

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
June 1 st Trinity 2 Church Urban Fund Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ruth 2 vv 1-20 p268 Luke 8 vv 4-15 p1037
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 11 vv 18-21 p190 Deuteronomy 11 vv 26-28 p191 Romans 1 vv 16&17 p1128 Romans 3 vv 21-31 p1131 Matthew 7 vv 21-28 p972
June 8 th Trinity 3	11.00 Holy Communion	Hosea 5 v15 – 6 v6 p903 Romans 4 vv 13-25 p1131 Matthew 9 vv 9-26 p973
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	1 Samuel 18 vv 1-16 p290 Luke 8 vv 41-56 p1038
June 15 th Trinity 4	11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 19 vv 2-8 p76 Romans 5 vv 1-8 p1132 Matthew 9 v35 – 10 v8 p974 Matthew 10 vv 9-23 p975
June 22 nd Trinity 5	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 20 vv 7-13 p779 Romans 6 vv 1-11 p1132 Matthew 10 vv 24-39 p975
June 29 th St Peter & St Paul Preacher: Rev'd Andrew Daunton-Fear	11.00 United Parish Eucharist	Zechariah 4 vv 1-14 p952 Acts 12 vv 1-11 p1106 Matthew 16 vv 13-19 p983
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
June 1 st Trinity 2 Church Urban Fund Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 11 vv 18-21 p190 Deuteronomy 11 vv 26-28 p191 Matthew 7 vv 21-28 p972
	9.30 Holy Communion	Hosea 5 v15 – 6 v6 p903 Romans 4 vv 13-25 p1131 Matthew 9 vv 9-26 p973
June 15 th Trinity 4	8.00 Holy Communion	1 Samuel 21 vv 1-15 p293 Luke 11 vv 14-28 p1043
	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Exodus 19 vv 2-8 p76 Romans 5 vv 1-8 p1132 Matthew 9 v35 – 10 v8 p974 Matthew 10 vv 9-23 p975
June 22 nd Trinity 5	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 20 vv 7-13 p779 Romans 6 vv 1-11 p1132 Matthew 10 vv 24-39 p975

Copy Date July Magazine 13th June 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday also at 2.00. **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

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Detling 2008

This year, the Diocese is organising a weekend of events on 21 and 22 June 2008. It's taking place at the Kent County Showground, Detling. During our two days together, we'll be thinking about what it means to be One People with One Purpose and One Passion. Throughout the weekend, there will be a programme of activities suitable for all ages. Saturday will finish with music, dancing, a BBQ and hog roast! The weekend's events will culminate in the Petertide Ordination service, to which all are invited.

Saturday

10.00am Opening Worship
10.30 Time "together@Detling" Pt1*
12.00 Time to Explore
5.00 Time to Mingle including BBQ,
Hog Roast, Dancing, and Music.

Sunday

10.00am Opening Worship
10.30 Time "together@Detling" Pt2*
12.00 Time to Explore**
2.00 Break
3.00 Time "together@Detling" Pt3 including Petertide
Ordination Service



“Click”

I recently saw an extraordinary and rather silly film called *Click*. The main character was a young architect with a lovely family – a beautiful wife and two dear little children. At the start of the film, we see him working every hour that God sends in order to rise

higher in the firm and to earn more money and so to make a better life for his family. The result is that he has very little time to be with them now and, when he is with them, he is too tired to enjoy their company and snappy when they demand his attention.

Then a mysterious figure (who subsequently turns out to be the Angel of Death) gives him a thing like a TV remote control, which enables him to control his life in the same way as we control the TV or DVD player. He can mute a barking dog or a nagging wife. He can rewind the bits of his life he wants to go over again. He can fast forward, skip chapters, even change the language.

It is the *fast forward* feature which turns out to be disastrous. A busy man like him soon learns to skip the boring or difficult bits of his life. At first, this is great. Soon, however, the device learns automatically to skip the tiresome hours, months and eventually years. In what seems like no time, the hero is an old man, dying of a heart attack.

As he rewinds and plays back, he realises what he has missed – his children growing up and a series of family pets. The angel explains that when he is on *fast forward*, he is physically present to other people, but he seems disengaged; his mind is elsewhere. This disengagement loses him the love of his wife and the respect of his children. He is busy at a meeting when his father dies and, the last time he sees the old man, he is rude to him because he is too busy to talk to him. He fails to notice his mother aging and hardly recognises his son’s new bride when asked to make a speech at the wedding.

