

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
4 th May Easter 3	9.30 Family Communion * Marriage Blessing	Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Acts 2 vv 14-41 p1093 I Peter 1 vv 17-23 p1217 Luke 24 vv 13-35 p1061	
11 th May Easter 4	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 7 vv 1-24 p8 Acts 2 vv 42-47 p1094 I Peter 2 vv 19-25 p1218 John 10 vv 1-10 p1076	
18 th May Easter 5	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 8 vv 1-19 p9 Acts 7 vv 55-60 p1100 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 p1218 John 14 vv 1-14 p1082	
25 th May Easter 6	9.30 Holy Communion & Celebration of Silver Wedding	Genesis 8 v20 – 9 v17 p10 Acts 17 vv 22-31 p1113 I Peter 3 vv 13-22 p1219 John 14 vv 15-21 p1082	
29 th May Ascension Day	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062	
1 st June Easter 7	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085	
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
4 th May Easter 3	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Acts 2 vv 14-41 p1093 Luke 24 vv 13-35 p1061	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Acts 2 vv 14-41 p1093 I Peter 1 vv 17-23 p1217 Luke 24 vv 13-35 p1061	
11 th May Easter 4	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 7 vv 1-24 p8 Acts 2 vv 42-47 p1094 I Peter 2 vv 19-25 p1218 John 10 vv 1-10 p1076	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Ezra 3 vv 1-13 p475 Ephesians 2 vv 11-22 p1174	
18 th May Easter 5	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Genesis 8 vv 1-19 p9 Acts 7 vv 55-60 p1100 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 p1218 John 14 vv 1-14 p1082	
25 th May Easter 6	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 8 v20 – 9 v17 p10 Acts 17 vv 22-31 p1113 I Peter 3 vv 13-22 p1219 John 14 vv 15-21 p1082	
29 th May Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062	
1 st June Easter 7	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085	
Wednesday Holy Communion 9.30 at Cuxton		Thursday Holy Communion 9.30 at Halling	
30 th April	Acts 5 vv 17-26 John 3 vv 16-21	1 st May S Philip & S James	Ephesians 1 vv 1-10 John 14 vv 1-14
7 th May	Acts 8 vv 1-8 John 6 vv 35-40	8 th May	Acts 8 vv 26-40 John 6 vv 44-51
14 th May S Matthias	Acts 1 vv 15-26 John 15 vv 9-17	15 th May	Acts 13 vv 13-25 John 13 vv 16-20
21 st May	Acts 15 vv 1-6 John 15 vv 1-8	22 nd May	Acts 15 vv 7-21 John 15 vv 9-11
28 th May Rogation Day	Acts 17 v15 – 18 v1 John 16 vv 12-15	29 th May Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062



Seduced into Politics

When my newspaper put up its price a few months ago, they made readers an offer. We could continue to have the paper at a lower price if we paid by subscription. For this subscription, we would not only receive the printed paper, but would also have access to the online edition, and here lies temptation, because, if you read the paper online, you are invited to add your comments to the features and the articles. Now I have strong opinions about most things, basically because I care deeply about the world and the people in it. The temptation is to comment online and to keep on commenting, but there are several reasons why this temptation needs to be resisted. First, it easy to waste a lot of time online! Secondly, I ought to ask myself just how many people are likely to be interested in what I think about anything? Thirdly, online comment does attract the irrational and the fanatic. Fourthly (and most importantly) I personally need to be careful because my profession is to preach the Word of God and I must be careful not to say or do anything which might compromise my reason for living.

Nevertheless, there are times when I can't resist. Indeed, on some occasions, online comment provides us with an opportunity to stand up for Gospel Truth and it might actually be our duty to take the opportunity to speak up for what we believe in, rather than a failing.

The problem is that many of the issues on which one would like to comment are political. Many people believe that religion and politics don't mix and that the Church should keep out of politics. That must be untrue. If God is, then God is God of everything. God is either everything or He is nothing. If you really believe in God, every aspect of your life – family, employment, hobbies, voluntary service and politics, everything – is lived in the context of faith. Whatever you do on earth, you do in the light of eternity. If you are a Christian, you are a citizen of heaven and you live by heaven's law of love. *And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* (Colossians 3¹⁷).

King Alfred was wise to put the Ten Commandments at the head of his codification of English Law. God is the only ultimate source of law, as God is the ultimate source of everything that is. God is the God of Justice. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life. Justice, peace, living life as it is meant to be lived are the very stuff of government. They are what politics is about. Political ideals are inspired by God, even if many politicians do not realise it. Whence, other than from God, do a fervour for justice, peace and the well-being of all creation derive? [I really would like to know if you have an alternative answer which is rational and coherent with contemporary scientific theories. I'd be happy to debate with you in public or in private or in the columns of this magazine.]

