

St Mary the Virgin—North Shoebury

MARCH 2022



The flowers are blooming, the time of birdsong has come!

Song of
Songs 2:12

TUESDAY 1ST MARCH — ST DAVID'S DAY

WEDNESDAY 2ND MARCH — ASH WEDNESDAY (START OF LENT)

THURSDAY 17TH MARCH —ST PATRICK'S DAY

FRIDAY 25TH MARCH — ANNUNCIATION OF ST MARY

SUNDAY 27TH MARCH— MOTHERING SUNDAY



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Itchy Ears

For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. (2 Timothy 4:3)

This was part of the New Testament reading this morning (21st February 2022) at Morning Prayer. The image of “itchy ears” struck a chord with me. I wondered, “What is it we are dissatisfied with in our lives?”

I wonder, “Why do we not appreciate the simple gift of life itself”.

Having recently been seriously ill twice in the last two years, I think some of my values might be changing. Like the writers of the Book of Common Prayer in the 17th Century, each new day has value. In the Collect for Grace we read:

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day: Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

There is a similar prayer in the modern version, but less eloquent.

In a world where truth appears complicated, we might ask ourselves, “What is truth?” In John 13:28 as part of the exchange between Pontius Pilate and Jesus, we read that Pilate asks Jesus, “What is truth?”

I think the answer might well be contained in “The Great Commandment”. I say it every time I preside at Eucharist. In answer to the question, “Which commandment is the first of all?” we read Jesus’ reply.

“The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 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. The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”



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When we read the papers, watch TV or even Facebook, this commandment of “loving neighbour” should be the gate through which truth should be able to be seen. But how do we handle a situation where there is a deliberate effort to confuse what might be truth?

Although the situation may well have changed when you read this, at the time of writing, the situation in the Ukraine is still cloaked in deliberate confusion. Where does love our neighbour fit in with that situation? In 2020 one writer in the Guardian wrote, “Putin’s goal is to confuse the public and to spread the idea that the truth is unknowable.”

When one asks “What about other leaders?” one can see where confusion lies and used for malicious purposes. Do our leaders in the west lie to their own advantage as well?

How do we respond? What can we do?

I think it is helpful to look at the consequences of decisions or plans. We need to ask ourselves if people will be at a disadvantage because of a decision.

We are warned about judging each other in the Bible, but we are not judging other people, we are looking at the consequences of actions.

As we begin to prepare for Lent, from Ash Wednesday through until Good Friday and the Resurrection at Easter, I plan to look at the consequences of what Jesus said and did. This will lead us to Pontius Pilate’s question, “What is truth?”

Are we consistent, do we follow a clear path towards truth, or do we have Itchy Ears and wander away to myths”?

Can we help to “make Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven?”

To find out more, please join in with our Lent Study Groups. One will be on Thursday at about 12:00 for no more than an hour after Community Coffee Morning in the Church Hall. The other will be on Zoom at 8.00pm on Thursday Evenings also for no more than an hour.

**God bless
David**





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Ash Wednesday, 2nd March

No service this year at St Mary's due to COVID

Such a strange name for a church service! Why would anyone be attracted to attend such a thing?

This year Ash Wednesday is close to the start of March; on the Second of the month. As the first day of Lent the service is used to physically place a sign of the cross on each person's forehead using ashes made from the previous year's palm crosses. The use of ashes has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship; the Old Testament referring to sackcloth and ashes over twenty times.

There is clearly a visual link with the blackness of evil and sin but also the 'dirtiness' that spreads everywhere from it. We all know how a small amount of mud on the shoes walked into the house will soon go everywhere and take a much harder and longer clean-up operation than if it was wiped off before entering. In Christian records, ashes are used for penitents by the sixth century, but it is not until the beginning of the eleventh century that the faithful took part in a ceremony on the Wednesday before Lent that included the imposition of ashes. Still later this came to be called Ash Wednesday.

The Imposition of Ashes is a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. It is 'felt' in the heart and soul – as well as on the skin. And can be one of the most profound experiences of humility as we enter together as a Christian community across the globe our journey towards the Cross and the Resurrection.

As the priest says the traditional words over you, "*Remember that you are but dust, and to dust you will return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ. Amen.*" what will you be focusing upon?



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**The Church garden work
party this month will be
on
Saturday
12TH MARCH
from 2-4pm**



**March
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St James the Least of All

On how to sabotage a music festival

The Rectory

St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

It seemed such an innocent suggestion. A local farmer announced he wanted to arrange a Spring music festival. I could already hear Mozart string quartets being played in our Lady Chapel, and arias from Donizetti operas being sung *al fresco* in the Glebe field, while we sipped champagne in the warm Spring sunshine and admired the flowers.

Unfortunately, our farmer was thinking of a heavy metal weekend in one of his fields. The teacups began to rattle when village talk turned to portable lavatories, mobile catering vans and using the churchyard for overflow camping space. Then the police arrived to discuss crowd control and drug policy. At James the Least of All we tend more towards congenial dinner parties, with drugs labelled Bollinger or Glenfiddich.

