

# St Mary the Virgin—North Shoebury

## FEBRUARY 2022



TUESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY—CHINESE NEW YEAR OF THE TIGER

FRIDAY 4TH FEBRUARY—2022 WINTER OLYMPICS ( ENDS 20TH)

MONDAY 14TH FEBRUARY—ST VALENTINE'S DAY

SUNDAY 27TH FEBRUARY—START FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT



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## Festivals and Colours

***<sup>22</sup> When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup> and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”  
Luke 2:22-24***

During the year, the colours of the hangings in church change from season to season. As I write this we are still in the Christmas period and the colour is white. After Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, which is the festival of Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also known as Candlemas, the colour will change to green. Why?

The symbolism of this day is complicated. As Candlemas, it celebrates the candles lit to mark the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This was a Jewish tradition explained in Luke's Gospel which you can see at the start of this letter. The choice of sacrifice is an indication that although the family of Jesus were religiously devout, they were also poor.

This day is also known in the United States as Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day is now celebrated mostly in America but the tradition is an ancient European festival brought to America by the settlers. In the Northern Hemisphere, this date marks the midpoint between the winter solstice in December and the spring equinox in March.

The tradition is that if the groundhog comes out of his burrow and sees his shadow, we'll have six more weeks of winter; if he doesn't see his shadow, it'll be six weeks until spring. It seems to me that this is six of one, and half a dozen of the other.

Either way, this day marks the moment when Spring can be anticipated, and Winter is nearly over.

Which brings me back to the colours in church. Each change marks a moment when there is likely to be a special occasion, or a festival of some sort. But as I have said more than once here, we have lost touch with our festivals, our heritage. These would have been moments when the village would have gathered together, shared food and drink, and the community strengthened. Sadly, we seem these days to lock ourselves away in our homes.

At the recent “Leading our church into growth” lunch meeting we talked about festivals. So look out for events that our church, traditionally the “village church”, will be celebrating. If you notice the colours change in church and there has not been an event, you might want to ask why not.

We are still coming through a time when the world we live in is changing fast. The pandemic has forced people who followed the advice to keep apart. Although we still need to take care, it is also time to begin to look out of our burrow, just as the groundhog does, and look around.

Spring is on its way.

God bless

**Rev. David Pierce**

**Lead Minister**



CANDLEMAS



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**A huge -"Thank you!" to everyone who came to our workshop in January.** It was a resounding success! And we eagerly await the fruits of our labours. We formed four working groups—they were:-

**Easter**—Pat, Phyl, Suzzanne, Jacky and Gill

**Patronal Festival**—Yvonne, Jane, Carla, Chloe and Barbara

**Remembrance**—Ken, Dorothy, John , Denis and Wendy

**Christmas**—Sue, Michelle, Frank and Roz

Each group is going to prepare and run a **Proclamation** campaign to encourage new visitors to the church. Most pressure must inevitably fall on the **Easter** group because it is the first. Please offer help that we can get a good start, speak to anyone in the group!

It was a fabulous reminder that if **a lot of people do a little** much more can be achieved than by one or two people doing a lot.



**The Church garden work  
party this month will be  
on  
Saturday  
6TH FEBRUARY  
from 2-4pm**



### **He Prayeth Well**

He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast,  
He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

*By Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

## On how to survive a residential conference

The Rectory

St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren



I am glad you enjoyed your conference, but please do not be deluded into thinking that conferences are there to teach you anything. Conferences exist to provide another entry on your CV, to give you time off while flattering yourself that you are working, and to make the person leading it feel that their life is not wholly pointless.

As it happened, I was also invited to the same one, the one entitled 'Learning how to say no.' But I refused to attend, thereby proving that I didn't need it anyway.

There are certain useful points you need to learn for conferences. First, about half the attendees will have been together only the previous week attending another conference in another part of the country. They will be eager, enthusiastic, and overflowing with management platitudes. Avoid them at all costs. Should one of them say to you: 'expect the unexpected' you have my permission to strangle them. They won't have expected that!

Secondly, when you are all asked to go through that ghastly process of introducing yourselves to everyone else, make it up. I think the last time I was obliged to do this, I became a butcher specialising in exporting offal to Saudi Arabia. All your clerical colleagues will then panic that they have turned up for the wrong course and the leader will make sure that you are not asked another single question throughout the event. Both outcomes are satisfying.

