlines and the three kings are only just arrived to Epiphany. Yes, difficult to believe, at the time of reading, that Christmas and New Year celebrations are now well behind us – decorations stored safely away by Twelfth Night ready for next year, tree recycled, and Easter is upon us in March just as British Summer Time returns! At least display of Easter eggs and so on in shops don't seem quite so premature this year despite the competition with Lent.

Of course, we have already made our plans for this year in HMF. You can find details on our website ([www.hayesmensfellowship.org](http://www.hayesmensfellowship.org)).

Just to whet your appetite to perhaps become a member – we are open to retired and semi-retired men of any faith or none for an annual subscription of just £20 – we highlight the following Outings, which cost extra according to distance: Blenheim Palace; Chichester including Cathedral tour; and RHS Hyde Hall.

Normally at this stage we feature several reports on past events. Due to our break over the festive season we have just one recent occasion to catch up on. This was our January meeting with 37 members present, despite the wet and windy weather. We were delighted to have an engaging talk by Barbara Stevens entitled “My year as a Journalist”.



Barbara has been a popular speaker with HMF having visited us several times before, but not on this particular topic. For those of us who had heard her before, Barbara updated us on the growing size of her family, now with several great grandchildren.

For those less familiar with her, she explained that she had lived in Downe for many years (the village had been the subject of earlier talks). She had also been President of the local WI and overseen production of (and was included in the “cast” of) two “Calendar Girls” style fundraising calendars for the self styled “Downe Dames” - £42,000 was raised, mostly for the Demelza Hospice Charity. Photos from the calendars were displayed for the members to see. Apparently, men from Downe Village produced a calendar in competition with the ladies, with theirs called “Downe Trousers”. After the first calendar, Barbara was approached by

the Editor of the Kentish Times group and asked if she would be a "Village correspondent" writing a weekly column for all their newspapers. And it was paid – and she was accompanied by a photographer for part of the time. From the way it was explained, this seemed to be a role that Barbara relished and was one that brought her into contact with many interesting people. She went on to describe some of the people she had met, and their exploits, in writing the weekly column.

These included:

- First was the very brave lady who flew on her own around the world in a single-engined Piper Cherokee aircraft to raise money for the Douglas Bader Foundation to enable disabled people to fly. Having flown around the world West to East, she then repeated the exercise a few years later North to South and back. This was an arduous challenge with some of the legs of the journey taking 10 hours in her relatively slow aircraft, taking months overall.

- Then there was the former Wing Commander who started in WW2 as a Spitfire pilot and, unlike so many of his contemporaries, survived throughout the war. But like a lot of veterans, he was loathe to talk about his experiences. He was both a talented pilot, and a fortunate one, as he escaped almost unscathed from two crash landings during the war. After the war, his talents were recognised by the Vickers Aircraft Company who recruited him as a test pilot. Another role that was not for the faint hearted!

- Barbara spoke to a medium who had visited the Queen's Head pub in Downe and believed she could feel the presence of a 17th century Ostler, a man employed to look after the horses of people staying at an inn. Talking to the staff, she was even able to locate an old lantern which could have been used by the Ostler. This historic item was displayed with pride in the pub. However, later it was tragically lost when the pub was refurbished.

One of Barbara's "well-known" sons had recently been in a TV programme. She was delighted to tell us that this was the subject of a two page spread in the Daily Mail. Professional photographers and make-up artists were laid on for her and her son to produce the spread. Barbara told us that, as a result of the article, she had received three proposals of marriage! At the end, Barbara explained that she was retiring from the public speaking circuit and had only two more engagements to go. So, sadly, this was her last visit to the Fellowship.

From the Archives- As mentioned here previously, 2024 is the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of our organisation, known then as Hayes Men's Afternoon Fellowship. The underlined word has been dropped to

reflect a widening of our activities across the day but we remain faithful to their scope and purpose in that we still meet only on Wednesdays unless very special circumstances require a different day.

Researching the Archives for our Diamond Jubilee has revealed other changes and variations. The initial subscription was 50p and increased to £1 in 1975 owing to increased inflation. (Sound familiar?) More-rapid increases followed in subsequent years but the principle of remaining nonprofit-making has remained. A “Rambling” Section for “Country Walks” was finally established in 1975 and continues today each month (except in August, September and December). The essential difference is in the current description of “Walks” rather than “Rambles” perhaps to recognise that some take place in and around London. The Standing Orders of the Fellowship have never stated the maximum permitted number of members although the general perception was that 100 provided a reasonable target to ensure support for activities. In the 1970’s a Waiting List for applicants beyond a membership of 100 was briefly instituted as the total membership had been allowed to rise to 107 at one point. However, mortality and ill health quickly rendered the List unnecessary. History can repeat itself. Over the years membership has declined or risen again. In some years infirmity or death has been a changeable factor. Following the recent covid outbreak and associated lockdowns, we lost many members. Before then we had had 101 members and were considering reintroducing a membership Waiting List.....Suffice it to say our current membership is steadily increasing and stands at the time of writing at 65.

When space again permits we shall delve into the Archives once more. Meanwhile you can look forward to reading about our recent doings in these pages now and every month. Next month we are back to a full programme and will include accounts of our Silver Jubilee Lunch, our Walk in London and our Talk entitled “Our Moon – Magnificent desolation”. If you would like to have a friendly chat with us our contact details are below.

