

St Mary the Virgin—North Shoebury

NOVEMBER 2021



GOD

"The Lord your God is with you

THINKS

He will take great delight in you,

YOU'RE

He will rejoice over you with singing."

AMAZING

[from Zephaniah 3:17]

MONDAY 1ST NOVEMBER—ALL SAINTS DAY

FRIDAY 5TH NOVEMBER—GUY FAWKES NIGHT

THURSDAY 11TH NOVEMBER—REMEMBRANCE DAY

TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER—ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

TUESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER—ST ANDREW'S DAY



The Church garden work
party this month will be
on
Saturday
13TH NOVEMBER
from 2-4pm



November



Lead Minister's Letter – November 2021

Mark:12:28b-31 – Jesus was asked, *‘Which commandment is the first of all?’*²⁹ *Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;”*³⁰ *you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”*³¹ *The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these*

Is this good news or not? If we all did this, would the world we live in be different?

Like a great many people, I have found the last eighteen months very difficult. I have found myself looking at my own life and attitudes, and I am discovering that what was once not so important, and maybe taken for granted, has become more important, and what I once thought important is not really so important after all.

There are two ways of looking at it. On the one hand, had I died from COVID-19, as the doctors expected, and as about 70% of those in my age group in hospital on ventilators did, many would have said, “Well, he was over seventy and had had a full life”. But that doesn’t make it alright. I think that I have been given an extension, and I think I need to use these bonus years more effectively.

But as I see that the COVID death-rate becoming normalised, it is beginning to get to me. I feel a sense of urgency as I think things need to change. However, many people have told me recently, it is time for me to “lighten up”. Once I was known to be laid back, but of late I am becoming more intense. I wonder why I have changed so much.

On 22nd October 2021 it was reported that there were 180 deaths from COVID-19 in the United Kingdom. That is 180 people like me, and you. People whose lives were cut short in a pandemic that is preventable, that is controllable.

Let us look at this in another way. In a Jumbo Jet set up for all economy seating, there is space for 660 seats. What would the press say if two of these Jumbo jets had crashed every week in the United Kingdom for the last eighteen months?

Reading again the quotation from the Gospel set for All Saints Day, what has surprised me is how often these words found in Mark's Gospel seem to appear. I know I have preached about them often in the last couple of years.

One of the motivations that has led me to become more intense of late is the urgency of these words in a world that appears to have no care for humanity, or its long-term survival. As an unexpected survivor, that matters to me, and I think it should matter to us all.

As the world prepares for COP26, many companies and organisations are trying to underplay the seriousness of what many are calling a potential climate catastrophe.

While the media still feel able to talk about climate change denial as having a scientific basis, this is not the case. No-one who has studied climate science disputes what is happening, but we are still seeing companies and countries looking to the short term financial future and are not seeing the consequences of continued abuse of the planet.

Is this a Christian issue? Well, it depends on how we interpret "Love your neighbour as yourself". As long as these problems are distant, we can possibly avert our eyes; but as we saw this week after the "unusually heavy rain", untreated sewage was flooding down the streets of Southend, and into the sea. As Christians, maybe the time has come to let people know that there is a need to look out for each other. Maybe it is time to rise above domestic party-political issues or our own financial interests and take a good clear look at the world and decide it is time to make a change.

I think it is time to look at the world through the eyes of Christ, and love our neighbour.

God bless

Revd. David Pierce

Lead Minister St. Mary's Church North Shoebury



November





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16th November St Margaret of Scotland

Some women have power, and some women are good. When a woman with power is also good, she can achieve an astonishing amount.

Margaret of Scotland has been called 'The Pearl of Scotland', but she began life in Hungary about 1045. She was born to the expatriate English prince Edward the Exile, and so was an English princess. The family returned to Wessex in 1057, when she was 13, and following the death of King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, her brother Edgar Aetheling should have been King of England, but he was never crowned. Instead, the family fled north, to Scotland, where she was married to Malcolm III of Scotland by 1070. As a Scottish queen she went on to become mother of three kings of Scotland, and of a queen consort of England.

Margaret was a Christian, and became a good friend of Lanfranc, a future archbishop of Canterbury. Her biographer tells of how she read narratives from the Bible to her husband, thus helping to 'civilise' him. He was illiterate, but so admired her reading, that he had her books decorated with gold and silver. She was also credited with helping her youngest son, the future King David I of Scotland, towards becoming a just and holy ruler.

