

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

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING - RECTOR'S REPORT

'I am about to do a new thing!' Isaiah 43.19

When we look forward to Easter, we know that prior to this we follow the path of Holy week, bringing the end to Lent.

Isaiah's call is to 'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past'.

John 12.1 recalls the raising of Lazarus, as Jesus, wanted by the authorities, returns to Bethany. Jesus was always, according to those we see questioning him in the gospels, in the 'wrong' place, or doing the 'wrong' thing, or at the 'wrong' time, or with the 'wrong' people. But again and again this is where we find Jesus. For example, when Mary anoints Jesus' feet in John 12. 3. This is shocking on many levels. Firstly, she is a woman and at the time this gospel was set is her place really among the disciples? Secondly, it is an extravagance, the perfume costing, as Judas points out, a year's wages. Thirdly, she uses her hair! Had she no shame? Scandalous, as Jewish women did not let down their hair in public. Wiping Jesus' feet with her hair would have been extremely improper. Even today if we saw this happen we would be shocked. Judas' shock at the waste, maybe also felt by the other disciples, or even us today, starkly contrasts to Mary's extravagance and highlights her actions even more. Judas' view could be the more acceptable one to society. But the people here are revealing things about themselves. Judas is thinking about himself, which John makes very clear v 6.

So, what has the last year revealed about us at St Mary's? At the APCM last April, I expressed a hope that we would be able to work together to engage more with families and young people, building on the growing schools and family work. This year, on top of the growing school visits (including now the secondary school), we have had services that

have increased engagement with local families, led with the **Fresh Start** team. There are also plans to add to what we can offer during Sunday services for our children and young people, utilising the Old School Rooms.

We have sadly lost some of our long-standing members but welcomed new people as well. It has been great to welcome **Rev Tim** as our **curate** to our ministry team, while he develops his ministry, working alongside our licensed lay ministers and lay members of the congregation, as well as all those who help us worship: the **sides people, servers, readers, those leading prayers, music and singing groups.**

Welcome Space and our other outreach into the community, **Bereavement Group, Twinkles, Craft Group** and **Charity Fair**, see many from outside our Sunday congregation coming into church. There is also a lot of positive feedback and uptake about when we are open for **Quiet Space**, and this is valued by the community. So, hopefully we can look at where we can grow this ministry. We have also reached out to our local care home Pittsmead Grange, joining together via Welcome Space and through special services at St Mary's and at the care home.

We have also had dialogue with our community through our **Community Survey**. Many members of the community responded, helping us to understand the views of people in Hayes about their community, where there are social or spiritual needs, and how the church may be able to join in. Rochester diocese has helped process the results for us, and the **PCC (Parochial Church Council)** will now be looking at the findings further in the next few months, with the help of a small working group.

As a whole congregation I hope we can discern how God can 'do a new thing' here in Hayes and truly focus on our mission together in this place, and develop a shared vision of how **St Mary's** can fully live out the gospel here in Hayes and truly 'make Christ known'.

Working with **Churches Together in Hayes** has meant that the unity of Christ is continuing to be revealed, a witness of working together through difference. In addition to **Messy Church, Lent and Advent courses** (new this year), **Walk of Witness, picnic** (also new) and **services**, we have witnessed together at Hayes Lights for the first time, and also for the first time, nearly all churches were represented! We have also worked with **Bromley Parish Church**, joining in services and an **Alpha Course**.

It is great news that St Mary's is no longer in financial deficit, reaping the benefits of increased income, our digital giving and the parish

giving launch in the autumn. We have also reviewed our charitable giving, which Mary, our PCC secretary has been sharing in *The Hayes Herald*, to ensure that we are being intentional in our work for **God's Kingdom**, not only in our acts of service but also our generosity.

So, a big **thank you** to all who support our work in whatever way. It is a blessing that this list continues to grow, so that there are far too many to mention, but know that your ministry is so valued; in serving you serve God.

Jesus tells us, "You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." John 12.8. Here is a challenge to the Universal Church, to us all, about getting its priorities right.

We have the message of hope, in a seemingly hopeless world; a God who loves us and calls us to repent, to reimagine who we can be, giving us forgiveness through His Son, raising Jesus from the dead and giving us eternal life. We have the best news to share! We are all part of new thing!

We are to share Christ's light in our community and the world. Can we be like the shameless Mary, worshipping Jesus with everything we have?

