

St Mary the Virgin

April 2020

North Shoebury



WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL--FOOLS DAY

SUNDAY 5TH APRIL. PALM SUNDAY

THURSDAY 9TH APRIL, MAUNDY THURSDAY

FRIDAY 10TH APRIL, GOOD FRIDAY

SUNDAY 12TH APRIL, EASTER DAY

Vicar's Letter*

April 2020

Psalm 118:24: *“This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

I am writing this letter in the middle of March for you all to read at the beginning of April. Covid-19 is still spreading, and people are trying to find ways to be protected and stop further spread of the virus. Earlier this week it was announced that the churches will be closed for public worship. Today it was announced that schools will partially close at the end of the week. These decisions are unprecedented.

Events are moving so fast that it is difficult to keep up. We do not know how much more life will change in the days and weeks to come.

But we can take some comfort in the words of the psalmist used at the start of this letter, ***“This is the day that the Lord has made”***.

Sometimes, when all around appears to be in chaos for us personally, when things are difficult, when we are confused and even fearful of what is to come, we forget that there is a bigger picture. We are all part of that picture, whatever unfolds; our actions will make a difference, but it is not “our” picture. There are many others who play a part.

As Christians, I would hope that we would be looking to help others. Sadly this week we have seen the selfish side of life typified by panic buying, by not looking out for each other. If we live by the rule of every man or woman for themselves, society becomes both fractured and stretched. The strain increases tensions and worry, and the world looks frightening.

But, in spite of what we read, the reality is that we live in a world of plenty. It is at times like this that we should really stand up and be counted, even though that will not be easy. We need to see the bigger picture, we need to rejoice and be glad in the day, whatever it offers. We need to remind ourselves that we are created by and loved by the same Lord who created this day. We have the gift of life itself.

We have plenty to rejoice and be glad about, even though at the moment it might not be easy to see that. Much depends on our priorities and values.

The world may well become a very different place in the weeks and months ahead, but somethings do not change. We are invited to love the Lord our God, and to love our neighbour; whatever that might mean, or cost.

St Mary's has had to be closed completely but you can keep up via our website, Facebook, twitter and now Youtube channel. You can contact me to talk by phone or by Skype. Simple services on Sunday and Thursday will continue to be held and streamed to our Facebook page, then uploaded to Youtube. You can join in by watching. You may well have a prayer book but we plan to put a link on our website to the Church of England Common Worship pages.

Whatever happens, keep in touch, with me and with each other. We are a community that cares. We are God's family. In spite of all that is happening, let us find time to "rejoice and be glad".

God bless

David

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



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From your editor

I am sorry that our magazine is late – there have been so many changes in our circumstances over the last few weeks that I am now on our 5th revision!

Despite “lockdown” I have include our planned schedule of Easter Services, I thought it a relevant piece of our history. Currently all regular users of the Church Hall have suspended their services– further information should be sought directly from the organisation concerned.

Given that we are not publishing a physical magazine this month and that all of you will be looking at some version of an on line copy, I have taken the liberty of including some links to other places. I realise that this might be controversial so please send me your honest feedback and I will review the inclusion of such before next month. If you are a fan send me suggestions. You will find the hyperlinks on page 12.

Best wishes, stay safe

God bless

If you would like to sponsor a magazine, for a birthday, anniversary, in memory or for thanksgiving, please contact Francine.

£25 b&w, £35 colour gift aided or not, would cover the professional printing of a monthly magazine.

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1 April - Fooling Around by Canon David Winter

I was about six when I began to enjoy April Fool's Day. My older brother was very clever at appropriate hoaxes, not only deceiving me but also mum and dad. On the whole my childish efforts were encouraged. The day was full of laughs, even at school, where the teachers would try to trick us and all day long no one quite believed anything they were told. So it went on, year after year, though I think it all seems as a bit unsophisticated for the modern generation.

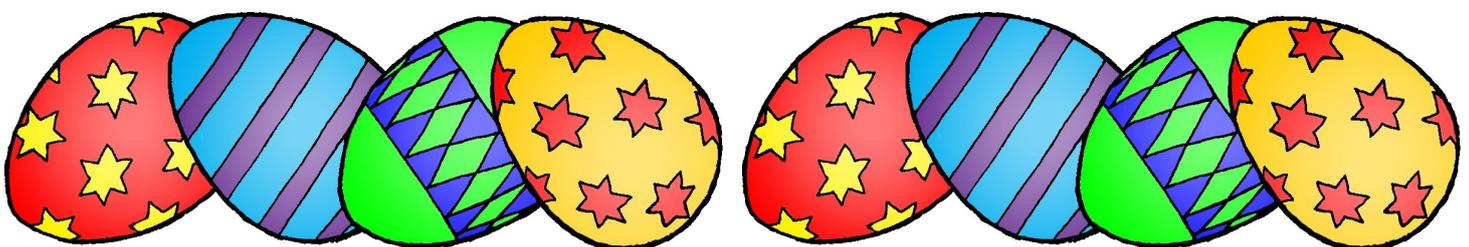
You couldn't say that, though, about probably the most famous April Fool's effort of all time. In the 1960's BBC TV broadcast a feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. Even those of us who bought our spaghetti in the supermarket from the pasta shelves began to wonder if we'd been wrong. Italian farmers explained their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants was carefully filmed, from planting to reaping. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from March 25th to January 1st. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the spring equinox, March 25th. Either way a touch of hilarity at the end of Lent does not seem amiss. Go to Greece, where the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated with fireworks and parties to see how it might work.