He set out to succeed in order to make life better for his family, but he has been so absorbed by his work that he has just not been there for them. The humdrum and the difficult times are very much part of life and, if you try to skip them, there is not much left.

It is a silly film, but it is also a modern parable. How many people are always living for the future and so miss out on the present? There are children at school and students at university so focussed on their studies and what academic success will lead to that they miss out on the now of being young – the friendships and fun, the relationships and the activities for which they will be too old only too soon.

People put off marriage and having children till they are established in their careers. Then some of them find that they cannot find someone with whom they want to form a lasting relationship or they find that their most fertile years are past and having children is difficult or impossible.

Or they have children and, while the children are young, they are looked after by strangers while mum and dad go to work and the doting parents miss the first steps, the first words and all those magic hours of pointless play.

Young adults may be so busy building for the future that they tragically miss out on the things they might have done with their own parents before a frail old age and death take away these opportunities for ever.

Young executive parents (perhaps) take their children to exotic holiday resorts on the strength of their inflated salaries and then sit on the beach with their laptops and mobile telephones, afraid to be out of contact with the office even for a few days. They would probably have had more fun with a week in a caravan at Leysdown without a ‘phone!

It is worth asking ourselves what we really value and whether the way we use our time (the most valuable thing we have in this life) reflects what we really care about. Family and friends matter so much more than money or success, but they are so easily squeezed out by the demands of education and career. We sacrifice too many presents for an uncertain future.

And, worst of all, we squeeze out God. Busy lives, dedicated to climbing the promotion ladder, paying the mortgage on ever better houses, etc. etc., leave no time to worship or to pray. Now is never enough. We can never enjoy today because we are always striving for tomorrow. We let slip the Eternal Now in pursuit of a mythical future.

Roger.

Reader Response

The last page of April's Parish Magazine produced some interesting feedback. Peggy Foote says that some years ago she spent time surveying how much traffic uses the Bush Road / Rochester Road junction. On the strength of the data she gathered, she asked for traffic lights there, without success. She wishes this latest campaign more luck! On the other hand, a telephone correspondent was concerned that traffic lights at Bush Road would lead to serious tailbacks on the A228 at busy periods. This correspondent also had more faith than my article did in Medway Council's reasons for placing traffic lights on the railway bridge in Halling High Street.

There was justified objection to the use of the word "kids" for children in the article about those born between 1930 and 1979. The word "kid" should be used for young goats, not human children. (This article, incidentally also made it to the *Medway News*, though I was surprised to find myself described there as "controversial". I thought that most of what I write in this magazine is obviously true! Feedback welcome!)

There was comment that the joke about the social worker and the pit bull was in poor taste, though I am more concerned that social workers and other local government employees have so much power over people's lives and so little accountability.¹

Finally, I was asked what I thought about children born in the 1920's. They lived through the depression and unemployment of the 'thirties. They became adults during the Second World War. Many of them "went without" to an extent that would be inconceivable to young people today. They saw sights which would have today's emotional weaklings rushing off to be counselled. So I should say that the 'twenties generation are strong and resourceful and an example to us all.

Roger.



MEDWAY METHODIST CIRCUIT

CHRISTIAN AID SPONSORED WALK

SATURDAY JUNE 14th 2008

MEET AT 9.30am

HALLING
(Directions to be provided)

BRING A PICNIC LUNCH
To be eaten at Leybourne Lakes Country Park
(WC's available)

Distance – approx 10 miles, (but there is the option of joining us at Leybourne Country Park for 5 miles only)

Further details/information/sponsorship forms available
from: Lynda Bromley Tel: 01634 723407
Email: thebromleyfamily@hotmail.com

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HELP CHRISTIAN AID WHILST KEEPING FIT & HAVING FUN

CANTILENA

Conductor: Bjørn Borge

**The award winning
choir from Norway**

Friday 27 June 7.30pm

St Michael's Church

Rochester Road, Cuxton

*This is Cantilena's only performance
in Kent during their 2008 Tour*

Free Admission
Retiring Collection for
Church Funds

www.pnms.co.uk/cantilena, cantilena@pnms.co.uk, (020) 8519 6491

¹ Another sick local government joke.

