

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

MEET THE TEAM – Jesus is for life, not just for Christmas

We are still in the Christmas season, which will continue. In the Christian faith, Christmas moves on to Twelfth Night, which falls on the 5th of January - that is, twelve nights including Christmas night. The Christmas season goes through to Epiphany on the 6th of January, celebrating the part of Jesus' birth story of the visit of the distant magi, also known as the three kings, ending with the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also known as Candlemas, which falls on the 2nd of February this year.

The visit of the magi reveals Jesus is a 'light to lighten the Gentiles', a gift given by God for all peoples. Jesus' recognition by Simeon and Anna in the temple, shows how he is also 'the Glory of God's people Israel'.

Jesus is a gift for everyone, so how will we make the most of this gift this year? St Paul has an idea in 1 Thessalonians 3.12-13, 'may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.'

What can we then make our New Year's resolution, I wonder? Maybe also to develop our relationship with God our Father, in prayer and looking to strengthen our hearts by searching scripture and joining in fellowship through worship and other events at church? Maybe join one of our Home, Bible Study or Prayer Groups. See some details below and at the centre of this Hayes Herald.

Rev Amanda

Friday Afternoon House Group About to Resume

Back in May it was announced in these pages that an afternoon House Group would be starting at 129 Pickhurst Lane in Hayes with the

ambitious object to read, study and apply Luke's Acts of the Apostles chapter by chapter, 1 to 28, every fortnight or so. We have had sufficient volunteers to launch and make excellent progress to reach chapter 12 as planned when we paused for Advent and Christmas and New Year celebrations. The discussion has been very good as we explored just how our Christianity was conceived, nurtured and developed into a meaningful faith, and continues to thrive centuries later in us. We are following a very helpful and insightful two-part study guide conceived and written by former Bishop of Durham Tom Wright which can be obtained inexpensively from Amazon.

The continuing plan is to resume as follows:

January 10: Acts 13; January 24: Acts 14; February 14: Acts 15; February 28: Acts 16.

That will take us up to when we pause for Lent (March 9th onwards) and the Easter period in April, resuming on May 9: Acts 17; May 23: Acts 18, then approximately every fortnight to conclude with Acts 28 on 24 October!

That's the plan! If anyone else would like to join us when we meet here at my house from 2.30 to 4pm, there's parking for 4/5 cars on paved forecourt, bus routes 138, 246 and 314 serve the "Crest Road" stop almost adjacent and refreshments are even provided! Please do get in touch, either in person at church (I'm there with Jean most Sundays for the various 10.30 services) or call me on (020)8249 0070 for an exploratory chat, or leave your contact details on the answering machine should I not be available.

One final encouragement to join the group now: chapter 13 sees the presence of Paul emerging...

Allan Evison, Reader with PTO

Central Bible Study Group

In our central Bible Study, on Tuesday mornings in the Meetings Room, we start at 11am and for an hour or so with coffee in one hand and the Bible in the other, we have an informal but informed walk through the Bible seeking its relevance to our daily lives.

Why do we study the Bible together? The Bible has a central place in our worshipping life, reflecting the way in which God speaks to His church, but also the way in which we respond as Christians. It is therefore formative in our daily walk with the Lord. So taking time out to deepen our understanding of what the Bible says seems a self-evidently good thing to do.

Recently we have been studying passages from the Old Testament through the eyes of the New Testament, and exploring how what is written there points to Jesus.

All are welcome to join us. We meet on the first and third Tuesdays each month.

David James



ST MARY THE VIRGIN HAYES - CHARITY GIVING FORUM – UPDATE

We met on a cold wet Saturday in November to discuss the way forward for St Mary's Charity Giving. Quite a complex matter, as you can imagine! Do we concentrate on just one or two charities? Do we support local charities or do we support the Church of England's well-known charities? Should we still support a Seafarers' charity, when we are miles from the sea? Can we restart our 'charity' coffee mornings? Can we manage all? As you are no doubt aware we are fortunate church – there is good support for any of our charity events – so a further examination and discussion will take place on **Saturday 1st February – 10.30am** in the Meetings Room. Do come along and join in this very important part of our mission.

Mary Whytock

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Every six years the Diocese of Rochester wants an update of Church membership, and as we have started a new year, we as Electoral officers have to ask everyone who is on our Church's Electoral Roll to re-apply. So look out for Graham and myself at the back of church with forms for you to sign again. Thank you.

