



December
2019

**St Mary the Virgin
North Shoebury**



**SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER WINTER SOLSTICE
TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE
WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY
THURSDAY 26TH DECEMBER BOXING DAY
SATURDAY 28TH DECEMBER HOLY INNOCENT'S DAY
TUESDAY 31ST DECEMBER HOGMANAY**

Repairing the Spire

The erection of scaffolding began mid-June, on what has been a project 5 years in the making. Bakers of Danbury started the first stage of restoration works to St Mary's spire by removing all of the old horizontal white painted weather boarding, which had been there since the 1980's and had seen the ravages of time and nature - peppered with woodpecker holes and letting through water like a sieve. The woodpeckers had been creating holes so they could feast on the insects living in the wooden weather boarding!

The old white weather boarding was carefully removed to expose the structure below, which had been previously repaired, but now in need of urgent attention. Water ingress overtime had caused damage to the shell and frame below. Bakers of Danbury carried out sympathetic repairs by replacing the timbers like for like. The majority of the timbers replaced were in green oak, as green oak would have been used when the spire was originally built.



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Bakers of Danbury covered the repaired shell and frame with a ‘breathable’ membrane, installed counter battens and then covered the battens with a waterproof ply. The battens created a void (a ‘breather’ gap) between the breathable membrane and the waterproof ply to help prevent moisture and condensation being trapped, which would otherwise have caused damage to the shell and frame below overtime. Finally, a coloured zinc was installed to replicate and blend into the rest of the structure, providing a similar look to historical roof coverings of past times. The scaffold was taken down in October.



Having been established over 140 years ago, Bakers of Danbury are fortunate to restore, conserve and on occasion extend many churches across the East of England and London. In the last 12 months Bakers have carried out restoration and alteration work to Westminster Abbey and St Pauls Cathedral, in addition to many other projects.

Vicar's Letter*

David, a servant and shepherd of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the church of St. Mary the Virgin North Shoebury - greetings.

Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this manner, one year ago, I started a regular correspondence with this parish. The last year has seen many changes. I commented a year ago how different Paul's experience was from mine. He would have known the members of his churches so well. Now, a year later, I know the members of this church a lot better than I did a year ago. But in the year that has passed, we have all changed, and are not the same. At least I hope not. In the last year we have lost some very dear members of our church, but at the same time, we have gained some new members. These changes have been taking place here, in our church, for the best part of eight hundred years, and will continue into another year.

So, we start a new year together, and as we prepare for the most disruptive event a family can experience, the birth of a new child, we prepare for the birth of the Christ Child; again.

Last year, we were challenged by Luke's Gospel, this year it is the turn of Matthew. Matthew presents different challenges and insights as his Gospel story unfolds and I hope we will continue to be both enriched and informed by his Gospel. I think we may discover big themes, we will see that King Herod represents all "Herods" and the politics of death; we will see Matthew's contempt for the "scribes and Pharisees" as he sees them as the "intellectuals for hire" to such a politic; and we will see very early in the year that the journey of the "wise men", after their meeting with the Christ child, mirrors the journey we all must take if we are to avoid the politics of Herod.

We are also preparing in a few days' time for a General Election. I feel that it is part of our Christian duty to engage in the politics of the day, and so I encourage each and every one of us to vote. I hope everyone looks closely at the policies of the parties and finds a way to look at the election promises through the lens of our Christian faith.

By the end of December, the world will be a very different place.

So I wish you all God Bless, and a Merry Christmas.

David

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

Five Marks of Mission – Part five of five

I am writing a series about the Five Marks of Mission. Here they are again.

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

At last, the end is nigh! Well we all hope it is not yet, but as I write this, the entire might of human ingenuity has not yet found humankind another planet to live on.

So just maybe we should look at ways to keep this planet going a little longer. For the purposes of this article, I really do not care if you are a climate change sceptic or not, it doesn't take a mighty intellect to see that if we continue to consume resources faster than we can regenerate them it will not work out well.

The Five Marks of Mission are not pick 'n' mix suggestions, they describe an attitude to existence in its widest sense, and when five all are found together, mission will inevitably be taking place.

But they add up to something more than the sum of their parts. They are about loving, caring, growing, encouraging and building. This message is hardwired into the fabric of our faith and yet, in the complexities of the world we have fabricated for ourselves, when we overlay this simple message with our own selfishness, they appear clouded, distant, unimportant, certainly not as important as **I AM**.

This takes us back to the earliest stories of creation, in Genesis. We read in the opening words of Genesis that everything that God created was good. Everything that was created was created from good by the God who when Moses asked who was sending him to Pharaoh gave the name **I AM**.

If we truly treasure the gifts we have been blessed with as part of creation, then really, we should be striving to care for them; we depend on them for our very existence.

God bless, David.