That was the point when Colonel Trubshaw began to search out his old shotgun. His wife even stopped serving coffee after Mattins, in order to patrol the perimeter of their estate with their arthritic spaniel. On the other hand, Miss Little went a little mad. She exchanged her usual tweeds and brogues and pearls for a red bandana, long patchwork dress and peace beads. She must have enjoyed the 1960s.

It was time to take action, so I told our farmer that St James the Least of All would support him to the hilt. Our ladies would of course do flower arrangements for the stage, and our sidesmen would greet the campers as they arrived. We would provide a full choral Evensong on Friday night, to help set the tone for the weekend. When the farmer gasped something about heavy metal, I was able to reassure him. "Heavy metal? We're doing that Saturday morning from about 6am, when our bellringers will give a three-hour exhibition of change ringing." The farmer pleaded something about singing, and I was able to reassure him on that point as well: "On Sunday we'll do a Songs of Praise, and not to worry, your campers can choose their favourite hymns from 'Ancient and Modern'."

I was thanked profusely, but the following week, our dear farmer wrote to tell me he had decided to graze sheep on his field after all. Shame about that.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



...I haven't the heart to tell her the bishop went home 20minutes ago!

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

Thank you Elizabeth Livermore's family for sponsoring this month's Magazine in celebration of her 80th birthday.

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

francinejohnson@gmail.com



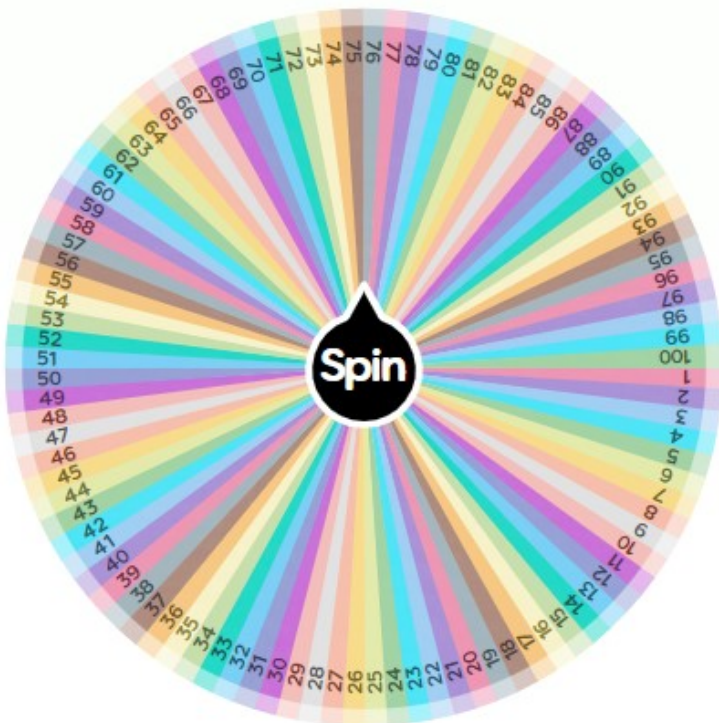
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HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

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 are

1st Prize FJ

2nd Prize DG

In FEBRUARY are

1st Prize DP

2nd Prize RA



**March
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St Mary's Church Hall Week Day Regular Hirers/Activities

Monday	<p>Strollerclase Strolling to 50's music 6-7,000 steps (3 miles) Fun, friendly, all ages, no gym kit required. £5 per hour 10 -11 am & 11.15am -12.15pm Contact: Karen/Tracy 07745 154065</p>	<p>Barling & Lt. Wakering Women's Institute 1st Monday of month, 2 pm Contact Phyl Wickenden 01702 562185</p> <p>USA Singing Group 2nd & 4th Monday 1.45pm to 3.45pm Contact: Colin E: colin.edwards5@btopenworld.com</p> <p>USA Knit & Natter 3rd Monday of the month Contact: Jane E: jvpartridge@gmail.com</p>	<p>Kels Bod Squad Ladies bootcamp 7.30 – 8.30 pm Contact Kelle 07847 249618</p>
Tuesday	<p>USA – Local History 2nd Tuesday of month 10.15 am to 12.15 pm Contact: Mick 01702 622356</p>	<p>St Mary's Bloomers Floristry group 1st Tuesday of month 2pm to 4pm Contact: Jane E: jvpartridge@gmail.com</p> <p>USA – Crafting 2nd Tuesday of month 1.30pm to 3.30pm Contact Janet 07810 879673</p> <p>USA – Gardening Group 3rd Tuesday of month 1.30pm to 3.30pm Contact Liz 07791 340859</p>	
Wednesday	<p>USA Ukelele Improvers 2nd Wednesday 09.45 – 11.45am Contact: Peter Bone 07637 562910</p>		
Thursday	<p>St Mary's Community Coffee Morning 10.30 am to 12 noon All welcome</p>	<p>USA Floristry 1st Thursday of month 1pm – 3.30pm Contact Jane E: jvpartridge@gmail.com</p>	<p>Kels Bod Squad Ladies bootcamp 7.30 – 8.30 pm Contact Kelle 07847 249618</p>
Friday	<p>Marriott's Tai Chi 11am – 12.00 pm Contact Tracey Cain 01702 290461</p>		

Casual hire fees £13 p/h, £13 admin fee + £50 refundable damage deposit. Contact hall@stmarynorthshoebury.org.uk for hire form and details.

