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

## LENT - IS NOT THIS THE FAST THAT I CHOOSE?

We are taking a break from 'meet the team' this month but it has been a great opportunity for the community to 'virtually' meet some of the many members of St Mary's and see the wonderful things that they do for the church and the community. This is an opportunity for me to thank all those who have taken up tasks to support St Mary's and serve the wider community.

Which leads me very nicely into talking about the time of **Lent**. A time of self-denial, of giving things up. Or maybe it can be time for us to take something up. A time of reflection and self-examination, of waiting and penitence, with time given to prayer and spending some time with God.

#### Why Lent?

Well, it could be seen as a journey, a pilgrimage towards the joy of Easter. But the pilgrimage goes beyond Easter Day, through the fifty days of celebration up to Pentecost. This is when the disciples are 'filled with the Holy Spirit'. (Acts 2.4.) So, the journey can be called 'from ashes to fire', the penitential cinders of Ash Wednesday to the flames of Pentecost, when 'divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.' (Acts 2.3.)

Following Shrove Tuesday, a time of pancakes, we move into Ash Wednesday. This year we shared Shrove Tuesday together, children and families enjoying pancake races, tossing pancakes and eating lots of pancakes too, with sugar, lemon, syrup and marshmallows, (some less traditional toppings here, I know). But do not worry, there were healthy fruit options too.

Christians in times past traditionally used up all the eggs and fat they had, making pancakes. When Lent came, they would eat less food, or even fast (do without food sometimes) to help them focus on God and not on the things they wanted. This tradition has been passed down the generations.

Ash Wednesday then follows, the start of penitential season. This year we had services at 10.30am and 7.30pm and at both there was the opportunity for self-examination.

- A general confession, to remember the wrong thing we have done and to ask for forgiveness
- The imposition of ashes, where each person can be marked in ash with the sign of the cross
- Prayers

This is the start of the Lent journey, to choose to fast, to act for God during this time. Isaiah has some words to share on fasting.

'Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?' (Isaiah 58.6-7)

Earlier in the book of Isaiah, it is shared that it is no good to fast and then oppress their workers; to fast and then quarrel and fight. It is humility in serving God that is required. In all we do, we are to act in such a way that people might see our 'light shall break forth like the dawn' (Isaiah 58.8); God brought into focus in the everyday of life.

So, what is the fast that we might choose? Caring for one another, speaking against injustice, sharing with others? At St Mary's we are looking for ways to do just that. We are looking for ways we can reach into the community, and hoping to run 'Caring Concerns', an introductory course that covers areas of pastoral ministry. If you are interested, please get in contact with St Mary's; we look forward to hearing from you and prayers for your journey this Lent.

#### Rev'd Amanda

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April** at 7.30pm in the church.

We will be electing two new Churchwardens and new PCC members: Yvonne Pickford, Rosemary Smith, Roger Rowe, Mary Stannard and Mark Willoughby will be retiring, as they have served their three-year term. We are extremely grateful to them for their service and input into our deliberations.

If you would like to stand for election, please indicate this to Rev'd Amanda, Yvonne and/or any member of the PCC. Please consider standing as a Churchwarden or Assistant Churchwarden and for PCC. There is a great need for members of our church to volunteer for these roles – we are at the moment considering the deployment of duties of these roles - as they have been defined in the past – so do not be daunted in offering your services in any way! These are exciting times for St Mary's and you can play your part and support the organisation and running of YOUR church.

So make a note in your diary and do think about standing for election.

The documents and papers will be available at the end of March.

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

### CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY OPPOSE STANDING CHARGES ON FUEL BILLS

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) has written a letter responding to Ofgem's call for input on standing charges.

For people on prepayment meters especially, standing charges can be problematic. Over summer, when people may not be using their gas for heating yet, they are still required to pay a daily standing charge. This can mean that when temperatures drop and people want to heat their home, they are faced with a high debt to repay before they can do so.

CAP would like Ofgem to note that the levels of most standing charges are currently too high, and can lead to longer periods of selfdisconnection. More needs to be done by suppliers, Ofgem and the Government to support low-income households afford their energy use.

PP news March 2024



2024 seems to be slipping away very quickly. It is lovely to see daffodils giving colour in the garden, along with crocuses, snowdrops and beautiful camellias. I am watching my neighbour's magnificent magnolia tree as it begins to burst into flower, and am looking forward to the day when I can get out into the garden to tend to the flowers again. We are reminded how wonderful God's world is.

