

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton				
1 st March Lent 1		9.30 Family Communion	Genesis 2 vv 15-17 p4 Hymn sung Genesis 3 vv 1-7 p5 Romans 5 vv 12-19 p1132 Matthew 4 vv 1-11 p967	
8 th March Lent 2		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 12 vv 1-4a p13 Romans 4 vv 1-17 p1131 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065	
15 th March Lent 3		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP	
		9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 17 vv 1-7 p75 Romans 5 vv 1-11 p1132 John 4 vv 1-42 p1066	
22 nd March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday		9.30 Family Communion	I Samuel 16 vv 1-13 p287 John 9 vv 1-41 p1075	
29 th March Lent 5 Passion Sunday		9.30 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Romans 8 vv 5-11 p1134 John 11 vv 1-45 p1077	
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling				
1 st March Lent 1		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Corinthians 6 vv 1-10 p1161 Matthew 4 vv 1-11 p967	
		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 2 vv 15-17 p4 Hymn sung Genesis 3 vv 1-7 p5 Romans 5 vv 12-19 p1132 Matthew 4 vv 1-11 p967	
8 th March Lent 2		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 12 vv 1-4a p13 Romans 4 vv 1-17 p1131 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065	
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Genesis 28 vv 1-22 p30 I Corinthians 1 vv 1-25 p1144	
15 th March Lent 3		11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 17 vv 1-7 p75 Romans 5 vv 1-11 p1132 John 4 vv 1-42 p1066	
22 nd March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday		11.00 Holy Communion	I Samuel 16 vv 1-13 p287 Ephesians 5 vv 8-14 p1176 John 9 vv 1-41 p1075	
29 th March Lent 5 Passion Sunday		11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Romans 8 vv 5-11 p1134 John 11 vv 1-45 p1077	
Holy Communion St Michael's Wednesdays @ 9.30 am			Holy Communion St John's Thursdays @ 9.30 am	
26 th February Ash Wednesday	9.30 Halling	Joel 2 vv 12-17 p912 Matthew 6 vv 16-21 p970	27 th February @ Halling George Herbert	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 Luke 9 vv 22-25
	11.00 HC Cuxton then lent lunch in church hall			
4 th March Ember Day		Jonah 3 Luke 11 vv 29-32	5 th March	Isaiah 55 Matthew 7 vv 7-12
11 th March		Jeremiah 18 vv 18-20 Matthew 20 vv 17-28	12 th March	Jeremiah 17 vv 5-10 Luke 16 vv 19-31
18 th March S Cyril		Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 Matthew 5 vv 17-19	19 th March S Joseph	II Samuel 7 vv 4-16 Matthew 1 vv 18-25
25 th March 11.00 The Annunciation		Isaiah 7 vv 10-15 Luke 1 vv 26-38	26 th March	Exodus 32 vv 7-14 John 5 vv 31 - 47
1 st April		Daniel 3 John 8 vv 31-42	2 nd April	Genesis 17 vv 3-9 John 8 vv 51-59

Copy Date April Magazine 8th May 8.30 am Rectory.



cuzson m

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is intrinsic to the Christian faith. Our story is that the LORD Who made heaven and earth is a just God. Nature obeys the laws of science and the laws of science are the laws of God Who created absolutely everything that exists in heaven and on earth. Created beings, especially human beings, who are made in God's image and have freedom of choice, are required to obey God's laws of behaviour if the world is to run smoothly. It makes about as much sense to build an aircraft without considering the laws of gravity and aerodynamics as it does to try to run your life (or your family or a country) as though the Ten Commandments did not apply to you. If you want to live a fulfilled life, follow the Maker's instructions. If you want the universe to run smoothly, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Maker's handbook. God's law is revealed in the Book of Nature (investigated by science and other human endeavours) and in the Bible which is there for everyone to read. God's law is summarised in the commandments to love. God is love. We are made in the image of God and we are called to love like Him. It isn't too difficult to love the people who love us, but, if we love as God loves, we love everyone, good and bad alike.

Matthew 5:43-48:

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

When we break God's Law, we bring grief on ourselves, we cause trouble in the world. We *provoke His wrath and indignation against us*. We cut ourselves off from the Source of all life. We give up our right to eternal life. *Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return. The wages of sin is death.* And we are all sinners. *There is none*

righteous, no not one. It follows from the fact that God is a just God that we have all condemned ourselves. *There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.* No peace for the wicked in this world or the next. We are at odds with ourselves. We are odds with other people and the world at large. We are at odds with God.

What hope then can there be for us? We are all sinners and there is no peace for the wicked. But God is love. God is merciful as well as just. Justice and mercy are indivisible from one another. They are two sides of the same coin and that coin is love. God is love. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (I John 4¹⁰). God forgives us. Our sins are washed away. We make a new beginning, a fresh start in Him. And how do we do that? We come to Him in faith. We trust God. We know that we can trust God because He made us and everything that there is. He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. *So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3¹⁶).

