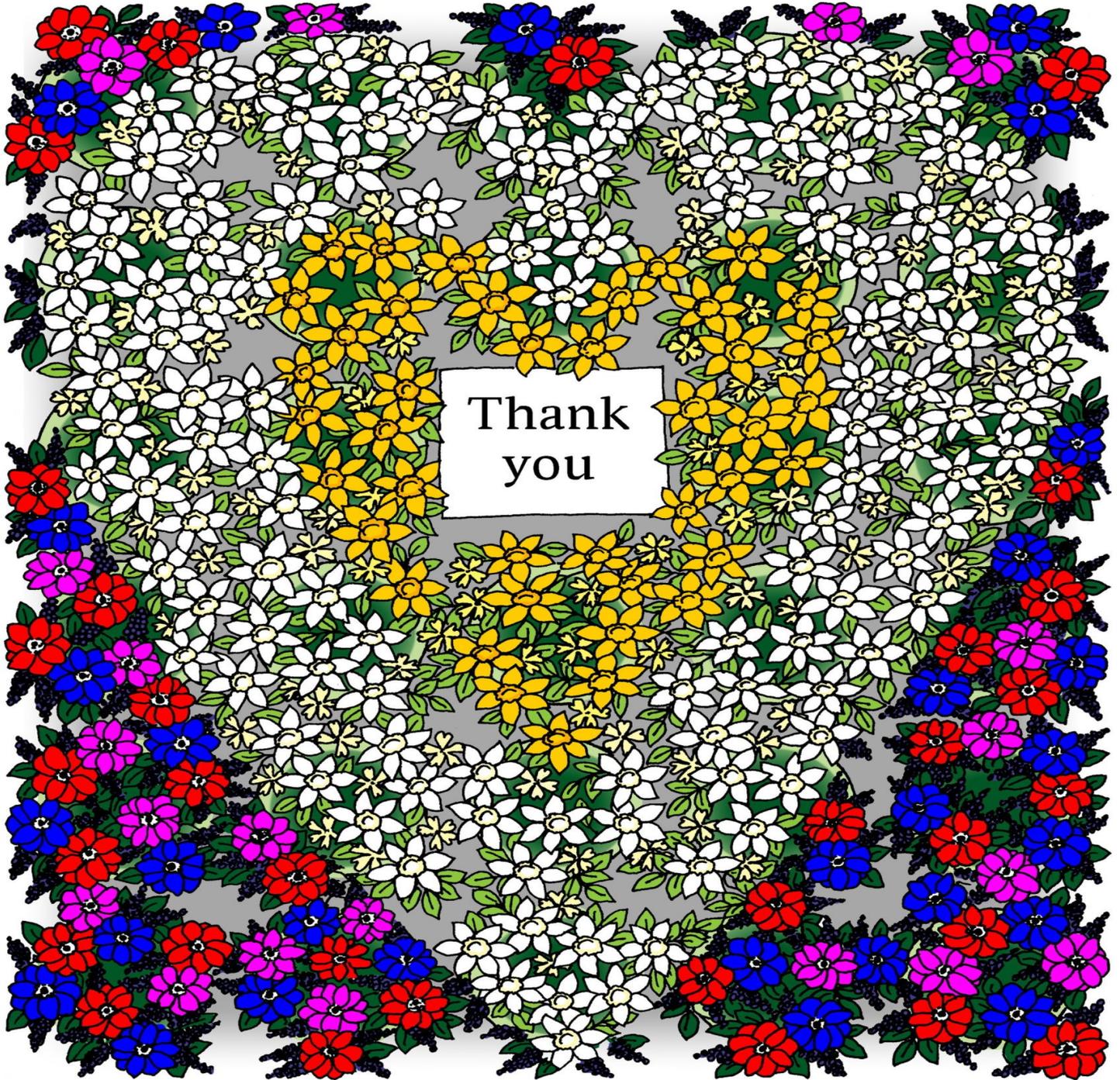




St Mary the Virgin March North Shoebury 2020



SUNDAY 1ST MARCH ST DAVID'S DAY

TUESDAY 17TH MARCH ST PATRICK'S DAY

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH MOTHERING SUNDAY

WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH THE ANNUNCIATION OF MARY



**This month's
magazine has been
sponsored In
memory of a Loved
One.**

4th Sunday in Lent

There is an old Jewish saying:
*God could not be everywhere,
and therefore He made mothers*



Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday' - as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families - which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.



Vicar's Letter*

Matthew 4:1 *"Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."*

The Gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent begins with these words from Matthew's Gospel.

The temptations of Jesus became the inspiration for the church season of Lent. Lent is traditionally a time when people "give things up for Lent". It may be chocolate or some other treat, but then during Lent, we are tempted to go and sample that which we have given up, and I assume we are missing. Wikipedia tells me that

"The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer for Easter through prayer, doing penance, mortifying the flesh, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and denial of ego."

