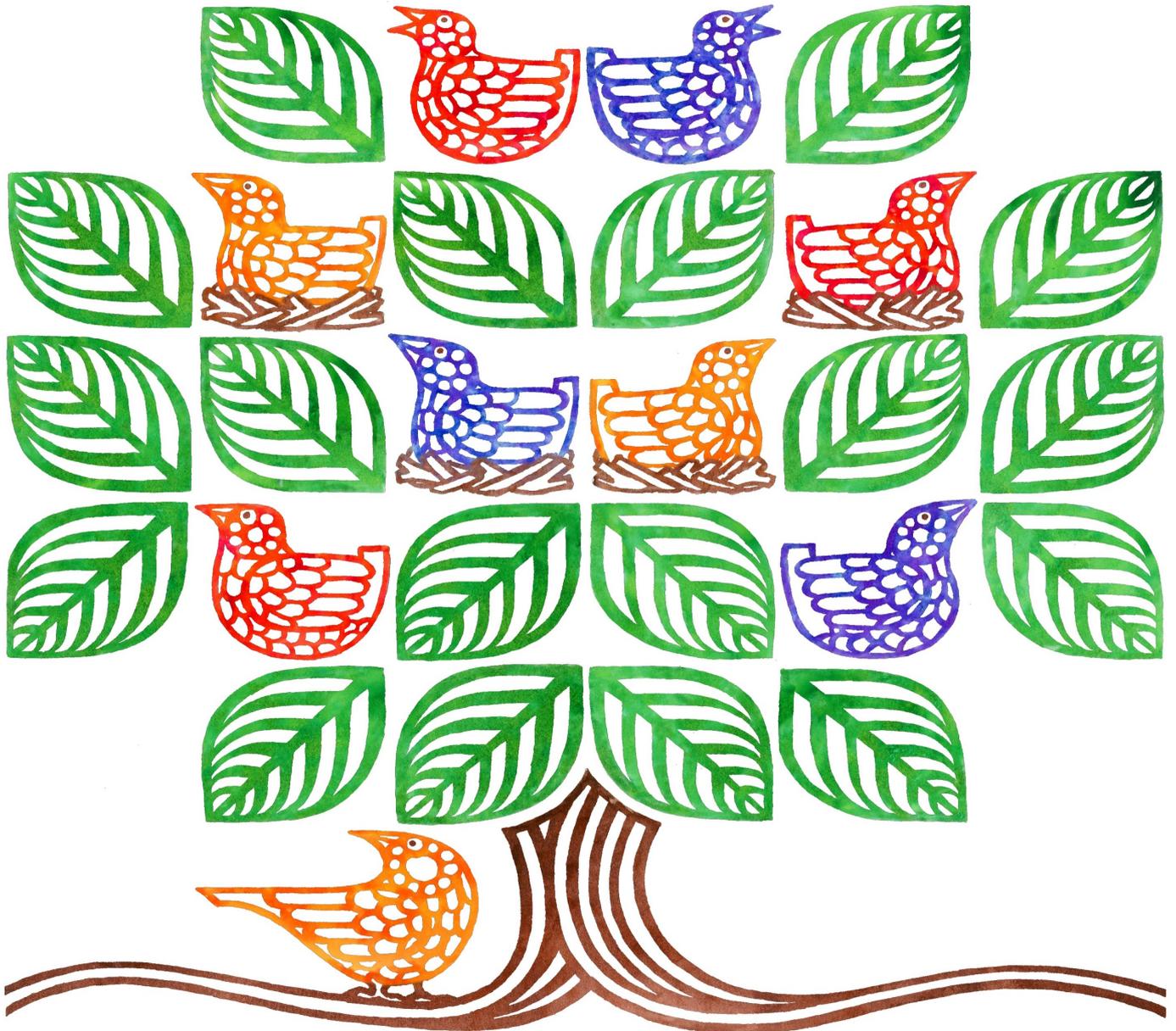


St Mary the Virgin



The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed - it is the smallest of seeds, but when it grows, it is big enough for the wild birds to come and build nests in its branches.
Matthew 13:31-32

THURSDAY 1ST AUGUST 1944 ANN FRANK'S LAST DIARY ENTRY

TUESDAY 16TH AUGUST THE TRANSFIGURATION

**WEDNESDAY 19TH AUGUST 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF
AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDANCE**

AUGUST 2019

Vicar's Letter*

Luke 17 1-2 *“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a mill-stone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble.’”*

These are strong words. On three occasions in the last two weeks I have had cause to reflect on them. As a priest, I keep them constantly in my mind, for I know that I will be held to account.

But we all stand as examples of our faith to those who look at us. This may be family, friends, colleagues or indeed strangers. Whether this is right or wrong is not the point, this is the way it is. If you read in the press about the church in general, or indeed the Church of England in particular, you may well get a very different view from the church we all know. At least I hope you do.

