CRAYFISHER February 2021 £1:00

The magazine for the Parish of Cray Valley

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The editorial team reserve the right to edit, and condense if necessary, items submitted for publication.

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Front Cover Picture: Horse drawn by Barbara Vance

PARISH LETTER

ear Friends, February is upon us. At the beginning of January it felt like this year would stretch forever with the new lockdown regulations and the new variants of the virus. There was little good news, we hung our hope on the vaccination



programme. Here we are in February, time marches on. Yes, we are still in lockdown, but more and more people are being vaccinated and the impact of the scheme should enable some relaxation of the rules in the weeks ahead.

February is a turning month, we start in winter and end in spring, we really notice days lengthening, new things growing in the gardens, birds gathering nest building material. By the end of the month, we can wriggle out of winter gloom and look to a fresh spring.

Right in the middle of February we celebrate St Valentine, this year on a Sunday. No one knows who the original St Valentine really was. There are a number of St Valentine's all with a slightly different story as is the way with folk tales which change over time. What is clear is that those associated with the name Valentine were change makers. They took risks to make life better for others often in the face of persecution, perhaps that is where the secrecy of sending Valentines come from.

Nowadays Valentine's Day is associated with romantic love: flowers, chocolates, bubbly and cards, but that is far from the original actions of those who share the title St Valentine, they were the ones whose secret actions of faith made life a little bit better for others.

In this month of change maybe we can put on the mantle of St Valentine, and be a secret change maker. Who knows what might just happen...

Happy Valentine's Day...... from shhhhhh it's a secret!

READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

Sun 7 th	NT Reading: Colossians 1. 15-20 GOSPEL: John 1. 1-14
Sun 14 th	NT Reading: 2 Corinthians 4. 3-6 GOSPEL: Mark 9. 2-9
Sun 21 st	NT Reading: 1 Peter 3. 18-end GOSPEL: Mark 1. 9-15
Sun 28 th	NT Reading: Romans 4. 13-end GOSPEL: Mark 8. 31-end

COLLECTS FOR FEBRUARY

- Sun 7th Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme overall all things, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 14th Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 21st Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your

Spirit: and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

Sun 28th Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

SERVICES DURING FEBRUARY

Sun 7th	Service
Sun 14 th	Service

Wed 17th Ash Wednesday Service

Sun 21st Service

Sun 28th Service

ALL OF THE ABOVE SERVICES BEGIN AT 10.00 AND WILL BE ON ZOOM ONLY. THE LINK FOR WHICH WILL BE SENT LATER

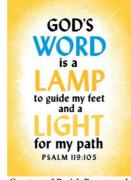
DETAILS FOR THE LENT COURSE

1st week Lent Course - Wednesday 24th February 7-8pm Zoom 2nd week Lent Course - Wednesday 3rd March 7-8pm Zoom 3rd week Lent Course - Wednesday 10th March 7-8pm Zoom 4th week Lent Course - Wednesday 17th March 7-8pm Zoom 5th week Lent Course - Wednesday 24th March 7-8pm Zoom Palm Sunday - 28th March - Jessie 10am St Mary's / Zoom

DETAILS FOR SERVICES AND EVENTS DURING HOLY WEEK WILL APPEAR IN NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

OUR NEXT APCM IS ON 7 MARCH 2021 AT 11.15 ON ZOOM. PLEASE ATTEND IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH ISSUE OF THE CRAYFISHER IS WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY. PLEASE HAVE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN BY THIS DATE – ANYTHING RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE



Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk

PARISH PRAYER GROUP

We cannot meet at Muriel's home, but we are still praying for all in need especially at this time.

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

For further details contact Tony Lathey

01689 872742

SOCIAL EVENTS

AT ST ANDREW'S AND ST MARY'S

Regretfully, our planned events for 2020 had to be postponed. We are however, hopeful that we can do some social events in 2021. WATCH THIS SPACE!







FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

A funny story to make you smile in these trying times.

The cat

A vicar and his wife were going out for the evening, and carefully set the security lights and put the cat out. But when they opened the door to go to the taxi, the cat slipped back in and disappeared upstairs. Irritated, the vicar followed it.

The wife waited with the taxi driver. Not wanting him to know that they were leaving the parsonage empty, she said: "My husband is just upstairs for a quick word with my mother."

A few minutes later, the husband arrived, breathless. "Sorry I took so long" he said, "but she put up a fight! Stupid old thing was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger and grab her by the scruff of the neck to get her out."

St James the Least of All

On why our church does not need health or safety...

The Rectory St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was entirely commendable, and I do know that sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave – which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over - and if it happens when preparing for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus *is* slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the church, but it is very slow - and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit from America to commemorate his death at Agincourt - which is probably just beyond remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling in the north aisle are solved with a row of buckets – and even you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look really rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is certainly an issue – although it looks so attractive in Spring



when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls while he was with us. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

A SUDOKU PUZZLE FOR YOU TO SOLVE

Solution will appear in next month's issue.

