


St Mary the Virgin—North Shoebury

MAY 2022



*Risen and Ascended
Lord,
as you were raised up,
so lift us
into your presence
that we learn
a greater awareness
of the needs of others
and become stewards
of your goodness.*

MONDAY 2ND — BANK HOLIDAY

SUNDAY 22ND MAY— ROGATION SUNDAY

THURSDAY 26TH MAY — ACCENSION DAY



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Suddenly everything changes, or does it?

Now, suddenly it seems, after the quiet reflective period of Lent, we find ourselves back in a world with challenges, and opportunities. The readings that we will hear on Sundays in church between now and 5th June will be taken from The Acts of The Apostles.

These readings demonstrate some of the challenges that were being faced by the early followers of Jesus as they struggled to find a place in the world. But I think many of those challenges still exist today.

In her Maundy Thursday sermon, Bishop Guli asked the congregation, made up mostly of clergy, to reconsider our “way of being”. In the light of the pandemic, which has changed so much in all our lives, she asked, “What are we for if we can’t do the things we have always done?”

I have asked similar questions. Shortly after I arrived I asked “What are we for?”. A few of us gathered for an “away day” in the Church Hall to talk about it. More recently, Craig and Tony asked similar questions as they worked through “Leading our Church into growth” with us earlier this year.

As I well know, the pandemic has changed so much, and until it is properly controlled it will continue to do so. In the context of the disruption caused by the pandemic, in her sermon, Bishop Guli reminded us of something her father said. “How can we rediscover our vocation for this time and for this place with renewed energy and confidence rather than weeping for what once was and is no more?”

We can bewail our past, but hopefully Lent has prepared us to face up to the challenges that are to come. As I said in my Incumbents Report at the APCM, we have a future that is bigger than our past. Our future is in God’s hands.

In the coming weeks, maybe we should think for ourselves just what our future might be. There are certainly challenges. I was very concerned by comments made over Easter by politicians criticising certain church leaders for doing what is their vocation; preaching the Gospel of Christ in word and deed.

Those comments reminded me of the comments made by the Temple leaders in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ ministry. Christianity is never going to find itself aligned with political will.

If our role is to “worship God, and love our neighbours”, how does the church make a public response when it is clear that sections of society are being specifically disadvantaged? Maybe it is time for the church to commission a repeat of the “Faith in the City” report.

In the 1980’s the “Faith in the City” report was the report of “The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas”. I taught for nine years in Urban Priority Areas in Birmingham, and in spite of all the effort we put into it, it was very difficult to see any way of making change.

The report opened with this quotation from a vicar in Greater Manchester, “It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that one is living in an area that is being treated with hostility by the rest of society”.

In the thirty seven years since the report was published, I have seen little of no improvement in the lot of significant sections of society. The problems highlighted now extend well beyond Urban Priority Areas.

The church is going to have to make a stand, and that is going to generate criticism. The Prime Minister of day when the report was published was also very critical of it.

So once again I ask, “What are we for?”

Maybe, just maybe, it is time to look closely at the Gospel of Christ, and to make some changes.

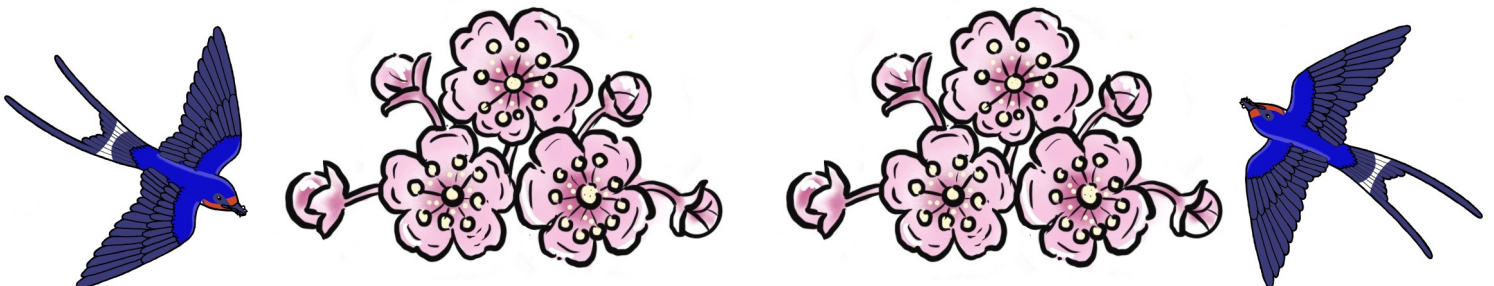
God bless

David

Revd. David Pierce

Lead Minister St. Mary’s Church North Shoebury.