Mary Rowedder



Firstly, I would like to wish you all a very happy, peaceful and healthy New Year. I look forward to the year ahead and hope that we might grow in faith and fellowship together. The start of a new year is, for some, a time to make resolutions, to turn over a new leaf and make changes for the better in our lives. For those of us that have made resolutions, I hope that you are able to fulfil them, but mostly I pray that we may all find the new year one of blessing and opportunity for us to share our faith as Mothers' Union members within our parish.

Seventeen of us enjoyed a festive meal at the New Inn, where there was plenty of laughter and friendship.



Thoughts for January:

Selah is an ancient Biblical, Hebrew word meaning pause and reflect. When I was thinking about my contribution to January's magazine I was pausing and reflecting and that got me thinking. Maybe this could be our thought for the month.

After a very busy and frenetic run up to Christmas and New Year, maybe now is the time to just take a deep breath and pause. I don't know about you but the preparation for Christmas festivities is exhausting. Trying to remember who to send cards to, who deserves a present, which Christmas decorations to use this year and whether to go for a crown of turkey or the whole bird. I realise I have been in a bit of a brain fog.

So, having paused and taken a deep breath, maybe it's now time to think back and analyse, very informally, how Christmas went. There is a management course that teaches a very simple way to reflect on anything that I have undertaken and learn lessons from it. It goes like this

What went well and why?

What didn't go so well and why?

So next time I will...

This very simple mechanism is so helpful. It means in any given activity; I can celebrate all the things that actually went well. At the same time, I can make a mental note of why they may have gone well (planning, discussing, resourcing etc). Then I can honestly reflect on why another activity or occasion wasn't so successful and why that might have been. And finally, I can look into the future and see what I might do differently next time to make the whole thing more successful.

It's a very simple tool but one that I have found to be very useful over the years. So, in January, when we think of Janus - look both backwards and forwards. I hope you find it useful too. **SELAH.**

Our next informal meeting will be on January 7th at the New Inn when we can catch up on news of our various Christmas celebrations. There will **not** be a meeting in the Meetings Room in January. We will be meeting on **10th February** (2nd Monday). Speaker to be announced in the February magazine.

I have been asked to share this Christmas Farewell letter to you all from Sheran, our World Wide President, as she comes to the end of her 5 year term.

Dear Friends,

The wonderful season of Christmas is upon us again and this is my final letter to you as your Worldwide President 2019-2024. The time has rolled by so quickly and instead of saying farewell, I would rather this to be a time of thanksgiving for the blessing that you are to so many, and a celebration of all we have accomplished together as Mothers' Union.

In a changing world with its many complexities, I am so much stronger and taller now, having been inspired by you and leading our life-giving movement through different phases, although sometimes it did stretch my understanding. Thank you for your love and prayers which gave me confidence and helped me to recognize that it has been all about God's plan and purpose for Mothers' Union.

This incredible journey has been one where I have seen the hand of God move mountains in difficult situations and reach beyond borders to give hope to so many members and communities. I have encountered the goodness of Jesus Christ when our sisters, their families and communities are lifted out of poverty and shame. The multitudes that benefit from our prayers and acts of kindness continue to testify to the Christ-light that radiates from us, and a faith that transcends all understanding. Blessed are we who fellowship together in this ministry! Blessed are we who believe in doing our little bit to make a difference.

As I reflect on the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel during this Christmas Novena, I am reminded of the announcement of the most marvellous event that ever happened in this world — the incarnation and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This good news was delivered to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Angel Gabriel declaring, "You are blessed and highly favoured."

As Christians we believe this to mean that God is giving us the grace to fulfil a special assignment. We know for sure that as members, this assignment is the work of Mothers' Union, and our mission is to share the love of Jesus with the world. Although a tall task, we have no fear because just as the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, he also spreads his wings and covers us with the assurance that God's Grace is sufficient.

Mary knew that she was going to give birth to Jesus, the light of the world, and through him the course of history would be changed. What is it that will be birthed from us as Mothers' Union in the new triennium that will transform the Church and the world to reflect Christ's Kingdom?

As we look forward to a new triennium, with the peace, hope, and love that the Christ Child brings, my fervent prayer is that we will build on all that has been achieved and move forward together with the vision of our founder Mary Elizabeth Sumner. May her legacy live on in our hearts, homes, and communities for generations to come. May others experience and share the amazing love of Jesus in the same way that we do in Mothers' Union.