Rev'd Amanda

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING - 6 APRIL

Following Morning Eucharist at 10am, it was encouraging to see some 50 parishioners attending our Annual Parish Church Meeting in the church with a cup of coffee and biscuit! (Thanks Olivia). Reverend Amanda ably presided. Sue Powell was re-elected in the role of Churchwarden. Stuart Spence was elected as an Assistant Churchwarden. Electoral Roll Report was presented; following a review there are 117 on our roll at present. Graham Collins was elected to the PCC. Mary Stannard and Kate Davies have agreed to stay on the PCC and were re-elected. They join those already elected: Ed Roberts was retiring as Treasurer and Nicolas Gudichet has been appointed to that role. Along with our Safeguarding Officer, Clare Scriven, they will be co-opted members of the PCC. Thanks were expressed to Rosemary Smith who was retiring. Ed Roberts, retiring Honorary Treasurer, referred those present to the Accounts and to his notes, which had been available to the congregation. He was presented with a gift for his exacting and hard work as Treasurer since 2021. Reports were received from Sue Powell

and Yvonne Pickford covering Churchwarden and Fabric Review matters, PCC Secretary (Mary Whytock), Deanery Synod (Ann Lawrance) and Safeguarding Report (Clare Scriven). Mary Rowedder was retiring as Electoral Roll Officer with Graham Collins now elected to that role. The deaths of those who had died since the 2019 Electoral Roll Review were noted. The evening concluded with thanks being expressed to Reverend Amanda for her enthusiasm and hard work not only for St Mary's but for the Hayes Community. Reverend Amanda's Review for 2024-2025 was given at the 10am service. A printed version was available to the congregation.

Electoral Roll 2025

Thanks to all who completed the renewal forms this year of Review. Huge thanks must go to Mary Rowedder who has been our Electoral Roll Officer for many, many years and is now stepping down. She has worked tirelessly and diligently year in year out, gathering the names and keeping our Electoral Roll up to date. Time to put your feet up Mary – hopefully you enjoyed that well-earned cruise!

Mary Whytock (PCC Secretary)



2025 seems to be slipping away very quickly. My colourful displays of daffodils, tulips and hyacinths are fading now and the magnolia and cherry tree blossom are falling. I give thanks that I am becoming mobile now and hopefully will be able to enjoy my garden more this year. We are reminded how wonderful God's world is.

At our last MU meeting we had a very informative and interesting talk on the work of TWAM – Tools with a Mission. Peter and his wife Diane told us that the tools that are donated get refurbished by a team



of volunteers, and then get packed into trade kits ready to be used in skills training centres to teach trades such as carpentry, tailoring, mechanics and many more. These graduates then get given a tool kit when they graduate and can start earning straight away. We could appreciate what a worth-while charity it is and how we could help transform lives in Africa by donating unwanted tools. There are leaflets about TWAM in the church porch. Please do support this worthwhile cause.

Next month we hope to learn more about the work of **Welcare** in Bromley. It should be a very interesting and informative talk.

As I mentioned in last month's *Hayes Herald*, we are looking into how we can contribute towards the worship for children in church. After a meeting with Rev'd Amanda we decided that we should aim the resources to three age groups. We are still researching the resources needed, but of course we will need money to purchase them. To this end we will be holding a coffee morning specifically with the purpose of raising money to purchase resources for the children in church. There will be a raffle and also a 'bring and buy' table. Please put the date **Friday, 30th May 10.30 – 12.30**, in your diary, for this coffee morning.

By the time you read this a group of us will have attended the AGM and Spring Members Meeting on 26th April in Kemsing. A report will be in the next month's magazine.



Carol Crouch has very kindly painted the Paschal candle. The name 'Paschal' comes from the Hebrew word *Pesach* which means Passover. In the Church, at the Saturday vigil before Easter Sunday, a 'new' fire is lit. The candle is then lit



from this sacred fire. There are four key symbols on the paschal candle: the five wounds, the cross, the year and the alpha and omega. The Paschal Candle has a long history and carries significant meaning and symbolism in Easter services. The candle is lit during the Easter Vigil, symbolizing the light of Christ's resurrection overcoming the darkness of the tomb. The Paschal Candle is also lit during baptisms, signifying new life in Christ.