We put our faith in God Who promises to hear our prayers. We repent of our sins. Sin is every failure to behave with love. It is the things we have left undone which we ought to have done and the things which we have done but ought not to have done. It is the unkind or untrue words we have said and the words of consolation we have omitted to say. It is our disposition, who we are. Insofar as we are not pure love, we are sinners. *We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.* If our hearts are not right with God, if our hearts are not replete with universal love, then *the devices and desires of our own hearts* are sin. *There is no health in us.*

What does it mean to repent? To repent is to turn. It is to turn to God. It is to turn away from sin, the world and the devil. Repentance is a change of mind and of heart. Repentance is a transformation. Repentance brings about a metamorphosis. Sinners are like caterpillars, failing to fulfil their potential to be butterflies, eating raw cabbage leaves or stinging nettles, rather than sipping nectar, or, like tadpoles, swimming about in the pond, unable to escape into the sunlight and fresh air. Caterpillars and

tadpoles have not yet fulfilled their potential. As sinners, we are unfulfilled as human beings.

Repentance has to be thorough. It needs to be complete. In order to be forgiven, we have to believe and to repent. We also have to be baptised (or christened). Baptism is death to sin. It is that definite. We die to sin in order that we might live with Christ. You cannot serve God and mammon. You are either a Christian or you are not. If you are a Christian you have given your life to Jesus. You take up your cross daily, knowing that you can trust Him and only Him for your salvation. Jesus is your teacher, your example and your inspiration. As Christians, we are called to follow Him, to be like Him. God is love.

I know that not all of you share my love of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. I am with you in believing that the Common Worship services we mostly use are mostly right for us today. I do think, however, that the versions of the confession in Common Worship are a bit too glib. They roll off the tongue too easily. They do not put into words the heartfelt and total repentance which is required of us if we are to be Christians. So I am glad sometimes to use the 1662 version for Holy Communion, to remind myself and the congregation of what we must do in order to stand with confidence in the Presence of the thrice holy God.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And He does have mercy. He does forgive us our sins when we come to Him in faith. They are washed away, gone for ever. We are cleansed and set free.

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him.

COME unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *St. Matthew.* xi. 28.

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John* iii. 16.

Hear also what Saint Paul saith. This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *1 Tim.* i. 15.

Hear also what Saint John saith. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. *1 St. John* ii. 1.

And yet there is something else. Jesus taught us to pray, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.* He even warns us in *Matthew* 6^{14&15}: *For if ye forgive men their trespasses. Your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* It is a question of what it means to be made like Him. God is love. God forgives. If we are to be like God, we have to forgive. If we cannot or will not forgive we are not healed, we are not whole people; we are not the people God made us to be. We are not complete human beings. It sends a chill down my spine when people say that they will never forgive; they are damning themselves.

If we will not forgive, we may well hurt the person who has harmed us. That might well be our intention, but is it what Jesus would do? If not, then it is not right for us to do it. The most basic phase of forgiving is not to retaliate. If we will not forgive, we also damage society at large. It is really embarrassing if you need to host a family party but Aunt Maud and Cousin John are not speaking to one another. It is bad for a church or any kind of community if some of its members are irreconcilably at odds with one another. Wars find a pretext in unforgiven atrocities which sometimes occurred centuries ago. We damage not only the wrongdoer and ourselves by failing to forgive; we damage the world in which we live. And we do damage ourselves. We fall short of Christ-like living so long as we harbour grudges and thoughts of revenge.

But how can we forgive? Forgiveness is not cheap. It is not easy if someone has really hurt us.

It is too easy to tell people that it is their duty to forgive, but how can we say that we forgive and really mean it?

First, I should say, be very careful about judging other people. Jesus says (Matthew 7¹⁻⁵): *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* Make every allowance, every excuse, for the person who has offended you. They may not know they are doing wrong. They may not be able to help themselves. Perhaps they have not had your advantages. *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*

If you are in a close relationship with someone who is hurting you or who has hurt you and cannot seem to understand why, perhaps, if possible, you should have a conversation with him or her. Of course, the person might be unable (maybe because of illness or age) to understand why what he did in the past was wrong. Or maybe you find yourself confronted with the need to forgive someone who has died. You can really only commend the whole thing to God in such cases. Let God sort it out. God can do anything.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Jesus says we should just go on forgiving how ever often someone offends us. But what if the person isn't sorry? What if there is no sign of repentance? Should we forgive someone who even boasts about having hurt us? Yes. As Christians, we want the person to be restored. We are told to

pray for those who despitefully use us. We also do not want to disrupt the life of our family or our community by perpetuating resentments and feuds. And we shall never be fulfilled as people made to be the children of God if we refuse to forgive. God did not start to love us when we repented of our sins. He has always loved us and it is His eternal love which brought us to repentance and forgiveness. Romans 5⁸: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Just two more points. Mercy and forgiveness do not annul the claims of justice. We cannot glibly tell the victim of terrible wrong-doing (such as rape, torture, the murder of a family member) that it is his or her duty to forgive. We cannot imagine their pain – not even if something similar has happened to us. It is not for us to judge them. Only God can judge. Romans 14⁴: *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.* We are all God's servants. Only He can judge us and He judges us with mercy – justice and mercy being the two aspects of the one coin which is love. All we can do is to be there for the victims of these terrible crimes and to pray (in our hearts if not out loud in their presence) that they may eventually find healing and peace.