The Bible is quite clear that all power derives from God. It follows that those who exercise power should be prayed for, respected and generally obeyed. It also follows that those who exercise power are answerable to God for the way they exercise it. So, in the Church of England, we pray, *Have mercy upon thy whole Church; and so rule the heart of thy chosen Servant Elizabeth, our Queen and Governor, that she (knowing whose minister she is) may above all things seek thy honour and glory: and that we, and all her subjects (duly considering whose authority she hath) may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey her, in thee, and for thee, according to thy blessed Word and ordinance.* Christians are also commanded in the Bible to pray for and to honour non-Christian rulers and normally to obey them. The only exception is when human rulers attempt to compel Christians to act contrary to God's perfect Law of Love. In that case, we have to disobey and to take the consequences meekly.

This is one reason why all governments are somewhat edgy about religious belief. When I was a scout, I promised to honour God and the Queen. It was tacitly assumed that England was a Christian country and that honouring God and the Queen were much the same thing. If, however, I were forced to choose between God and the Queen (suppose her ministers put through parliament some piece of legislation requiring me to act contrary to my Christian convictions), then,

as a Christian, I should have to put my loyalty to God first. We owe unconditional obedience only to God. When we sing *I Vow to Thee my Country*, I sing the first verse with patriotic emotion, but I also know that the second verse is of infinitely greater significance.

We could take the prophet Jeremiah as a model. He spent most of his life criticising his country. They had forsaken the LORD and worshipped false gods and therefore they had become dishonest and greedy in their business dealings and indifferent to the plight of other people, violent and selfish, and therefore their nation was doomed to dissolution. Jeremiah had a great deal to say about his nation's failings, but he never stopped loving them. He stuck with them, no matter what happened. He even accompanied some of them to a final exile in Egypt, even though they had only got there through disregarding all his warnings regarding their disastrous conduct. Never stop loving your country, but *there's another country, I've heard of long ago, most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know*; that country is made up of faithful men and women, *a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*. (Revelation 7⁹). It is here our ultimate loyalty is to be found standing *before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands*.

We also pray, as members of the Church of England, for all in authority, *that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue*. If this prayer doesn't make sense to you, let me ask you this. Can you really have virtue without true religion? Can you recognise wickedness and vice except for the fact that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life – the God of Justice made flesh? Surely our character is absolutely dependent on our knowledge of God.

As Christians, we can think independently. Archimedes said, *Give me a fulcrum and I shall move the world*. You can't move the world unless you can stand outside it. You can't measure the world unless you have some external standard by which to measure it. If your thoughts are entirely conditioned by the society you were brought up

in, you are in no position to judge whether that society is good or bad. You can't try to make things better unless you know what good is. You can only know what is good if you have some understanding of what good means apart from the way good is defined by the world we live in. God is transcendent and imminent. Jesus dwells in heaven and *He became flesh and dwelt among us*. The Holy Spirit is worshipped with the Father and the Son and yet He dwells in human hearts. Christians are in the world, but not of the world. Because of our knowledge of God, because we have the Bible, because we are citizens of heaven, we are in a much better position to serve the world, than if the world were all we knew. We can see what needs changing because we can see things the way they ought to be.

So Christians ought to engage in politics – in debate, in seeking election, in voting. We have to be extremely careful about the temptations of politics. The Church has very often gone astray when she has taken to herself worldly power and wealth, even if originally in the hope of doing good with them. Lord Acton was right. *Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely*. The clergy also have to take care. On the one hand, as preachers of the Word of God and perhaps even as prophets, we may be called upon to speak out against injustice, bloodshed, dishonesty, indifference to the plight of the poor. We may need to stand up for the rights of Christians to express their faith in public as an increasingly secular society seeks to exclude us from the public realm. On the other hand, as pastors and evangelists, we have to avoid giving unnecessary offence to those with political views which may be different from our own.

Here is the point. No political party, no candidate, no political system will ever be perfect. Certainly the Church does not have all the answers to our political problems. The Bible does not tell us how to fund the National Health Service, what to do about the situation in Ukraine, how to solve the problems of unemployment and what limits (if any) there should be on immigration. Good people can sincerely differ about what are the right policies to adopt, or which party's programmes we should support, while agreeing on the fundamental principles of justice, peace and fullness of life to which the Bible does testify and

which we seek to model in our Christian communities. Christians may well therefore support different political programmes and ought to do so with mutual respect, but I am sure that it is right to give our full attention to political issues and to contend for what we believe to be right. Roger.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2¹⁻⁴).

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<http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

Saints Alive! meet at St Michael's at 9.30 am on Sundays during school terms. The first Sunday of the month is a Family Communion.

All are invited to join us for lunch on the first Wednesday of every month in the church hall at 12.00.

Please contact the Rector if you wish to arrange for weddings, christenings or thanksgiving for the birth of a child. Please also contact the Rector to request a home visit, for Holy Communion at home or to arrange for Confession. Also please contact the Rector for the laying on of hands and anointing of oil for the sick and dying.