This month's article will be short as I am recovering from my knee operation, and Colin has had an emergency stay in St Thomas's hospital, and is still very unwell.

We have continued to meet at The New Inn which seems very popular with many members as it gives them an opportunity to socialise with other members. Our next meeting at The New Inn will be on **March 5th at 11 am**. On February 26th we welcomed Debra Lucas to talk about "Introducing 'Wellness' into our lives". A report on her talk will be in next month's magazine.

Our meeting in the Meetings Room, on **March 18th**, will be taken by Allan Evison who will be speaking about '**Mothers and Motherhood'** as it is close to Mothering Sunday. It will be a time when we can reflect on our own mothers, and all that we can thank them for. I hope to be back with you all for our April meeting.

#### Give a Gift of Dignity this Mothering Sunday

www.makeamothersday.org

"We share what we have grown..." - Jeanne, Burundi

Every woman and girl should have the right to be respected. Yet in some of the world's poorest communities, the local culture consistently robs them of that right. Your Gift of Dignity this Mothering Sunday can empower women and girls to break the chains that stop them speaking out. You can inspire leaders and authorities in their community to stand by them.

Jeanne's story is just one example that shows how the support you provide makes a difference.

It all started when Jeanne, from the Diocese of Buhiga in Burundi, was introduced to literacy training. The skills she developed from learning to read and write later enabled her to secure a loan. The skills of literacy have now enabled her to have a house, cows, food, clothes and schooling for her children – essentials previously out of their reach. She tithes to her local church, investing in her community in the process.

Her family are changing the devastating cycle of poverty. Her children are now in school, gaining an education and building their own futures.

Jeanne holds her head high with dignity, knowing she is lifting herself and her family out of poverty – for good. Your gift can even support more women to grow their independence, take on leadership roles, and build a better future for their children.



You can also make a gift in the memory of a loved one, perhaps a mother, auntie, grandmother or other significant caregiver. It's a beautiful way to cherish their life and to honour their legacy.

I am going to start this month's article on "**abuse**" by continuing our investigation into what actually constitutes domestic abuse. Last month MU published this poem by Jim Bradshaw from the Diocese of Bristol that addresses our response, so let's look at it again.

Respond...don't ignore, 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. As I said before, anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of age, gender, race, faith, sexual orientation or social class. Victims may also include another relative, child or household member. It is, in truth, any situation where the 'abuser' exerts power and control over the victim.

Domestic abuse can be physical, mental, economic or sexual in nature. Incidents often follow a pattern and are rarely isolated. Often they escalate over a period of time, becoming more and more severe. They can culminate in physical injury or permanent mental breakdown.

'Are you being abused?' is a question that maybe we should ask ourselves? Sometimes, relatively harmless behaviours and habits within a family setting become entrenched and incrementally abusive.

Becoming aware and vigilant is the first and most important step in dealing with the situation. Tough stuff and enough for now!

Next month we will look at ways in which we can begin to recognise signs of abuse.

All that I have just said is reinforced by the MU, in their current initiative **RISE UP.** 

If you are interested in finding out more about Mothers' Union please contact **Mary-Ann 02084621091**, or just come along to one of our meetings. You would be most welcome.

### Avril Ashford

# A LONG WAY BACK

Peter and I have just been on a 6-week round-the-world trip to catch up with friends and family in Australia and New Zealand. I'm very grateful to David James for producing the February *Hayes Herald* in my absence.

Back in 1989 we lived in a small town called Waimate in NZ for a year while Peter was on a teaching exchange. We swapped our terraced house in South Norwood for a large detached bungalow on a 'quarter acre section' belonging to another geography teacher. I felt we got the better of the swap, but his family seemed happy to be moving close to the sights of London.

One of the highlights of that year – apart from travelling all over the South Island - was getting involved in the local am-dram scene. The annual musical was My Fair Lady, and – entirely on account of our accents, it must be admitted - Peter and I landed the lead roles. This proved an excellent way of getting to know people – and being recognised by people we didn't know too.

It was a strange experience to revisit the place after 35 years. Many of the people who had befriended us back then were older than us and had retired and moved elsewhere or passed away. Apart from changes to some of the business premises in the high street, everything looked the same – the blue hills, the wide streets, the bank of cloud that always packed in along the coast. The theatre where we had performed was still there, as was the Royal Tavern where we used to have a beer on Friday nights. The melancholy thing about revisiting places in later life is the awareness that the main thing that has changed is you, and that from now on you will only ever visit foreign countries as a tourist.