I have been very encouraged in the short time I have been at St. Mary's by both the commitment to the church, and engagement with the church, of those who are members of our Christian community here. We are growing slowly as more and more people learn that our church was not closed. But many in the community have been told this and believe this. How are we to address this? It is time to demonstrate that we “are here”.

So, I have been reflecting on how we engage in what is called “Mission and Ministry”. As you know I am not likely to go up to a complete stranger and ask them if they know that they have been saved by Jesus, as one person did to me once. Neither would I expect that of you. So how do we spread the “good news”?

Although there is no documentary evidence to support it, St. Francis is reputed to have said, *“Preach the gospel, only use words if you have to”*. In Matthew, in a section where Jesus is talking about trees and the quality of their fruits, he reflects, *“Thus you will know them by their fruits”*. I commend to you the Letter of James; he has much to say about the balance between faith and works, he is clear that faith inspires action.

The way in which we conduct ourselves both as individuals, and as a church, is a reflection of how much our faith influences our worldview. This will, in turn, influence what others think about both us and our faith.

In the Autumn it is my hope that we will be starting home study groups. Here we can learn more of the faith we share and encourage and learn from each other. These are of course open to everyone who has an interest in our faith, so invite your friends. Details will appear in this magazine and on the website, Facebook page, twitter feed etc.....

I look forward to seeing you there.

God bless

David

Five Marks of Mission – Part one of five

In June I wrote about the Five Marks of Mission. Here they are to remind you”

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

In my letter to the church this month, I made mention of Mission and Ministry, and asked just how do we spread the “good news”? In this age it is not easy. We reflected in Morning Prayer just today, about how difficult it is to talk to people about our faith life, or our church life. I would observe that if there are no positive role models of people with faith, how will the common perception of “Christian people” ever change.

Where are the role models? We are the role models.

Jeremy Hunt, who by the time you read this may or may not have become the next Prime Minister said, "I sometimes pray. I'm like regular Church of England folk: it's part of my life and my identity, but I don't think it defines my politics."

I admire the honesty of his statement, but within this statement is part of what is blocking mission. It is by using our faith to define not only our politics, but the moral and ethical framework of our lives, that we will be seen as Christian or not, and our mission will be effective or not.

We have nothing to be ashamed of, there is nothing wrong in loving God and neighbour. We just have to work out how our lives may have to change in order for mission to happen because it is through our behaviour that we proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

There will be study groups later in the year, details will be published soon, and I hope we will be able to deepen our knowledge and understanding. But more of that in part two, next month.

David

***Rev David Pierce is the Lead Minister at St. Mary's Church**

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Christian squirrels

The Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

But the Catholic church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

Beer of 'biblical proportions'

What kind of beer did people drink in biblical times,
and what did it taste like?

Such questions will brew in the minds of real ale lovers, as they lovingly savour their favourite real ale each weekend. And now help is at last at hand. For scientists in Israel have managed to brew beer using extracts of ancient yeast. Microbiologists in Israel, along with scholars from the Israel Antiquities Authority and Hebrew University, extracted microscopic specimens from several ancient beer jugs that dated as far back as 3000BC. They then cleaned and sequenced the full genome of every specimen. Finally, the result was handed to brewers as well as to a local beer export to produce the drink. And the result? The Associated Press said the beer was "champagne bubbly and dry, with a hint of green apple." Sort of a honey wine mixed with modern ale. Dr Ronen Hazan, from the Hebrew University-Hadassh School of Dental Medicine, added, 'By the way, the beer isn't bad.' Beer was an important part of people's daily lives in antiquity. The more things change...?



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Growing crisis in social care

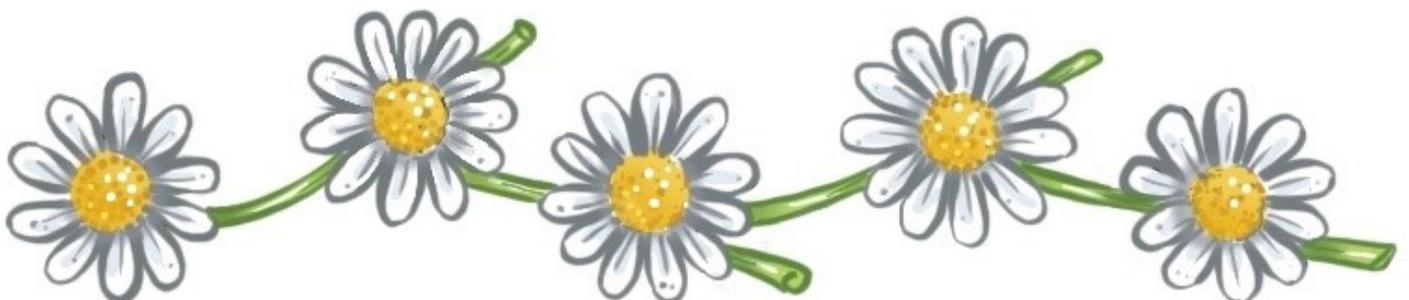
More of us need more help. Fewer of us are getting it. The crisis in the social care system in England continues to grow. Local council spending in real terms is now £700million below what it was in 2010/11.