Dates For Your Diary

11th April: 7.30 Christian Aid Supper, S Philip & S James Upnor
16th April: 12.00 Lunch for Christian Aid, church hall.
21st April: 2.00 Easter Egg Hunt Rectory Grounds
26th April: 10.00 Vestry Meeting & APCM Church Hall
4th May: 9.30 Wedding Blessing at St Michael's Peter & Jane Joyce followed by open invitation reception in church hall
25th May: 9.30 Silver Wedding Celebration at St Michael's Ray & Buffy Maisey followed by open invitation reception in church hall
1st June: Big Lunch Cuxton Recreation Ground
14th June: Deanery Quiet Day Aylesford Priory
19th July: Parish Barbecue Rectory Grounds

27th July: 11.00 First World War Commemoration Service Halling
3rd August: 6.30 First World War Commemoration Service Cuxton
20th September: 7.30 Christian Aid Quiz, All Saints Frindsbury
5th October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper St Michael's and Church Hall
25th October: 7.30 Quiz for Parish Funds Church Hall
2nd November: All Souls Services Cuxton 9.30 & Halling 11.00
30th November: 6.30 Evensong @ St Michael's followed by an open invitation to rector's 60th birthday celebrations in church hall.

Food Bank

There is a food bank in Medway (<http://medway.foodbank.org.uk/>) which exists to help people who find themselves temporarily without the resources to buy food. This might be because of a delay in getting paid, administrative problems with the benefits system, an unexpected bill (maybe, for example, the roof starts leaking or the washing machine gives up the ghost) or for a whole host of reasons. If you would like to contribute, you can bring packets or tins (with long sell by dates) to any of our services. We envisage a steady trickle of a few items at a time rather than a bonanza like harvest. You might have something over or buy something specially. It is also likely that during the course of the year other reception centres for goods will be set up. I'll keep you informed.

Confirmation 2014

We are not expecting to hold a confirmation service in the parish this year, but we have at least one candidate and I shall be running a class later in the year, probably leading to a confirmation service in another church in the Autumn. If you are interested in confirmation this year, please ask me. The

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Email: dignitybathing@outlook.com

commitment is the commitment you made at your Baptism – faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, repentance of sins and renunciation of evil. If you are not already a Christian and wish to become a Christian, you will be baptised at the confirmation service. You are also welcome to attend the classes if you are “just looking” at this stage. Please contact me if you are interested. You need to be at least twelve (or ten if you know what you are doing). There is no upper age limit. I’ve known people to be confirmed in their nineties. It’s never too late. Roger.



Weekend work only wanted
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 Building & Garden maintenance
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 Night time 01634 711158 or
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Not Just Names – Centenary of the Outbreak of the Great War

We are still trying to collect information about the people commemorated on our First World War Memorials. I have received no more since what was included in the March magazine. I think it is important to realise who these people were – people with similar hopes and aspirations to ours, whose lives were cut short and whose loved ones’ lives were so altered when their country demanded of them the supreme sacrifice. It is right that their stories should not be forgotten. At the two events detailed below, we hope to stage a small exhibition of memorabilia – medals, photographs, pay books, letters home, etc.. If you have anything you would be prepared to lend us for these exhibitions, please let me know. [We may have left this a little bit too long for the Great War because there are now so few people left with the personal knowledge to share. I intend, therefore, after this centenary is over, to start straightaway on personal memories of the people commemorated on our 1939-45 memorials.]

We shall be marking the centenary at Halling on 27th July at 11.00 at our Holy Communion service, president and preacher the Bishop of Tonbridge. We shall be marking the centenary at Cuxton on 3rd August at 6.30 at Evensong, preacher the Archdeacon of Rochester. We also hope to welcome the mayor or deputy mayor at these events and they will both be followed by a reception.

St Michael’s Draw: £10 each for Laura McDonald, Iris Crewe & Elizabeth Maisey - £5 each for, Huw Silverthorn and Alan Dodge –drawn By Saints Alive!

St John’s Draw: £5 each to Mrs Head (1), Mrs G Mitchell (62), Mrs S Mitchell (63) & Mrs Cheeseman (135) – drawn by Mrs Smitherman.



Halling WI

Well here I am reporting Halling W.I.. I have been to Colditz and the Land of the Living Dead and survived. I have met some truly wonderful people and some very weird ones but it takes all sorts. This month you have two for the price of one. So here goes. My two dear friends, Betty and Margaret, helped me so that I was able to attend the March meeting. The Jubilee Hall chairs are a bit hard for a new hip to handle for an hour. I will take a cushion next

time. We did sing Jerusalem. How else can you start a W.I. meeting? It has been happening for ninety nine years, and if we didn't sing it, it could be any other old meeting. Jemma read the minutes and the correspondence. We still need a couple for the Ryarsh W.I. party. An outing has been arranged by the County for a visit to Tatton Park Flower Show in Cheshire, three nights away, quite a lot of money, but a good time is assured, even if it pours with rain,