And finally, while not all sins are crimes against society (thank God), some are and, for the sake of the whole community, it might be necessary for the offender to be punished even if he has repented, even if his victims have forgiven him. The authorities cannot just let off, say, to take an extreme example, the commandant of a concentration who repents how ever sincerely and even if his surviving victims by some miracle find it within themselves to forgive him. Mercy and justice are not rivals contending for mastery of the universe. God is the Master of the universe. Justice and mercy are aspects of God's Nature equally important in His loving purposes for the whole of His creation and its final consummation in love. Roger.

That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy holy Word; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Thanks

We had a nice letter of thanks from Sharon Copestake, Vicar of St Francis Strood, for the Christmas gifts we collected in December which were distributed to households which otherwise might not have had much for Christmas.

Rev'd Stanley Evans RIP

Most of you did not know Stanley but he is well known in bell-ringing circles and he was present at my Institution and Induction service at Halling when I first came here. He rang with the regular ringers before that service and a number of us met him again one year on our bell ringers' outing at St Saviour's Westgate, where he was Vicar from 1972-2001. My interest in him, apart from the fact that he was such a very nice man, arises from the fact that he was the priest who really established St Christopher's Church Newington where I was minister before I came here. There was also a connection in that Stanley's wife Marie was the sister on the ward at the Sea Bathing Hospital when I went into for a minor operation on my wrist having fallen off a ladder repainting the interior of the said St Christopher's Church.

The Newington Estate at Ramsgate was built by the council after the war. It was a time of great idealism and hope for the future and the houses were well designed, well built and well appointed – rather like Vicarage Close Halling. There were large gardens in which families could grow their own food and flowers separated from the road by privet hedges. There was plenty of grassy open space in which children could play safely in the fresh air. The Centre included a public house and shops which supplied most of the things you would be likely to need on a day to day basis, within walking distance of where you lived. The roads are narrow and winding, forming a maze which discourages speed and helps to make it safe for children to play in the street. In my days there, we all had our milk delivered and it was always late because Roy, our milkman, checked up on all the people on his rounds every day. In many ways, the estate conformed to very present day ideas about protecting the environment and healthy living. The exception was that the houses were not terribly well insulated and depended on coal fires for heating. That suited some residents, however. They were miners in the Kent Coalfield and entitled to free coal. One of my duties was to write to the Coal Board occasionally to confirm that retired miners and their widows were still alive and therefore entitled to keep on claiming!

One thing the estate initially lacked was a church. The estate is part of the parish of St Laurence in Thanet and had been ministered to from there, but they wanted their own church and, around 1950, 500 residents signed a petition addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury to provide one. The Archbishop in question was Geoffrey Fisher and his Diocesan Board of Finance agreed to pay £9,000 out of the total £14,000 required. The remainder was raised by people on the estate with the help of all the other churches in Ramsgate. On 26th September 1955, the new Church was dedicated by the Archbishop – a dual purpose building which could be used as a hall as well as a place of worship. This cut both ways. It was a useful economy and it brought people into the building but mothers would sometimes say that they did not want their baby christened in the same place as the clinic was held in which he was weighed. Also, because the chancel where the choir sit is also the stage, there is quite a climb from the nave to the choir stalls and altar. I think I was the first priest (in the 1980s) to hold weddings at St Christopher's, most couples preferring a more traditional church building for their ceremony.

At the time, Stanley Evans was curate at St Oswald's Norbury, near Croydon, which was in the Diocese of Canterbury till 1984. In 1957, Archbishop Fisher asked him to take on St Christopher's. Stanley told me that he was quite daunted by the prospect but that Archbishop Fisher promised to support him, a promise which was kept. Stanley established a choir. Choir stalls and robes were donated by St Paul's Ramsgate, whose building had been bombed and was not to be rebuilt. It is said that numbers in the congregation grew by as much as 25% per annum in the 1950s. I am told that five double decker buses were needed to take the Sunday School on their outings. I have noted Stanley's enthusiasm for bell ringing and he also obtained a bell from St Paul's, which, there being no tower at St Christopher's, was hung in a specially constructed wooden frame.

Thirty years later, when I was at St Christopher's, the choir robes were worn out and we replaced them (though the new ones were not as warm and comfortable as the old, the choir told me) and the bell frame had collapsed under the weight of the bell. So we gave the bell to a new church which was being built in Africa and that had advertised for a bell in England.

I should say that St Christopher's was built up as it was by Stanley's sheer love for God and for people. Things are not so rosy there now and one can give all sorts of reasons (not to say excuses) for that. Far fewer people – even those who consider themselves Christians – go to church nowadays or contribute to the Church's work. Given the straitened circumstances of the Church of England as a whole, there is no longer a resident minister on the estate. The estate itself is very much tougher than it used to be. The Isle of Thanet has suffered high levels of unemployment. When the estate was new, the council was very paternalistic, but it was tough love. They looked after you, but, if your behaviour was unacceptable to the neighbours or you didn't keep your house and garden clean and tidy, you could be evicted. But problem families and difficult tenants have to live somewhere. So that regime didn't last and, even in my time, there were gardens full of car parts and old fridges instead of fruit, vegetables and flowers, untended homes, vandalism, graffiti, etc. Crime, alcohol and violence were something of a problem. Mentally ill people tended to gravitate to cheap council accommodation when the big asylums (for very good reasons) were closed. The result is a much greater social need to meet but fewer people with the resources to meet it. It is too easy to get into a spiral of decay, both for the Church and for the wider community. I am sure the answer, however, is in Christians like Stanley whose deep and sincere love for God and for other people reaches out to meet the needs of the world. Roger.