St Mary's Church Hall – Regular Hirers/Activities

Monday	<p>Strollercise 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>Barling & Lt. Waking Women's Institute 1st Monday of month, 2 pm Contact Phyl Wickenden 01702 582185</p>	
Tuesday	<p>U3A – Local History 2nd Tuesday of month 10.15 am to 12.15 pm Contact: Mick 01702 622356</p>	<p>U3A – Crafting 2nd Tuesday of month 1.30pm to 3.30pm Contact Janet 07810 879673</p>	<p>Private booking 5.30 – 7.30 pm Southend Wado Kai Tengudojo Karate 7.30 – 9pm Contact: Tony 07874 854494</p>
Wednesday	<p>U3A Ukelele Improvers 2nd Wednesday of month 10 am to 12 noon Contact: Roni 07584 660096</p>	<p>U3A Knit & Natter 2nd Wednesday of month 2 – 4pm Contact Pat 07476 078570</p>	
Thursday	<p>St Mary's Community Coffee Morning 10.30 am to 12 noon All welcome</p>	<p>U3A Floristry 1st Thursday of month 1pm – 3.30pm Contact Jane 07743507511</p>	<p>Private booking 5.45 – 6.45 pm</p>
Friday	<p>Diddi Dance 9.15 – 10.15 am Funky pre-school dance class for boys and girls. Contact Jennifer Ripton 07756 407162</p>	<p>Marriott's Tai Chi 11am – 12.00 pm Contact Tracey Cain 01702 290461</p>	
Saturday	<p>Yoga Class 11.30am – 12.30pm Contact Bridgette 07812 742481</p>		

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**Christmas message from The Right
Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of
Chelmsford.**



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Have a peaceful and colourful Christmas

I was visited New Zealand in the summer – their winter. I was speaking at a conference on mission. My wife, Rebecca, came with me and like a couple of teenagers we hired a camper van and went exploring. Because it was winter many of the sites we visited were delightfully quiet and peaceful. One of the most unusual places was Wai-O-Tapu Park. It has all of the ingredients you might expect from a beauty spot; unspoilt rocks, ferns, and trees nestled around lakes. What makes this place remarkable are the weird colours. The glooping escape of geothermal gasses through mud and hissing geysers have upset the colours you would expect to see. Soil is white, rocks are orange and water is bright green or red. There is something wonderfully unsettling about seeing what is familiar in a startlingly different way. The day after the birth of Jesus Christ, the houses of Bethlehem, the harbours of the Mediterranean and trade routes of the Middle East all looked the same. But for Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and Magi everything was startlingly different. God's familiar creation was now represented in a new and unsettling way. Jesus is baby just like any other, yet his birth, life, death and resurrection reveal Gods new creation. God reframes the entire universe from him, through him and for him. When we visit him at Christmas we are invited to see ourselves and the whole world in startlingly new and different colours. I wish you a peaceful and colourful Christmas.

HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to Francine, Michael 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

THE WAY I SEE IT: Protecting the Innocent

The day most of us call 'Boxing Day', was when tradesmen used to collect their annual tips from customers. It is named in the Church Calendar as St Stephen's Day, in memory of the first martyr, stoned to death by an angry crowd because of his faith. That is a shocking footnote to the celebration of Christmas, but worse is to follow.

Three days later the Church asks us to remember the 'Holy Innocents'. These were the young children of Bethlehem killed by Herod's soldiers in a vain attempt to annihilate the potential new-born king. The Magi – the so-called 'Wise Men' – had told him the child had been born in that town. In fact, the child Jesus was by then safely across the border in Egypt, his parents having been warned to do so in a dream.

But that did not save the innocent toddlers of Bethlehem, who were brutally put to the sword. They were subsequently named the 'holy innocents' because that is what they were: holy and wholly innocent, victims of a man's determination to cling to power, whatever the cost.

Innocent children still suffer, of course: in refugee camps, in enslaved families, in unhappy homes and at the hands of abusers. Because they are weak and helpless, and utterly innocent, the rest of us have a duty to protect them.

When Jesus wanted to portray pure innocence, He took a small child in His arms. He then uttered a warning, probably the harshest words to leave His lips. Anyone who offends against such little ones would not escape severe punishment.

The fate of the 'holy innocents' is a sharp reminder, just after the Christmas celebrations, that Jesus was born into the world as it is: light and darkness, compassion and cruelty, love and hatred. He didn't come to endorse that world, but to change it. Darkness cannot defeat light. In the end the angel's song will be fulfilled: 'Peace on earth' in the kingdom of God.

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On the best ways for a vicar to disrupt Christmas

The Rectory
St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

I am sorry I was not alive during that wonderful four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas. Just think! No Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. That man was a hero.

Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2nd January. By Easter, the flowers for church have been colour coordinated, the seating plans and table decorations for the Christmas party have been allocated (with nominated reserves in case someone should inconveniently die in the intervening eight months). Long before Summer is over, the tree lights have been tested, music for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service has been chosen and the service sheets printed. Way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found, those who are to light all the candles will have been rehearsed to perfection and the brass lectern has had its annual polish.