Easter Celebration In
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Monday	<p>Strollercise Strolling to 50's music 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>Rachel's Story, Rhymes and Activity Time Toddler Group at 10am except 2nd Tuesday Contact: Rachel 07780 374991</p> <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</p> <p>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>Sweaty Mama Female Bootcamp 7.30 – 8.30pm Contact: Kellie 07847 249618</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>	

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We offer you this article by the Ven John Barton, commenting on coronavirus. But we are well aware that things are changing rapidly....

The spread of Coronavirus

Thorough and frequent hand washing with soap and water is recommended by the World Health Organisation as the first step to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

I don't know who first said, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness", but you won't find that phrase in the Bible. Ritual washings are practised by many religions, but they usually signify spiritual cleansing, not physical sanitisation. Piety isn't a substitute for hygiene, nor vice versa.

The Coronavirus, now called Covid-19, has been a daily news item for months, with the result that fear is spreading more rapidly than the disease itself. Stock markets throughout the world have plummeted; sales of disinfectant have soared. Sports fixtures have been cancelled, whole towns have been quarantined and worldwide trade is threatened.

Statistics change hourly, so anything quoted here will be out of date by the time you read it, but we need to put this plague (if that is what it is) into perspective. Do you remember the Ebola epidemic which swept through regions of Africa from 2014 onwards? More than one in three sufferers died from that virus, but there's now a vaccine which can be used when Ebola threatens. Past influenza pandemics have been nowhere near as severe. 'Asian Flu' in 1957, led to 3,550 deaths in England and Wales, or something like 2.4% of actual cases. In 2009, the fatality figure for the swine flu epidemic was about 0.026%. The figures for today's Covid-19 virus suggest that around 80% of cases are mild, 14% develop severe symptoms, 4% become critically ill and the death rate is 2%.

This virus was first publicised by Doctor Li Wenliang, who was detained and censured by the Chinese police for "spreading false rumours". Although he himself subsequently died of the disease, there can be no doubt that his courage saved many lives. There are echoes here of words from St John's Gospel: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." As for the people of China where the virus originated, the Bishop of Newcastle, Christine Hardman, tweeted a Sri Lankan poster, which shows the right Christian attitude. It says, "HATE THE VIRUS, NOT THE CHINESE.

Let's pray for them instead".

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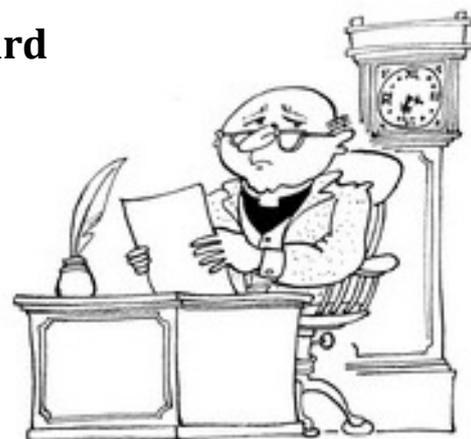
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St James the Least of All

On how to run your notice board

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

Your decision to place a notice board outside your church seems a good one – and its design in blue plastic with luminous red detachable letters seems entirely in keeping with the aesthetics of your building. Make sure that it is lockable, however, as an innocent notice saying **'all are welcome'** *may be modified by a devotee of anagrams to say something far less polite by the following day.

We recently replaced ours, which had disappeared shortly before last bonfire night. That the Scouts' bonfire had a board which closely resembled our old one in its centre was, I am sure, a complete coincidence. The Venture Scouts' collective smirk during the following week's Parade Service did give one pause for thought, and the Cubs' collapse into helpless laughter at the chorus 'So light up the fire and let the flames burn' only increased suspicion.

On reflection, you may not have been wise to use your notice board to tell everyone your holiday dates. Certainly, various local burglars were tripping over each other inside the vicarage while you were away. However, the note the last one left you, saying that next time he broke in, he would bring *you* something, since you had so little left, was quite touching.

Inevitably, now that your church has a notice board, there will be open warfare over who is allowed to display notices on it. Will the Slimmers Club be seen as biblical? Why is the Ladies Guild notice twice as large as all the others? And do remember that while everyone will want space to display their notices, no one will ever remove them once the event is over. Plaintive announcements of Christmas parties in April or of Summer Fetes in November only serve to take people down memory lane.