As a result of this process, we are supposed to become "better people". Does it work for you? I am not sure it does for me.

There are other traditions associated with Lent, but this is process of giving stuff up is what catches the imagination of most people. Even those who have no association with church enter into this tradition.

Why then does Fairtrade Fortnight begin on 24th February, and therefore is always part of Lent. I ask this because Fairtrade Chocolate is just so lovely. Each year I ask myself if by giving up chocolate will I become a better person?

So what then? I gave up giving stuff up for Lent a long time ago, but I do not ignore this forty day period. Many years ago, before I was ordained, I started saying Morning Prayer every day during Lent. This discipline forces me to take about fifteen minutes out of the day, and spend it in prayer, reading the Bible and quiet thought. It has become a lifetime habit, but every day it is still an effort, but one I find worthwhile.

For the last few years I have read a "Lent Book". Each year several books are published for personal or group use as a guide through Lent. *"Saying Yes to Life"* by Ruth Valerio is The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2020. You can buy it through Amazon or Waterstones and have a donation made to the work of St. Mary's through Easy Fundraising. (See elsewhere in the magazine for details of Easy Fundraising.)

Lastly, there will be a Lent Course held on Thursday at 11:45 in the Church Hall. It will last about an hour, please bring sandwiches, coffee and tea will be provided. We will be using Pilgrim Course to look at the Beatitudes. Taken from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, they are a foundation part of the Christian life, and once upon a time would have been learned off by heart.

Lent should be about improvement, so this year, rather than giving up something trivial, not that chocolate is trivial, for forty days, maybe take something up, or do something positive that may eventually become life changing.

So this Lent, do something positive that makes a difference. You might not change the world, but you may well change yourself.

God bless

David

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

Pilgrim Course – Lent 2020

During Lent this year, we will once again be holding weekly study groups. This year the groups will be using the popular Pilgrim Course. The Pilgrim Course is a major teaching and discipleship resource from the Church of England. It aims to help every local church create a place where people can explore the Christian faith together and see how it can be lived out each day.

There will be six sessions, one a week, starting on Thursday 27th February at 11:45 in the Church Hall. Each session will be about an hour long.

Pilgrim takes a different approach from other Christian programmes. It approaches the great issues of faith not through persuasion, but participation in a pattern of contemplation and discussion with a group of fellow travellers.

This year we will be looking at the Beatitudes. Part of the Sermon on the Mount which only appears in Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes are a short but profoundly influential collection of sayings by Jesus. They set out the Christian vision of the world.

Each session begins with a short opening prayer, and then a discussion followed by a reading from the Bible. There is a video and a reflection.

I do hope that you can find time to attend these sessions, as I think they will help and support us on our Christian journey.

I look forward to sharing them with you.



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17 March - St Patrick: beloved apostle to Ireland

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God".

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

But by 435, well-educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.



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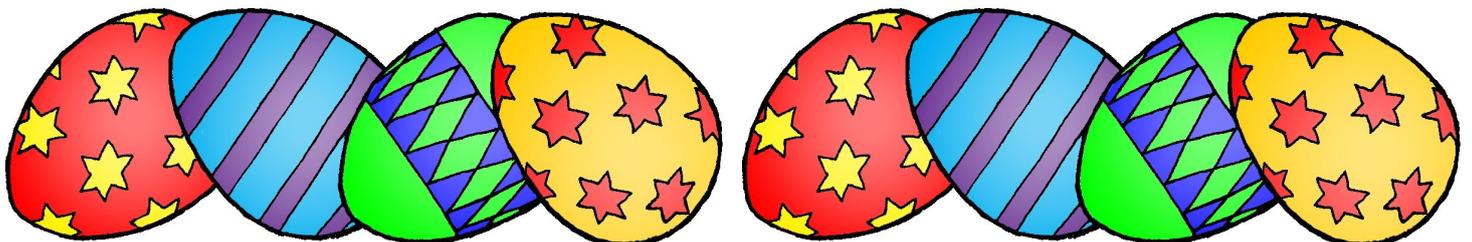
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On the nonsense of having a lavatory at church

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

This year, the rigours of Lent have taken second place to a far more pressing matter: the installation of a lavatory at St James the Least of All.

Personally, I entirely disapprove of this additional sign of decadence in our moral fibre; we have survived perfectly happily for the last 800 years without one, so why is there such an urgent need now? And being surrounded by acres of fields, there seems to be a completely acceptable alternative.

It also spoils the pleasure I used to take, informing ushers at weddings, having liberally refreshed themselves at our local pub before the Service, that we have no facilities and that they would just have to wait. Their look of pained resignation, developing to clear signs of repentance as the Service progressed, was most cheering. It also meant that wedding parties did not linger after the Service but disappeared with commendable speed to safe havens.