I leave the Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila with you.

Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours.

St. Teresa of Avila

(1515-1582)

As we celebrate this joyful season with family and friends, may our prayers and God's love reach all those who are having a very different Christmas this year.

A Happy and Blessed Christmas from my family to yours!

With my love and prayers as always,

Sheran x

Please let me know what you would like me to arrange for our 2025 programme of meetings, along with as many suggestions for speakers

as possible. This has been a difficult year for me with both Colin and myself being in poor health. Next year we will need more help in setting up the room, and with the refreshments. Please offer help if you are able.

Happy New Year.

Avril Ashford

MAKING MIRACLES - THE BIG KNIT 2024



Further to the article in last month's Hayes Herald these are the photographs of the knitted blankets and baby clothes we took down to Rochester Cathedral.

We have already started knitting squares for next year's blankets. Thank you very much for

all your donations of wool we have received this year it is good to know we have been able to use the wool on various projects.



Pauline Muggridge



ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY JANUARY 2025

Morning Prayers take place daily at 9.15am Monday to Wednesday on Zoom* and Monday to Friday in Church (10am on Saturday) throughout the year, except Bank Holidays.

EPIPHANY

Saturday 4th	12.30pm	Churchyard Tidy Up
Sunday 5th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise
		Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)
Tuesday 7th	11.00am-12.15pm	Bible Study**
Wednesday 8th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Thursday 9th	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group**

BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Sunday 12th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
		Blaze session** (age 6-10)
Wednesday 15th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Friday 17th	10.00-11.00am	Twinkles – singing, story, snacks**

2ND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Sunday 19th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	9.15am	Fresh Start
	10.30am	Morning Praise
Tuesday 21st	11.00am-12.15pm	Bible Study**
Wednesday 22nd	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Thursday 23rd	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group**

3RD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Sunday 26th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
		Blaze session** (age 6-10)

* for Zoom link please contact the Church office

** denotes Meetings Room

The church is also open for quiet space on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10.00am to 12.00noon unless there is an event taking place. Details of these will be given in the weekly pew sheets.



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

HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We reach January after an all too short break from Fellowship activities without an outing or a walk in December but of course all our members could then celebrate Christmas and New Year in their own way and return refreshed to look forward to an active HMF new year. Prominent on the agenda must be our Annual Lunch in a new venue, The Park Langley Club (sometimes known as The Tennis Club) in Wickham Way and so popular that we have had to book for a Friday instead of our usual Wednesday! The deadline for bookings has now passed and we are delighted to report that 62 diners are on the list, higher than last year.

Meanwhile here is how our most recent activities turned out, starting with our visit to Windsor and The Poppy Factory in Richmond. Windsor was a delight because it was so much quieter than when most of us had visited it previously. But this was not peak tourist season – the castle was closed on Wednesdays and the riverboats shut down in September for the Winter. It was a pleasure admiring the castle, browsing round the shops or walking along the Thames towpath. Next stop was the Poppy Factory where we were given a talk about the



origins and its relationship with the Royal British Legion. The charity was founded in 1922 by Major George Howson MC, a British Army officer who had served in WW1. His vision was to provide employment for veterans injured during the First World War and that continues to this day. Most poppies are now made directly by the Royal British Legion but veterans at Richmond still produce Remembrance wreaths by hand. We

were also able to make examples of two of the different types of poppy. We were encouraged to make the traditional poppy using a wooden block developed by George Howson to enable disabled veterans to create them one handed.

Our latest walk was from Richmond Station to Kew or Mortlake. The weather was excellent for walking when the walkers left Richmond Station making their way to the south bank of the Thames and, shortly after passing under Twickenham Bridge, before crossing the Thames at Richmond Lock. Then on across Syon Park, past Syon House, building sites, inlets, the start of the Grand Union Canal, various wiggly roads and down to Kew Bridge where they lunched at 'The Express Tavern' (good service and food). The total distance walked was 5.0 miles.