20th April 2022



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The Church garden work
party this month will be
on
Saturday
14TH MAY
from 2-4pm



The Rectory
St James the Least



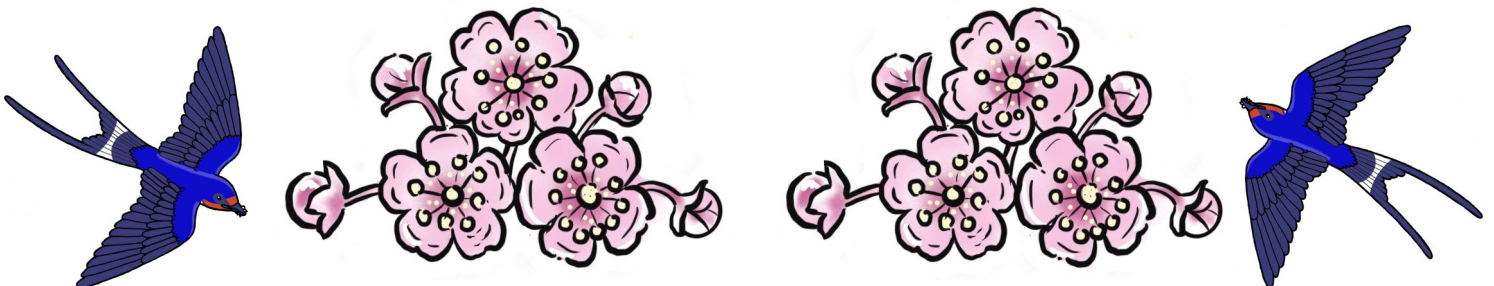
My dear Nephew Darren

A Spring parish picnic is always a good idea – although you must bear some details in mind. First, whatever date you choose will turn out be the wettest of the year. English picnics are invariably eaten under umbrellas while wearing Wellingtons and the sort of determinedly cheerful look that defies anyone to admit they would rather be home in front of the fire.

Second, no matter how early in the year, wasps will emerge from hibernation in huge numbers, and terrorise Mrs Hornby with the picnic baskets. And thirdly, someone will bring along their (hungry) dog. Last time Colonel Psmith's spaniel outdid herself: she leapt up, head butted a piece of Madeira cake out of Mrs Horngirdle's hand – and ate the lot – before even a crumb could touch the ground. A good piece of field work, that.

Half-way through the afternoon, some over-excited member of the party will decide to arrange a game of rounders. (Mr Poppinjay tried this one year, as in his youth he had been athletic. Fortunately, the ambulance got there quickly, and the ankle healed well.) Then the mothers who join in will completely ignore the ball sailing past them, while they discuss some burning topic of Mother's Union gossip.

In the meantime, the young choir members, who were the reason for arranging the game in the first place, will have drifted off to the lake to throw stones at the ducks while no one is looking.



For our annual picnic, I use my own car, making sure it is so full of clerical robes and church magazines that no one else can fit in. Throughout the day, I keep returning to it to make sure no one has broken in to steal the Communion wine – and taking the opportunity to catch up on the cricket scores. By the middle of the afternoon, I usually remember that some urgent duty, such as blessing a traction engine, demands my departure.

The rest of the party, by now soaked, cold and knowing the coach to take them home is still several hours off, only wish they had such demanding work to tear them away.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