In Christchurch, we stayed with Peter's brother and sister-in-law who have lived there since they moved as 'ten-pound Poms' in the early 1970s. They were caught up in the earthquake of 2011 and took us to the newly created museum to give us an inkling of what they had experienced. They also drove us around the Red Zones – suburban districts now designated unsafe to build or live on. There are acres and acres of these subdivisions – now just levelled grassy plots with a smattering of abandoned shrubs describing the ghostly outlines of former gardens where houses once stood. It was sobering stuff. The cathedral is still swathed in

scaffolding and а temporary 'cardboard' cathedral has been erected nearby - an Aframe building designed to withstand tremors. I had envisaged something cobbled together out of old brown amazon boxes. but this is



clearly a more sophisticated cardboard.

This was just one week of the six – I am still processing all the sights and experiences from the rest of the trip!

#### **Clare Wickert**

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY **MARCH 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).

#### LENT 3

Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	12.30pm	Churchyard Tidy Up
Sunday 3rd	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise
		Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am-12.15pm	Bible Study**
Wednesday 6 <sup>t</sup>	<sup>h</sup> 10.30am	Coffee morning for the bereaved and those living on their own**
	12.30-3.00pm 2.45pm	Warm Welcome Space** Hayes Men's Fellowship in OCS

#### **LENT 4 - MOTHERING SUNDAY**

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

#### LENT 5

Sunday 17th 8.00am 9.15am 10.30am Monday 18<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> 11.00am-12.15pm Wednesday 20th 12.30-3.00pm

Holy Communion BCP Fresh Start Morning Praise Mothers' Union\*\* Bible Study\*\* Warm Welcome Space\*\*

## PALM SUNDAY

Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP		
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW Blaze session** (age 6-10)		
	5.00-6.00pm	Illuminate** (Bible study, age 10-18)		
Wednesday 27	<sup>th</sup> 12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**		
Maundy Thursday				
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Holy Communion		
Good Friday				
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am	Procession from Hayes Village Hall		
	10.30am	Service at Hayes Free Church		
	12.00-3.00pm	Three Hour Devotion		
Easter Eve				
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup>	8.00-9.00pm	Easter Vigil		
EASTER DAY				
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup>	8.00am 10.30am	Holy Communion BCP Parish Communion CW Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)		

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

The church is also open for private prayer 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.



### HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Spring into March with the next in a monthly series of HMF outings to our beautiful countryside, with charges just aiming to cover costs: to Chichester in West Sussex, including a tour of the Cathedral, followed, month by month, Essex's Secret Nuclear Bunker and Chelmsford; Biggin Hill Museum and Nymans Gardens also in West Sussex; Folkestone and Dover; the Didcot Railway Centre; and our annual Boat Trip. Our members always have preference but we welcome paying guests for any vacant seats. Full details available on www.hayesmensfellowship.org.

If you are a retired or semi-retired man, of any faith or none, you can become a member of HMF for the modest subscription of  $\pounds 20$  – still unchanged after two years! Or perhaps there is someone in your life who you think would enjoy our convivial company? They, and you, might also enjoy the monthly walks in the countryside or sometimes in London, covering around 5 miles and stopping off for lunch at a selected and tested pub; the walk is free, lunch is at your choice and cost.

Each month starts for HMF members only on the first Wednesday when we have visiting professional speakers on various topics, such as "Fifty Years with London Buses"; "US Presidents – Bits and Pieces" and "Samaritans" followed by tea and biscuits, even mince pies in December.

That's what is on offer in 2024. Here now we report on our recent activities starting with our "outing" which was our Annual Lunch – this year our Diamond Jubilee Celebration Lunch - at the Regan's Banqueting Suite above the New Inn, Hayes. It was a rather grey and chilly January day, but we were still pleased to have 56 people at the lunch – just slightly fewer than the previous year. We have continued to invite wives and partners of members as well as widows of former members to this popular and sociable event - altogether, ladies made up just over a third of the diners.

In his introduction, Allan Evison, HMF Chairman, welcomed members to the excellent venue once more. Colin Vivian, HMF Pastoral Care Officer, added his thanks to everyone, especially the ladies, for their attendance. As in other years, the Fellowship had invited representatives from the Churches Together in Hayes and we were pleased to welcome Rev'd Amanda Spence of St. Mary's (our HMF President) as well as Alison Smith of the Hayes Free Church. Ian Hamlin from Coney Hill Baptists and Father Gregory Akron from the Catholic Church of the Rosary, with their regret, were unable to accept our invitations this year.

