



St Mary's Church Wargrave

With Knowl Hill

Our vision is to be a church
at the heart of our community

Parish Magazine

March 2022



St Peter's Church Knowl Hill

With St Paul's Warren Row

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£1

Who's Who: Parish Directory

Vicar	The Revd. John Cook	johnrmcook@btconnect.com	0118 940 2202
Associate Minister	The Revd. Steve Turville	Stephen.turville@ntlworld.com	0118 901 6720
Curate	The Revd. Richard Eves	Richard.m.s.eves@gmail.com	07746 383046
Lay Minister	Andy Ferguson	andyferguson1@btinternet.com	0118 940 2925
PCC Secretary	Sheila Williams	sheilamarywilliams1952@gmail.com	0118 940 3587
PCC Treasurer	Jane Wills	paulandjanewills@btinternet.com	0118 940 2030

Parish Office

Address	St. Mary's Church, Station Road, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8EU		
	The Parish Office is open from 9.30am to 1.30pm on Tuesday & Wednesday and Thursday 2pm - 5pm		
Administration	Lucy Bowley	lucy@wargravechurch.org.uk	
	Katie Blades	katie@wargravechurch.org.uk	0118 940 2300
St Mary's Wargrave Churchwardens	Ian Matthews	matthic@talk21.com	0118 940 2049
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Director of Music	Peter Dart	peter@familydart.com	0118 940 1068
St Peter's Knowl Hill Churchwarden	Sandra Baker	sbakerdalc@hotmail.co.uk	01628 822402

Parish Registers: Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals

Baptisms at St Mary's, Wargrave

2nd January Bethan Grace Uniake

23rd January Hannah Ellen Lloyd

Funerals, Cremations and Ashes at St Mary's, Wargrave

12th January Arthur Neville Hampton, 80, funeral service at St Mary's followed by Cremation at Reading Crematorium

Cover Photo

This issue is celebrating mothers everywhere and all they do for their children

Copy Date for the April Magazine

Please submit contributions for the April Magazine by
Noon on Wednesday 16th March 2022

Articles of up to 400 words are most welcome for publication in this Magazine and should be sent to the Editor: bobausten@wargravechurch.org.uk

The decision to publish material is at the Editor's discretion.

Views expressed in articles included in the Magazine are not necessarily shared by the Editor.

The Parish Magazine cannot accept responsibility for any products or services advertised in this Magazine.

Sunday Services for March

St Mary's Wargrave - 6th, 13th & 20th March

8.00am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language
9.15am Family Service: a short informal service with children's activities

1st & 3rd Sundays of the month:
10.30am Holy Communion in modern language

2nd & 4th Sundays of the month:
10.30am Morning Worship in modern language with music

St Mary's Wargrave - from 27th March

8.00am Holy Communion: a said service in traditional language
9.45am Mothering Sunday and the first of our new format services

St Peter's Knowl Hill

1st Sunday of the month 10.30am Holy Communion
3rd Sunday of the month 10.30am Village Praise

St Paul's Warren Row

2nd Sunday of the Month 9.15am Holy Communion in traditional language

Ash Wednesday Service

A special service of Holy Communion will be held on Wednesday 2nd March, 7.30pm at St Mary's Church.

Butterflies

An update from Camilla Cook

We are well under way this term with our discussions based on 'The Five Love Languages of Children' by Gary Chapman. So far, discussions have been focussed on 'Physical Touch' and 'Words of Affirmation'. We've enjoyed a range of delicious breakfasts and had time to chat and to share parenting highs and lows.



The annual Mother's Day Dinner is being held on Wednesday 23rd March in the St Mary's Church Centre: a three course Tex-Mex extravaganza is being planned. If you're a young mum and would like to join us, please do contact Camilla. We'd love to see you at the dinner and on Wednesdays. Email: camillacook@btconnect.com

Butterflies is held in the Church Centre, 9.30am - 11am.

Next Sessions: 2nd & 14th March

Ladies' Breakfast

The next Ladies Breakfast will be on Saturday 12th March at 9.30am in the Church.

Open Church

St Mary's Church is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 3pm.

Welcome Café

The café will be open on Tuesday 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th March from 2.30 - 4pm in the Hannen Room.

St Mary's Wargrave New Look Services

Not long now until the launch of our new Sunday services. Imagine a giant digital clock counting down the days to Sunday 27th March, the hour going forward and Spring!

Why change the familiar pattern of services?

Before Covid-19 hit us in 2020 we had a 10.30am service, with Communion on the 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays of the month, and less formal Morning Worship Services on the 2nd & 4th Sundays. The children and young people would often take part in an all-ages talk before leaving for Sunday Club and Crèche.

During lockdown we provided online streamed services but once we were allowed back together in Church, we wanted to maintain social distancing to minimise the risk of spread of Covid-19. We decided to split the services to reduce the size of the congregation at each service. The 9.15am is a short 40 minute service aimed at families with young children, while the 10.30am service maintains the old pattern, but without the all-ages slot. We were not able to run the Sunday Club.

With Covid-19 becoming less frightening with the immunisation programme and boosters, we wanted to find out what sort of services our congregation wanted from a post-ish Covid-19 Church. Over the four Sundays in September 2021 all those who attended the 9.15am & 10.30am services were encouraged to complete questionnaires.

What people liked about the current services?

- In lockdown, people appreciated the effort taken to run the virtual services.
- While the 8am service does not appeal to many, some find it very valuable and were keen that it should not change.
- The 9.15am service is a success. Young families like the earlier time, the short duration, the liveliness and interaction, and the involvement of the children.

What people wanted?