Mystery Gift

On 24th January, a parcel appeared on the Rectory doorstep. It contained a picture of a green RT bus with roof box number indicator on route 480 to Dartford. I was delighted to receive this gift, but do not know whom to thank you. So, if you are reading this, thank you.

I chose this picture of an RT (not a roof box bus) because it shows how they tested buses for stability. I know at least one of our readers was very curious about this, having seen how far they used to lean over outside Halling Post Office, where there used to be quite a dip in the road. See also p10 for a story about an overturned bus at Cuxton.

Anglesey Abbey, Gardens & Lode Mill



This Cambridgeshire National Trust Property comprises an elegant house, enchanting gardens and an historic working mill. The brochure describes my route as a 'mindful meander through the Winter Garden' and states that there are 'pockets of peace' along the way. The Winter Garden was planted to commemorate the

centenary of Lord Fairhaven's birth. It has a path which is a quarter of a mile long. The plan for the garden was always to have a sensory mix of plants which offer colour, scent and beauty regardless of season. At this time of year the gardens are well known for their display of snowdrops. Enthusiastic volunteers give tours on weekdays during the season.



There are over 300 varieties of

snowdrop, some are labelled, within the borders. The borders are carefully designed to show-off the snowdrops to their full potential by planting contrasting shrubs, daffodils and other vegetation. During my stroll through the gardens, on well cleared hard paths, I photographed lots of snowdrops and discovered many daffodils already in flower. This must be a well sheltered area.

The shrubs and trees are outstanding and inspiring. There is a mixture of trees, from mature oaks, chestnuts, elms and conifers to newly planted saplings and a stunning feature area of silver birch. The shrubs

have different colours in their leaves and branches as well as different textures. Some have buds almost beginning to burst with blossom. There are different scents to experience as I walk.



After strolling through the garden I reach the riverside walk and the mill. Centuries old, Lode Mill, is a water mill which has a long history. It dates back to 1086 but has undergone several restorations and conversions. For example, in 1900 the mill was converted from corn

milling to cement grinding but was closed down around 1920. It was restored back to corn milling around 1935 but has required further restorations in order to allow volunteers and visitors to experience corn milling today. Freshly ground National Trust flour can be bought in the mill or in the visitor centre.

From the mill, I walk along the waterway to view the other gardens. Sadly many areas are roped-off to rest the lawns before the summer visiting season. There is a large pond on route with a pair of swans and other common water fowl. There are well tended borders and vistas across the grounds and extensive parkland. I reach the house. Anglesey Abbey has a rich history ranging from a monastic priory to a hospital to a twentieth century home. Its previous owner was Lord Fairhaven who bought it in 1926. He made many changes to the property and decorated the walls with many pictures and portraits. In particular, there are many paintings of Windsor Castle. I think that this is

due to his association with Windsor where he served in the military. He had many interests including, shooting, collecting and supporting the arts. Every room had a different clock and he bequeathed his house and gardens to the National Trust but all had to be kept as he had left it. The National Trust acquired the property in 1966 and has set about conserving many items, restoring various aspects of the fabric and maintaining/replanting parts of the gardens and parkland.



Out in the parkland are many footpaths and trails. There are three sign posted walks, Winter walk, Circular walk and Hoe Fen walk. These range in walking time of 40minutes to 1hr 30minutes. On studying the map, I discovered that I had covered the Winter walk and nearly all of the Circular walk and

Hoe Fen. I enjoyed the gardens very much and would love to view them in a different season. The parts of the Hoe Fen walk that I omitted



were the children's play areas, the wildlife area and the pond discovery area.

At the Visitor Centre is a good shop and a welcoming restaurant. A hot meal in a warm, clean restaurant is the best finale in the winter. Holly Croft.

The Noble Army of Martyrs

We noted at our services on 10th & 11th January the martyrdom of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, on 10th January 1645. He was Rector of Cuxton in 1610. He did not stay in the village long. At that time, the Rectory was at the bottom of the hill and very damp. Laud suffered from the Kentish ague, which is a kind of malaria. He did a lot to raise standards in the Church of England. I wonder whether he was responsible for installing the Jacobean choir stall at St Michael's? It was the kind of thing he would do. He promoted scholarship, establishing his own collection of manuscripts and, as President of St John's College Oxford, did much for the university. He was open to good relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and reached out to the Greek Orthodox Church seeking ecumenical partnership. He did not, however, get on with the Puritans so well. He believed that the Church must have bishops and insisted on prayer book worship and traditional clerical vesture. He could be a very cruel man. Because he was closely associated with King Charles I, he was unpopular with the parliamentary party at the time of the Civil War. Parliament imprisoned him in the Tower of London, and, when they were unable to convict him in a court of law of any actual criminal offence, they passed a Bill of Attainder which enabled them to execute him without the necessity of a conviction. Perhaps ironically, Laud in 1625 wrote the Prayer for Parliament which is in our

Book of Common Prayer and is said in St Michael's at least once a week (when parliament is in session) within feet of where presumably Laud himself once prayed.