Thirdly, do realise that when you are asked to divide into small discussion groups, it means that the conference leader has run out of ideas about what to do next. Do not, at all costs, volunteer to be chairman. It only means that when you have to report back – and if the leaders use the word 'plenary', then by all means contemplate strangling them also - you will be involved in sticking sheets of paper on to walls, which will then rip off the wallpaper when you try to remove them.

You will also have the embarrassment of finding that every felt tip pen you try to use will be empty, and what you thought were the conclusions your group had arrived at will be volubly contradicted by all the other members.

No, if you are ever obliged to attend another course, take a good book, enough claret to cover every evening away, and develop a debilitating illness that, while enabling you to attend every meal, obliges you to retreat to your room for the rest of the day. You will leave having learned as much on whatever the topic was as your colleagues, but you will return refreshed and eager to make the next booking.

**Your loving uncle,**

**Eustace**

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

**Thank you Craig for sponsoring this month's Magazine in memory of others.**

**£35 colour gift aided or not, would cover the professional printing of a monthly magazine.**

**Francine Johnson 01702 589244**  
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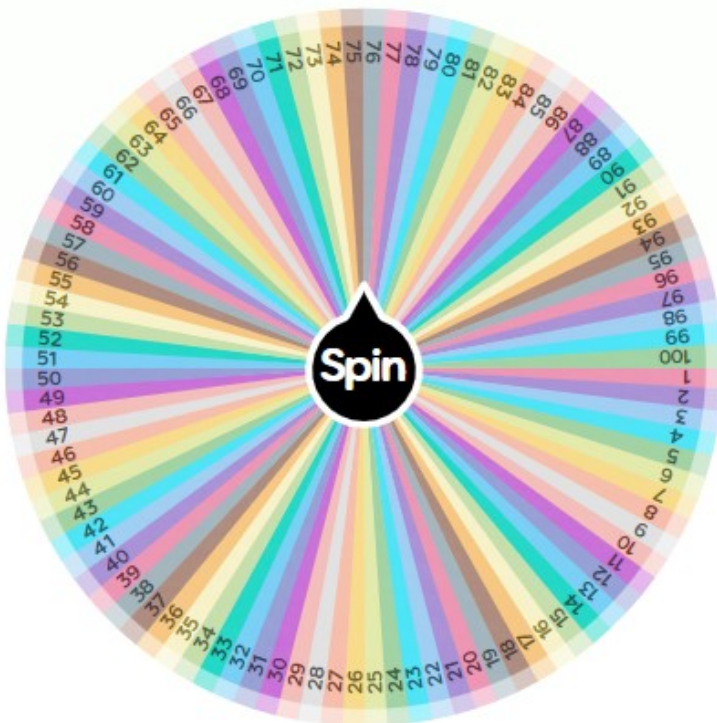
**CANDLEMAS**

## HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to David 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

numbers 1 - 100



**Winning numbers  
in JANUARY have been  
deferred to allow everyone  
time to subscribe.**

**There will be a  
Double draw in FEB**

In a famous correspondence in *The Times*  
under the title '*What's wrong with the world?*'

GK Chesterton's letter simply said: '

*Dear Sir, I am.'*

# St Mary's Church Hall

## Week Day Regular Hirers/Activities


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

Casual hire fees £12.50 p/h, £12.50 admin fee + £50 refundable damage deposit. Contact [francinejohnson@gmail.com](mailto:francinejohnson@gmail.com) for hire form and details. November 2021

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## **Reflected Faith Series: Candlemas**

There are three reasons for this festival, which is held each year on the second of February.

**Firstly**, it's the halfway point between the shortest day and the Spring Equinox, so from that date on the daylight hours get longer.

In pre-Christian times, this day was known as the 'Feast of Lights' and celebrated the increase strength of the life-giving sun as Winter gave way to Spring.

**Secondly**, it's when we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby Jesus, to the Temple forty days after His birth.

**And the third reason?** It's directly linked to the name of the feast – Candlemas. It was so named because on that day each year all the candles for the coming year were brought into the church to be blessed at a 'mass'. Remember that candles were important in those days, not only because there were no electric lights; people thought they gave protection against plague and illness and famine.

In many churches on this feast there will be a procession of the whole congregation with lighted candles – often inside the whole building, going into every 'dark' corner. Everyone carries their own lighted candle, which they are encouraged to take home and light there also.

One of the prayers that may be used is this:

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.*

*You make our darkness to be light.*

*For with You is the well of life  
and in Your light shall we see light.*

*This month*

Christ is often called the 'Light of the World' who came to bring light, hope, and peace into our darkness. Have a think about those places that are dark for you and perhaps you do not like going there or will not go there. Perhaps they are too painful or scary.