The Council Planning Officer's Boast

"The landowner is richer than I am and the architect is more highly qualified. I am not as skilled as the bricklayer or even as strong as the hod carrier. But none of them lifts a finger without my *say so*."

June 29th 2008

Paul Watkin is to be ordained deacon in Chelmsford Cathedral this day. Rev'd Andrew Daunton-Feare (our CMS link mission partner in the Philippines) is the preacher at our 11.00 United Parish Eucharist at St John's.

Looking Ahead

This year's **Parish Barbecue** is on 5th July in the Rectory Grounds.

In August, we have a **Victorian Tea Party** at the Rectory on 9th and a **Cheese & Wine Party** on 29th at 73, Charles Drive. Also a **Coffee Morning** at 15H Foxglove Row, Vicarage Road on 20th from 10.00

There will be a **Quiz** for Christian Aid in the Church Hall, Cuxton, on 6th September.

Halling Bellringers

We rang at Hartlip at the Call Change Competition on April 19th. We came fourth. Also Jane Adams was made a member of the KCACR at the same meeting. Peter Silver.

Help Wanted

Our Annual Meeting was somewhat alarming this year. Not only are we a year or two in arrears in our **finances**, last year's income was more than £6,000 less than 2006. This was largely due to the facts that we had fewer weddings and far fewer bookings of the Church Hall. People ask me how much money we in fact need and it is quite hard to say exactly for reasons that you will understand if you look at the accounts. I should say, however, that our shortfall is between £12,000 and £20,000. This is so imprecise because technically the Parish Share is a voluntary contribution to the life of the Diocese and because we also receive grants from the Diocese. If you want to help reduce this huge deficit, as well as supporting our fund-raising activities, you can make one off or regular donations. If you are a tax-payer, you can very simply use *Gift Aid* to add something like 25p in the £1 to their value. Contact Marie Hendey to join the planned giving scheme or to find out about *Gift Aid*. Otherwise monetary contributions can be handed to the Rector, churchwardens or treasurer, or put in the collection plate at church.

Even more important than money, we need **people**. At least two of our four **churchwardens** intend to make this their last year. Our **hall manager** wants to retire. We need more people on the **Social Committee**, which makes a very valuable contribution to our **fund raising**. No-one volunteered. If you are interested, please have a word with the Rector or with those doing these jobs already.

We also need someone **about six months of the year** to take the magazines to the people who deliver them and someone else to **deliver magazines** in Rochester Road, Cuxton. If you can help, please contact Margaret Guest.

All these difficulties made me wonder whether it is viable to maintain small village churches in modern England. It appears that only a minority of English people are Christians and, of those who call themselves Christians, only a minority seem to see the need to attend Church. You can get married in a castle and miss out the embarrassing religious bits. You can have a secular funeral without any boring prayers or Bible readings. The local authority offers a naming ceremony for your children without the commitment of Baptism. There are plenty of churches within driving distance for those who like to attend regular worship. I guess that the number of people who want to go to church every Sunday in this parish and who could not drive or get a lift to somewhere else could easily hold their service in someone's front room. So many village shops, post offices, police stations and public houses have closed. Why bother to keep the churches open if there is not enough support to make them viable?

Personally, I believe that the Sunday Communion is a sacred duty to God. I believe that there ought to be a power house of prayer at the centre of every community. I believe that it is vital to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel to the whole of the human race. I believe that society would be infinitely poorer without the pastoral care and Christian insights which only the Church can offer. These things do not have to be offered by traditional parish churches and we could do all these things without either St Michael's or St John's. I do, however, believe, that the traditional English parish church is a very effective way to do these things and, so long as it is up to me, St Michael's and St John's will continue as they are now. But it is not only up to me. It also depends on whether there are enough of you as well. Roger.