As always, the diners seemed to enjoy the occasion with plenty of chat – this was aided by the round tables which made it easier to speak to everyone on the table. There were frequent compliments about the food, service and fellowship. The menu was a little different to last year's with

prawn cocktail, chicken breast chasseur and the fruit crumble the most popular options. A super event once again, in the lovely surroundings of Regan's, the Lunch really is one of the highlights of the HMF year.

Our latest walk was from London Bridge to Charing Cross through a historic part of London. The weather was dry and mild, perfect for walking. From London Bridge Station, we made our way to the South bank of the Thames then proceeded upstream, past the Globe Theatre and many other well-known landmarks. There were so many distractions that it was difficult for the group to stay as a cohesive whole - three became

detached and crossed over on the wrona bridge! Perhaps roping the walkers together have helped. may Everybody managed to meet up for a good lunch provided bv The Morpeth Arms opposite the headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). From there it was 1.6 miles via St James's Park back to Charing Cross.



At our last Meeting 40 members were pleased to welcome back Hugh Alford for a talk entitled "Our Moon – Magnificent Desolation". This was a new talk that Hugh had put together with an exceptional array of facts, photos and videos about the Apollo Moon landings and the Moon itself. Hugh is Vice President of the Orpington Astronomical Society and responsible for their outreach activities to groups like ours and to schools. As a talking point to break the ice, he passed round a piece of a meteorite that had landed in Argentina. Though small this was dense and heavy – and 4.5 billion years old!

By way of background, the Moon is almost as old as the Earth itself, with both over 4.5 billion years old. In terms of the future, the Sun will eventually become a red giant and engulf the inner planets including the Earth and its Moon. But the assembled audience was relieved to hear that was not for another 4 billion years! The name Moon is derived from the German word for month. Many religions around the world incorporate the Moon and its cycle in their beliefs. Relative to the size of its planet, ours is the largest in the Solar system. It looks relatively close – especially when there is a supermoon which is 14% bigger and 30% brighter. In reality, the

Moon is 240,000 miles away - into that gap you could fit all the other planets.

The first manned Moon landing from Apollo 11 was on 20 July 1969 – remarkably only 66 years since the first powered flight by the Wright brothers' Kitty Hawk in 1903. The astronauts on Apollo 11 were Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin in the Lunar module, Eagle, and Michael Collins who remained in the Command Module. In a tribute to flying history they took part of the Kitty Hawk with them to the Moon.

The moon landing was watched by 650 million people around the world. The landing (late night in the UK) was arduous as the timing and trajectory of the Lunar Module were not quite according to plan. The intention was for the onboard computer to land the craft but with the need for recalculation it was struggling – not surprising, as Hugh explained that it had less computing power than an App on a smartphone. As a result, Buzz Aldrin had to control the descent manually to land 4 miles from the site practiced, and in an area strewn with boulders, some the size of houses. The stress caused his heart rate to double! The plan had been for the astronauts to have several hours rest after the landing which would have meant that the moonwalk would have been the next morning in the UK, but James Burke who was part of the TV panel monitoring the messages heard there would be no delay. So he insisted that the BBC continued broadcasting through the night – a good job otherwise the live moonwalk would have been missed by the viewers.

Hugh described Apollo 11 as the last of the test flights because each of the subsequent missions did much more. They trekked further, had more equipment and were able to conduct more experiments. In fact, 1,800 findings are attributed to the Space programme. Altogether 24 astronauts flew to the Moon and 12 of them landed on its surface. Remarkably the last moonwalk was in December 1972 – more than 50 years ago.

This was a hugely professional, informative and fast paced talk. This was acknowledged in the usual way with a good round of applause from the members present, many of whom, including our Chairman, had youthful memories recalled, of staying awake until 4am to witness history being made with that "one small step for man, a giant leap for mankind".

You are always welcome to try us out at a meeting and can sign up on the spot if you so decide, over a free cup of tea with biscuits. Or why not give us a call for a friendly exploratory chat? Contact details are (020) 8249 0070 and e-mail <u>chairman@hayesmensfellowship.org</u>

More here next and every month.

Allan Evison, HMF Chairman Graham Marsden, HMF Secretary

# THE LADY WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS

It was a close-run thing. But no one would have guessed it would be that close!