Margaret introduced the worship and practise of the Church of Rome into Scotland. She also wanted to help the many pilgrims travelling in Scotland, and so she established a ferry across the Firth of Forth, which is where the towns South Queensferry and North Queensferry got their names.

Margaret performed many charitable works for the poor, and she interceded for the release of English exiles who had been forced into serfdom following the Norman conquest. She also began the restoration of Iona Abbey.

In private life, Margaret spent much of her time in prayer, using a cave on the banks of the Tower Burn in Dunfermline as a place of devotion and prayers. St Margaret's Cave is still there today, covered beneath a municipal car park.

Margaret died in 1093, and in 1250 Pope Innocent IV canonised her. Her relics were dispersed after the Scottish Reformation, but at one time Mary, Queen of Scots, owned her head.



November



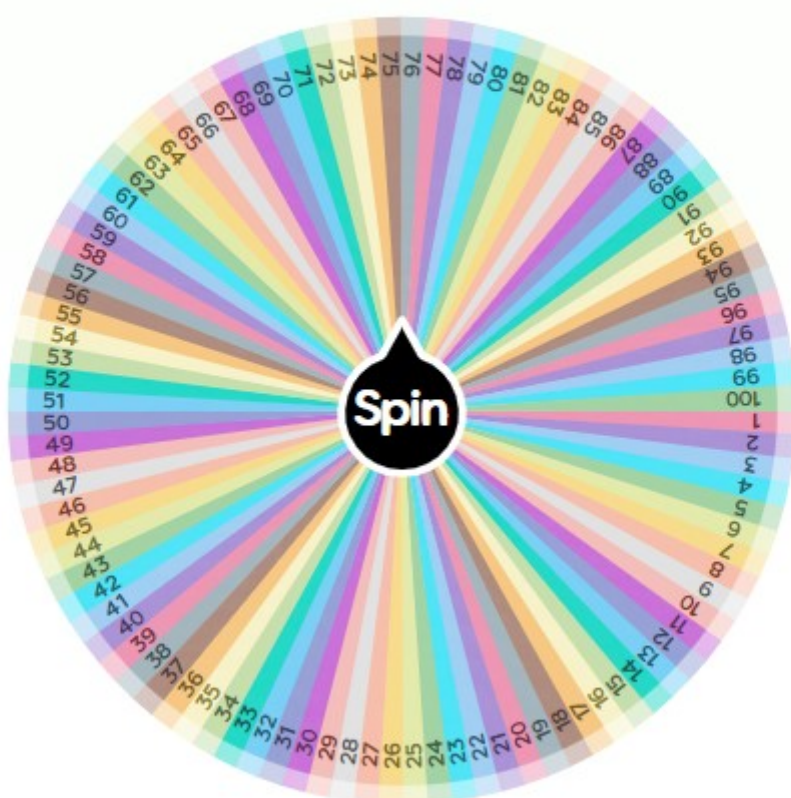
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There are more frightening things than bishops out there....

My dear Nephew Darren

You really should not worry about having reversed your car into the bishop's gatepost, knocking it over and destroying his rose-beds. It gives him an opportunity to exercise Christian forgiveness. Your real mistake was scribbling a note of apology and pushing it through his letterbox. Far better would have been to have sent an anonymous letter (and to have written it on lined notepaper in capital letters, preferably in green ink, to make it look truly authentic) saying that you had seen the archdeacon do it, and then you had watched him drive off without stopping. That would have taken the minds of the senior clergy away from parish matters for quite some time.

No, never worry about the wrath of bishops; dangers lurk much nearer home. For a start, never incur the displeasure of your flower arrangers. I only crossed their path once – and arrived in church the following Sunday, to see a ten-foot-high floral arrangement at the front of church. I assumed it was by way of making amends, until I discovered it had been placed in front of the pulpit. I was obliged to preach, hidden behind a large multicoloured hedge, while the congregation listened to what were apparently talking chrysanthemums.

A colleague offended his own ladies and arrived to find that the contents of the safe had been removed and replaced with all those exotic pieces of equipment that seem to be indispensable for arranging flowers. He was obliged to administer Communion using a small vase until peace was re-established and his chalice returned to him.



November



Similarly, organists are a delicate breed. Congratulate him on the anthem, and if it happened to be unaccompanied, he would assume you were implying that the services were better without his playing. Offend your organist and you can be guaranteed that hymns will be played at either half or double speed, stopping one verse short and that the final piece of music as you process out will stop, leaving you and the choir stranded halfway down the aisle.