At our latest meeting we had a talk entitled “Acting is Murder” by Linda Regan about her careers as an actor and an author of crime fiction as well as her earlier life. She has worked – and is still working – in film, TV, Theatre and Radio. She has been in over 100 TV shows, including five series of Hi-de-Hi and Birds of Feather. She has also been in a wide range of films including Carry on England and acted on stage, including for the RSC. She was a very engaging speaker who talked through a series of witty anecdotes. One was about her first job which was to say two lines in a programme being filmed at Elstree Studios starring Diana Dors. She was 17, had a full driving licence for three days and owned a Ford Popular car (cost: £5)! She was supposed to take the A1 but accidentally deviated onto the M1. When she realised, she tried a U-turn on the

motorway but got bogged down on the central reservation. Miraculously, she was not injured and the Policeman attending the scene turned out to be “in love” with Diana Dors so escorted her to Elstree rather than arresting her. He was rewarded with a signed photo of his “beloved”!

That's all for now, but surely not too belated to wish everyone a Happy and Sociable New Year.

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

Contacts: Graham Marsden
e-mail: secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org
phone: 07764 153383

SUNBEAMS ON ADVENT SUNDAY

On December 1st we had great fun. After our usual candle song, collection and sticker picture (currently a flower called Petunia) things got exciting. Christmas is within sight so we looked at the story of the Nativity and then set about making a Christmas stable scene. I don't usually have as many as ten children and wondered whether I had enough stable scenes for them all. In fact I had exactly the right number and shouldn't have been surprised as God was in charge!

As there were so many children, I put the four older ones on a separate table with work to do and left them a bag of glitter. The younger ones remained at the other tables with crayons. With extra helpers we kept everyone happy and when I returned to the older children there was naturally glitter everywhere! We finished as always by singing the prayer 'Thank you for the world so sweet' before going into church to show our work and tell the congregation what we had been doing.

My helpers are wonderful and together we are a great team. By returning to the Meeting Room before the last hymn of the service we manage to clear everything away in time for the coffee and tea to be served. The children head straight for the biscuits of course!

At home I sorted out my bag and put away the glitter until the arrival of the Kings. Then I realised I had glitter on myself and other places in the spare room. Glitter is part of Christmas for me and I love it!

We are now looking forward to the special Christingle service and the Crib Service and I will tell you all about them next time.

Hilary Burtonshaw

DRAGONS AND HORSES

“You have to produce this girl. We’re not going to let you go until you do.” The triad gang leader was banging on the table furiously, and everyone in the cafe was terrified. Not least Jackie, sitting at the table with him, surrounded by five or six of his gang. Outside were two cars, full of gang members armed with knives. Angel was a young prostitute. Jackie had given her protective shelter and had come to meet with the gang leader to urge them to release Angel from her life of enforced prostitution.

Jackie explained that Angel now wanted to follow Jesus. She no longer wanted to be a prostitute. She wanted to start a new life. But all they were interested in was the fact that she was valuable to them. Angel represented income. And property.

And Jackie was now in their way. The mention of Jesus seemed to hit deaf ears.

Jackie was alone, apart from one of the young lads from the club who had come with her. There seemed to be no way out. She prayed, quietly so that they could not hear her. Having no idea what to do on a (inspired?) whim she said “I have to go and buy some vegetables”. Amazingly they just let her go. Outside some of the men were getting out of their cars and walking towards her. Just at that moment a bus happened to pass. She jumped on, got away and went straight to the police station.

Why did they let her go? A little later Jackie was talking to Angel’s family. They had also had a terrifying visit from the triad gang, looking for Angel. But one of the gang had asked who Jackie, this ‘Jesus lady’, was. Before, said the gang member, Angel had been so obedient and passive. But now she dared to resist them. And then he admitted that when they were sitting in the café with Jackie, *they* were frightened: “we dared not look in her eyes because she has some kind of power”. They had not dared to touch her because they recognised a spiritual power at work.

This experience of Jackie Pullinger in Hong Kong, came to my mind recently during Morning Prayers* as we were reading the Biblical account of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 6).

The king of Aram was furious, shouting at his advisers: “There’s a traitor among you!” At war with the King of Israel, his every move seemed to be anticipated by the enemy. “There’s no traitor,” pleaded the advisers, “but Elisha, the prophet of Israel, has the power to know your thinking. He guides their king”. So, the king of Aram sent a large force of his troops to seize Elisha, who at that time was in Dothan with his servant. The troops surrounded the town. Terrified, Elisha’s servant

asked him “what shall we do?”; “Don’t be afraid” said Elisha, “for those with us are more than those with them”. And praying to God to open the servant’s eyes, the servant saw that the hills around were full of a huge *spiritual* army, likened to horses and ‘chariots of fire’. Suddenly, a temporary blindness struck the king of Aram’s forces, and Elisha by a ruse led them to a place where they were at the mercy of the king of Israel. But directing the king to spare them, he sent them on their way unharmed.