Our speaker for the evening was SIR Jeremy Elwess. His name rings a bell and it is as near to Royalty as Halling W.I will ever get. Sir Jeremy was not a good speaker. I doubt if some members heard a word and I hadn't got the cheek to ask him to speak up. How could I? Not a sir! It was fortunate that Sir had slides. So at least we could follow what he was on about. The subject was great, something most of us didn't know much about, "The Livery Companies of the City of London". The Livery Companies have lovely coats of arms, if you'd can call them that. The Fishmongers had a large cod (no chips). The Butchers sported a big bull's head straight off of the Fray Bentos corned beef tin. One of the slides showed us some of the companies that are not around anymore, "The Longbow Cord makers" - not much call for them these days. The Soapmakers, the Woodmongers and the Pinmakers all extinct. The Merchant Tailors and Skinners companies have been around since 1327, but 144 halls were burnt in the Great Fire of London. Behind some of the gray walls in the City of London are some lovely rooms, staircases chandeliers and paintings and pretty courtyard gardens. Sir Jeremy said you can go to some of them for lunch at a cost of between £60 and £80 and this does include the drinks. The number one Livery company is the Mercers. This is to do with wool and posh fabrics. It helps support St Paul's school and recently has installed an anniversary window costing £600. Compared to some of the spending this seemed a bit cheap to me. Perhaps it should have been £6000. The members (Any one can become a member, at a cost, but I don't think it was for the likes of us) they do lots of



Cuxton W I

Ladies in Cuxton must have a fresh spring in their step as after our evening with Clarins the skin care specialists we all now know how to have a beautiful skin. The young girls who advised us were such a delight and made us all feel young again. We were treated to a "goodie bag" and Iris won the raffle which was a bag full of their lovely products. After that it was tea and then business as usual.

Pat had been to a conference at Ascot and came back having met members from all over the country. She learnt that the difficult problems

charity work mostly with education and schools. The whole talk was an eye opener, and we know a bit more about the Livery Companies of The City of London.

Ann Hayward won the competition for something to do with uniform and Sylvia Mitchell won the Flower of the Month with an early tulip.

Second instalment coming up. The night after our W.I. meeting we were hostesses to the District for a talk by Ann Carter on "The Growing of the Globe". At least we knew we would be able to hear Ann as she is just as likely to burst dramatically into a bit of the Bard. Ann.'s talk brought back lovely memories for me as Pam Amos, who was well known in the District W.I's, was a lifelong fellow of the Globe and we had a few good days watching the building of the place. Ann explained how theatre all started when a crowd of noisy men, no women, would jump up on a cart and act in all sorts of ways. Sam Wannamaker, an American, was so disgusted that there wasn't a memorial of some sort in London for William Shakespeare, he set to to raise money to get the Globe built. Sadly Sam died before it was finished. So never saw what a great success it would be. It is the only building in London with thatch on the roof, covered with sprinklers. Have seen Comedy of Errors and As you Like it in this wonderful different theatre. I would love to see Macbeth or Hamlet or even Richard the Third. As always, an evening with Ann Carter was enjoyable but the Jubilee Hall chairs were still hard and I was very relieved when it was tea time. Two very enjoyable evenings. Next night was PCC, I thought I would give that one a miss. Phyllis.

about charity giving were now a little clearer. We are able to donate to local charities and also to women's charities. There had been lots of talk concerning the WI centenary year in 2015. A suggestion for us was a hand painted vase for the President's table to be filled in turn by members who then kept the monthly flowers. Other news was that members can go to NFWI headquarters in London in October where they will be given a tour of the building. The Stansted garden tours were on June 1st. The soup lunch fund raiser had been postponed as Maureen is ill at the moment. Coral had had a bad fall resulting in several broken bones and so is quite poorly. There had been a collection in memory of Sylvia and a sale of her

craft items etc. Altogether these plus the church collection at her funeral had raised over £200 for the Wisdom Hospice.

Next month is our AGM and we do not have a speaker on this evening. We are hoping that people may have some memorabilia appertaining

to the WWI time. And then we could put out a little exhibition which will be of interest to members. Next meeting is on Thursday May 1st at the Church Hall at 7 30pm. The competition is for a Handy Tool - perhaps something from WWI days!! Sheila.

Churchyard and Cemetery Grass Cutting

Medway Council look after St John's churchyard because it is legally closed – although it remains the PCC's responsibility. St Michael's churchyard and Halling Cemetery we have to do ourselves. I think we shall be able to thank both parish councils for monetary contributions towards their respective burial areas this year. We also depend on donations from members of the public. Thanks to all those who have given in the past. Any further contributions will be gratefully received. Please make cheques payable to Cuxton and Halling PCC and hand to rector or churchwardens. It also helps when people can keep their own family graves tidy and some people even do a bit more. Please also take your rubbish home. We are currently paying someone to keep Cuxton churchyard cut, though there isn't really sufficient money in the funds. I'm not quite sure what happened at our last PCC meeting with regard to Halling Cemetery, but, as I understood it, we agreed that it must be kept tidy and the grass cut. Otherwise it just gets worse and worse and this seems disrespectful to those who are buried there and their families. It also appeared, however, that we just do not have the money to pay for it to be cut professionally. The regular congregation at Halling is fewer than 30. Many of them are pensioners. And it falls to them to maintain a substantial facility which is for the benefit of the whole village. A volunteer very kindly then offered to keep it cut through the Summer, but it is a huge job for one man. I think he will need help. We'll see how it goes, but any help would be gratefully received. [I did offer to cut the cemetery grass myself instead of attending PCC meetings, but the PCC didn't take up the offer though I'm much better at mowing than chairing meetings!] Roger.