Church Hall Draw (March): £5 to Joe Martin, drawn by Ray Maisey. (April): £40 to Nellie Blake, drawn by Julia Wells. St John's Draw (April): £5 each to Mrs Chidwick (30), Mrs Ballard (35), Mrs Parris (54), Mrs Catchpole (79) & Mrs Ashford (99) – drawn by Mrs Maisey.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

13th April
20th April

Caileigh Anne Shorthouse
Niamh Jessica Houlan

Hillcrest Drive
Chatham

Wedding Blessing:

26th April

Lee & Tracey Pattison

Cuxton

Wedding:

4th May

Harvey William Watts & Lorraine Barbara Day

Cuxton

Funerals:

15th April
29th April
6th May

William Arthur Woolmer (81)
Peter John Lancley (65)
Edith Ling (81)

Downsland House
Formby Terrace
James Road

New Marriage Rules

At present you are only legally allowed to marry either in the parish where you live or (where this is different) where you are on the Electoral Roll as a regular worshipper of at least six months. You may have seen that it is proposed that this will change shortly so that people will be free to marry in any parish church with which they have a meaningful connection. I think this is a good idea. However the law has not been changed yet. It might be towards the end of the year. Until the law is changed, I am sorry but we have to abide by the old rules. RIK.



The **Dicken's Country Protection Society** are promoting the cause that Chequers Street Lower Higham should be designated a Conservation Area. If you have views on this, please write to Gravesham Borough Council.

Ghandi's Seven Social Sins: Politics without Principle, Wealth Without Work, Pleasure Without Conscience, Knowledge without Character, Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity, Worship without Sacrifice .



Halling WI

We had almost a full house for our April meeting and Mary got the proceedings on the way. Trish had her birthday this month , the only one. We make up for it in May. Jerusalem sung, minutes read, then on to correspondence. It was teabag time again. It can't be a year ago since we had the last consignment, can it? Yorkshire tea supply all the W.I.s in the country with enough teabags for all W.I meetings but in our case we include church teas and parish meetings. It is excellent tea and our members have saved enough coupons from the tea boxes to plant another four trees in Ethiopia. Keep collecting them girls!

Our speaker, Mr Simon Charlesworth came to talk about Lavender, the common little herb found in most gardens, which reminds you of your gran's house, such an old fashion scent. It brought back some pleasant memories for me as I visited the nursery when it first opened with our old friend

Pam Amos. Jean Mattingly thanked Simon and his wife for a very informative talk and we were able to buy a plant or two at very reasonable prices.

Simon judged our competitions. I won the flower of the month points with what I thought wasn't a very good specimen of hyacinth, but it was an unusual colour. We had a goodly number of flowers despite the inclement weather of late. The competition, H for Horse, was won by one of our newer members, Ann Graves, with what she said was a Husband proof Hammer, too pretty for a man to use, but I thought it would be lovely for breaking up toffee.

Next month, the Resolutions, Deep Trawl Fishing and Imprisonment of Mentally Deranged Persons. Nobody can say W.I. is not versatile. Come along and join in the debates, I can't think they will be too dull, and at least we have the June party to look forward to. Phyllis.



Cuxton WI

May was our Resolutions meeting, and surprisingly there was a reasonable number of members present. Business included several dates for future activities and Cuxton are arranging an outing to Kew Gardens in September for the District. The Poetry group thanked Janice Newcombe for allowing them to use her home for the meetings. She will be very much missed as she is leaving Cuxton to live nearer her family. The Resolutions this year were for the banning of "bottom trawling", which damages the sea bed and marine life, corals, etc. and the inappropriate imprisonment of the severely mental ill. Ann Harris and Dorothy Drew went through the Resolutions respectively, and after discussion and questions, a vote was taken on each. A delegate from West Malling WI will represent us at the AGM at Liverpool in June. After tea break, we held a Tombola to raise funds, and there was a really large selection of prizes. Although everyone bought lots of tickets, there

were still a few prizes left, so some members obviously were not very lucky with their tickets! The Walking Group were supposed to go to Ashenbank Woods to see the bluebells, but as it was absolutely pouring with rain, we went into Rochester instead and walked round the Museum, had coffee in a pub, and went round the Cathedral. One of the Cathedral vergers gave us some interesting facts and showed us some "graffiti" dating back to the 1700s carved on one of the pillars. All the time we were inside the weather had cleared up! We then drove to Cobham and had a very nice lunch at the Darnley Arms. When we left the Church Hall after our meeting, there was a bird in the tree singing its heart out. Was this a Nightingale? Most other birds sleep when it gets dark. Let's hope this little bird is making a comeback.