Our next meetings are:

Tues. 6th May 11.00am - Social gathering at 'The New Inn' Hayes. coffee and optional lunch.

Mon. 19th May 10.30am in the Meetings Room - 'Welcare in Bromley'. Please note there will be a plate for donations towards their work.

Tues. 3rd June 11.00am - Social gathering at 'The New Inn' Hayes. Coffee and optional lunch.

Friday 30th May 10.30am in the Meetings Room - Fund raising event to raise money to equip the 'folders' for the children in church.

Help will be needed for this fund-raising event. Could members please donate a raffle prize. There will be a 'bring and buy' table.

We pray for all Mothers' Union members. We especially bring before you all our members who are unwell, waiting for a diagnosis, in hospital or nursing home. Wrap your healing arms around them that they might feel your love and warmth and know that you are there with them. We pray especially for Allan, Dorothy, Faith, Hilary, Jo and Carol.

If you are interested in finding out more about Mothers' Union, please contact Avril Ashford **0208 468 7785** or just come along to one of our meetings. You would be most welcome.

Avril Ashford





SATURDAY 31ST MAY 2025
ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

1pm - 3pm Activities
3:15pm Worship
3:45 Picnic - Bring your own

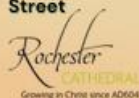
FREE EVENT
NO NEED TO BOOK

For more information contact -
sarah.cabella@rochester.anglican.org

All Are Welcome

We have a sensory breakout space with tents and self-regulating activities for those who benefit from or need a quieter space. We will have PECS and a social story available prior to the event, please ask.

There is no parking at the Cathedral nor vehicle access to the Cathedral from the High Street



Diocese of Rochester
called together



ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY MAY 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.

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sunday 4th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise Sunbeams session** (age 3-6)
Wednesday 7th	10.30am	Coffee Morning for the bereaved and those living on their own**
	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
	2.45pm	Hayes Men's Fellowship In OCS
Thursday 8th	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group**
	11.30am	VE Day Service

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Saturday 10th	12.30pm	Churchyard Tidy Up
Vocations Sunday		
Sunday 11th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW Blaze session** (age 6-10)
Tuesday 13th	10.00-11.00am	Prayer Group
Wednesday 14th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Friday 16th	10.00-11.00am	Twinkles – singing, story, snacks**

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sunday 18th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
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	9.15am	Fresh Start
	10.30am	Morning Praise
Monday 19th	10.30am	Mothers' Union**
Tuesday 20th	11.00am-12.15pm	Bible Study**
Wednesday 21st	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Thursday 22nd	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sunday 25th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW
		Blaze session** (age 6-10)
Tuesday 27th	10.00-11.00am	Prayer Group
Wednesday 28th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**

Ascension Day

Thursday 29th	10.30am	Ascension service
	8.00pm	Ascension joint service at Ss. Peter and Paul
Friday 30th	10.30am-12.30pm	Mothers' Union Coffee Morning** (details on p.16)

* 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 a wedding or funeral 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

Easter is now behind us and we have the prospect of better weather, but remember the old saying "Ne'er cast a clout till May be out"! May brings with it a number of traditions; May Queens who are said to be a personification of springtime and Maypole dancing, for example. And also "institutions" like the Chelsea Flower Show brought to us by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Although the Fellowship still has a full programme of activities with a meeting, an outing and a walk most months, May is when we have a committee meeting to think about the programme for the following session. So watch this space later in the year to see the fruits of our labours!

Meanwhile, details of the remaining events for 2024/2025 are on our website www.hayesmensfellowship.org together with fuller reports on completed activities. The website also provides information about joining our welcoming group. To enjoy all our activities, you just have to be a retired or semi-retired man of any faith or none and willing to pay our annual subscription of a very modest £20.

This month, our reports on that full programme of activities start with the outing to Audley End and Saffron Walden. Audley End sits on the site of Walden Abbey, a Benedictine monastery dissolved on the orders of Henry VIII. The current building was largely built in the 1600s, and is acknowledged to be one of the finest Jacobean houses in England. The imposing house is now managed by English Heritage, and everyone had a very informative guided tour of the sumptuously furnished interior. Adjacent to the main house was the Victorian Service



Wing which included kitchens, dairy, ironing room, meat safe and laundry to show how and where staff “below stairs” worked. Outside, the extensive Capability Brown designed parkland straddles the River Cam and includes several neo-classical monuments.