- To reach out to young families – the future of our church in Wargrave.
- A desire for all ages to worship together – for at least part of the service, together with the resumption of Sunday Club and separate crèche. It was clear the 10.30am congregation missed the presence of children and young families.

Our aims?

- Unite the 9.15am & 10.30am congregations to provide a service pattern which would appeal to different ages, providing different services through the month.
- All ages of the congregation to contribute to the services.
- Reinstate teaching for our young people and provide more adult teaching to the parents of children who currently attend the 9.15am service.
- Start the main service early enough, and give a guaranteed maximum duration of service, so that those with later commitments can make plans. However, we did not want to put off people who like a lie-in on Sunday mornings.
- Music will continue to be a mix of classics, and contemporary hymns & songs

What we have decided to do

- We are maintaining the 8am service unchanged.
- From Sunday 27th March the 9.15am and 10.30am congregations combine in one service starting at 9.45am and lasting no more than 60-70 minutes.
- We decided on the following pattern of services throughout the 4 (or in some months, 5) Sundays of the month:
 - **First Sunday** – A shorter All Age Family Worship, incorporating elements of the present 9.15am service, as a number of the more senior congregation did enjoy the 9.15am service, as well as the young families. There will be no Sunday Club, and everyone will be in Church together. Think 'First-Family'.
 - **Second Sunday** – Family Communion, with a more contemporary feel to the liturgy. After an initial welcome the children will leave the service for their teaching, then return for Communion.
 - **Third Sunday** – Morning Worship (no communion). The format of this will change from month to month. The children will have their teaching and return for the final song.
 - **Fourth Sunday** – Family Communion, with liturgy like that used for our Communion Services at present. Children will have teaching as for the second Sunday.
 - **Fifth Sunday** – All Age Parish Communion. All will be in Church together for a shorter Communion Service (no children's Sunday Club).

The variety of formats, and the presence of all ages throughout the services on the 1st & 5th Sundays each month, will allow children, as well as adults, to take an active part in our readings, prayers and worship.

The pattern of regular teaching for our children and young people on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sundays each month will restore a much-missed part of our work in furthering the knowledge of the love of Jesus in our children. We hope their parents will benefit from sermons exploring faith in greater detail and complexity than has been possible in the 9.15am services.

The success of the new pattern of service will rely on the enthusiastic engagement of everyone in the congregation. There may be aspects we feel sad about changing, but by looking at many more positives which will come from these changes, we are able together to sing the Lord a new song.

Let us all pray that this new service pattern will be a success in helping us all come together to praise the Lord.

**Remember
Sunday 27th March
9.45am!**



Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday 4th March

When all are encouraged to pray and be enriched by the faith experience of other Christians, become aware of the situation of women in other countries, share their hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, opportunities, needs and to pray with and for them and turn their prayers into positive actions.

Representatives from England, Wales and Northern Ireland came together in 2018 to work on this year's service, recognising their differences but also their common ground as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-faith societies, anxious to preserve differences of language and culture. The main concern four years ago was Brexit, particularly in Northern Ireland, but more recently the pandemic both of which are causing division and dissatisfaction.

A few other issues raised and mentioned below are also worldwide problems:

- squandering the resources of the natural world
- living in poverty despite local prosperity
- fear of partner abuse either physical, mental, emotional or sexual
- loneliness and isolation because of age, disability, ethnic origin or sexuality



The 2022 theme is an invitation to place our trust in God in times of suffering. It is based on God's promise found in Jeremiah, "I know the plans I have for you" and focusses on freedom, forgiveness, justice and God's peace – a promise that can be a sign of hope for everyone – and fulfilled in Jesus.

This is a wonderful occasion for men, women, and children of all ages to share in celebrations across many regions of the world. The 'Wave' of prayer begins on the International Date Line, with Samoa, and travels westward throughout the rotation of the Earth, with the last service in American Samoa. Locally, special services are being held at three venues.

Friday 4th March (*see various times*)

St Mary's Church, Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2AU, 1.30pm

Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BE - 10.30pm

Park URC Church, Palmer Park Avenue, Reading, RG6 1DN - 2pm

A Prayer

"God, giver of life, we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be fulfilled.

God of hope, in our busyness may we find space to see you at work in our lives and in our world.

May we be people who radiate your hope as we worship in celebration today.

Amen."

The Vernal or Spring Equinox

by Christine Walker

An equinox is the time when the plane of the Earth's equator passes through the geometric centre of the sun i.e. the centre of the sun is directly above the equator. It occurs twice each year; in March it is called the Vernal or Spring Equinox and in September called the Autumnal Equinox.

The vernal equinox is the start of the astronomical spring, and this year it is the 20th March and marks the transition season between winter and summer. It is the date when day and night are of approximately equal length – hence the term *equinox*. The word *vernal* comes from the word *vernus* in Latin meaning 'bloom'. It marks when the Northern Hemisphere starts to tilt toward the sun during which we see days getting longer and sunnier, so temperatures rise and plants blossom in time for summer.

It is often in our gardens that we notice 'astronomical' spring. They represent for us the glory of Creation, the seemingly infinite variety and beauty of the natural world and permit our creative expression. Gardens have a long history. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the seven ancient wonders of the world; gardens appear in the Bible, most famously the gardens of Eden and Gethsemane; on Easter Day, Mary initially mistook the Risen Christ for a gardener; the grand Victorian cemeteries were created as restful parks.