Next meeting Thursday 5th June - Birthday Meeting
Ann Harris

Ascension Day

In the March magazine, I lamented the poor attendance at our Ash Wednesday services this year. I should like to say, however, that it was very pleasing to see an increase in numbers over last year on Ascension Day at both our parish churches. Long may this trend continue.

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism)

Parish Lunches

We thank Marie Hendey for organising our lunches in the Church Hall on the first Wednesday of the each month at 12.00. These lunches provide fun and fellowship and are also very effective in fund-raising. We are sorry that Marie is unable to continue with this. However, we are very pleased that Christine Eede has kindly taken over the task. As Christine is a professional caterer, we shall be leaving it to her supply the food and not bringing our own. Christine is not taking anything for herself, but obviously the food must be paid for and we hope to make some profit for the Church. A minimum donation of £3.00 is therefore suggested.

Nature Notes April 2008

The early morning of the 1st was grey with drizzle but by mid morning the sun was shining and it was pleasantly warm. Murphy and I walked round the water at the leisure park where there was a westerly wind rippling the water. The grassy banks were a lush green and I looked forward to seeing the wild flowers blooming there again. The next morning I heard the yaffle of a woodpecker, and the calls of a chaffinch and a greenfinch. The early morning skies of the next day were a clear blue then later, wispy cloud drifted across from the west. We went to the river where golden celandines and clumps of ground ivy bloomed and where hawthorns had burst into leaf. Gulls called from

the river which sparkled in the sunlight while a redshank and a pair of shelduck stood on the edge of one of the small pools. Rabbits scuttled across the tussocks of grass and a peacock butterfly fluttered over the nettles. Two large black crows flew across the water. I watched a brimstone butterfly hovering over the garden the next morning. North West winds were blowing. Snow fell on the 6th when we took Murphy to Hope Hill. Flurries of snow were drifting through the air and branches of trees on the higher levels were laden with snow and the woodland areas looked beautiful. The next day a jay and a large crow

came to the garden. Later when we walked the river path I saw clumps of cowslips, chickweed, speedwell, buttercups red deadnettle, daisies and two bluebells. A pair of mallard ducks bobbed up and down on the rippling river. On the morning of the 9th, a glorious sunny morning, I listened, in the garden to the songs of a great tit and a chaffinch. On the 10th, a great spotted woodpecker came to the bird table. I saw my first pair of green finches in the garden the next day.

On the 12th, I went with Cuxton Countryside Group to Cliffe Marshes. The blue sky was embellished with beautiful billowing white clouds and a fresh westerly wind blew. As we walked the paths the air was redolent with the slightly bitter perfume of alexanders which grew almost majestically along the paths' verges. Blackthorn flowers were snowy white. The water, reflecting the blue of the sky, was rippling in the wind. There were very few waterfowl but we saw white egrets on a bank and later on our route we saw a single egret fly across one of the lakes. Canada geese congregated on a small island. I found clumps of coltsfoot, the petals of which were closed while carpets of ground ivy flowers, a deep blue, were spread along the way. Daisies, dandelions, white and red deadnettle, sandwort, field forget-me-nots. Periwinkle and wallflowers had escaped into the wild. A silver birch was breaking into leaf and the hawthorns were such a beautiful fresh green. Skylarks sang and one hovered overhead. We heard the songs of chaffinches and great tits and watched a peacock butterfly hovering over grasses. As we journeyed home, rain bearing clouds were looming but we had had a perfect morning

The 15th was a beautiful day and as I walked Murphy by the river, I saw may blossom and golden celandines. I also caught sight of a fox on

some rough ground but Murphy didn't see it.

The 18th was cold and grey with a sharp easterly wind which formed white horses on the river where I watched the swirling currents near the bridge and small waves broke on the mud flats. The wind blew us along the paths where cow parsley was breaking into flower. Ox eye daisies were in flower the following day. Rain fell during the morning of the 23rd when I walked along the main road. Ash leaves had burst their buds and there were tiny leaves on the silver birch in the churchyard. Wayfaring trees bore creamy flowers and the small elms bordering the road bore fresh green leaves. Garlic mustard and cow parsley bloomed along the verges of the path leading to the church. I walked across the churchyard where I saw carpets of ground ivy. As I returned I noticed alexanders in flower along the main road's verges. We had a very short walk the next day because the heavens opened disgorging their rain upon us. There was a clap of thunder as we headed back to the car. On the 25th I walked through Six-acre Wood and into Mays Wood where I saw plenty of beautiful wild flowers-wood anemones, celandines, yellow archangel, cow parsley, cuckoo flower and bluebells, the scent of which filled the air. The leaves on the trees were that special spring green. Primroses and celandines peeped through the grass stems in the churchyard. We took Murphy to Camer Park the next day when the sunshine was glorious. On the 29th there were frequent heavy showers in the morning but it cleared in the afternoon enabling me to walk along the river path with Murphy.