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

e-mail: [secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org](mailto:secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org)

phone: **07764 153383**

## THE CRIB SERVICE 2023

After a couple of years when a Nativity service was held at 10.30 am to avoid crowds post the pandemic, it was deemed safe to revert to the traditional 4 pm Christmas Eve Crib Service. A Christingle Service was held the week before and at the appropriate time during this, two children dressed as Mary and Joseph walked around the church with the baby Jesus to illustrate God coming into the world. This was a new addition to the service but seemed to work well.

Regarding the Crib Service my first concern is always whether we would find enough children to take part but to my delight all but two of the Sunbeams were available and with the addition of a few extras who came out of the woodwork we ended up with seventeen children. Not only that but they all turned up at the correct time in spite of the many viruses flying around at that time of the year.

Having acquired the children the next step is to allocate the roles and then the costumes. This can be problematic but with the able assistance of my trusty Sunbeam helper this was accomplished one evening in church. My next task is ironing all the garments which takes a while and never quite seems to remove all the creases. They are then packed in tissue paper in my case.

I then have to ensure I have all the accessories of sheep, head-dresses, belts, safety pins, kirby grips etc, not forgetting the baby doll and the star. Last year's star was looking rather sad, having been used for several years, and Tom made me a lovely new sturdy one which I decorated with tinsel. As I was helping with the talk I also had to collect together many props for Amanda to use in the pulpit and these included a balloon, a wooden mallet, some straw, a sheep, a camel and many others. If you wonder what was going on come and see next year!

I spent the afternoon of Christmas Eve in the Meeting Room arranging seventeen chairs with a costume on each and the name of the child. I was so fortunate with the help I received from my trusty Sunbeam helper and her little daughter. At the right time the children began to arrive and three of us, together with parents, achieved the impossible and turned seventeen children into Mary, Joseph, shepherds and angels and were ready for the traditional photograph. Unfortunately, I

didn't realise that two of them were having a comfort break at the time so sadly they were missed from my picture.

A new innovation was that the children processed into church behind the cross and then peeled off to the Lady Chapel to sit on kneelers to await their turn to walk around the church. They all did very well and created a lovely tableau on the chancel steps. At the end of the service photos were taken by the parents and then we all trooped back to the Meeting Room for the great undressing. When everyone had gone I was once again given much appreciated help to restore the room to its usual condition. Exhausted but happy I returned home for a cup of tea, and it's only ten months until the next Crib Service!

**Hilary Burtonshaw**

## **CHRISTIANS IN NORTH KOREA.**

Each year, Open Doors, the Christian organisation that fights for persecuted Christians around the world, publishes its World Watch List. This list identifies those countries where persecution of Christians is most severe. In recent years, Open Doors has ranked North Korea as the place where Christians face the worst persecution for their faith. It is a country where it is not only dangerous to be known as a Christian; but often fatal.

Yet amazingly, there are a significant number of Christians, secret believers. Open Doors estimates around 400,000 out of a total population of 26 million. Given the systematic attempt of the authorities to wipe out Christians and the brainwashing that goes on in the schools and elsewhere that number is truly remarkable.

Information about what is happening, seeps out mainly through refugees who escape, usually across the border to China. But that is not a safe route.

Recently, Open Doors printed details of the testimony of one North Korean believer who had escaped to the West. She recalled how as a child her house was ransacked by police, arresting her father and looking for his 'secret book'. Her father was taken away and she never saw him again. "My father loved to read me stories and sayings out of the book – about a wise man who sat on a mountain and began to teach. Why would a lesson about kindness be so dangerous in North Korea". Only years later did she realise it was a Bible.

She was determined to find out what her father's secret had been. What had meant so much to him that he was willing to count such a severe cost? But there was one other hidden thing in her house that the police agents had not found: her father's radio.

After her father was taken, she started listening to the radio. One evening she was turning the dial and found a new station. She realised, with a start, that they were talking about the same 'wise man' her father had told her about, the one in the secret book. They called Him 'Jesus'. "From then on, I listened to the station every chance I got.....I heard other things about Jesus: 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ' and the most amazing thing of all: 'For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have everlasting life'. "As I listened, I became more and more convinced. This Jesus was the great teacher that my father had been trying to tell me about. Jesus wanted to be my Lord and saviour – and I wanted to follow Him, in the same way my father had".

What can we do to help the Christians in North Korea?

1. Pray – using the Open Doors website for key prayer points
2. Financial support – yes, amazingly there are ways that Open Doors and others can channel effective support.

Information from the Open Doors website.

**Contact:** [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

**David James**

## **A WALK AT CHRISTMAS**

Dark clouds are crossing a bright moon  
As I walk my dog in the dark  
Two days before Christmas.  
No one else has ventured out.  
The streets are eerily silent.

Houses have festive lights and decorations.  
I see a man crossing his room,  
Talking on his mobile

Like an actor in a play  
With no sound track.

Our street is ablaze with lights  
Flashing and changing colour  
Reminiscent of Blackpool.  
My dog seems unaware of them  
And the emptiness of the street.

Some houses are in darkness  
With no signs of celebration  
Some folk are away for Christmas,  
Some too sad to celebrate  
Or have painful memories.

I could feel alone but I don't.  
I look to the dark sky  
In all its magnificence.  
The wind and scudding clouds remind me  
That my God is watching me.

I talk to him as I stroll  
And he listens to my deepest thoughts.  
Walking in the dark in late evening  
Is strangely peaceful and comforting.  
The true 'Light of the world' is in my heart.....  
[And I feel sad for those who don't know Him]

**David Langford**

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**Items for the March magazine by 17<sup>th</sup> Feb please. Copy to the Editor.**

**March magazines will be ready for distribution on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.**

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