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HOLY DAYS IN FEBRUARY

2nd Feb: Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

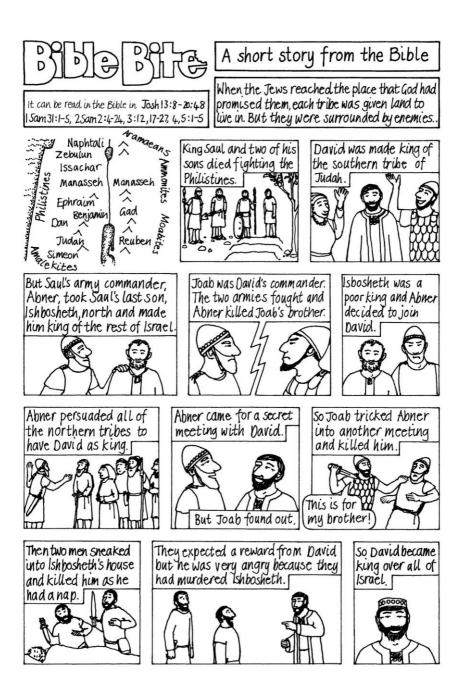
3rd Feb: Blaise, the cure for sore throats

St Blaise is the saint for you if you have a sore throat, or a pet who is ill. He was born in Sebastea, ancient Armenia, (now Sivas, in Turkey) sometime during the late 3rd century, and became a physician. But his compassion did not stop there: he went on to become bishop of Sebastea, and thus a physician of souls. Known for his dedication to prayer, Blaise taught by his own example of virtue and sanctity, as much as by his words. His ministry was accompanied by many miracles of healing, and people (and animals) came flocking to him from near and far.

When in 316 the governor of Cappadocia and Lesser Armenia began a persecution of Christians, Blaise was arrested. As he was being led to prison, a distraught mother, whose only child was choking to death on a fishbone, threw herself at his feet and begged for help. Blaise prayed, and immediately the child was cured. Regardless, the governor had him beaten and beheaded. But the miracle was not forgotten by the people who loved him, and Blaise became the patron saint of illnesses of the throat, and of wild beasts.

Blaise was one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. There are several churches named after him in England, from Cornwall to Oxfordshire.





How to handle temptation

"I can resist everything but temptation" (Oscar Wilde). During Lent we remember Jesus' experience in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), when 'He was led by the Spirit... to be tempted by the devil.' (1). Temptation is a test of obedience, whether we do things our way or God's way. After 40 days of fasting Jesus was tired, hungry and vulnerable. Like Him, the Devil will attack us at our most vulnerable moments, especially during this pandemic.

The first temptation was to turn stones into bread: Jesus' ministry was not about meeting His own needs, but being nourished by God's Word. 'We do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' (Deuteronomy 8:3). Like Jesus, we are called to make God our priority and trust Him completely.

The second temptation was to put God to the test: Jumping off the Temple pinnacle would have been a dramatic way for Jesus to gain popularity, but this is not God's way! *'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'* (Deuteronomy 6:16). We too need to learn this lesson!

The third temptation was to worship Satan: Finally, the devil took Jesus to a mountain to offer Him worldly power. In contrast, His calling as Messiah was marked by suffering and honouring God. *Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'* (Deuteronomy 6:13). This is often our experience in living for God.

Jesus stands with us in our temptations. As we claim the promises of Scripture, we will find strength in the power of the Spirit and the victory of the Cross.

For the Young and Young at Heart is courtesy of <u>www.parishpump.co.uk</u>

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POETRY CORNER

Life is mostly froth and bubble. Two things stand like stone. Kindness in another's trouble: Courage in your own. *Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833 – 1870)*

WINTER

Oh precious winter where have you gone? Those Autumn days seem to linger on, What became of your pristine snow Replaced by rain in forceful flow! The frost that once graced every bough Where has it gone, where is it now? The daffodils that once did know The winds of March and Spring's weak glow Now greet the snowdrops in their woodland knell. A worrying story they alone can tell Of concerning change that befalls our land A testimony to mans' careless hand.

Jim Cook

I had a nice picture of my son's dog this morning which prompted me to write this.

Ada-canine detective There's a mystery afoot It's around this tree, Criss-crossing the root Then over the scree. Bushes give cover, so do the weeds But I've a good nose for tracking leads The grass is ahead and so is that tree, The squirrel is flushed He's just faster than me!

Joyce Ozsvald



THE PARISH CHURCHES OF ENGLAND

The parish churches of England are more varied than the landscape, according to Sir John Betjeman (1906 – 1984) the Poet Laureate. He gave these examples:

'The tall town church, smelling of furniture polish and hot-water pipes ... The little weather-beaten hamlet church standing in a farmyard down a narrow lane, bat-droppings over the pews and one service a month ... The church of a once-prosperous village, its soaring splendour of stone and glass a relic of the 15th-century wool trade ... The suburban church with Northamptonshire-style steeple rising unexpectedly above the slate roofs of London and calling with mid-Victorian bells to the ghosts of the merchant-carriage folk for whom it was built ... The tin chapel-of-ease on the edge of the industrial estate.'