On the final day of the month heavy showers of rain fell with dark clouds trundling across the sky from the west. A rainbow appeared in the sky.

Elizabeth Summers.

A Spike of Green by Barbara Baker

When I went out
The sun was hot
It shone upon my flower pot.

And there I saw
A spike of green
That no one else
Had ever seen.

On other days
The things I see
Are mostly old
Except for me.

But this green spike
So new and small
Had never yet
Been seen at all.

A gorilla in the zoo was mulling over the difference between Genesis and Darwin. At last he exclaimed, "I've got it! It's all a question of whether I'm my brother's keeper or my keeper's brother!"

BIBLE NOTES: A few weeks ago, I attended a seminar at Rochester Cathedral. The speaker was a very well known New Testament scholar and her theme was that, in the last couple of hundred years, many people had lost their way when it comes to Bible study. Treating the books of the Bible like any other books, scholars and general readers come away with a lot of information about the text, its transmission and translation and its multiplicity of possible meanings. They have acquired a certain amount of information about the history and geography of the Ancient Near and Middle East. They have learned a lot about ancient history, myths and legends. They have tried to answer a lot of questions about authorship and intended readerships. All this is useful stuff, but it is only preliminary. If you stop there, you have missed the point of the Bible. Bible reading may well seem boring and not worth it. The Bible is, in fact however, the Word of God written. It bears witness to the Word of God made flesh, Jesus. That is why we stand and face the book at the Gospel. We read the Bible in the context of worship because it is God's Word to us. We know God through the Bible and to know God is to have eternal life. We read the Bible prayerfully. We read the Bible as an act of worship. Reading the Bible properly is exciting. RIK.

What the Church Believes About the Holy Spirit

What does the Church believe about the Holy Spirit? The fifth of the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England is entitled *Of the Holy Ghost* and states, *The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.*

It may not be obvious, at first glance, what this means. It does, however, state quite clearly our faith that the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost, two versions of one name for the same person of the Trinity) is God. If He were not, it would be blasphemous to say *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost*. So the Holy Spirit does not come into existence at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit exists eternally with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is involved in Creation and Salvation, as well as in Sanctification. There is one God and He exists eternally as three persons, co-eternal and co-equal. The Holy Spirit is one person of the Godhead. He is not an impersonal force or influence and that is why it is usual to refer to the Holy Spirit as *He* rather than *It*. Some people may ask, why not refer to the Holy Spirit as *She*? It is true that the Hebrew Word, used in the Old Testament for the Spirit of God, is grammatically feminine. So it would not be wrong sometimes to think of the Holy Spirit as *She*. Normally we would, however, certainly think of the Spirit as a person. The Greek word used in the New Testament for the Holy Spirit is grammatically neuter and, occasionally, it seems right to translate it as *It*. All this just serves to demonstrate that human words are inadequate when we attempt to speak about God.

We first meet the Holy Spirit in the Bible right at the very beginning. The second verse of Genesis tells us *the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*. Psalm 33 teaches us *By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made*. Now the Word of God is Jesus. So all three persons of the Trinity, the Son and the Spirit as well as the Father, are involved in the work of Creation. The eternal God creates time and space and energy and matter and these are sustained by His continuing love for as long as it is His good pleasure that they should remain.