We also noted that the last Bishop of Rochester to live at Halling, John Fisher, was also martyred, this time by Henry VIII. He was imprisoned in the Tower and very poorly treated there before being beheaded for his opposition to Henry's declaration of the English Church's independence from Rome. Fisher was himself considered a scholar, open minded and a reformer, but he too could be a very cruel man. He opposed those who wanted the Bible in English to the extent of burning them at the stake.

The stories of these two men raise all sorts of questions about how the good and the bad are mixed up in us Christians, whether we should judge people by our own standards or by the standards of the age in which they lived, whether we should honour people who have given their lives for what they believed even though their personalities were otherwise flawed, whether we would be prepared to die for what we believe, what beliefs we should cling onto, come what may, and in what respects it might turn out that we are very wrong?

MOST gracious God, we humbly beseech thee, as for this Kingdom in general, so especially for the High Court of Parliament, under our most religious and gracious Queen at this time assembled: That thou wouldest be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations, to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her Dominions; that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations. These and all other necessities, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Blue Plaque for Thomas Harris VC MM Birthplace

Halling Historical Society is launching a public appeal for funds to put an historic blue plaque on the birthplace of Thomas Harris VC MM, Halling's Great War hero. Sgt Harris' family home was 79, High St, Halling. The current owners have given permission for this project, which will cost £400. Please contact Halling Historical Society for details at hallinghistorical@gmail.com if you would like to make a donation. When the plaque is in place, there will be a public unveiling ceremony.

Jokes

Why did the pineapple go out with a banana?
What is orange and sounds like a parrot?

Because he couldn't get a date.
A carrot



CUXTON AUTO SERVICES
Servicing/Repairs/MOT Centre
Yusuf Oomar
Workshop Manager/MOT Tester
Malcolm Petts
Service Manager/MOT Tester
1 Sundridge Hill
Cuxton
Rochester ME2 1LH
01634 717987
www.cuxtonautoservices.co.uk

Forthcoming Attractions

29th February: XKids St John's
2.00 – 4.00 pm.
6th March 10: World Day of
Prayer Service @ St John's
19th March: The Sixteen perform
Allegri's Miserere at 7.30 @
Rochester Cathedral. Book 0333
010 2850, thesixteen.com
25th March 11.00: Lady Day
Holy Communion @ St
Michael's.
28th March 7.30: Albert Marshall
Reminisce Musical Evening in
Church Hall
25th April 9.30: St Mark's Day
HC, Vestry Meeting & APCM St
Michael's Church & Hall

24th June 2020 (Nativity of St John the Baptist): 11.00 Holy Communion St John's followed by pudding party.

9th July 7.30: Cantium Singers @ St John's.

Literary Competition.

In the novel “Bleak House”, Charles Dickens satirised the Chancery Court for its notorious inefficiency. His book played a significant role in the abolition of this denial of justice, along with conscientious lawyers and lord chancellors who recognised that the abuse could not continue. He wrote in Chapter 1: *Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on. This scarecrow of a suit has, over the course of time, become so complicated, that no man alive knows what it means. The parties to it understand it least; but it has been observed that no two Chancery lawyers can talk about it for five minutes without coming to a total disagreement as to all the premises. Innumerable children have been born into the cause; innumerable young people have married into it; innumerable old people have died out of it. Scores of persons have deliriously found themselves made parties in Jarndyce and Jarndyce without knowing how or why; whole families have inherited legendary hatreds with the suit. The little plaintiff or defendant, who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled, has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world. Fair wards of court have faded into mothers and grandmothers; a long procession of Chancellors has come in and gone out.* I wondered if another author might do something similar for the Clergy Discipline Measure. So this is a competition. Suggest an author who could do this (dead or alive) and give your reasons in 150 – 250 words by 13th March 8.30 am. The winning entry will be published in the April magazine (plus perhaps any runners up). The prize will be the satisfaction of a job well done.

Here are a few suggestions. In Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis”, the hero goes to bed a man and wakes up a giant insect. This, to me, reflects the sheer surreality of the CDM. In George Orwell’s “1984”, the individual finds himself inexorably ground down by the system. Joseph Heller’s “Catch 22” perhaps foreshadows the dilemma suffered by those accused under the CDM. Fail to find any witnesses for the defence and you will probably be convicted, but appealing for witnesses can be regarded as “further misconduct”. Then there are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Julian Barnes. In “Arthur and George”, Barnes writes up the true story of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s efforts to exonerate George Edalji. George was the son of a vicar and the vicarage family made the mistake of assuming that the system would deliver justice when George was falsely accused of a horrible crime. What happened in practice was that the police started from the assumption of guilt (probably because George was of Asian heritage) and the court went along with them accepting shaky prosecution evidence which should never have been admitted and dismissing strong evidence produced by the defence which proved that George could not possibly have been guilty. After serving three years of a seven year prison sentence, he was released on orders of the Home Office. Conan Doyle and thousands of others campaigned to have the original verdict overturned by a pardon. (There was no Court of Criminal Appeal in those days.) Eventually, the Home Office accepted that George was not guilty but still refused to treat him as innocent. Shades of Kafka. However, the case was instrumental in convincing politicians to set up an appeal court. On a lighter note, there is Lewis Carroll with his Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. There we find the grin of the Cheshire Cat which continues to exist even after the cat has vanished. There is the Queen of Hearts of whom Carroll says, *The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. 'Off with his head!' she said, without even looking around*’ (although the said death sentences were usually vetoed by the King of Hearts. And there is this interesting dialogue between Alice and Humpty Dumpty. “‘When I use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.’ ‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’ ‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master — that’s all.’”