It has been a tradition to consider Paradise, where we all hope to go after death, as a garden. 'Paradise Gardens' probably originated in Iran during the Achaemenid period (C6-4 BC) but spread throughout the Middle East, India and into Europe. Usually, they are in peaceful enclosed spaces with labyrinth designs in paving, or cut into turf, and intended to be an aid to prayer and meditation. The 'Hortus Inclusus' (enclosed garden) comes from the Song of Solomon 4.12: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse: a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up." It was popular in mediaeval imagery and is particularly associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gardens are important to us because they chart the seasons and even in the depths of Winter, they provide the promise of Spring. Gardens are a restorative stimulus to repose, reflection, and prayer. There is an old Chinese proverb which says:



***"If you want to be happy for a few hours, get drunk;
if you want to be happy for a few days, get married;
if you want to be happy for the rest of your life, get a garden."***

Weekend Away: 4th - 6th March 2022

by Camilla Cook

After two years of waiting, and longer of planning, it looks as if we are finally able to go ahead with the church weekend away on Friday 4th March!



A group from St Mary's will head off to the De Vere Hotel in Denham for a relaxing weekend of Bible teaching and fellowship.

I think all of us are excited about having this time of refreshment and renewed fellowship and are looking forward to John Cook and Richard Eves leading us through Romans 8 over the three days.

As well as the teaching there'll be opportunities for walks, swimming, gym exercise and exploring the local area.

Might we be able to slip in a trip to the Bekonscot Model Village?!

If you haven't booked but find yourself wanting to join us, there might be a possibility of last minute cancellations, so do get in touch with Jane Austen.

Email: austenjaneelizabeth@hotmail.com.



Ramblin' with Bob

by Bob Austen

The March ramble on Sunday 27th March is the one postponed from 30th January. It is about four miles in length and is mainly over the land belonging to the Berkshire College of Agriculture in the Parish of Hurley.

We shall meet at 12.30pm at the Dewdrop Inn and return there for lunch at 3pm.

If you would like to join us on this walk, please contact Bob Austen by Monday 21st March latest to book your place and advise whether you wish to stay for lunch.

Email: austenrobert@hotmail.com

Phone: 0118 940 3038 or Mobile: 07970 611013



Wargrave Festival - Festival of Love

June 2022

The much anticipated and hugely popular Wargrave Festival returns this year after a prolonged Covid-19 absence. Two weeks of events to gather the village together and of renewing and making new friendships....so much to look forward to!

St Mary's are hosting several events again this year: Midsummer Music at the Manse (formerly Brass on the Grass), Folk Night, a concert by The Academy of St Martin's in the Fields, Butterflies, the Festival Service and a Family BBQ/picnic.

An important date for your diary is the ticket sales day, which will be held on **Saturday 2nd April** from 9am at the Scout Hut, Recreation Ground, East View Road, Wargrave. Order forms will be found in the Festival programmes and will need to be filled out and taken on the day.

Preferred payment will be by card (cheques will be accepted). Cash WILL NOT be accepted on Ticket Day except to purchase raffle tickets. Remaining tickets will be made available to book online after the 2nd April.

If you'd like to help out at any of the St Mary's Festival events this year, please do get in touch with Camilla Cook, who'll point you in the direction of the event organiser.



Festival Folk Club

Tuesday 14th June



St Mary's Church is once again organising the folk night – the 16th time that we have put on this show! Each year has been a sell out and we are hoping for another one this year. The date for your diaries is **Tuesday evening 14th June in the Church Centre.**

This will be an evening of songs old and new, no 'finger in your ear' material but plenty of contemporary songs from the likes of Simon and Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, Lindisfarne and of course Bob Dylan, and a sprinkling of memorable ditties from the Summer of love.

Repeating the success of the 2019 event, this will be a folk club setting in the Church Centre and will feature our own Wargrave group 'French Collection' and ably supported by Wargrave Community Choir and other local talent. There will be a bar selling beers, wine and soft drinks at Festival prices.

Tickets will cost £12.50, and these will be on sale on the Festival Ticket Day. For further information, please contact Bob Austen:

Dear Friends,

At our church services on Sunday 6th February, we were reminded that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth has been our monarch for an unprecedented 70 years.

It was the death of George VI in the early hours of February 6th 1952, that the Queen's Accession occurred. She was the first sovereign in 200 years to accede abroad.

Her life of duty and devotion to her people have been unparalleled and despite enduring a turbulent reign, both within the life of the Nation, Commonwealth, and her own family, the Queen has remained a constant in our lives. She's brought stability and reassurance to so many.

Her lifelong service and sacrifice, as well as her speaking of hope in difficult situations, has reminded us of what true leadership looks like. The contrast is made stronger with the current disarray in parliament in recent weeks.

The book of Proverbs brings a helpful perspective:

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart. (Proverbs 21: 1&2)

Whatever appears to be going on, God is in ultimate control of a monarch's or leader's heart. Just as the farmer could dig irrigation canals and channel streams of water to where they could do best, so the Lord is working his purpose out. It is a comfort to be reminded that no matter how powerful and proud persons become, they cannot escape the supervision of God. God can direct His purposes as easily as a farmer does watering of crops. Each powerful person will only be an instrument for the accomplishment of God's plans.

Alongside this, a monarch or leader's heart is important and is weighed by the LORD, as is each of our hearts. There is God's true knowing in comparison to human guessing. This is a salutary reminder that we don't just await the last judgment, as it is taking place every day. As the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews puts it:

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

(Hebrews 4:13)

This is something for each of us to remember whether we are a monarch or world leader or simply a citizen of the UK.

John R.M. Cook
Vicar of Wargrave with Knowl Hill





The Big Jubilee Lunch

Sunday 5th June



Nationally on the 5th June there will be a celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with every community looking to hold the Big Jubilee Lunch.

In Wargrave, St Mary's Church is organising the lunch which will have a similar format to the events held in 2012 & 2016 celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and her 90th Birthday.