The Spirit is the Spirit of the Risen Christ. He is described as *another comforter* (or *paraclete*). Jesus is the original comforter (or *paraclete*). When He ascends into Heaven, He sends the Holy Spirit on the Church and on the world. The Spirit bears witness of Jesus and works with Jesus in all the work which Jesus does. The Spirit is the fulfilment of Christ's promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*. The Spirit intercedes for us in Heaven. He prays with us and for us. He prays on our behalf when we do not know how to pray or feel unable to pray. The Holy Spirit is God's Love in action, caring for us. It is through the Holy Spirit that we know God to be *Abba*, Father, and also that we acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

We C21 human beings are not sufficiently awed by God. We shy away from the concept that *the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*. Rather than recognising that it is an awesome thing to come into the presence of the living God, the God Who made Heaven and earth, the God, Who, Himself thrice holy, judges us by the standard of Jesus' self-sacrificial love, we take it for granted that we can come and go just as we please. The Bible recognises that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. We can only enter the Presence through the Blood of Jesus and with the advocacy of the Holy Spirit.

The Church of God is the Body of Christ. We Christians are commissioned to complete the work of Jesus. We are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and it is by the power of the Spirit of the Risen Christ that we are enabled to do this work. The Holy Spirit gives us the gifts which enable us to glorify God and to do His work in the world. St Paul speaks about gifts of the Holy Spirit such as wisdom, faith, healing and miracles, but he says that the greatest of them all is love. In the old Testament, more mundane abilities – the talents of craftsmen, artists and musicians – as well as gifts like prophecy, are seen as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever you do for God you can only do through the gift of the Holy Ghost and, whatever good works He has prepared for you to walk in are your privilege and are to be done with all your might and in His strength. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him.*

There is no problem in seeing the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. It is true that our fellowship with the Holy Spirit is only possible because of the Cross of Jesus. In sacrificing Himself on the Cross, Jesus effects an atonement, an at-one-ment, which makes it possible for us to be reconciled to God. It is because Jesus has died and risen that, through faith in Him, we may dwell in God and He in us. The Holy Spirit works in the Church and the world because of Jesus the incarnate Son. But God is eternal and the effects of the Cross are therefore eternal. So the Holy Spirit operated, operates and will operate in every age of history, because all ages are encompassed in eternity. We can therefore see the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, as well as the New, though we need the New to open up the mysteries of the Old.

Through our fellowship in the Holy Spirit we will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which St Paul identifies as *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness & temperance*. These are the fruits Christians may expect to bring forth on earth, but the Holy Spirit is also an earnest – a foretaste and a pledge – of the joy which shall be ours in Heaven.

St Paul says that it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. I think this means by failing to open ourselves to the riches of His grace, failing to live in accordance with God's Will for our lives, in particular, perhaps, by failing to live as members of the Body of Christ, united in love and with a common purpose. In the same chapter (Ephesians 4) he speaks of *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*.

St Paul also warns us not to quench the Holy Spirit, to put out the Whitsun fire. We would do this if we refused to receive His gifts or if we refused to use the gifts He gives us – the time, talents and money, perhaps – to the glory of God and for the good of the Church and the world. Particularly Paul may be warning us against refusing supernatural gifts, the gifts that enable us to go above and beyond the commonplace.

Terrifyingly, Jesus speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and He says that such blasphemy is the unforgivable sin. I believe this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is so to harden your heart against God that even He cannot penetrate the carapace of your rejection.

One last thing to think about. People sometimes ask why there is so much more about the Father and the Son in our creeds and in our worship than there is about the Holy Spirit. Possibly, the answer is that it is the Spirit's work to bear witness of the Father and the Son and not to bear witness of Himself. If we really think about it, however, all the clauses of the Apostle's Creed which follow *I believe in the Holy Ghost*, actually depend on the Holy Ghost if they are to mean anything at all. Think about it. *I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.*

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Halling Historical Society

June 19th: History of Gravesend Airport, Mr F Turner. Meet Jubilee Hall 7.30 pm.



Tails of My Predecessors - By Max the Rectory Spaniel.

Master says that some of you thought my article very funny about the travails he went through in getting a new kitchen. So he's allowing me some space here and my picture too! Incidentally, he still hasn't found those two tea spoons; one of a pair of mugs appears to have got broken and a galvanised steel bucket is missing! Oh the trials and tribulations of this transitory life.

Anyway I thought I'd tell you this month some tails (get it?) of my predecessors as dogs in the clergy house – as opposed to tales of clergy in the dog house, for which you would do better to see the *Daily Mail*. When Master was first ordained and went to live in the curate's house at Orpington, he very much wanted a dog, but he thought that he probably could not have one because he went out so much and the dog could not be left on his own. We dogs hate solitude.