Just pause for a short time with a lit candle and imagine Jesus going there for you or with you. Lighting your way. Making it safe. He came to give us life – and life to the full – even in those dark places.

### *With Valentine's Day in mind:*

Love is the master key to a happy home.

If you work at love, you will find love at work.

– *Peter Jackson*

Marriage requires falling in love many times – always with the same person.

Marriage has three states: cooing, wedding, and billing.

When there is room in the heart there is room in the house.

– *Danish proverb*

'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

• *Tennyson*

### *Some miscellaneous observations on life*

My train of thought was just derailed. – *Anon*

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.

– *Duane Hulse*

We make our friends, we make our enemies, but God sends our next-door neighbour.

– *GK Chesterton*

## Five famous quotes from Desmond Tutu

*The recent death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu was mourned around the world. Here are five of his more famous quotes, which show why he was so especially honoured for his justice and reconciliation work in South Africa.*

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

“Don't raise your voice, improve your argument. Good sense does not always lie with the loudest shouters, nor can we say that a large, unruly crowd is always the best arbiter of what is right.”

“Forgiving is not forgetting; it's actually remembering - remembering and not using your right to hit back. It's a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don't want to repeat what happened.”

“Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realise our need of one another.”



CANDLEMAS

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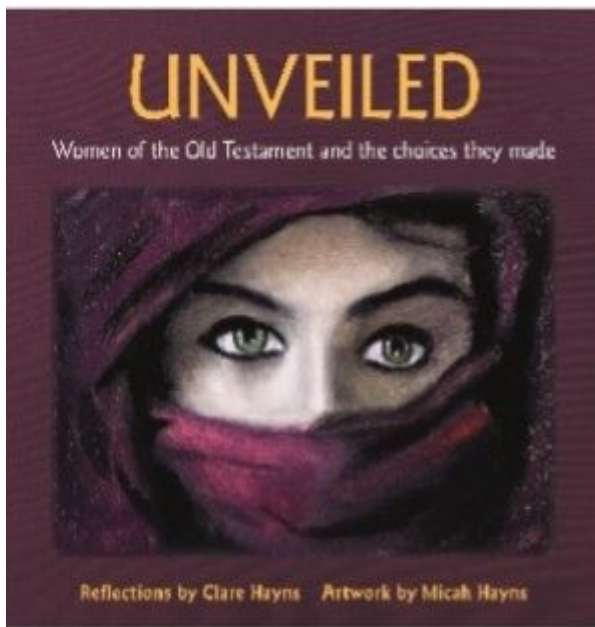
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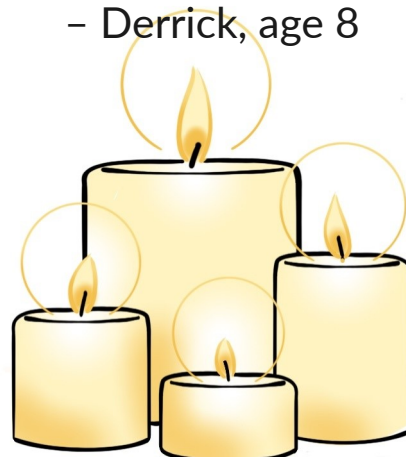
Some women of the Hebrew scriptures are well known, but many others are barely remembered. Even when they are, we often don't pause on them long enough to think about what we might learn from them. Each reflection ends with a short application to everyday life, guidance for further thought and a prayer.

*How can a stranger tell if two people are married?*

You might have to guess,

based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

– Derrick, age 8



**CANDLEMAS**

## Situations Vacant

As a growing church we need to prepare for the demands that growth will bring. We have a number of openings where we need help! You may know of someone who would welcome the opportunity to become involved because they have the skills, time and experience to contribute, please bring these to their attention.

**Hall Bookings Co-ordinator:** To accept and respond to enquiries for hiring the Church Hall, by email, phone call and through social media. To issue Hall Hirer agreements and invoices. To liaise with the Churchwardens/Caretaker for opening and closing the Hall. All systems are in place and training will be given. **This is our most urgent need.**

**Hall Caretaker:** To regularly clean and prepare the Church Hall before and after use by regular and casual hirers. **This will be a part time paid position 10-15 hours per week according to demand.**

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·Simeon with the Christ Child in the Temple **Rembrandt**.

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