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Pretty

Ugly

I'm very ugly
So don't try to convince me that
I am a very beautiful person
Because at the end of the day
I hate myself in every single way
And I'm not going to lie to myself by saying
There is a beauty inside of me that matters
So rest assured I will remind myself
That I am a worthless terrible person
And nothing you say will make me believe
I still deserve love
Because no matter what
I am not good enough to be loved
And I am in no position to believe that
Beauty does exist within me
Because when I look in the mirror I always think
Am I as ugly as people say?

-by Abdullah Shoaib



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Repent

What does repent mean in the Bible?

Metanoeo - to reconsider. This term is used to describe the change of one's mind or purpose for the better. As you can see, the word repent means to change one's will, mind, or purpose for the better. The feeling of regret is not repentance, but it can lead to repentance.

During our prayers we quite rightly seek God's grace and forgiveness when we consider that we have missed opportunities through what we do, think and say either through temptation, weakness, or our own deliberate choice.

Thankfully, we are given absolution!

May the almighty and most merciful Lord grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, time for amendment of life and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.

I am not sure we always give ourselves permission to really **feel** what this means?

TURN BACK ONE PAGE AND READ THE POEM AGAIN— BUT THIS TIME FROM THE BOTTOM UP



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THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 2022 AT 10:30am

St Marys Easter Bake Challenge

Prizes will be awarded as follows:

Easter Cake – £20 prize

Easter Sponge – £10 prize

Easter Cupcakes – £10
prize.



We'll post photos of the winning entries on here as well as the commended runners up.

Further enquiries to
Pat Fitch – 01702 585289



**March
2022**

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

Lead Minister	Revd. David Pierce	07305 710265
	david@revdavidpierce.net	
Churchwardens	Craig Hunter	07932 503644
	chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk	
	Tony Pond	07960 678219
	tonypond899@gmail.com	
Hall Bookings	hall@stmarynorthshoebury.org.uk	
PCC Secretary	Michelle Waters	589026
Church Finance & Gift Aid Secretary	Francine Johnson	589244
Electoral Roll	Sue Arnold	586453
Church Diaries	Wendy Shipperley	588319
Flowers co-ordinator	Yvonne & Jane	
Social & Fundraising	Francine Johnson	589244
	Phyl Wickenden	582185
Readers, Chalice Assistants & Sides persons Rota Parish Magazine	Churchwardens Craig Hunter	07932 503644
	chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk	
Churchyard	Tony Pond	
Safeguarding Officer	Pat Fitch	585289

THE CHURCH WEB SITE

www.stmarynorthshoebury.org.uk

On Thursday(24th Feb 2022), both Archbishops Welby & Cottrell issued a pastoral letter to the clergy and people of the Church of England, calling on them to pray for peace in Ukraine.

They wrote: "This attack is an act of evil, imperilling as it does the relative peace and security that Europe has enjoyed for so long.

"The attack by one nation on a free, democratic country has rightly provoked outrage, sanctions, and condemnation.

"We lament with the people of Ukraine, and we pray for the innocent, the frightened and those who have lost loved ones, homes, and family.

"We continue to call for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian forces as well as wide-ranging efforts to ensure peace, stability and security."

In a video he recorded in Brussels, Bishop Robert spoke of the Church of England congregation of Christ Church, Kyiv, Ukraine.

"Our little church in Kyiv are right at the centre of this crisis," he explained.

"Some of them have fled the city by car, others are still there.

"These are our people, our brothers and sisters, and of course we are very concerned for their wellbeing and safety.

"In the face of military action and aggression, we feel powerless. What can we do?"

*Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*



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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.**

Communications and Media Tsar: To manage our online presence by streaming our services, arranging adverts and editing and distributing the Church Magazine and Weekly newsletter. A good opportunity perhaps for a student or someone wishing to update their skills and CV.



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Hedgehog New Homes Required



The South Essex Wildlife Hospital is a rescue, rehabilitation and public advice charity formed by Sue Schwar in 1995. Sue started the charity as there was no wildlife care or rescue centres anywhere in the area. Initially helping animals in her own home, Sue was soon overwhelmed by the sheer volume of sick animals needing her care so a more suitable location was found.

The Hospital can get between 50 and 100 phone calls a day and often has between 200-300 patients.

They are currently in great need of suitable hedgehog release sites. If you would like to re-home a hedgehog you will need to meet the criteria as hogs are only being released to areas of proven habitat. If you think you can help please complete a hedgehog release form at :


<https://southessexwildlife.org/hedgehog-release/>



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