The event will be held on Mill Green from 12 noon until 5pm. Chairs and Tables (seating 6) will be available for sale: partygoers bring their own lunch and drink.

There will be a children's entertainment village, band, coffee and ice cream truck and competitions for the Best Dressed Table and Platinum pudding.

Ticket day is from 9.30am on Saturday 26th March at St Mary's Church Centre. Each ticket is £6 per person and one individual may purchase a maximum of 12 tickets. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, Mastercard or Visa and it is expected that the 1,000 tickets available will be sold on this day.

As a special treat some people may wish to order a 'Daisy Love Jubilee Hamper'. Pre-orders for these will be taken on ticket day.

St Mary's Church is organising this not for profit event in order to further it's desire to be a Church at the Heart of the Community.

Churchyard Grasscutters

by Bob Austen

As we say our goodbyes to gloomy winter weather and look ahead to the first fruits of Spring, our thoughts turn to the real joys to come. And what finer joy is there than to be a churchyard grasscutter – a position of rare distinction and pleasure!

We operate five teams which means a shift once every 5 weeks for 2 hours on a Saturday morning. We offer gentle exercise, pleasant company and the pleasure of seeing our beautiful churchyard looking at its best for the Sunday services.

There are opportunities for new recruits to join our happy band and so do please contact me and you too can mow your way to a brighter future.

Email: austenrobert@hotmail.com Phone: 0118 940 3038 or Mobile: 07970 611013



The Egg that shares the Easter Story



Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter Eggs sold each year, The Real Easter Egg is the only Fairtrade one with the Easter story in the box.

The Real Easter Egg was created in 2010 as a way for churches, groups and individuals to share the Easter story while supporting Fairtrade.

We have sold them every year since then at St Mary's and St Peter's, via our Traidcraft rep Pam Thompson.

This year, the major supermarkets have declined to stock them, despite their excellent value and quality, so the independent English manufacturer (the Meaningful Chocolate Company) is relying on the support of churches more than ever.

Look out for the eggs in St Mary's on 6th March and from 27th March until Easter, as long as stocks last. As always, we hope to bring some to St Peter's too.

Or contact our Fairtrade rep.:

Mike Buckland - 0118 940 4960, mikebuckland54@gmail.com

Pam gives us a 5% discount in exchange for a donation to Traidcraft. This sets our prices at £4.50 for the original milk chocolate egg, £5 for the white one, and £5.50 for the larger dark chocolate egg. If you can't get to Wargrave, you can order them at www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/easter, where the prices are undiscounted.

Have you ever noticed?

by Roy Woodward

In 1975, my wife Ann and I were living in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa. I was working with Architects French and Hastings designing safari lodges, hotels in game parks and coastal locations as part of the developing tourist industry.

The general concept for lodges was to aesthetically relate to African design which meant using as much local material in construction as possible then furnishing

One day three soldiers in unkempt uniforms arrived with boxes of carvings etc asking to show us their wares for sale. I found this extremely strange and asked who they were?

They proudly told me they were Freedom Fighters fighting along the borders with Mozambique. I was aware of the havoc they were causing raiding villages, so I asked them to leave. However, as they walked past, I noticed the head of a small statue protruding out of one of the boxes. Something about the statue compelled me to see it.

The statue was wrapped in dirty old newspaper about 30cm high and made of the blackest ebony. It was the most sensitive and delicate piece of carving I had seen in Africa. The arms were carved separately from the body but when fitted in place you couldn't see any joints, even the ligaments lined up. The face was a wonderful example of pain, emotion, and compassion.

The so-called soldier sold me the statue; it was Christ with arms outstretched when in place. After purchase I asked where the statue had come from and the soldier told me it had come from a village they had raided but unfortunately the villagers had resisted so there was burning and killing including the carver of Christ.

The carving travelled with us as part of our belongings hidden away in the old newspaper and generally forgotten for the next 25 years. When we returned to Wargrave in 2000 we rediscovered the carving and it so impressed us again we showed it to the Rev John Ratings, the village Vicar. I could see the carving impressed John as much as Ann and myself and without hesitation he said "this belongs in a Church" and set about having it mounted onto a light wood cross making it a crucifix.

So, have you ever noticed?

It is on the column supporting the pulpit looking out over the congregation in St Mary's Church Wargrave.

I don't know how you feel reading this but to us it seems poignant that the skill and work of a massacred inspired woodcarver should have survived a journey of thousands of miles and end up on display in St Marys.

Parents of Little Christians

by Richard Eves

During the pandemic one of the lockdown measures that had the biggest impact on young families was the closing down of schools.

Apart from the disruption to parental work of suddenly needing to be on childcare duty, another major concern for parents was the disruption that the move to remote learning would have on their children's education. Would there be a gap? Would their children fall behind and subsequently be trying to 'catch up' for the rest of their school careers?

These understandable concerns reveal something quite interesting about the way that British parents think about the education of their children. For us, education is something niche, a specialist task, best outsourced to experts. This means that when, for whatever reason, the experts are unavailable, we tend to assume that even despite Mum and Dad's best efforts, the child's learning will not be happening as well as it otherwise would, if it happens at all.

This pattern of thinking is not confined to 'secular' education. For better or worse, many of us Christians assume that most of a child's Christian education, in other words their discipleship, is best done by spiritual professionals in the church.

Faithful parents diligently get their children along to all the events - Sunday school, family services, youth groups, holiday clubs, summer camps - in the prayerful hope that these are the places where the experts can do the spiritual work that their children need. Of course, all of these things are good and helpful, but if they are the main place, we are investing our hope for our children's spiritual growth, we are missing a very important element.