I look forward to receiving your suggestions for a living or deceased author who could expose the failings of the Clergy Discipline Measure in a novel. 150 – 250 words, please, to the Rectory by 8.30 am 13th March. Or write the book yourself. Roger.

Wymondham Abbey

Retired high court judge Sir Mark Sedley has been reviewing a CDM case at Wymondham Abbey in Norfolk. He says, that the affair is “a disgrace to the Christian community”. He said that a tribunal would cost “tens of thousands of pounds” and last for several days”. There must surely be a better way of reconciling differences within churches. “The origin of the dispute has not been disclosed but Sir Mark said some of the complaints showed ‘an unusual emotional fragility’”.

Raymond Maisey RIP

Parishioners were sorry to learn of the death of Ray Maisey on 6th February. Ray and Buffy joined our church when they first moved to Cuxton and have both been valued members of our community, involved in the life of the Church and the village. Ray took a great interest in local affairs and served on both Cuxton Parish and, as councillor for Cuxton and Halling ward, on Medway Borough Councils. He held the office of Deputy Mayor of Medway twice. As a local councillor, Ray was committed to the welfare of the whole parish and its residents. Ray was an accomplished amateur musician, entertaining us sometimes at church functions. He also ran a printing business, often doing work for the Church and for local organisations. Our prayers are with Buffy and all Ray's family at this sad time.

World Day of Prayer 6th March 2020

This year's World Day of Prayer is entitled Praying with Zimbabwe. The service in this parish will take place at St John's Church Halling at 10.00 am.

Lady Day 25th March

We shall be welcoming Mother's Union members from other parishes to join us for our celebration of the Annunciation at St Michael's on Wednesday 25th March at 11.00 am (followed by lunch).

Albert Marshall's Reminisce 28th March

A musical evening at Cuxton Church Hall beginning at 7.30 pm. Those who have attended Albert's concerts before will testify to his zest and energetic performance of a wide musical repertoire which nobody could fail to enjoy.

St Michaels Draw February: £10 to Mrs Maisey (34) & £5 each to Mrs Morren (9) & Mrs P MacDonald (32).

St John's Choir



Our small but loyal choir at St. John's Halling has found it increasingly difficult to get to a choir practice on Thursday evenings. I would like to try holding a practice once a month open to anyone who would like to practise the hymns for the following month's services (mostly 11am on a Sunday but not exclusively). Obviously I'd like to hope those attending will be able to attend at least one of those services to support our singing, but that's not strictly necessary. As I have no idea how many people would be interested in doing this, my intention is to hold the practices for three months (March/April/May) and then see if there is support to continue. I am thinking of the third Thursday of every month at 5.30 pm till 6.30 pm but am open to suggestions if that is too early/too late, particularly for those who would like to attend but work till later in the day. So at present I will start on 19th March 2020 at 5.30 pm, practising the hymns to be sung at St. John's in April. Practices will be at St. John's, Halling. Gillian Feraday, St. John's Church organist.

Caesar

Last month we asked if anyone knew anything about Canon Toone's dog Caesar, buried in the Rectory grounds in 1933. Our readers do not disappoint. Apparently Caesar was a fairly large black and white dog and very lively. He must have been much loved to be given his own memorial. At about the same time, there was another Rectory dog called Darnley. At least one parishioner was a bit afraid of Darnley. We do not know where he is buried.

Overtured bus at Cuxton

The story is that around about 1916 a double decker bus overturned following a collision with a fallen tree at the top of Sundridge Hill. This would have been on the old road, of which you can still see a portion where it crosses the railway on a bridge behind the recycling centre. At that time, there was a signal box just there on the South Eastern and Chatham Railway line to Victoria. The signaller telephoned for assistance and a contingent of soldiers arrived to rescue the bus passengers.

Curious Geography.

Big boot Italy
Kicked poor Sicily
into the Mediterranean Sea

up jumped Austria
said she was Hungary
so had a bit of Turkey

dipped in Greece
fried in Japan
and eaten off China

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Mitchell (64), Mrs Gyde (133), Mrs Waghorn (156) – drawn by Mrs Mitchell.



Mothers' Union January Meeting – Talk on “Caleb Parfait” by Peter Joyce
Looking at the title of Peter Joyce's subject “Caleb Parfait – 1719 Rector of St. Michael's Church,” might sound a deep and heavy subject but in fact it was quite the opposite. The talk was very well presented and some of the asides which came out of the period of Caleb Parfait's life were so interesting and entertaining.

Caleb Parfait's ministry in the church connects St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Cuxton with St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Shorne and St. Nicholas' Church, Strood.