I anticipate that now we have the thing, a sub-committee will form to devise a commissioning Service for the person who will be in charge of its maintenance. I can already foresee Lady Bartlett proposing an appropriate set of robes for the office holder – although it will need some tact to select suitable insignia on the sleeves.

In fact, the project has not been entirely successful; we still need to have a lock fitted and so at present, occupants have been advised to sing hymns loudly. A hymn book has been installed as an *aide memoire*.

The greater difficulty arises from our antiquated plumbing system. A member of the congregation can leave a Service perfectly discreetly; they can enter the lavatory unseen by anyone, but on flushing, water is drawn through pipes running the length of the inside of the building with a thunderous roar.

I am sure that in your worship centre you will have lavish cloakrooms furnished with colour co-ordinated walls and towels, baby-changing facilities and video monitors relaying everything going on in the service. But we are made of sterner stuff, and I maintain that our congregation should be grateful that they now a lavatory at all.

And to think that someone suggested it should even have heating!

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



The Church garden work party this month will be

on

Saturday 14th March

from 2-4pm

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Real Easter Eggs celebrate their 10th birthday!

The Real Easter Egg campaign has been running since 2010 and involves thousands of churches, schools and groups. It crosses all denominations and offers individuals a simple way to share the Easter Story while supporting Fairtrade and charitable projects.

The idea began in 2008 when I was given a chocolate Easter Egg. On the side of the box it read: 'Easter is the festival of chocolate and loveliness'. I began to wonder – was it right for the manufacturer of an Easter egg to change the meaning of a religious festival in this way? Imagine the outcry if this had been done to Christmas.

For it to be a 'Real Easter Egg', it had to reflect the Easter themes of hope and new life and do three things – have a copy of the Easter story in the box, be made from Fairtrade chocolate and support charitable causes.

The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010. It was a struggle, as the supermarkets turned down the idea. It was left to churches and schools to place orders and fund the making of The Real Easter Egg.



Ten years on, more than a million eggs have been sold, with over 750,000 eggs sent through the post directly to customers. The rest have been sold through retailers and supermarkets.

Nearly £275,000 has been donated to charitable projects with Fairtrade Premium fees paid to farmers allowing them to buy everything from school-books and solar panels to providing fresh water.

For Easter 2020, there are five types of Real Easter Eggs available, all with new content. Each egg has an edition of the Easter story included. There is a new 24-page version in the Original and Dark eggs with activities, biblical text and a prize competition worth £200. There is a poster activity version of the Easter story in the Sharing Box and Fun Pack and a simple guide version in the Special Edition. Both the Original and Dark 2020 eggs are plastic-free and all our chocolate is Palm Oil free.

This year churches are encouraged to read more or order at www.realeasteregg.co.uk

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100,000 causes

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
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	Church Wardens	
Parish Magazine	Craig Hunter	0793203644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk
Churchyard	(Vacancy)	
Cleaning co-ordinator	Pat Fitch	585289

Indira Gandhi once said 'There are two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group – there is less competition there!'

THE CHURCH WEB SITE

www.stmarynorthshoebury.org.uk

A massive thank you to Francine and Phyl (and their helpers) for their tremendous organisation of our Beetle Drive evening last month. Fifty seven people supported us, ate sausage and competed for the “spurs and saddle” of best driver which was won by Marilyn with a total score of over 130. Along with the raffle the evening raised £320 with which it is proposed (subject to PCC) to carry out repairs in the Church Hall.



It is Curry Night ! - Wednesday 18th March



7 for 7:30pm at the Café Masala,
Broadway, Thorpe Bay.

Please sign up on the notice board or give your
name to Phyl or Francine. £18 per head
makes a major contribution to church funds.

According to a recent survey,

95% of people won't notice if you replace a word with a musical instrument.

Quit with the puns or I may have to resort to violins.

I managed to read this joke properly the first time but for those who missed it,
there is no basis for sax or violins during church proceedings.

How many instruments did you see?

HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to Francine 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

MARCH	Family Service	Parish Eucharist
Sunday 1st March First Sunday of Lent	10am Family Service Family Eucharist Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 8th March Second Sunday of Lent	10am Family Eucharist Rev. David Pierce	11:00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 15th March Third Sunday of Lent	10am Family Service Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 22nd March Mothering Sunday	10am Family Service Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 29th March Fifth Sunday of Lent		8:00pm Evening Eucharist Rev. David Pierce

Mid-week services

Monday	9:00am	Morning prayer
	4:00 pm	Evening prayer
Thursday	9:00am	Morning prayer
	10:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Coffee Morning
	4:00 pm	Evening Prayer

TRANSPORT TO CHURCH

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

1 March - St David's Day: time for daffodils



1st March is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' - but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery!

We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.



In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.





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