The findings come in a recent report from the King's Fund think tank, which found a two per cent rise in new requests for adult social care since 2015/6. Yet with 1.84million applications in 2017/18, there are actually 13,000 *fewer* people being given help.

More disabled adults of working age are also seeking help. In 2015/6 there were about 500,000; in 2017/8 there were 524,000. All in all, the report concluded: "that increasing need among working-age adults, an increasing older population and high levels of existing unmet need are combining to put immense pressure on our care and support system, now and for the future." The report also warned that 22 per cent of older people say that they need support, but do not get it.

**Today's wise words come from perhaps an unlikely source,
the actor, Tommy Lee Jones:**

**"Kindness and politeness are not overrated at all. They're
underused."**



ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL REGULAR USERS

| | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Monday | <p style="text-align: center;">Strollercise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strolling/dancing to the sounds of the 50s 6-7,000 steps (3 miles) Fun, friendly, all ages, no gym kit required £4 per hour No need to book 10 -11 am 11.15am -12.15pm Contact: Karen/Tracy 07745 154065</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Barling & Lt. Wakering Women's Institute</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2pm 1st Monday of the month Contact Phyl Wickenden 01702 582185</p> | |
| Tuesday | <p style="text-align: center;">U3A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2nd Tuesday of month 10am to 12 noon Contact: Mick 01702 622356</p> | | Private booking 5.30 – 7.30 pm |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | <p style="text-align: center;">Community Coffee Morning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10.30 am to 12 noon All welcome</p> | | Private booking 6-7pm |
| Friday | <p style="text-align: center;">Diddi Dance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9.15 – 10.15 am Funky pre-school dance class for boys and girls. Contact Jennifer Ripton 0775 6407162</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Marriott's Tai Chi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11am – 12.30 pm Contact Tracey Cain 01702 290461</p> | |



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On the discovery of a long-lost crypt



The Rectory
St. James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Since your church is a former cinema, I suspect that were the floor to be removed, cigarette ash, sweet wrappings and tickets for the last Charlie Chaplin film would be revealed. Our marble flooring in the chancel was raised last week to try and find the rat that had died on an underfloor heating pipe. It made its presence so un-ignorable last Winter that it gave me the excuse to use incense.

But we have made an exciting discovery: the long-lost crypt containing the tombs of the Lords Staveley. He flourished in this area, until a little domestic disagreement with Henry II made the family realise that life in Italy might be pleasanter if they wished to retain their heads. The stone from their manor house soon became our lady chapel; an example of re-cycling as a euphemism for theft.

Inevitably, as soon as we had made the discovery, rumours of vast treasure flew round the parish. Long before anyone had descended into it, the treasurer had the fortune earmarked for re-wiring the church, the organist decided it should be spent on enlarging the organ, and Mrs Millington had decided it should keep the flower arrangers in chicken wire until the next millennium-but-one. I confess that even I toyed with the idea of a conservatory with discreet drinks cabinet at the rectory.

Sadly, it was not to be. Our 'treasure' consisted of rows of coffins in various stages of decay, enough bat droppings to keep our Verger's vegetable patch enriched for the coming year and long-lost peppermints dropped by generations of choristers sitting above, as they munched their way through the sermons.

Later that evening, when the workmen had left, I decided to have one last look. Taking a torch, I descended the stone steps, but lost my footing. The now-broken torch went one way and I another. After floundering round in total darkness and unable to find the stairs to get out, I resigned myself to an uncomfortable night in the crypt until daybreak.

In the early hours, I heard steps on the same stairs and in their torchlight, saw it was someone who must have heard the rumours of treasure and decided to liberate some of it. He, too, tripped, fell and lost his torch and in the total darkness I heard him fumbling about at the other end of the crypt among the coffins.

Intending to be helpful, I called to him softly, saying that I'd been trying to get out of here myself for a long time and had never made it, so he may as well give up. But do you know, he found his way out in no time.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

The Sound of Worship

As we gather for the service
Greeting, laughing, chatting we,
While a genius is working
Deep in electricity.



Checking all the wires are plugged in,
Running gremlins down to ground.
1,2,3 - that mike is working!
No more faults there to be found!

Have you seen that desk he/she uses?
Sliders, switches, buttons, knobs;
Looks to me just like a flight deck -
Someone really knows their job!