We do not do spontaneity at St James the Least of All. If ever there was a service when time for something unexpected was allowed, its place would be announced in the order of service, how long it would happen unexpectedly would have been decided by a committee and who was to be spontaneous would have been allocated on a rota.

The one person none of these well-meaning, efficient, committed organisers can control is the Rector. You could call it a staff perk.

Carols will (accidentally, of course) be announced in the wrong order; if verse 3 was to be omitted, I announce it will be verse 4. This keeps the organist on his toes while the choir hovers on the point of a collective nervous breakdown. At the Christmas supper, my introductory welcome speech and extensive grace make those in the kitchen wonder if the vegetables being boiled should better be served as thick soup.

I offer the helpful suggestion that the tree, having been installed and decorated in the chancel, may perhaps look better in the sanctuary and I turn all the heating off throughout the season, explaining that it will help the flowers to last. All Services will start five minutes early (was my watch rather fast?) so I can look disapprovingly at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone yet again slightly awry, with parishioners exhausted and I exhilarated at the chaos that has been created with such ease. Mr Cromwell, your spirit lives on.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Mid-week services

Monday	9:00am	Morning prayer
Thursday	9:00am	Morning prayer
	10:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Coffee Morning

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

RESERVED SACRAMENT

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.

TRANSPORT TO CHURCH

Please let the Churchwardens know if any parishioners would appreciate a lift to Church





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The Rev Paul Hardingham considers an annual challenge...

How to help someone who is lonely this Christmas

'It's gonna be a lonely Christmas'. The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they're always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, she probably felt very alone. Her situation would be seen as scandalous, as few believed that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit! Yet, God was with her: *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel" (which means, 'God with us')*. (Matthew 1:23).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

Take time to talk

Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who's lonely.

Give someone a call

Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won't be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.

Give a neighbour a card

Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card.

Start a conversation and make a connection.

Having a party?

Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!

Pray for Others

If you hear of someone who's on their own, pray for them. Pray that God would show you how to respond!

'The most important thing I can tell you is that we are never alone when we know Christ.' (Billy Graham).



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DECEMBER	Family Service	Parish Eucharist
1st December 1st Sunday in Advent	10am Family Service Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
8th December Advent 2	10am Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce	11:00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
15th December Advent 3	10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
22nd December Advent 4	10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
		4:00pm Celebration Carol Service Revd. David Pierce
Tuesday 24th December Christmas Eve	4:00pm Christmas Crib Service Revd. David Pierce	11:30pm Midnight Mass Revd. David Pierce
Wednesday 25th December Christmas Day	10:30am Combined Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce	
29th December 1st Sunday in Christmas	10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce

Sunday 15th December

4pm

Shoebury High School

Carol Service

Sunday 8th December

4pm

Shoebury Garrison

Carol Service

CONTACT DETAILS

For all enquiries, including weddings, baptisms, blessings etc. please, in the first instance, contact the Churchwarden.

Phone numbers are all area code 01702 unless stated

Lead Minister	Revd. David Pierce	07305 710265 david@revdavidpierce.net
Churchwardens	Pat Fitch	585289 pat_fitch@btinternet.com
	Craig Hunter	07932503644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk
Pastoral Assistant	Kym Hazzard-Garne	07826241530
Hall Bookings	Phyl Wickenden	582185
	Francine Johnson	589244
PCC Secretary	Michelle Waters	589026
Church Finance & Gift Aid Secretary	Francine Johnson	589244
Electoral Roll	(Vacancy)	
Church Diaries & Flowers co-ordinator	Wendy Shipperley	588319
Social, Hall & Fundraising	Francine Johnson	589244
	Phyl Wickenden	582185
Readers, Chalice Assistants & Sides persons Rota Parish Magazine	Church Wardens Craig Hunter	0793203644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk
Churchyard Cleaning co-ordinator	(Vacancy) Pat Fitch	585289

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Christmas at St Mary the Virgin, North Shoebury



There are so many wonderful Christmas Carols, and the season passes so quickly that if we are not careful we can miss them. So, this year at St. Mary's there will be an additional Christmas Service. It will be at 4.00 pm on Sunday 22nd December. At this service we will tell Christmas Stories, not only from the Bible, but other poetry and stories that have been told through the years about Christmas. So to make sure we sing your favourite Christmas Carol, we need to know which one it is. There is a sheet at the back up church where you can add your favourite. But if you use the web you can put in your request at our contact page:

<https://www.stmarynorthshoebury.org.uk/contact-us/>

Or tweet to <https://twitter.com/stmarynorthsho1>

We will publish the list in the New Year. There may be a Local list, and an International list.

Sunday 22nd December	Family Christmas Celebration Carol Service	4pm
Tuesday 24th December	Christmas Crib service	4pm
Tuesday 24th December	Midnight Mass	11:30pm
Wednesday 25th December	Combined Family Eucharist	10:30am