In Exodus 12 God lays down the pattern for the annual Jewish celebration of the Passover - the memorial of his rescue of them from slavery in Egypt. It is to be celebrated in families, and a key aim of it seems to be to offer the parents an opportunity to explain to their children what God has done for them.

This is a pattern we see in multiple places in the Old Testament - God gives families distinctive things to do with the aim that these would raise questions on the part of the children.

Who does God give the responsibility to answer their questions? Their parents. God thinks that the most important people in the discipleship of a Christian child are their parents. That is God's plan, but is it ours?

Valentine's Delivery

by Camilla Cook

The church Centre was buzzing with cream tea preparation for our Valentine's delivery on Sunday 13th February. Families from church had baked scones and bags were filled with scones, jam, cream and a message from St Mary's Church. 36 bags went out to single church members, many of whom responded very enthusiastically to their gift!



Perhaps a highlight was the beautiful heart shaped cards that Felicity Liddell had made with messages about Jesus' love, which she described as being bigger than a mountain, more precious than a diamond, brighter than the sun, stronger than a rock and lasting longer than forever. Wonderful truths about the love of Christ!

Below is the Valentine prayer that was delivered with each bag:



A Valentine Prayer

May you find love in unexpected places
 Love that fills and fulfils and fires and inspires
 Love that immerses the depths of you
 and sweeps through the agony in you
 Love that holds you tight in your darkest night
 Love that floods you in glorious light
 Love that is wide and deep and high and long
 Love that soothes your soul draws you into the song.

May you find love in unexplored spaces
 Love that quenches and drenches
 Love that pours forth with extravagant mores
 Love that dives into the oceans of you
 Love that clasps you near in your wildest fears
 Love that collects your starkest tears
 Love that is wide and deep and high and long
 Love that rests your heart draws you into the song.

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News from the PCC

by Sheila Williams, PCC Secretary

The PCC met on Monday 24th January

Items addressed included:

- Safeguarding – which is a priority for the PCC which receives reports and ensures updated training is undertaken in accordance with the Parish Action Plan. All members of the PCC were now required to complete an on-line Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Learning Pathway course.
- Parish Giving Scheme – plans for the future roll out of this were presented.
- Format for Future Services at St Mary's – the new pattern of services was agreed to start from Sunday 27th March. A sub-group would be meeting to plan the detail of this.
- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee – arrangements for celebrations in Church, and on Mill Green were announced.
- APCM – it was agreed this would take place on Sunday 24th April after morning service.

Knowl Hill News

We held an excellent quiz on 29th January set by Lesley and David Bell. Our team didn't win unfortunately but we had a very jolly evening and raised the impressive sum of £447 towards St Peter's running costs. Thanks to Lesley and David and everyone who helped and attended. If you have any ideas for future events please let me know.

The next event is a Murder Mystery evening (The Deadly Derby) on 2nd April organised by Knowl Hill Village Association. We have held several of these before and they are always great fun giving everyone a chance to dress up and show off their acting skills. There are quite a few talented thespians in the village but you will have to come along on 2nd April to see who they are! The ticket price (£38) includes a delicious three course dinner and a pay bar. Watch out for posters and update on website for details of when tickets will be available (from Lesley Bell).

We are planning an event on 2nd June to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee which will be a chance for the whole village to get together - look out for details nearer the time.

Finally we will be starting litter picks and churchyard tidying in March so if you have a few hours to spare please come along and give a hand. Your help will be much appreciated as we attempt to return the churchyard and cemetery to its pre Covid state. Details of dates and times will be available on the KHVA website.

Sandra Baker, Churchwarden, St. Peter's

Letter to our Maintenance Manager

by Christine Walker

Dear Sir,

I appreciated your recent concern when you were told that one of the congregation had got wet feet because of that leaking radiator and flattered that you called me in to have a look at it and investigate the cause. I am hoping that the 'quick fix' is still holding and that there will be no more paddling in the pews. If it continues to drip onto the feet of the congregation, we might have to report it to the Health and Safety Officer since wet feet and then going out into the cold could lead to pneumonia or worse!

The photo of the wet floor has made me aware that water damage can cause wood to rot, and if the floor rots it could collapse. Oops, possibly another note is needed for the H&S Officer. How did we manage before we had the 150 page Health and Safety Document and a resident H&S Officer? The church has survived perfectly well for hundreds of years, well it would have done if someone hadn't tried to burn it down. The lengths some people will go to avoid getting up on a Sunday morning for church!

I have one or two other issues raised over the past week. I had a shock when I switched on the lights in the Parish Room. Not an electric shock fortunately, just a shock and it woke me up, so I remembered to put the kettle on for the Welcome Café. Well, one of the lamps went fizz – bang but it's OK now because the Churchwarden fixed it.

If the hirers of the Parish Room report that they heard mice in the roof, don't bother to send for the pest control people because it was only me scrabbling about up there. Oh, and I'm sorry that when I asked the lay minister to have a look behind the curtains in the Lady Chapel, he breathed in so much dust that it set off an asthma attack, fortunately not too serious. Do I need to report that on an Accident Report Form?

I do thank you for all the work you do as Maintenance Manager but am so sorry to hear you slipped and broke your leg tripping over your new pup whilst you were walking him on the Green. I knew that having that extra-long lead was a trip hazard. Perhaps we need a Risk Assessment for on the Green activities and an annual review. Could you put that on the agenda for the next Health and Safety meeting?

Yours,

Jill of All Trades

Mothering Sunday or Mother's Day?

by Richard Eves

Mothering Sunday began as an explicitly religious event of the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church", which is to say the main church or cathedral of the region.

It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church, known as "going a-mothering", for a special service. It became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants traditionally given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church.