Next stop was Saffron Walden, very close by, which is a historic market town that can trace a history back to neolithic times. Today, it has been voted one of the best places to live in England. It still has a number of buildings from the medieval period with the oldest inhabited building in the town thought to be the 15th-century former maltings building with a courtyard garden. The town is dominated by St Mary the Virgin Church, a coincidence given HMF’s affiliation with St Mary the Virgin parish church in Hayes! The one in Saffron Walden is the largest parish church in Essex and, at 193 ft high, has the tallest spire in the county too. The church dates mainly from the end of the 15th century, when an old smaller church was extensively rebuilt. The coach had an excellent run back to Hayes after a super sunny day out, with plenty of time to chat to friends old and new.



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Our latest walk was in the Farleigh area of Croydon. From the Harrow Inn they walked 1.2 miles north along Farleigh Road, passed the Farleigh Golf Club, bringing them to the Selsdon Nature Reserve where they walked the perimeter, a distance of 2.3 miles. Thereafter they retraced their route back to The Harrow for a good pub lunch. The fairly flat walk of 4.7 miles was enjoyed in lovely sunny weather by the six walkers.

At our latest Meeting we had an excellent talk entitled “Mariners, Murderers and Music Halls” by Chris Davis, a librarian locally in Bromley. In effect, this talk was a virtual walk from Tower Hill to Wapping Stations delving into the rich history of the area and illustrated with slides that included many photographs she had taken herself. We went from Tower

Hill to the adjacent Trinity Square Gardens, through St Katherine's Dock then onto Cable Street. From there we went past the enormous St George in the East Church, to Tobacco Dock and then to Wapping. From the title, the Mariners were represented by the War Memorial in the Gardens to seafarers who lost their lives in two World Wars and those who were helped and trained by Trinity House nearby. The Murderers included some of the 120 people hanged at Tower Hill, the perpetrators of the brutal killings in Cable Street, as well Jack the Ripper who operated in the area. The Music Hall refers to Wilton's, built in 1858, which is the oldest example of a purpose built music hall still operating.

We look forward to meeting up with you again in these pages next month or, even better, in person at one of our meetings.

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

Contacts: e-mail: secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org

phone: **07764 153383**

BIGGIN HILL RESIDENT TAKES ON EVEREST-SIZED CYCLING CHALLENGE FOR CANCER SUPPORT



Local resident and endurance enthusiast Paul Clark is preparing for an extraordinary test of stamina and determination to support cancer patients and their families for local cancer charity The Chartwell Cancer Trust.

On 21st June 2025, Paul will be conquering Stock Hill, Biggin Hill's steepest climb, at least 240 times in 24 hours. That is a staggering fifty metres of vertical ascent per lap, adding up to a total climb of over 12,000 metres. Higher than the summit of Mount Everest.

This monumental challenge aims to raise £24,000 towards funding the planned creation of a new Cancer Information Centre at the Chartwell Unit in The Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough. The centre will provide crucial support and guidance to patients and families navigating the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

Paul's challenge will begin at 9am, where he will be cheered on by supporters and volunteers collecting donations. The local community is encouraged to come along, show their support, and help keep his spirits high as he battles every lap. Determined to see it through, Paul has committed to pedalling for the full 24 hours, even if he reaches his goal.

"This is more than just a physical test; it is about making a real difference for those facing cancer," Paul said.

Local businesses and community members are rallying behind Paul's inspiring challenge, and there are still plenty of sponsorship opportunities available. Senior Trustee of The Chartwell Cancer Trust, Michael Douglas added that "We urgently need more spaces where people affected by cancer can turn for support. The new centre will be a place of comfort, advice, and care when people need it most. We hope Biggin Hill will come out in force to support Paul. Every cheer, every donation, will help build something truly meaningful for local families affected by cancer."