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

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

francinejjohnson@gmail.com

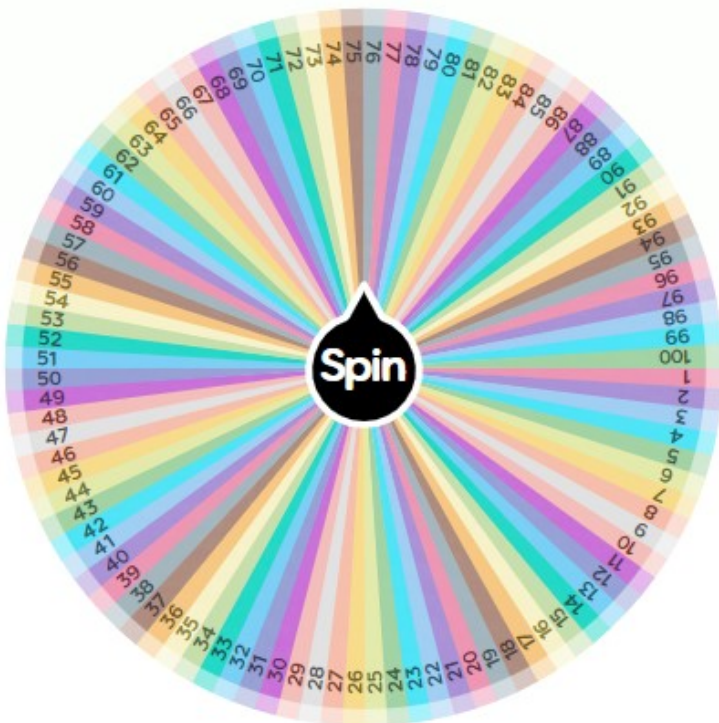


HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

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 APRIL are

1st Prize 23 PW

2nd Prize 20 JH



St Mary's Church Hall

Week Day Regular Hirers/Activities

Monday	Strollercise 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	Barling & Lt. Wakering Women's Institute 1st Monday of month, 2 pm Contact Phyl Wickenden 01702 582185 USA Singing Group 2nd & 4th Monday 1.45pm to 3.45pm Contact: Colin E: colin.edwards5@btopenworld.com USA Knit & Natter 3rd Monday of the month Contact: Jane E: jvpartridge@gmail.com	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 E: jvpartridge@gmail.com 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 07637 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 E: jvpartridge@gmail.com	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		

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

March 2022

There was no mourning when Christ's resurrection appearances came to an end. After the final occasion we are told the disciples 'worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy'.

They had already experienced the onset of grief caused by His death, intensified because of the dreadful manner of it and the consequent crushing of their hopes. Then, with feelings combining bewilderment with elation, they were confronted by Christ alive and had to rethink everything they had understood until then about the certainty of death.

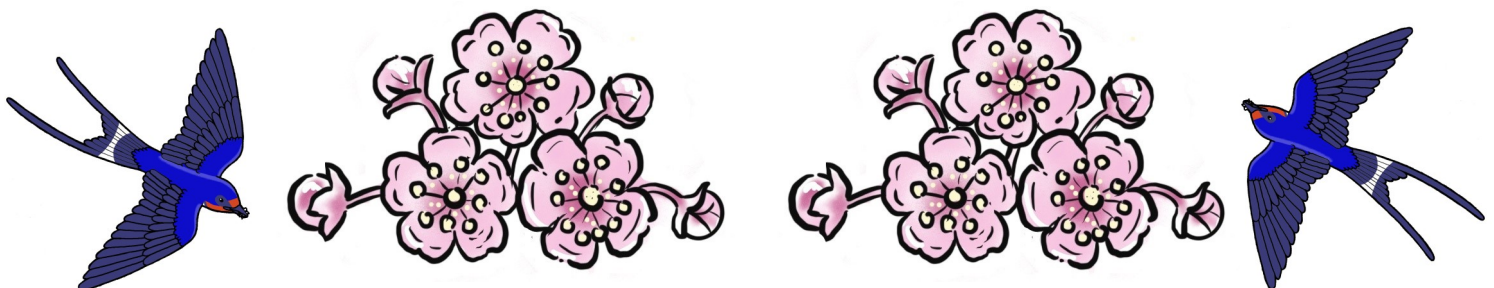
They became convinced that the Crucifixion and Resurrection signposted a new beginning, not an ending, and that it gave fresh purpose to humanity, past, present and future.

Why was Christ's final departure met by joy rather than gloom? Here are some reasons, which we might think of as His legacies.

First, He had said that He was going to prepare a place for His followers. It's worth pondering John Chapter 14, to see why Jesus' disciples were so confident after His Ascension.

Second, He taught them His departure was, actually, for their *benefit*. Only in this way would the 'Advocate' come. 'Advocate' is one translation of a word meaning 'called alongside' and is a description of the Holy Spirit's work in and for humanity, then and now.