And finally, never, ever upset your verger. One forgotten Christmas present and you can be sure you will get half-way through a baptism to find he hasn't put water in the font; at marriage services, the sheets for last week's funeral will have been accidentally put out and when you sit in your stall you will discover where he now stores the mop and bucket.

No, bishops are warm, fluffy bunnies; real danger lurks much nearer home.

**Your loving uncle,
Eustace**

HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to David, Pat, Tony and Francine for their contributions. 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.

Please send any material for the Magazine by the 17th of the month



November



A visit to York Minster and Choral Evensong

On a recent visit to York to visit old and dear friends, and spend a few days relaxing in that ancient and beautiful city, I planned to spend some time, as I have done many times, in the Minster. However, this would be the first time I had entered a Cathedral since Covid 19 had changed the world, and I was uncertain what to expect. So, rather than risk being disappointed I decided to check their website for information.

This action saved me a wasted journey, as I learned that one can only book a visit online, with a chosen time slot. I was all set, and somewhat excited and looking forward to re familiarising myself with this most beautiful and ancient place of worship once again.

On entry, and having my ticket checked, I walked into the longest and widest Nave in the country to the sounds of excited chatter from a party of school children, eyes upturned, and faces full of wonder. Then suddenly, as if stunned into silence at the vastness of the space before them, their mouths dropped open as they marvelled at the beautiful medieval architecture and incomparable stained glass.

This reaction I witnessed from these children reminded me of hearing how the medieval visitor reacted in the same way, in awe of their surroundings, and overcome by the magnificence of this gothic masterpiece of stone and wood, the mother church in the North of England, built to the glory of God, and telling the story of Jesus Christ.

I continued my tour taking in such features as the huge chapter house (which, I was sure would easily house the whole of our own St Marys, with room to spare) and the breathtaking, recently restored, east window. Then, seeing a guide, I made enquires regarding evensong that day, and to my delight was told it would be choral, and so decided to return at 5.30pm.



November



Now was my opportunity to spend some time in prayer, and I arrived a little early to secure a seat in the quire. Softly lit by subtle down lights and candles in the choir stalls, and slowly filling with the faithful and the curious, but all wanting to experience that uniquely English tradition of choral evensong.

At exactly 5.30 a single male soprano voice broke the silence, and, I must admit to experiencing a shiver down my spine as alto, tenor and base responded. Together with the clergy, they processed into the quire, whilst the organist played. The service had begun, and continued with Psalm, Magnificat and Nunc Dimitis, all lifting our souls up through the tree like pillars and columns. Branch like mouldings spreading out and over the expanse of the vaulted ceiling and ever upward, piercing the mists that settle over the skies like the very breath of God !The service finished, the choir recessed and sang their final exquisite polyphonic chant which echoed, it seemed, from afar.

I left quietly, feeling spiritually enriched and uplifted. But also somewhat privileged that I had once again participated in one of the most emotive acts of worship that this house of God offers to all who enter its doors.

Thanks be to God.

Tony Pond.



November



St Mary's Church Hall

Week Day Regular Hirers/Activities

Monday	Strollerclase 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	Barling & Lt. Wakering Women's Institute 1st Monday of month, 2 pm Contact Phyl Wickenden 01702 582185 USA Knit & Natter 3rd Monday of the month Contact: Jane 07743507511	Kels Bod Squad Ladies bootcamp 7.30 – 8.30 pm Contact: Kelle 07847 249618
Tuesday	USA – Local History 2nd Tuesday of month 10.15 am to 12.15 pm Contact: Mick 01702 622356	St Mary's Bloomers Floristry group 1st Tuesday of month 2pm to 4pm Contact: Jane 07743507511 USA – Crafting 2nd Tuesday of month 1.30pm to 3.30pm Contact Janet 07810 879673 USA – Gardening Group 3rd Tuesday of month 1.30pm to 3.30pm Contact Liz 07791 340859	
Wednesday	USA Ukulele Improvers 2nd Wednesday 09.45 – 11.45am Contact: Peter Bone 07837 562910		
Thursday	St Mary's Community Coffee Morning 10.30 am to 12 noon All welcome	USA Floristry 1st Thursday of month 1pm – 3.30pm Contact Jane 07743507511	Kels Bod Squad Ladies bootcamp 7.30 – 8.30 pm Contact: Kelle 07847 249618
Friday	Marriott's Tai Chi 11am – 12.00 pm Contact Tracey Cain 01702 290461		

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SAFEGUARDING

There has been a Parish Safeguarding Officer in our Church for quite a while now. The first was Wendy and then Naomi, now it is my role. But what does a PSO do? Mainly they act as the intermediary between the Safeguarding Unit at the Diocesan Offices in Chelmsford and the PCC and congregation in following the Directive of the Bishops for Safeguarding in our Church. The Safeguarding Unit send to me any updates in guidelines and I pass them on to the PCC to interpret how the information should be applied to our Church. The main purpose being safety, especially of vulnerable adults and children but also anyone who comes to our Church for whatever reason. This was never more necessary than at the outset of Covid 19 when rigid guidelines were put in place and we are still following the basic instructions now.