To donate and support Paul's challenge, visit:
www.justgiving.com/page/paul-clark-3

Natalie Reilly
Chartwell Cancer Trust



A REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF ST PAUL

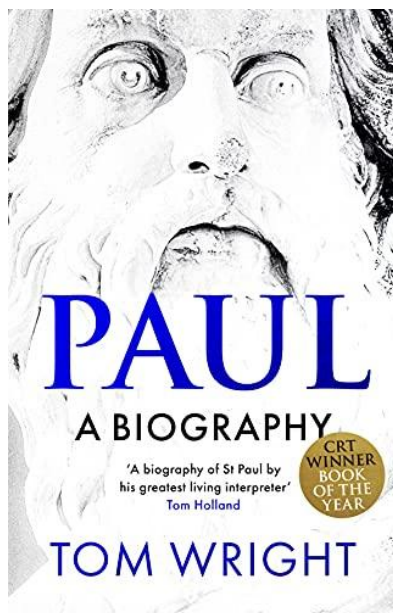
The most difficult thing in life, for most of us, is to acknowledge our mistakes. And perhaps even traumatic if we come to realise that our whole lives have been built on a mistake.

This of course was what happened to St Paul. Although a contemporary of Jesus, we do not know whether as a young man he ever actually heard Jesus or saw Him during those three years of His ministry. But we do know that, after Jesus' death, he became one of the most violent and dangerous opponents of the Christian church, seeking the arrest and death of those early disciples wherever he could find them. He was driven, as he was later to confess, by his zeal for the God of Israel and Israel's history, hope, and scriptures.

So what changed with Paul? It was not as if after his Damascus Road experience he stopped believing in the God of Israel or its history and believed instead in the 'Christian' God. The cause of his radical change of heart and mind is rather that through that personal encounter with the risen Christ, he was suddenly confronted by the Truth: that Israel's history, hope and scriptures had all been pointing forward to fulfilment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In that moment Paul saw that the Jesus he hated and whose followers he was hounding to death, was in fact the promised 'Messiah' whom God – the God of Israel to whom he had devoted his life - had raised from the dead. As Tom Wright in his excellent biography of Paul puts it, Paul had been absolutely right in his devotion to Israel and the Mosaic law, but absolutely wrong in his view of Israel's calling and identity.

Paul was aware, better than most, what the prophets of Israel – all those centuries before - had said to expect from the Messiah's ministry when He came. Yet Paul, like so many of his contemporaries, refused to accept the evidence of his own eyes. 'Go and tell John



what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. This was Jesus' message to encourage John the Baptist when he began to doubt. This was exactly what the prophets had said to expect.

One of Paul's contemporaries was the 'lawyer' whose question prompted Jesus' parable about the good Samaritan. This parable was the subject of our second session in this year's *'Lent course', in which we explored various biblical texts following the theme of poverty. The danger with this passage in Luke's gospel is that it is so familiar that we are tempted to run through it quickly, thinking, yes, we know all about this story and what it means.

If we do so, ironically we immediately fall into the trap of that 'lawyer' who prompted the parable. For him the Old Testament scriptures were so familiar that they just tripped off his tongue, but failed to engage his heart. Clearly, he had never stopped to ask himself what 'to love your neighbour *as yourself*' truly means? For a start, all the good things in life you want for yourself you commit to ensuring that your neighbour (any neighbour!) gets as well. The commandment had (and has!) huge implications that he had never considered. The cost of compliance was total.

Even Jesus' own disciples recognised that human nature would need to be changed for this to be possible (Mark 10:26). And this was Jesus' point. It is not just a case of doing a little better (although that of course is good). A total change in our heart and mind is needed. Yes, for us that is impossible but as Jesus said with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27).

And that brings us back to Paul. After the Damascus Road experience he realised that in His life, death, resurrection and ascension to glory, Jesus had inaugurated a new era in world history that would begin that transformation, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit who was sent to us at Pentecost.

So, with Paul we say "Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans7:25)

David James

*Held as in previous years jointly with CTiH (Churches Together in Hayes)

To friends and members of St Mary the Virgin, Hayes
Please come and support our

Coffee Morning



to equip folders/bags
with quiet activities for children
in church.



**Friday, 30th May 10.30 -
12.30**

In the **Meetings Room**

There will be a raffle and Bring and Buy table.

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### Genesis and Politicians

A surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing as to whose profession was the oldest.

“Eve was made from Adam’s rib,’ said the surgeon, “and that surely was a surgical operation.”

“Maybe,” said the architect, “but prior to that, order was created out of chaos, and that was an architectural job.”

“But you forget,” interrupted the politician, “somebody had created the chaos first!”

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Photos on p10 and p11 by Graham Marsden

Items for the June magazine by 17th May please. Copy to the Editor – see below.

June magazines will be ready for distribution on 27th May

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