***COMPETITION- SEND YOUR ENTRY TO :- chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk**

Here's the best way to manage a notice board: create that panacea for all problems: a sub-committee. These poor people only ever exist in order to get the clergy out of tight corners and to make sure that matters are discussed at such inordinate length that every issue eventually dies a natural death. And if even that fails, you could have a quiet word with our Scouts before next year's bonfire night.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



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Reflecting on (and in) Lent.

In the March issue of this magazine, the vicar's letter asked us to reflect on the purpose of Lent and to consider the period not just as one of abstinence but also of self-reflection with the aim of self-improvement.

My ears pricked up! For those of you unfortunate enough to have been rugby tackled by me at Church or targeted over phone or email, you'll know that I'm in the midst of a career coaching course. An important part of this is reaching out to friends and family, the community, and anyone else who unwisely stands next to me for more than 5 minutes.

The course is in turn exhilarating, challenging, fascinating and exhausting. Sometimes all in the same day. But this journey is not simply one of self-indulgence. People who are happy in their work contribute the most to society and the world needs people who are good at what they do.

One thing is becoming clear as I progress. The simple and the joyful, and the core values in my life are coming into focus. As Churchill said "Out of intense complexities, intense simplicities emerge."

St Mary's has always been a constant in my life. What this period of self-reflection has thrown into relief is how important worship at, and the community of, this little church is to me.

And that is a wonderful thing to reflect upon.

Suzanne Jones

Mid-week services

ARE CURRENTLY SUSPENDED

Monday 9:00am **Morning prayer**

Thursday 9:00am **Morning prayer**

 10:00am **Communion**

MARCH	Family Service SUSPENDED-DUE TO COVID	Parish Eucharist
	Join our services on line at	
Sunday 5th April Palm Sunday	10am Family Service Family Eucharist Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Family Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Thursday 9th April Maunday Thursday	Or streamed live on https://www.facebook.com/St-Mary-the-Virgin-North-Shoebury-208335569233255/	
Friday 10th April Good Friday	4:00pm Evening Prayer Rev. David Pierce	
Sunday 12th April Easter Day	05:45am Sunrise Service Rev. David Pierce	
Sunday 12th April Easter Day	10am Family Eucharist Rev. David Pierce	11:00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 19th April Second Sunday of Easter	10am Family Service Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce
Sunday 26th April Third Sunday of Easter	10am Family Service Rev. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Rev. David Pierce

TRANSPORT TO CHURCH

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



...er... the good news is the youth-group have made a great start by pressure-washing the west window...

Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection,
not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime.

Martin Luther

HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to Suzanne 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

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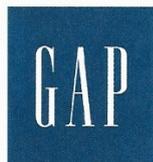


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CONTACT DETAILS

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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

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Do not abandon yourselves to despair.

We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.

Pope John Paul

The Hubble Space Telescope

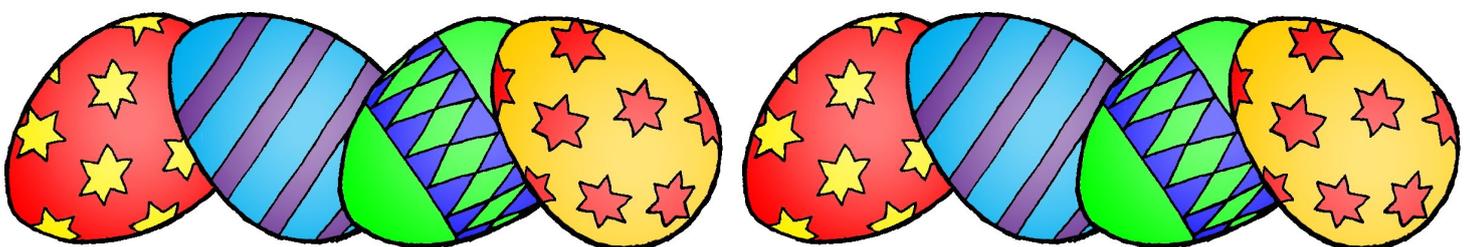
The Hubble Space Telescope was launched 30 years ago, on 24th April 1990. It was named after Edwin Hubble, an outstanding expert on extragalactic astronomy in the 1920s and 1930s.

The launch, originally scheduled for 1983, had been delayed by technical and budget problems and by the Challenger disaster. Ironically the NASA error that caused the Challenger tragedy was similar to the one that led to the Hubble telescope being launched with a defective mirror – unwillingness to accept technical warnings when there was great pressure from above to go ahead.

In the case of the Hubble telescope, also built by NASA with help from the European Space Agency, a more basic machine revealed the problem with the mirror, but those in charge did not believe it because a newer, more complex machine had given the go-ahead.

The problem was put right by astronauts in 1993 – the telescope was always designed to be serviced in orbit – and since then its position outside the Earth's atmosphere has enabled it to record many detailed visible light images that have enabled scientists a deep view into space, leading to new theories in astrophysics.

The telescope is estimated to remain in working order until 2030-2040.





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