One of the tastiest traditions of Mothering Sunday was the baking of Simnel cake. Often regarded as a purely Easter-related confection, this rich fruit cake is also tied to Mothering Sunday, as a bit of indulgence to make up for the general austerity of Lent (and a nice home-baked present to take home to your mother). Consisting of layers of cake and marzipan, a traditional Simnel cake also reflects the religious overtones of the event by being adorned with 11 balls of marzipan,



Mothering Sunday eventually fell out of fashion at the dawn of the 20th Century, when Constance Penswick-Smith the daughter of a vicar, thought the loss of Mothering Sunday was a great shame, and worked hard to rekindle interest. She wrote a book whose title clearly laid out her ambition - it was called 'The Revival of Mothering Sunday'.

She also founded the Society for the Observance of Mothering Sunday. Her determination paid off, and the fading festival was restored to the culture of the country, only with much more of a focus on celebrating motherhood. And this was due to an American influence.

Mother's Day, technically speaking is a completely unrelated American event, invented by a woman called Anna Jarvis in 1908. Her initial inspiration was a desire to honour her own mother, but she wished to create a formal "Mother's Day" for all American mothers. It was literally laughed at with officials jokingly saying that it might lead to a "Mother-in-Law's Day". Anna Jarvis wasn't easily put off, and in 1914 US President Woodrow Wilson officially signed Mother's Day into existence.

So, Anna Jarvis who inspired our Constance Penswick-Smith revived the more religiously flavoured Mothering Sunday, although the two separate events have since become conflated in most people's minds.

Anna Jarvis herself was the first person to condemn the growing commercialisation of Mother's Day and started organising boycotts of the event she herself created leading to her arrest for disturbing the peace. She was particularly appalled by ready-made Mother's Day cards, saying "A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world."

Motherhood: Distinct & Essential

by Richard Eves

“Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.”

In 1 Thessalonians chapter two the apostle Paul is looking for a metaphor. During his second missionary journey he spent three weeks preaching the gospel in the Greek city of Thessalonica. His time there was fruitful, many came to faith and a church was planted, but it also stirred up great opposition. This opposition was so fierce that in less than a month public anger at Paul and his message boiled over and in the ensuing riot Paul and his co-workers were forced to flee the city.

This left Paul in a state of great emotional distress. The rioters had forced him to abandon the infant believers of Thessalonica, new in their faith and surrounded by a deeply hostile culture. And so he reaches out to them, first by sending a secret messenger, and then in the form of a letter which is what we have in 1 Thessalonians.

Early on in his letter Paul is trying to explain to the Thessalonian Christians just how he feels about them. He reaches for an image, and the picture that comes to hand is that of a nursing mother. This image perfectly encapsulates what the apostle wants to communicate. He loves the Thessalonian Christians deeply. He never wanted to hold them at a distance, but was eager to share his entire life with them. He wants to provide them with everything they need to flourish, both now and for eternity. He knows that they are dependent on him, and so he works hard to make sure he is not a burden upon them.

All of these ideas, of irresistible and powerful love, of the intimate sharing of life, of working and struggling and labouring to nurture and care for another, are perfectly exemplified in the picture of the nursing mother. She knows that her baby is dependent on her - hour by hour - for life. And because she loves her child so deeply, she will do everything she can, including neglecting herself and her own needs, to make sure that the infant's needs are met.

Those who have had the joy of being close to a mother soon after the birth of a child will recognise that sense of straightforward self-sacrifice on the mother's part. As she sits in the chair, exhausted from her recent labour, emotionally drained and shiny skinned from days without a shower, nonetheless all her focus is on the wellbeing of the child and how its needs can be met. Not merely out of a sense of duty - such a sense would hardly endure the difficulty of the moment - but of love.

Feature: Motherhood

Clearly this is an ideal. In our fallen world the reality of mothering is as imperfect and corruptible as anything else. And yet in God's kindness it often survives. That is why the image rings true. Many of us have seen and known women like this. They are essential.

A not uncommon response to all this would be to say that what I have just described is not in fact an image of mothering, but of parenting more generally. In contemporary British culture the idea of the interchangeability (and dispensability) of mothers and fathers is more and more accepted. It has even come to be seen as homophobic to insist that by far the best family situation for a child is the presence of a father and mother. The trans movement confuses these categories further still.

This is not the view of the Bible, however. Immediately after the introductory quoted passage from Paul's letter he moves on to another image, that of a father, and the ideas he associates with that image, though surely related to the mothering ideas, are different. The things he picks out are urging on one's children, encouraging them, exhorting them to do what is right.

Of course, this is not to say that these things can never be done by mothers. But there are things that on balance will fall more normally into the role of the mother than the father, and vice versa. Mothers and fathers are both parents, and so there is overlap in the ways that they function. They both love, they both provide, etc. And yet for Paul, there is a significant difference as well. A father can never replace a mother. She is as distinct as she is essential.



Our Parents

by Richard Eves

There are definite seasons in a child's relationship to their parents. The young child's chaotic and turbulent love for Mummy and Daddy gives way to the cool distance and bemused suspicion of the teenage years. Frequently it is only as we are taking our own first steps as newly independent adults in our later teens and early twenties that we really begin to appreciate the scope of support our parents provide. We also come to understand the depth of experience that the process of parenting a child from birth to adulthood brings, as well as the depth of insight into our own character and personality that our parents almost uniquely have. Our parents can be clear eyed about our weaknesses and failings, in a way few others can, and when things are working well this is no threat to the health of the relationship.