Have You Any Spare Plants?

The storm of mid February 2014 did not leave the almshouses in Waghorn Road, Snodland, entirely untouched! Amongst the casualties, much of the old fencing round the perimeter of the large garden behind the flats broke away and fell on the flower beds. The fencing has now been replaced, but, in digging out the old, many of the shrubs and climbing plants (honeysuckle, Clematis) have been destroyed. I have permission from the chairman of the trustees to ask if anyone has seedlings or plants they have divided from stock that they have spare and would be willing to donate (not cash). I would be very grateful for gifts. Mary Morren.

Well Done Sheffield Runners



A couple of weeks ago, the runners were all lined up for the start of the Sheffield Half Marathon, when it was realised that supplies of bottled water had not been delivered. The organisers decided that they would have to cancel the event on *health and safety* grounds – which seems a bit odd. Unless Yorkshire in April is a great deal hotter and drier than Kent in April, I could have told them that it is perfectly possible to run 13 miles without drinking en route – even for a barely fit geriatric such as myself. The runners seem to have thought the same and many of them ran the course anyway, despite police roadblocks set up to enforce the bureaucrats' diktat. Amazingly, these bold pioneers discovered that South Yorkshire is not a desert and that it is, in fact, populated by friendly natives glad to share their water with those passing through. Nobody died of thirst! One up for the people, one down for the bureaucrats.

It is important to make a stand. These bureaucrats are set on global domination. They will not rest so long as there is any aspect of our lives which they do not control. Appeasement is useless. They let Hitler have the Sudetenland and he marched into Poland. The bureaucrats got away with an arbitrary tree preservation order; then they demanded a licence before we could have music at our barbecue. I say, *We shall fight them on the beaches; we shall fight them on the Council; we shall fight them on the DAC; we shall fight them in our gardens; we shall fight them in the streets; we shall fight them in our parks and recreation grounds; we shall fight them in the woods and fields; we shall fight them in our places of employment; we shall fight them in our places of recreation. We shall never surrender.* It is the only way to preserve even a vestige of freedom and personal autonomy.

Speaking of wartime metaphors, it did go through mind that if Britain were threatened with invasion today, fifth columnists would only have to start a rumour that snow was forecast for the whole country to be shut down, leaving the invaders to amble in and take the nation over at their leisure! Roger.

From the Registers

Baptism

29th March

Jack Howard Wakefield Pagan

Honor Oak

Funeral:

9th April

Brenda Edwina Jablonski

North Halling

DEANERY QUIET DAY AT AYLESFORD PRIORY

SATURDAY 14TH JUNE 2014: 10am – 4.30pm

This year the day will be led by Fr Peter Damian Masegill, a Franciscan brother. There is no charge for the day, only donations for teas/coffees. Bring your own packed lunch. We shall be using the Patrick Geary room, which caters for a maximum of 40 people, so please put your name down as soon as you can to avoid disappointment. Names to Rector, please.

This year's annual Christian Aid Walk will take place on 21st June. Potential participants, please contact the Rector.

Nature Notes March 2014

"Written in March" by William Wordsworth

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping-anon anon;
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone.

On 1st of the month, early morning skies are grey and the garden is wet from overnight rain. Eventually clouds disperse to reveal sunshine and blue skies. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. I hear the call of a coot on the water. More cloud fills the sky in the early afternoon before clear skies reappear. There is a chill in the air. The next day is blustery with billowing grey clouds driven across the sky from the west. I walk to church and hear birdsong along the way. The wind strengthens in the afternoon. The early morning skies of 3rd are a beautiful blue as I drive along the Halling bypass. Pink and white blossoms are very beautiful. The next day I walk beneath blue skies round the lake at Bluewater, where leaves on weeping willows have begun to unfurl and other trees are showing signs of Spring. Daffodils raise their heads to the sun and crocuses are comfortable among the grass stems. Birdsong fills the air. The afternoon remains bright; then the early evening sky is suffused with grey and salmon pink clouds as the sun is setting. The 5th is a beautiful day of blue skies brushed with

cloud and with golden sunshine. On 6th glorious sunshine beams down from blue skies brushed with billowing white clouds. I walk across Church Fields where buttercups and a few dandelions bloom. Blackthorn flowers are in bud. I walk the muddy paths of Mays Wood where celandines bloom, arum lily plants and dog's mercury are growing between the trees. Green moss covers fallen branches. I hear a magpie, a woodpecker and a blackbird. Later I see a small blackthorn bearing flowers. A beech sapling bears tightly folded buds and in Dean Valley tall silver birches display their mauve twigs. A bumble bee hovers over grasses. As I walk round the cultivated fields, I find pussy willow, catkins and hawthorns which have burst into leaf. Cow parsley plants are in bloom, just a few florets. Daisies, primroses and violets look beautiful in the churchyard from where I view the sparkling river. The evening skies of 7th are lit by shining stars and a crescent moon. Beautiful weather continues. In the late afternoon of 8th, I watch a magpie as it carries nest building material.