While you listen, learn, and worship
May a prayer of thanks be found
Then, perhaps a little feedback
For the one who does the sound.

By Nigel Beeton



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HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?
Thank you to Francine, Pat and David for their contributions this month. If you have anything which would be of interest, please contact the editor, Craig Hunter early in the month, so that your space can be reserved.
07932503644; chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk

Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

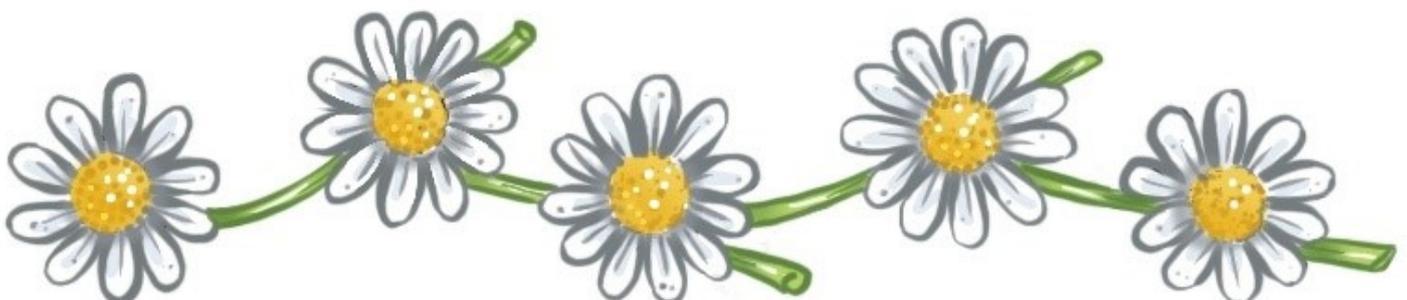
80 years ago, on 2nd August 1939 that physicists Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard wrote a letter to US President Franklin D Roosevelt explaining the dangers of Germany building an atomic bomb before the USA, and urging the creation of an atomic weapons research programme.

During the final stage of World War II, the United States detonated two nuclear weapons over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, with the consent of the United Kingdom, as required by the Quebec Agreement. The two bombings killed 129,000–226,000 people, most of whom were civilians, and remain the only use of nuclear weapons in the history of armed conflict.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.' (Matthew 5:7).

The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, *'Go and do likewise.'* (Luke 10:37).

'Do not take revenge, my dear friends...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.' (Romans 12:19,20).





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| AUGUST | Family Service | Parish Eucharist |
| 4th August Trinity 7 | 10am Family Service Tony Pond | 11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. John Russell |
| 11th August Trinity 8 | 10am Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce | 11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce |
| 18th August Trinity 9 | 10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce | 11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce |
| 25th August Trinity 10 | 10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce | 11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce |
| | 12:15 Kim Hazzard | Healing service after Eucharist on 4th Sunday each month. |

Mid-week services

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Monday | 9:00am | Morning prayer |
| | 4:00pm | Evensong |
| Thursday | 9:00am | Morning prayer |
| | 10:00am | Communion |
| | 10:30am | Coffee Morning |
| | 4:00pm | Evensong |

Evening Prayer
5 p.m.
Friday at 10, Herongate
(Kym's home)

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The Sacrament is reserved for the Communion of the sick and housebound. Please let the Pastoral Assistant know of any parishioners who would like to receive communion at home.

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| | Craig Hunter | 07932503644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk |
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| Organist & Choirmaster Hall Bookings | Michael Crabb, MBE | 298314 |
| | Phyl Wickenden | 582185 |
| | Francine Johnson | 589244 |
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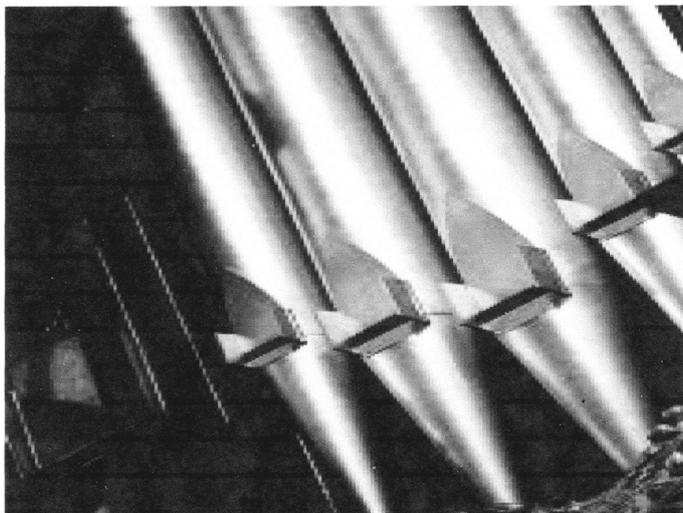
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