Another turn in our relationship with our parents comes if and when we ourselves become parents. By default, the vast majority of our understanding of what it means to be a good parent, for better or worse, comes from our own childhood experience. Those parts of our upbringing which we enjoyed, found value in, or can trace through to some positive outcome in our adult lives, we adopt. Those which were a source of distress, or which we blame for later problems, we reject. Even in the parts we reject however, the entire framework through which we interpret successful or unsuccessful parenting is an inherited one. We must not ascribe too much power to our parents however. After all, they inherited their parenting strategies as well.

The relationship between parents and grandparents can be simultaneously life giving and a source of tension. The coming of the new child forces the parent to make the above critique of their own parents, and an attentive grandparent might perceive differences in parenting strategy as implicit rebukes. All of this is further complicated and obscured by the fact that a child has two parents from two different families, and so any agreed parenting strategy is not only a response to their respective pasts, but also a negotiation. This means that discussing parenting together can be a potential minefield of misunderstandings and unintended offence. On the other hand, grandparents are of necessity much more experienced parents than young parents, and if the conversations are navigated wisely, can be a great source of encouragement and insight.

All of this comes before, in later life, the relationship between children and their parents changes again, into one of increasing dependency. Once again, this is an entirely new experience, for both parties. For the children the additional responsibilities of caring for their elderly parents is coupled with a shock at seeing their decline, and a confrontation with the reality of the parent's eventual departure. For the parent the gradual loss of capabilities once taken for granted and dependence on others where once there was a sense of self sufficiency, can be difficult to accept and a source of anger or fear. All of these things are new challenges which the parent child relationship must navigate as it endures through this final stage.

Feature: Parents

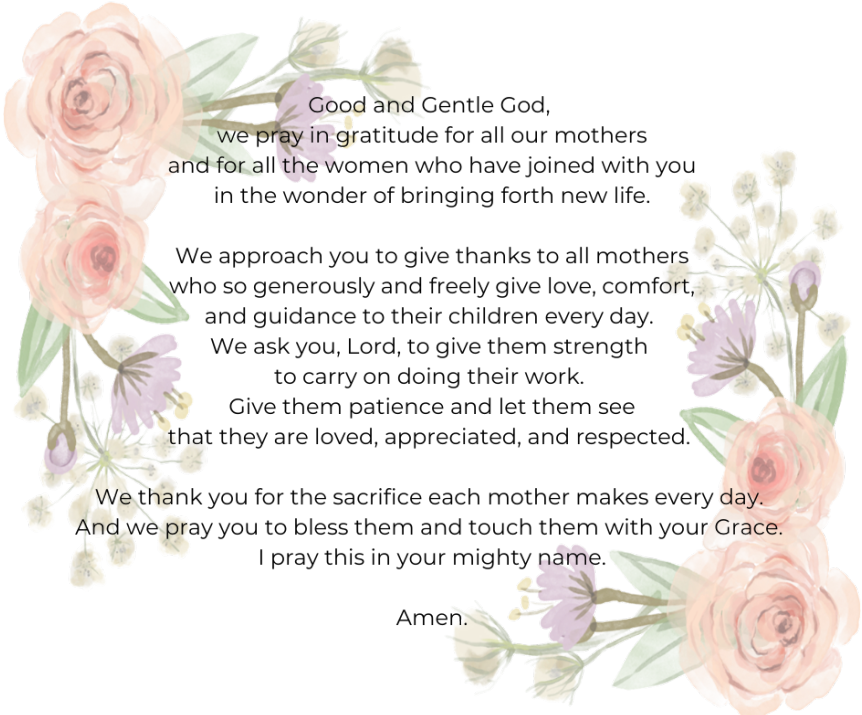
As we consider all of the different seasons of this unique relationship, how should the Christian feel about this significant aspect of the life God has given to each one of us? Surely no one answer will be sufficient. This is particularly the case since the seasons described above are only the roughest of sketches. Sometimes they look different, and sometimes they don't come at all. Parents or children might die young, or never be known in the first place. Relationships can become broken beyond repair. Marriage and children can be longed for but not found - or never longed for in the first place.

Still there are things of which we can be usefully reminded. Of all of the Ten Commandments, only one is dedicated to specific human beings. The ninth and tenth commandments both describe things you should not do to your neighbour (bearing false testimony, and coveting their possessions, respectively), but as we know from the Lord Jesus, 'neighbour' is the widest category imaginable. Only the fifth commandment mentions individuals - honour your Father and Mother.

So here is our baseline truth. Whatever stage or season of life we are in, whether our parents are living or departed, whether near or far, whether known or unknown, our parents deserve our honour. As always when a simple principle meets a messy and fallen world, how this works out in practice is as diverse as the lives of those who apply it. But it is the baseline. Wherever you are, and wherever they are. However your relationship is or isn't. Here is God's word. Honour them.



A Prayer for Mothers



Good and Gentle God,
we pray in gratitude for all our mothers
and for all the women who have joined with you
in the wonder of bringing forth new life.

We approach you to give thanks to all mothers
who so generously and freely give love, comfort,
and guidance to their children every day.
We ask you, Lord, to give them strength
to carry on doing their work.
Give them patience and let them see
that they are loved, appreciated, and respected.

We thank you for the sacrifice each mother makes every day.
And we pray you to bless them and touch them with your Grace.
I pray this in your mighty name.

Amen.

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Hebrews 13:3 says: “Continue to remember those in captivity as if you were with them, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.”

Imagine this scenario:

You are a Christian and move into a village that has no church. You discover that there other Christians in the village and meet some of them.

One has saved enough money to buy a plot of land. The Christian community accepts his generous offer, and to save further expense, you build the church yourselves. You give it a thatched roof, using grasses you have gathered - the quickest and cheapest option initially at least - and it does, you think, look attractive.