The highpoint in the history of the Kingdom of Israel was the reign of David, followed by his son, Solomon. But after Solomon the Kingdom had split into two – the northern kingdom, based mainly in Samaria, and the southern, centred in Jerusalem. From the outset the northern kingdom had increasingly adopted the faith and practices of the neighbouring countries. But the southern kingdom, Judah, remained (largely) faithful to the foundational faith of Israel. And the descendants of David continued to sit on the throne of the southern kingdom. This was just as well because people remembered the promise that God had made to David that his throne would be established for ever (leading ultimately of course to the reign of Christ, who would be a descendant of David).

In the ninth century (about 100 years after David and 800 years before the coming of Christ), King Ahaziah, a descendant of David) was king of Judah. He was murdered during an ill-advised visit to Samaria, and his mother Athaliah seized power. To secure her position she wiped out the rest of the royal family, including all the sons of King Ahaziah.

So what was going to happen to the royal line and God's promise to David?

What happened was a God-fearing sister of the dead King Ahaziah called Jehosheba. She took her courage in her hands and managed to secretly hide the youngest of Ahaziah's sons, called Joash, a mere babe in arms. For six years Athaliah's reign of wickedness (the description used in the Book of Chronicles) went unchallenged. Then Jehoiada, Jehosheba's equally godly husband, led a revolt. Athaliah's reign was ended and Joash was declared king. What was also declared was a covenant – or agreement - between the people and the king and God. They re-committed themselves to being the Lord's people.

So, looking back, everyone could see that although during Athaliah's reign all had looked dark and without hope, the key to the future, kept alive due to the courageous intervention of Jehosheba, was waiting to be revealed at the right moment.

It's a reminder to us that at various times in history, the cause of Christ's Kingdom has seemed particularly weak and fragile, hanging by a thread. We are encouraged to remember, as Jesus said to Martha at the time of the raising of Lazarus, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God".

It also reminds us, that the promise that God made and the coming of His kingdom, was worked out in all the 'turbulence and upheaval of human history'.

And finally, it's perhaps a reminder to us that we are all called to be God's faithful servants. Sometimes that may be especially costly. And very often only God will know the role we play. Most of us immediately recognise the name of Joseph of Arimathea and the critical role he played at the time of Jesus' death. Very few now remember Jehosheba.

The history of Israel, between the time of King David and the exile to Babylon is a particularly fascinating period, in which we see the interplay of God's people and the rise and fall of world powers around them (notably Assyria and



Babylon). An excellent, and easy to read, introductory guide and commentary can be found in 'The Power and the Fury' by Dale Ralph Davis (to whom I also owe the striking heading to this article!).

#### **David James**

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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 <u>ocs.hayes@hotmail.com</u>



# CASPA

CASPA is a local charity supporting children and young people with Autism together with their families. St. Mary's children and young people have been fundraising for them for a number of years, mainly through running the cake stall at our Christmas Fayres and also with collections from some of our Christmas services.

At the start of 2020 none of us had any idea how our world would be turned upside down and we would all have to do things differently on so many levels. It was no different here at St. Mary's and we were unable to hold our Christmas Fayre cake stall as usual.

Our marmalade, jam and chutney makers had already been busy and were fully stocked but without an outlet, so our 'online preserve shop' was created instead of our cake stall as a way of distributing our preserves and raising money for CASPA. Like all charities they had seen a significant reduction in income over the year and needed support more than ever.

The success of the online shop exceeded our wildest expectations thanks to the generous support of the St. Mary's congregation, and together with our service collections, CASPA were both surprised and delighted with the donation we were able to give them.

Since then, we have run the online shop for three years with great success and last year were finally able to hold our Charity Fayre with our cake stall once again. Our Treasurer has recently received a letter from CASPA thanking us for our donations and generosity, which since 2020 have amounted to £3400. With a Gift Aid top up of £850, the total donated is £4250 for which CASPA are extremely grateful. They have asked us to pass on their thanks to all of you, our congregation, for supporting them so generously and faithfully in such difficult circumstances.

#### **Rosemary Smith**

Photo of walkers at Clink St on p11 by Tony Archer

Items for the April magazine by 16<sup>th</sup> March please. Copy to the Editor: Clare Wickert, 3 Hayes Garden, Hayes.

Tel: 020 8462 7161 <u>wickerts@hotmail.co.uk</u> Business Manager: Gordon Barclay, 29 Hurstdene Avenue, Hayes Tel: 020 8462 2568 <u>gcbarclay@hotmail.co.uk</u> Church Website: <u>www.stmaryshayeskent.co.uk</u> April magazines will be ready for distribution on 28<sup>th</sup> March.