Safeguarding is a caring for and protection of one another. Anyone who has any difficulties or problems with their visit to our Church, or we may be aware of someone within our congregation who is experiencing personal difficulties or that they have concerns about something else and think they should mention it, then please speak to me or David, Craig or Tony or anyone on the PCC. It would be treated with absolute discretion. The Diocese requires us as individuals on the PCC to obtain a Safeguarding Certificate every three years and that is open to everyone to apply for, just by going to the Diocese website and clicking on Safeguarding. This will direct you to the appropriate courses and by completing the question and answer section, you can obtain your own Safeguarding Certificate at no cost.

We are asked to love and care for others, not only in Church but in the wider community as well. We have a lovely congregation at St Mary's, friends we have made over many years, but we want everyone to feel safe who comes along to share worship with us. This we can do by safeguarding all who visit us.

If there is anything more you would like to know then please either speak to me, email me or telephone. Email: pat_fitch@btinternet.com Phone: 01702585289.

Pat Fitch

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Caring for Creation

This month sees the eagerly anticipated COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. As Christians, we need to hold together two key insights, if we are to engage with the challenge of climate change:

The world is not ours:

'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it' (Psalm 24:1). The world is not ours, but God's! If we understand this, we will rediscover the responsibility of our calling to care for God's world: *'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'* (Genesis 2:15). This challenges our consumer mindset, that says the resources of the earth are both limitless and exist for our pleasure. As well as caring for the planet, we also need to care for its people, for it's the poorest who will suffer the most from climate change. According to the World Bank, 100 million could fall into poverty by 2030. We cannot properly address the climate crisis until we re-learn our place in God's world!

We belong to Christ:

We also belong to the one in whom: *'all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.'* (Colossians 1:16). We can look forward to the climax of history when God will restore the broken world and make everything new. We are empowered by Christ to take our proper place as stewards of the earth, as we share in this hope. We are called to love God and neighbour, and care for the planet by living simply, recycling, conserving energy and choosing reusable options.

However great the climate crisis gets, as Christians, we can engage in it with faith and not with fatalism!

Mid-week services

Monday 9:00am Morning prayer

Thursday 9:00am Morning prayer

10:00am Communion



November



CONTACT DETAILS

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

01702 585289

Phone numbers are all area code 01702 unless stated

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	Tony Pond	07960 678219 tonypond899@gmail.com
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Charitable Giving at St Mary's

Through your great efforts and generosity we already support a charitable effort to give what we can to support

- **HARP & The Foodbank** as each of you bring grocery essentials each week to be collected at the vestry entrance and delivered by Ken to their collection points (Thank you Ken).
- **Childrens' Society** many of you have collection boxes in which you save up change which Dennis then remits to the Society (Thank you Dennis).

For the new year 2022

We are seeking to focus our efforts each quarter to direct our support towards one **favoured** charity. In the quarter up to Christmas that Charity will be **Send a cow** (see opposite). We have chosen this one in this instance as we have regularly made a donation at Harvest time to this cause.

Could you become a champion of a cause in which you feel deserves our support?

If so, would you propose to any member of the PCC in writing that charity with some background reasons why you feel they are the ones we should be giving to. We as a PCC will then promote that cause through this magazine, the weekly news letter, at the coffee morning and organise event(s) which will boost the funds raised.

We are waiting to hear from you!



Every day families face poverty that is extreme, cruel, and worst of all – unnecessary. But rural Africa is rich with opportunity and where there is land, there is hope.

Send a Cow doesn't impose solutions, we help grow them from within. That's why they work. Our African-designed solutions were developed with, and for, the communities we support. Families get back the skills and confidence they need to get the most from their land. Families can grow enough food, earn a living and go after their dreams.

And because the families we work with pass on what they know, success quickly multiplies, from family to family, community to community, generation to generation.

Working across six African countries, we speak many languages. But in all of them, Send a Cow has come to mean a better future.

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