There is great joy as you meet to worship God there for the first time. Your services, prayer meetings and Bible studies soon attract about 100 people.

Some local people, however, are unhappy to see a church go up and tell the police it is a front for political meetings. The police feel obliged to act and, five months after you built the church, turn up at a meeting and ask you to stop praying there. They explain that some influential local people do not like your prayers and have threatened to accuse you of being a front for a political movement. You explain that this is not true.

The next day, the police ask two of your members to burn down the church. They refuse.

The church is burnt to the ground the following day. Many of you go the police station to report what has happened. You are told to let it be and not pray there again. You engage a solicitor and consider your legal options.

I doubt that many of any of us can imagine this happening where we live and may even think the story is exaggerated. After all, it has not made any news headlines. Well, here is what happened in India in February this year.

A church built by the Koya tribal community in Kistaram village, Chhattisgarh state, India was burnt down in the early hours of 5 February in an attack that villagers allege was planned by the Station Head Officer (SHO) of the Kistaram Police Station.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide sources report that SHO Bhavesh Shinde visited the church at 11am on 3 February and asked the Christians to stop praying in the premises. He told them that he didn't like their prayers and threatened to falsely accuse them of being Naxalites (i.e. far left radical communists, who have been in constant conflict with the government of India over land rights) if they didn't stop praying there.

On 4 February the SHO reportedly called two villagers, named Deva (35) and Kadthi Santhosh (26), to the police station and asked them to set fire to the church. However, they refused to do so, and were subsequently insulted and threatened with being falsely accused of being Naxalites.

At approximately 3am on 5 February, the church was burnt down. Later that day, the SHO reported the incident to church members Thurram Khanna and Kadti Gurva, who owned the land, and two other members of the church. The SHO allegedly smiled as the incident was being reported and warned them that they would be sent to jail if they prayed there again. Mr Khanna and Mr Gurva have filed affidavits in support of their allegations.



The church, which had a thatched roof, had been built five months ago by the Koya tribal community with their own hands. The land in Kistaram village belonged to Kadti Gurva (52), the son of Penta Gurva, and was paid for using his family savings. An estimated 100 people attended prayer meetings and Bible studies there regularly.

On 5 February, the Chhattisgarh Christian Forum made enquiries of the SHO about the church burning, which he denied had taken place. The villagers had reportedly asked him to file a First Information Report, which is required for the police to open up an investigation, however he refused to do so and would not even note the villagers' complaints.

On 7 February, a delegation of CGCF and Christians from the Koya tribe met the Director General of Police and submitted a memorandum asking for an inquiry and suspension of the SHO. On 8 February, they met with the Human Rights Commission and the Minorities Commission to submit a memorandum.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said:

"It is deeply concerning that members of the police force, which is meant to protect the fundamental rights of Indian citizens, have either condoned or been implicated in this violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief. We urge both Chhattisgarh state and central government authorities to conduct an independent and impartial investigation to ensure that all perpetrators of this crime, including any police officers who may be complicit, are brought to justice. We also call for the victims to be fully compensated for the loss that they have suffered, and to be provided with alternative arrangements for them to practise their religion freely. The state must also ensure that this community will not be subjected to fear and intimidation in the future."

This is not an isolated case. Churches have been razed to the ground elsewhere in India and in other countries, for example in Nigeria. Please remember such Christian communities in your prayers, with Mervyn's words and CSW's web site and prayer diary as a guide. It can also help to write to ambassadors. International publicity often brings results. Evil likes to hide under cover.

Source: www.csw.org.uk/2022/02/08/press/5577/article.htm



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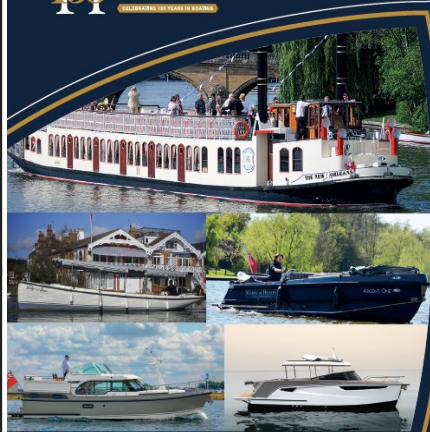
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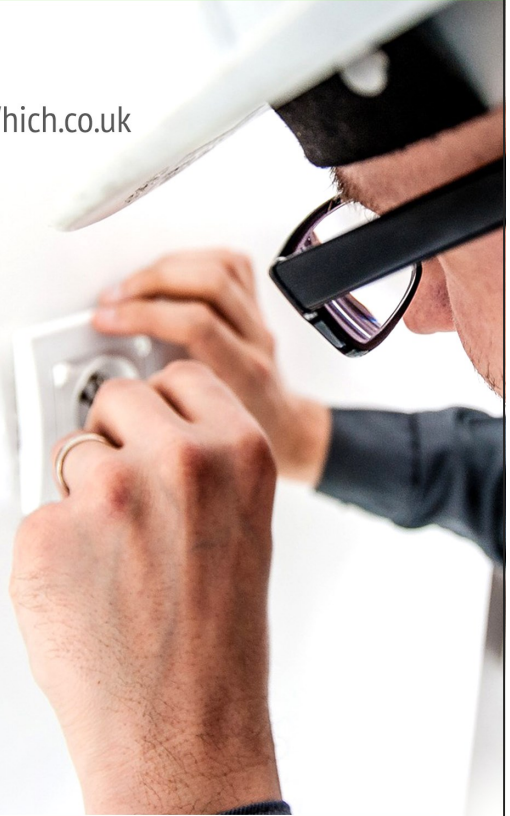
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