After being burgled so many times that he lost count between twelve and twenty, however, Master's father encouraged him to get a dog to guard the house and made a promise (which he would later come to regret) to look after the dog when Master was away from home for any length of time.

The first dog was rather a sad story. Master asked in the pet shop if they knew of any dogs going cheap, but they only had budgies going cheap. So they directed him to a family who had found a puppy abandoned alone in the woods. This was Blue. As he was getting bigger, they found they could not keep him and were looking for a new home for him. Master was very happy to take him home. He was a bit of a mischievous dog and he was the one who let himself into the refrigerator one Saturday afternoon and started gnawing on the Sunday joint. It was not until after they had finished eating, that Master told his guests why the portions were somewhat smaller than usual. Unfortunately, Blue caught parvo virus and, despite being injected, died a very short time after Master had him.

After Blue came Ben, a Springer spaniel like me. On a very wet day, Master and a friend walked from Orpington to a place near Fawkham where there was a kennel for strays. Ben was so thin and hungry. Going home on the train, he tried to eat the chewing gum stuck to the carriage floor. Calling in for canine supplies at the St Mary Cray pet shop, he eyed the guinea pigs hungrily and helped himself from the biscuit barrels. Bearing in mind that he was supposed to be a guard dog, it was somewhat unfortunate that Ben pretty much refused to be in the house on his own. The very second day Master had him, he left him in an empty house while he went to church, only to find that there was no dog on his return. Ben had jumped out of an upstairs window and was now in a neighbour's shed awaiting collection. On another occasion, when Master left him, Ben put the bolt on the front door and it was Master, on his return from the pub, who had to climb in through an upstairs window. What Ben could really not bear was for my master to go off in the car and leave him at home. So, when he got a car, before going anywhere in it, he used to have to take Ben for a little ride, park round the corner, walk home with Ben and walk back for the car when Ben had forgotten that it was no longer in the garage. The upshot of all this was that Ben went nearly everywhere with Master and became a great favourite at church, in the schools and in the homes of dog-loving parishioners, as well as the local pub where, when Master wasn't watching, he used to get alcoholic drinks served him in an ashtray. Those were the days, when you could take your dog into the pub and have a smoke if you wanted one! Not everyone loved Ben, however. He once sat on the feet of a PCC member for a whole meeting. Because the man didn't say anything, Master assumed that he was a dog lover who welcomed the canine contact. It actually turned out that he was too petrified of dogs to speak or move. Maybe there are some meetings at which it would be worth putting a watchdog at the feet of everyone present!

Ben, apparently, had a wonderful life, running with Master in the parks and woods, chasing the ducks into the lake, swimming in lakes and ponds, chasing squirrels up trees, playing ball with the youth club and later, when Master moved to Ramsgate, running on the beaches and swimming in the sea – even when it was so cold that he came out with icicles in his fur. In different parishioners' homes he expected his milk or tea or biscuits. One parishioner even gave him a knitted blanket, which Master's mummy has inherited. Master tells me that he is very sad that there are now so many rules and regulations which stop dogs and people freely enjoying themselves. He says that officialdom can always give a plausible reason for every new

prohibition – health and safety, political correctness and so on *ad infinitum* – but every newly thought up regulation detracts a little bit from humanity's ability to have fun.

Many of you knew Bobby, the dog Master brought here from Ramsgate back in 1987. Bobby was not much more than a puppy when he came here and he soon made himself at home. I am told that he was so quiet that he could be taken to places and people would not even know that he was there. He could walk along the road without a lead on. He almost never left the garden on his own except twice to chase away people attempting to break into the church hall. Bobby too had his regulars and his regular haunts.

And now there is me! I do like to have my own way. So Master hardly ever trusts me off the lead and, when I am on it, I determine the pace and, to a certain extent, the direction. I cannot contain my exuberance and enthusiasm for meeting people. So Master feels the need to hold me back and rein me in. And of course there are so many places Ben and Bobby used to go to from which dogs are now prohibited. This is partly why Master never now goes on holiday. But I've run out of space to tell you about the wonderful things we do do and the fun we have with the people we meet! Maybe some other time. Max, the Rectory Spaniel.