The 9th is a beautiful day with blue skies and golden sunshine which is pleasantly warm. Birds are singing. A brimstone butterfly hovers over the garden. Spring is definitely here. North east winds blow on 10th. So it is not as warm as yesterday. I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. A pair of grebe glides on the rippling lake. Later, in the garden, I hear a blackbird's song and then a great tit's call. When darkness falls, I'm aware of a chill in the air. A chilly wind blows on 11th as we walk round the lake. The daffodils on the bank are beautiful as they nod their heads in the breeze. A meadow brown butterfly hovers over the grass. A peacock butterfly appears in the garden. The 12th is another beautiful day. The flowers in the garden are bright and colourful and the air is full of birdsong. I put balls of Murphy's fur into the garden hedges for the birds' nesting material. In the late afternoon, bare branches of trees on the embankment are golden in the setting sun. A hazy moon shines in the night sky of 13th. The next day, early morning sunshine streams through the window before fog descends casting a shroud across the countryside. Eventually the skies clear as we drive to Bluewater with Murphy. Golden gorse blooms along the way. On 15th, I hear the calls and hammerings of woodpeckers. In the afternoon I walk across Church Fields and into Mays Wood where dog violets and dog's mercury bloom and where bluebell and ramson plants have emerged through the woodland floor. I come down the Warren and back along Pilgrim's Road where I see carpets of pale yellow primroses adorning a garden. In the evening birds are still singing. At Bluewater on 17th, the weeping willows are in full leaf Their delicate branches sway in the breeze. In the afternoon, a sparrow hawk kills and partially eats a wood pigeon, not a pleasant sight but this is *nature red in tooth and claw*. The sun shines brightly and with warmth the next day. A fresh westerly breeze blows in the afternoon. I listen to the melodious song of a blackbird perched in the holly tree. The 19th is a cooler day but there is some sunshine. I'm aware of apple

blossom and blackthorn flowers as I walk along the road to the church hall. Carpets of primroses adorn the churchyard and celandines bloom along the banks. A bright moon shines in the night sky. Rain has fallen during the night of 20th but the next day is bright with sunshine and blue skies across which drift billowing white and grey clouds. As I walk along the main road, I notice that elm and hawthorn leaves have unfurled. On 22nd, a fresh west wind brings chill to the air as I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. A moorhen and a coot glide on the rippling water. Daffodils and cowslips bloom and more leaves have unfurled. On 23rd, sunshine streams through the window in the early morning then grey clouds drift across from the west. Later the wind veers to the north west bringing a chill to the air. Cloud increases in the afternoon. A heavy shower falls and the rain becomes large hail stones which bounce on the patio and the grass. There is a frost overnight. The following day is beautiful but cooler. In the garden I watch a red tailed bumble bee as it seeks nectar. A large crow pecks at the coconut shell containing fats and seed. Lilac buds are fat and almost ready to burst into leaf. Cold north winds blow the next day and unsettled weather is forecast. There is a frost on the night of 26th but the sun shines the next day bringing a little warmth. It is good to see the daylight lengthening. Cold easterly winds drive clouds across the sky as I drive to Addington where I see beautiful trees bursting into leaf. Spring is my favourite season of the year. The 29th is a warm, sunny day when I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. The water ripples in the breeze and the sun feels warm on my face as it beams down from a blue sky. Later, at home, a brimstone butterfly hovers across the garden then I see a peacock butterfly settled on a grape hyacinth flower. The 30th is a warm day with hazy sunshine especially in the afternoon. A beautiful jay visits the garden. The final morning of the month is grey with some rain but it doesn't last long and it feels quite mild.

Elizabeth Summers.

Hymn Writers 14

Fred Kaan 1929 – 2009

Through our calling closely knitted, daily to your praise committed,

For a life of service fitted, let us now your love proclaim.

(Father, who in Jesus found us)

Fred Kaan has made a significant contribution to the modern section of our hymnbook. The poetry of his hymn writing speaks straight to the reader/singer in the most unassuming way and he strives to illustrate his experiences of God in the view of the contemporary world, laying the social concerns of the day whilst at the same time searching for worldwide peace and food for thought. His output is largely unchallenged in quantity and he is featured in most of the major Christian hymnbooks in current use. He attempts to make the contribution of

hymnody to the worship of the Church relevant to current life, and his commitment to the Christian church manifests itself in his writing.

The Reverend Frederik Hermanus Kaan was born in Haarlem, Netherlands on the 27th July 1929 and although he was baptized as an infant he did not attend church at all until his late teens. His teenage years were interrupted by the Nazi occupation of his country and his parents were actively involved in the Dutch Resistance. Like all young people not members of the Hitler Youth, Fred often suffered beating and bullying from those who were members and who were suspicious of his family's activities throughout the war. Three of his grandparents died from the effects of the Nazi induced famine in 1945 and this, of course, had a great influence on him. His wartime experiences turned him to pacifism. He attended church and was confirmed in 1947. He went on to study theology and psychology at the University in Utrecht and after further study at Western College, Bristol, he was ordained a Congregational Minister and went to work in Barry, South Wales. His calling to the Pilgrim Church in Plymouth gave him a receptive and encouraging congregation for his talents as a writer of hymns. He mastered the English language which, in turn, allowed him a large literary output including six collections of hymns translated into fifteen languages. During his time at Plymouth he wrote the first edition of "Pilgrim Praise" published in 1968 with further editions in 1972 and 1975. Paul Oestreicher, who was a canon at Coventry Cathedral and the director of the Cathedral's Centre for International Reconciliation, commissioned from Kaan a hymn for Remembrance Sunday and 'For the Healing of the Nations' became his most popular of hymn.