Not only did we find out that the first “Work House” was started in Strood, behind St. Nicholas' Church but that we realised what lengths one has to go to, in order to research the archives. The research on this subject involved many hours spent in the British Museum Library in London.

We would like to say a big “Thank you” to Peter for a most interesting talk. Jenny.

The Clergy Discipline Measure on the Radio

Radio 4's *Sunday* programme had a long section on the CDM on 9th February. According to the contributors, the whole CDM process is obviously generally regarded now as a disaster. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself says that it is unfit for purpose. As long ago as 2018, the *Church Times* queried whether or not it is a harsh discipline.

We were given several examples of how CDM works. One innocent clergyman had been offered a year's salary to resign and spare everyone the embarrassment of actually dealing with his case. One woman minister described how she had received death threats following a malicious complaint under the CDM and how her archdeacon had refused to take the issue seriously. She came to dread the visit of the postman as the case dragged on and on without resolution. One guy, who was eventually able to clear his name, was initially found guilty by a bishop who admitted that he had not even read the defence statements. Another vicar, even after legal aid, had to spend over a thousand pounds of his own money on legal fees in order to secure his acquittal while the diocese paid the legal expenses of the complainant who had made the false allegations against him! Tellingly, the words of the clergy concerned had to be voiced by actors, so intimidated are clergy who want to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth regarding the scandal that is CDM.

Unfortunately, this goes to press before a second programme in which complainants will have the opportunity to describe their experiences of dealing with the CDM. Evidence so far suggests, however, that people with genuine complaints are as frustrated by the CDM process as those who are wrongfully accused.

Church Notice

This notice was seen in a church in France. It is an appeal to the congregation possibly by the parish priest. For ease of understanding it has been translated into English. Please disregard the last sentence on the notice. Of course, you wouldn't be that silly! Would you?!

“When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear ‘The call of God’. However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and speak to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text whilst driving!”

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Hildegard was one of the foremost early composers, not to mention one of the very few, if not the first, famous *women* composers that existed in the man's world that was the Middle Ages. She was from Rupertsberg, born in the Rhineland in 1089 and it is thought died in Bingen on 17th September, 1179. Although thought of as a saint for many years, she was only “canonized” by Pope Benedict in 2012 as a Doctor of the Church. She was elected by her nuns as *magistra* in 1136 and founded monasteries of the Benedictine Order in Rupertsberg in 1150 and Eibingen in 1165. She wrote texts about medicine, theology and botany, as well as many letters, liturgical songs and poems, but there

are more chants by her surviving from the Middle Ages than from any other composer of the time, and she is also one of the few who wrote both music and words.

Even now, in the 21st century, the world of classical music is dominated by men, and although this state of affairs is beginning to change, it is a very slow process. The levels of equality in performing is not much better and the vast majority of conductors are male. So it is remarkable that, eight centuries ago, Hildegard of Bingen, a female composer, theologian and mystic, was able to establish herself and leave a musical legacy.

Hildegard had begun her monastic life in 1102 and from that time had realized the importance of music to aid the liturgy of Divine worship for the spiritual life of her community. We learn from her letters that the nuns of her convent had been refused permission to sing divine worship by senior clerics in Mainz because Hildegard had refused to exhumate the body of a nobleman who, *they* maintained, was an ex-communicant and so should not be interred in the holy ground of the convent. She stated that he had confessed to his priest and was in communion with the church when he died. Further in her letter she insists that the sanction be removed because of the importance of singing and of the dire consequences that will befall those who have forbidden it. She says, "The canticle of praise, reflecting celestial harmony, which has a living voice, the body in harmony with the soul, to use it's voice to sing praises to God. Therefore, those who, without cause, impose silence on a church and prohibit the singing of God's praises will lose their place among the chorus of angels." She is not cowed by seniority. Her threat is unsubtle and to the point; either remove the sanction or spend eternity in hell!

Hildegard extended her compositions further than for those for daily services. She added to the plainchant repertory of the early church through her own texts and musical output. She added variation to the strict repetition of the normal structure of the singing and of the services, adding interest to the worship of her day. Her legacy is that her music is suitable material for the many occasions of the church's year and is now being resurrected by modern-day scholars for use in sacred and secular locations and extending their repertoire and appeal. Attention in recent decades to the contribution of women of the medieval Church had led to popular interest in the compositions of Hildegard, and sixty-nine musical compositions survive, plus four where the musical notation has been lost but could be reconstructed. This is the largest surviving repertoire among medieval composers.

Whilst her music was not widely circulated immediately after she had composed it, which in all probability was because it was safely guarded within the convents that kept it archived, there has been some upsurge of interest in her output since the first modern performance of her work in 1857. It is said that to scholars it is possibly the most widely recognized plainchant from the Middle Ages, and the more it is performed, the more it will become recognizable to the listening public. She was a revolutionary. Her advice was sought by popes and secular leaders, and as an itinerant preacher, her message was heard by many. We have had fine female composers – from Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn in the 19th century to Ethel Smyth and Amy Beach in the 20th century – who too often have had their contributions ignored. This line of female composers threads back to Hildegard of Bingen and this shouldn't really be ignored! JGB