This rather mysterious incident from the life of Elisha is of course full of drama but also immediately raises for us as Christians a number of questions: not least, what are we to make of this? And what is its relevance to us today?

So, three reflections:

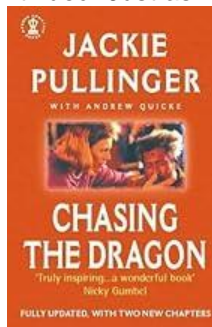
Firstly, throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation the theme of God’s presence is loud and clear, developed consistently in the OT but reaching its climax in the Gospels and the birth of Jesus, God’s own Son. In Jesus God came to live amongst us. And on the cross to die for us. And after Jesus’ death and resurrection, at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to us.

Secondly, God’s presence with His people can be apparent in different ways, but He is most often with us in the humdrum of life, the ‘ordinary’ undramatic cut and thrust of life. As Christians we are not alone. But we often need reminding of that. As Israel’s King David said, even when we find ourselves going through horrendously dark times (Psalm 23).

Finally, on occasion God’s presence may appear in what to us is the ‘extraordinary’. But the extraordinary offers a glimpse into the ordinary. Into spiritual reality. As in this incident with Elisha. And for two thousand years in the life of the church that experience has continued. Just as in the incident in the life of Jackie Pullinger in Hong Kong. Most amazingly, God’s presence working in and through the lives of ordinary Christians.

**Meeting in church and on Zoom, Monday –
Wednesday at 9.15 am.*

Footnote: Jackie Pullinger first went to Hong Kong in 1967. In *Chasing the Dragon*, she sets out the story of her work amongst the drug addicts and prostitutes in the so-called walled city of Kowloon, a lawless enclave within Hong Kong, that was finally demolished in 1994.



David James

HAYES (KENT) VILLAGE ASSOCIATION TO CLOSE AFTER 91 YEARS OF SERVICE

Hayes is about to lose its voice.

Please come to Hayes Village Hall on **Thursday 16th January at 7.30pm** to decide what happens to Hayes Village Association. The association faces a vote to dissolve it as there has been a lack of members. This is the last chance to save the HVA and to ensure it survives into the future. The pleasant place in which we all live has held on to its village feel thanks to those people who have led and supported the HVA over the last 91 years to prevent Hayes being swallowed up by Bromley.

Please consider standing for the committee to allow the HVA to continue to serve Hayes.

Olly Pereira

Footsteps at Bedtime

Footsteps echoing down the hall,
Shadows shimmering on the wall,
Are things I've remembered over the years,
Often with pleasure, sometimes with tears.
Lying awake in fading light
I'd listen and watch until it was night.
I knew who stayed in and who went out,
Who spoke in a whisper and who with a shout.
I heard every footstep on the stair,
And knew exactly who was there
When my sister followed me to bed at last,
On reaching the landing she'd hurry past,
But later Mum, then Dad, would pause at my door,
And through the night I'd hear no more.
Safe in the silence I'd sleep 'til morning.
When I heard the sounds of a new day dawning
I would get up eagerly and run downstairs,
And my footsteps and shadows would mingle with theirs.

Hilary Abrahams

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

Tools with a Mission is a Christian charity founded in 1984 that accepts donations of useable unwanted tools, refurbishes them, sorts into trade kits (15,200 p.a.) and ships (20 containers p.a.) to principally Zambia and Uganda where the journey ends and LIVES are TRANSFORMED.

We do this because we believe "**The Lord is close to those whose hearts have been broken. He saves those whose hearts have been crushed** " (Psalm 34:18)

- **Hand & power tools for inclusion in –**
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- **Bibles in Modern English**

Full details at www.twam.uk or on facebook at: www.facebook.com/toolswithamission

Questions are most welcome

Please ring Peter on **020 8467 5120**

Photos on p.10-11 by Graham Marsden

Items for the February issue by 18th Jan please. Copy to the Editor. February magazines will be ready for distribution on 1st February.

Editor: Clare Wickert, 3 Hayes Garden, Hayes.

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

Business Manager: Gordon Barclay, 29 Hurstdene Avenue, Hayes

Tel: 020 8462 2568 gcb Barclay@hotmail.co.uk

Church Website: www.stmaryshayeskent.co.uk