*For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.*

Kaan wrote many, many hymns sometimes setting them to popular tunes, other hymn tunes or, for the younger church members, to children's songs sometimes pushing the limits to get his thoughts through to his congregations. He once wrote a hymn "We have a King who Rides a Donkey" set to the tune of the shanty "What shall we do with a Drunken Sailor?" which could be good for Saints Alive to get their teeth into at some stage!

The wide variety of hymn writing that happened after World War II can loosely be placed into two distinct groups. There were those hymn writers that worked in a traditional style clearly wanting to add their contribution to what had gone on before but needed to be relevant to a more modern world. The second group introduced a new style of what we today call 'worship songs' designed very much to appeal to a modern audience of today sometimes with more modern instruments and sometimes with "trendy" words. Fred Kaan was of the former group, standing with Fred Pratt Green ('Long Ago, prophets knew...'), Alan Gaunt ('Lord Christ we praise your sacrifice') and Brian Wren ('There's a spirit in the air'), and was not always too kind to the second group calling their songs "the nursery rhymes of the church". His work and translations from a variety of languages address the modern challenges to faith, most notably issues of peace and justice across the world and, as such, are used across the spectrum of Christian churches in all parts of the world.

In 1954 Fred married Elisabeth Steller, a daughter of German/Dutch missionaries in Indonesia. They had three children, Martin, Peter and Alison. They separated in 1989 which triggered the end of Fred's pastoral ministry. It was a painful parting and she died in 1993. Kaan then married Anthea Cooke a doctor from Birmingham and when she retired they moved to the Lake District. Fred Kaan continued to take on work as a speaker, preacher and writer, and, having suffered Alzheimer's and cancer in his last years, died in Penrith in 2009. Roberta Rominger, General Secretary of the URC said of Fred..."(his) ecumenical drive and an ability to enable the Church to sing the faith in plain but moving speech have had a major influence on the Church in the last half of the twentieth century." To understand the essence of Fred Kaan is to read his words (from the hymn book). Deep faith but with wit and a cheeky humour, the simplicity of his inner sight come through the words to the reader. Only by reading his text will we become aware of Fred Kaan the man and what he believed."

*Now let us from this table rise, renewed in body, mind and soul;
With Christ we die and live again, his selfless love has made us whole.*

JGB

STAMPS – Thank you everyone who is supporting this on behalf of OCD UK. Please bring your used (and even unused) stamps into us. We are still collecting them – they are appreciated and for a good cause!! JGB

Ruby Wedding Anniversary

Gill and John would like to thank the congregation for the card and presents given to us for our fortieth wedding anniversary. We had a lovely day with our family. Thank you very much.

CARE

On 9th April Medway ministers were invited to a lunch at the Bridgewood Manor Hotel. Over sandwiches and nibbles we learnt about the work of CARE, a Christian campaigning organisation which owes its ultimate origin to the Festival of Light back in 1971. Those of you with internet access can find out more about it on <https://www.care.org.uk/> (It is not connected to CARE International, a totally different body with its headquarters in America.) CARE campaigns for a Christian perspective on issues such as bioethics, education, equality, end of life issues, family and marriage, gambling, human trafficking, protecting families on line and prostitution. It describes its resources as catalyst, the prayer diary and the Lyndon letter. You could also write to **Christian Action Research & Education**, 53 Romney Street, London SW1P 3RF for more information or if you would like to receive the quarterly prayer diary. As well as CARE's foundation in prayer, CARE gets involved in political campaigning, education and pastoral support for people in hard circumstances.

In addition to a description of the work CARE does, we heard an excellent talk about the biblical principles underlying Christian action in society. I think it would be really worth our congregations' while to hear what the speaker had to say, but I do not want to ask him to travel all the way up from the New Forest unless he will receive a response. So over to you. Shall I invite the speaker to preach at our services or to address a meeting or not at all? Roger.

Max's Tail Piece



Last month I said I would probably write about our proposed walk along the next section of the North Downs Way from Lenham eastwards. It was Monday 17th March when we took the train to Maidstone Barracks and walked to Maidstone East to catch the train Master's friend had boarded in London. Fortunately it was a warm sunny day, because there was nearly an hour's wait on the station platform. Then it was down to Lenham, through the village and back up to the North Downs Way where we left it last year. The NDW bifurcates, one fork going to Folkestone, the other to Canterbury. They haven't yet decided which one to follow, but I expect we'll end up doing both. It looks as if we can loop back via Dover, which would be good fun along the top of the cliffs, though Master says that it was all very much nicer before they spoilt it by digging the Channel Tunnel. Years ago, when he was a missionary in the Far East (i.e. curate at Ramsgate) he walked that path with the curate of Dover. Having had a pub lunch at Folkestone, they abandoned plans to walk back along the beach and caught the bus home. Fortunately they did the beach route between Dover and Folkestone later on another occasion, because now it is (he thinks) impossible because of Eurotunnel. (Isn't it much more pleasant and healthier to walk along the beach than to travel by train under the sea? I would think so, but then, I'm just a dog!)