Tommy's Talking Points



This is me as I was at five weeks. Now I am five years. I told you last month that Master was hoping to return with his friend to their old stomping grounds around the Post Office Tower for a drink in the famous *Fitzroy Tavern* in which well known Bohemians congregated, drank copiously and organised treats for poor children and other charitable causes for much of the first half of the twentieth century. The expedition started off very well. It was a beautiful

January day and Master decided to take the route from St Pancras along the Regent's Canal towpath as far as Regent's Park. I am quite jealous. He took Max there once, but I have never been and it is a wonderful place for walking, running, cycling and meeting people and dogs. He rather underestimated the distance and so was a little late for lunch in an excellent restaurant in Charlotte Street, but three of them had a very good meal based on sharing platters. He strongly dislikes the idea of shared plates and even shared cutlery which he thinks has become far too fashionable these days, but, on this occasion, the food was served on separate serving plates and with dedicated spoons and forks which were not used by anyone for eating. He says that the food was delicious, but I'm not sure I envy him in this regard. A lot of it was vegetable matter. Two of

them then went to the *Fitzroy* and were quite disappointed. The bars were tiny. They were very gloomy, though there was a nice wood fire where they sat. There were hardly any customers. The only colour was the barman's language, who expostulated as if he might have dropped a hammer on his big toe. Instead of two pints and a bus ride to the station, they stuck with one pint and walked back to St Pancras – another pleasant walk I was denied. He did take me for a quick circumambulation of the Six Acre Wood when he got back, but, by that time, it was nearly dark and raining. Mustn't complain, however. I'm not left alone for long much and I'm sure we three shall be being carrying on with our coastal walk in the Spring.

Since then the days have been getting longer and there has hardly been any cold weather, but there has been a tremendous lot of rain. Master slips and slides in the slithery bits. One morning he went over full length in the mud and had to change all his clothes and shower when he got in. People ask him if I don't need a bath too, but I think I'm OK to let the mud drop off naturally. We did have a lot of fog and mist while it was still dark and another morning he wandered off the path into the brambles and scratched his legs. Luckily he was wearing shorts or he would have had to mend his trousers. As I told you last time, he really loves it when the night sky is clear and you can see the moon and the stars and even the planets sometimes. On such clear nights, there is often a frost and I can roll in the frozen grass - ecstasy. As I write, the catkins and pussy willow are on the trees, the snowdrops have been out for weeks, primroses are appearing and the lungwort is beginning to show. Spring is round the corner.

Master's friend and we did have a nice walk locally, which I can recommend to any of you who have not tried it. It is all flat and there was very little mud. Our friend came down by train from London and we got on at Cuxton. We alighted at Snodland and walked by Brookland Lake to Leybourne Lake. We circled Leybourne Lake and returned to Snodland Station via Neville Park. There were plenty of people and dogs, runners and cyclists. There are water fowl including swans and Canada geese and other wildlife and tremendous views of the distant North Downs. I have not been that way since I was a puppy when I had a really good time exploring all the nooks and crannies at high speed even though that time we had walked all the way from Cuxton. This time we caught the train back and the humans ate an excellent lunch in the *White Hart*. I had mine when we got back to the Rectory.

Master tells me sometimes about how he used to enjoy running and how his other dogs used to go with him, though Bobby seemed to like it more than Max. Max liked to decide his own pace and route. I might like to try it and he thinks I'd enjoy it, but, around the time he was sixty, before I was born, Master's knees decided that they weren't going to run anymore. He felt quite frustrated by this and was quite jealous of people whom he saw out running. He remained thankful, however, that he can walk and cycle. However, we were out the other morning, and he thought he could see no reason for not giving running another try and we ran along the top path in the Six Acre Wood. Well, I ran. He jogged at just above walking pace. But he was so pleased that he has decided to keep trying and things might get better. He got up to nearly a mile, but only down hill. Then we had what you might call a step change. Two days ago we set off for a walk on a cold morning. Dawn was still perhaps twenty minutes off but there was a bright moon and Master quickly decided to give running a try. Well, very soon he got too hot running and had to divest himself of the two sweaters and a tee shirt he had put on for the walk. These he had to carry, inconvenient as that is. Well we ran across the bottom of Dean Valley and Bush Valley, only walking a little bit on one specially steep hill. We ran back across the top of the valleys and down through the woods to St Michael's Church, where he discovered that he had lost his tee shirt. So back we went round the circuit in the opposite direction. We eventually found it near where he had first taken it off. So, I reckon we managed six or seven miles of running (slow jogging) uphill and down dale. I wasn't a bit tired. He was, as they say, tired but happy. The next day he thought he might like to do something similar, but it rained all night and it was raining when we went out. It was still very dark and the paths were slippery. We walked! But today started bright and beautiful. He was a little bit late getting up and considered curtailing our walk somewhat to save time. That wouldn't have been so good. Happily, he changed his mind, deposited his excess clothing on the bench in the churchyard, and we ran our usual circuit – just once this time, but at least we weren't late. It's really worth getting up and going out early in the morning. A half moon hung over Bush Valley. As we ran down the meadow behind Cuxton Church, we looked down on the river and the lying water in the fields opposite reflecting on glass-like surfaces the pinks and mauves of the rising sun. And then we went into Church and said Morning Prayer and (being Friday) the Litany. What could be better? Tommy the Rectory Spaniel.