Third, Christ continues to campaign for the human cause, though now out of sight. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it bluntly: "He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Paul writes something similar in his letter to the Romans. It means that Jesus prays for us nonstop, so when we pray it's like treading on a moving walkway taking us in the right direction.



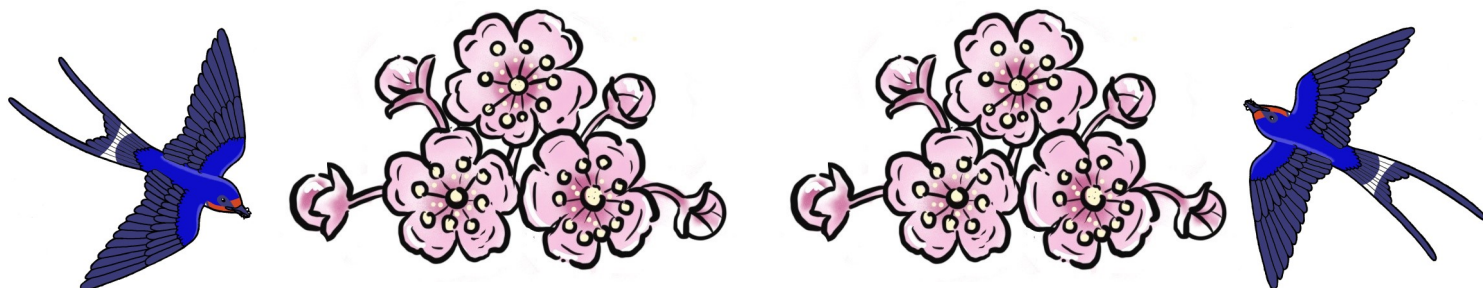
Fourth, He came to show us what the unseen God is like. When one of His trainees asked, “Lord, show us the Father”, the reply was, “Have I been with you all this time and you still do not know Me? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father”. So, the more we contemplate Jesus, the closer we get to the unseen God.

Let them eat cake !

A fabulous well done to everyone who baked and toiled in the kitchen over a hot stove to enter the Easter Bake Challenge. The tables in the hall were creaking on Thursday 14th April with a fabulous assembly of sugar and egg baked masterpieces!

The entry fees, the raffle and the generous contributions from the congregation and our fabulous friends who support our coffee morning raised £65 towards this quarter’s charity appeal.

A special thanks must go to Pat Finch, Phyl, Gill and Michelle for keeping order and arranging and managing the event. Well done everybody!







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Easter Morning 2022

5am

St Mary, North Shoebury.



Quotes to think about.

Compassion is difficult to give away because it keeps coming back. – *Anon*

Aspire to inspire before you expire. – *Anon*

Serenity is not freedom from the storm, but peace within it. – *Anon*

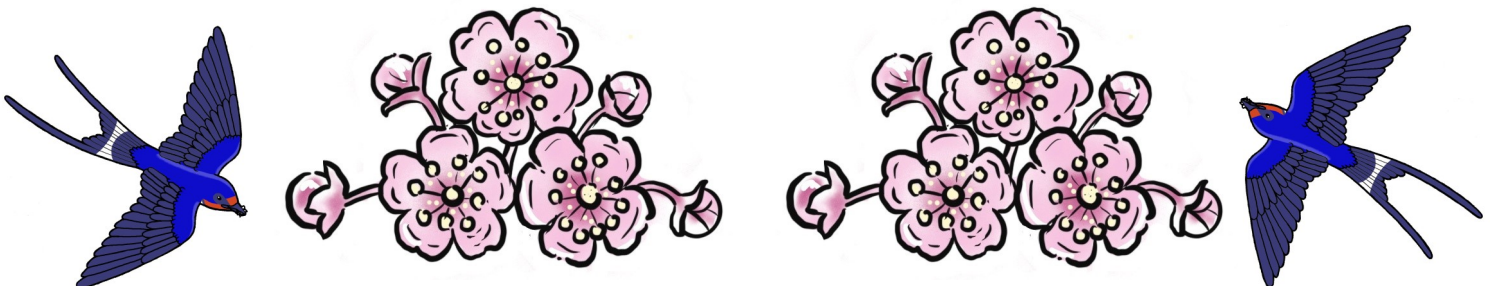
We don't change God's message – His message changes us. – *Anon*

Plan ahead – it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. – *Anon*

Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory position. – *Anon*

Coincidences happen when God chooses to remain anonymous. – *Anon*

You can become a Christian in a moment, but not a mature Christian. Christ can enter, cleanse, and forgive you in a matter of seconds, but it will take much longer for your character to be transformed and moulded to His will. It takes only a few minutes for a bridegroom and bride to be married, but in the rough-and-tumble of their home it may take many years for two strong wills to be dovetailed into one. So, when we receive Christ, a moment of commitment will lead to a lifetime of adjustment. – *John Stott*



CONTACT DETAILS

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please, in the first instance, contact Pat Fitch.