Either way, they thought that Wye or Chilham would probably be too far for one day. So it was decided that we were going to Charing. It was, like most of the NDW, a lovely walk. Spring came early this year after all that rain. Fortunately the mud was mostly dried up and we had a very pleasant walk, with hardly anybody about. There are tremendous views from the downs. What I did I am not allowed to tell you. What I did was harmless and tremendous fun for me, but Master says that it is too embarrassing to put in print. So I cannot tell you.

On the subject of Master's hypocrisy, however, I will tell you about his embarrassing behaviour last time he and this particular friend went out on 17th March. They went to London. Being 17th March, lots of pubs were capitalising on its being St Patrick's Day, with bar staff in leprechaun costumes and pints of Guinness

dyed green. All good fun, except that the 17th March that year happened to be the Monday in Holy Week, which Master continually insisted to bemused revellers meant that St Patrick's Day could not that year fall on 17th March, but would actually have to be put off until the week following Easter Week. Nobody took any notice of him, but then nobody ever does – least of all me!

Back to the Pilgrims Way. We managed to miss Charing. We failed to see the sign telling us where to leave the NDW and, anyway, it was still quite early and we weren't very tired when we passed it a mile or so to our right. Master thought he recognised the woods where he got lost forty years ago between Charing and Chilham when it snowed overnight while they were sleeping in Charing Village Hall. Nice woods. We met a party of men who recommended us to the *Wheel* at Westwell for lunch. When we arrived, it was hard to find the way in, but, once in, we received a wonderful welcome. There was a puppy there and we had a wonderful time playing together. Master thought that I had regained my puppyhood. Unfortunately for the human beings, it transpired that the pub had just been refurbished and was under new management. They would not be opening the kitchens to serve food till that evening! One round downed thoughtfully, stomachs rumbling. When Master went up for the second pint, he pleaded plaintively, *Haven't you any crisps or nuts?* Apparently not, but the new landlord took pity on them and said that he would prepare them a smoked platter. That largely consisted of smoked fish, meat and cheeses, which were delicious. There was also smoked salt. This sounds intriguing, but they didn't try it. Master's friend is a doctor and smoked salt looks like it might turn out to be doubly unhealthy. Master promised that he would recommend the *Wheel* to anyone else going to Westwell, both for its food and for the friendliness of the staff (and their puppy).

They didn't feel like going on and they didn't hold out much hope for a bus. So it was determined that we would walk back to Charing by the lower route. This too was very pleasant, except that not all the mud had dried up and we had to cross a marsh – ankle deep for the humans. I didn't much care as I'm used to it. Lunch at the *Royal Oak* at Charing, sitting in their garden. They commenced with the main course, treating the smoked platter three miles back as a starter, and I am afraid that only Master ate dessert, but then he always does. So home by train. We just missed our connection at Maidstone which gave me twenty minutes to make another new friend on the platform. I can't wait for the next instalment.

I also mentioned Master's hypocrisy back in April when I told you that we were expecting four young men who are due to be ordained at Easter who would be walking from Farnham to Canterbury as a pilgrimage as part of their preparation for the ministry. You remember that, when they rang up to make the arrangements, he told them that twenty to twenty five miles a day should be no problem, even though our chunks of NDW are usually less than half that and he seldom carries anything heavier than a credit card! Well the day came that we were expecting them. After Evening Prayer at St Michael's we set off to meet them. It was a glorious day. The bluebells and other wild flowers were coming out and we walked up as far as Court Farm. But we didn't meet them and Master was afraid that we had somehow missed them and that they might be already at the Rectory waiting for us. So we went back. No sign of them. But then they rang to say that they were nearly here and we went back to meet them in the field behind the church. They couldn't have been far behind us, though they were later than we expected. Not only had they walked from Oxted, they were weighed down with incredibly heavy rucksacks. They did seem a trifle fatigued. Tea was very welcome. So were showers. Then off to the *White Hart* for an excellent dinner and Master was introduced to an incredibly complicated Mexican dice game, which he never did come to understand. He had to assure the landlady that they were not gambling!

Early to bed and up for Mattins at 7.15, followed by breakfast. Very aptly the New Testament lesson was about God putting His Law into the hearts of believers. Having the Law in your heart as opposed to carrying it on two stone tablets has been likened to the difference between having your lunch in your stomach and carrying it in your rucksack. We were envious as they set off to the Coop for provisions and then hauling their rucksacks up the steep slope opposite what used to be the paint factory back onto the Pilgrims Way. They had to make Lenham that day, a journey which had taken us three days, spread over several months!

Max the Rectory Spaniel.