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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

Thank you all

First of all, I would like to thank all those who helped and support the church during the Easter period. Although the world may not know it, Easter is clearly more important in both theological and church terms than Christmas. So first there are a great many people to say thank you to.

I would like to thank those who gave up time in Lent to join in the Study Group on Thursday evenings as we looked at Mark's Gospel describing in so much detail the days leading up to Good Friday and Easter Day. I think that what we shared with each other helped to prepare us for Easter.

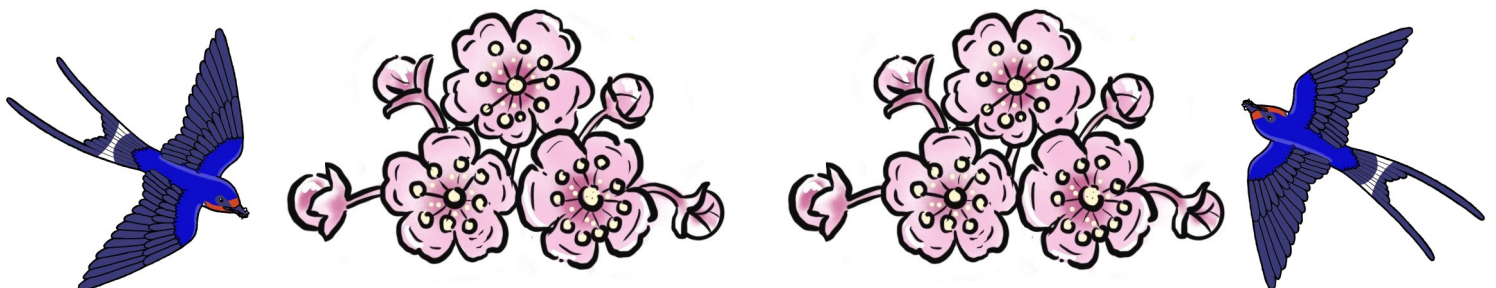
I would like to thank Pat and her team for putting together the Maundy Thursday Coffee Morning Cake Competition. I was unable to be there, but as people told me about it, I could still see the smiles on their faces.

I would like to thank all those who helped put together the Maundy Thursday evening service in church. Also thank you to Francine and her team who organised to food for the fellowship meal in the church hall. The service was put together and led by Cadets and tutors from the Salvation Army Training College in Denmark Hill in London.

In meeting with our sisters and brothers from Shoeburyness Salvation Army, and Friars Baptist Church, we were enriched by their presence, and their brass band leading our worship. It is one of the great memories I will take with me into retirement later this year.

I would like to thank all those who shared with me the three hours on Good Friday as we reflected on Jesus' journey to the cross. At the end of the service, we placed a stone over the tomb on the beautifully prepared Easter Garden.

I would like to thank those who were in church on Saturday morning to prepare the church for Easter Day.



I would like to thank all those who got up at silly o'clock to greet the dawn on Easter Morning. As we brought the "Light of Christ" into a dark church, the whole space was lit by that single candle. A very powerful reminder that darkness will always be overcome by light. At that service we prayed by the Easter Garden and removed the stone.

I proclaimed, "Alleluia. Christ is risen." And everyone replied, "**He is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**"

Thank you again to Francine and her team who made sure there was breakfast. I know that I may well have missed out people who should be named, for this I am sorry. Since Covid, I am well aware that my memory is not as good as once it was; and it wasn't very good anyway.

What is so good is that we are a community of people who support each other by our effort and presence both in church and in the community, and we help each other to grow in strength in our Christian lives together.

God bless

David

To Alan & Rosemary for sponsoring this month's magazine in celebration of their anniversary and many family birthdays





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