I think that's some of the most delightful descriptive prose that Betjeman ever wrote. His powers of observation were extraordinary and he had a comprehensive knowledge of Anglican Church architecture and history.

Let's see how skilfully Betjeman could write verse, too. Walking in the open air he spotted 'A Lincolnshire Church':

Greyly tremendous the thunder hung over the width of the wold But here the green marsh was alight in a huge cloud cavern of gold, And there on a gentle eminence, topping some ash trees: a tower Silver and brown in the sunlight, worn by sea-wind and shower. What sort of a church, I wonder? The path is a grassy mat, And grass is drowning the headstones sloping this way and that. 'Cathedral glass' in the windows: a roof of unsuitable slate – Restored with a vengeance, for certain, about eighteen-eighty-eight.

The Victorians were industrious at mending or making additions to the interiors and exteriors of old churches. Betjeman's expertise enabled him to identify at first glance the likely date that each piece of work had been done.

Jerry Dowlen

DADS!!!

They have a lot to live up to by their children! They have to be good at everything – drawing, driving, piggyback rides, playing in the sand on holidays, angel rides to watch the Trooping of the Colours and making toys, to mention a few!!

My dad started off as a fitter in London Transport, working the night shift. So, after his morning sleep he would collect me from my auntie's across the alley (mum worked full time too), and we'd 'work' together in the garden or in his shed! One time when dad was concreting the back path, I threw my ball in the cement mix and splattered him! I thought it hilarious! He didn't! But didn't lose his temper!

After that he made my wooden shop to keep me out of his hair! It had a counter, a shelf and I could squeeze between. Just big enough for a 4 year old before starting school! No nurseries around then! I had little jars of sweets on the shelf and small paper bags from Jack's, the local shop. I had toy scales, but no money except for Co-op tin coins! (Might have been older then). My customers were Linda and Susan, my neighbours, and my cousin, Glenda, but she ate the sweets! That wasn't allowed! They were supposed to go back in the jars!!!

I hope others will put their Dad memories in the Crayfisher.

Jacky Cook

GARDENING TIPS

I f like me you were lucky enough to get seeds as a present - check planting times some may be able to be planted indoors or under glass from now on, for example cauliflower. *Rita McKay*





Funshine Club Cray Valley Parish Toddler Group Every Wednesday during term

We meet in St Andrew's Church Lower Road Car parking in the church car park

£1.00 per adult, Children free

(Includes craft activity, tea/coffee, squash and biscuit)

Enquiries to: Sarah Rideout 0794 1020724

Please see the notice on page ?? We will be putting story time on-line if you wish to join

Please come along and join in the fun.

HALL FOR HIRE

St Mary's Church Centre is available most days and evenings throughout term time and school holidays.

If you would like to enquire about this venue, please contact the Parish Administrator on 07484 193188 or email crayparish@outlook.com

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'NOT STOPPING AT ST. JOHNS'

hat is the explanation for the words so often heard by commuters to London Bridge and Charing Cross on the Orpington line? 'Not stopping at St. Johns'.

St. Johns was always a bit of a bottleneck. A signalman's error in 1898 caused a two-train collision in fog, with three deaths. Up till the 1950s most trains stopped at St. Johns. In those days Orpington trains always bypassed Lewisham so if you wanted Lewisham you had to change at Hither Green and wait for a train from Dartford. Gradually after that new timetables included some stops at Lewisham whereupon St. Johns was sacrificed to help make up time.

In the 1950s St. Johns had four platforms. It has now retained only the two on the eastern side. Meanwhile the congestion has been relieved by the construction of new tracks from Lewisham high up on a flyover dropping down onto the fast lines.

Mornington Crescent tube station on the Northern Line has a different story. In central section between Surrey and Middlesex the line splits into a Charing Cross and a Bank / London Bridge branch. The map suggests that both branches stop at Mornington Crescent but actually you can't get on or off there using the Bank branch. You have to change at Euston or Camden Town.

The Charing Cross branch was the first to be built in 1907. It went straight down Eversholt Street (formerly Seymour Street) to Euston, so the Mornington Crescent platforms are immediately under Eversholt Street. The Bank branch opened later in 1924. It runs below Hampstead Road, just to the west of Mornington Crescent, where it then goes round in a wide sweep to eventually cross over the Charing Cross branch at Euston to head east. They could have built a second pair of Mornington Crescent platforms but they couldn't justify the cost. It means that the iconic London Underground tube map, designed by Harry Beck in 1930, isn't geographically correct.

Sorry if some of the above is too technical but I'm an engineer at heart! It's also a curious fact that the so-named Northern Line connects to the southernmost station (Morden) of the London underground network, but not to the most northerly station (Chesham)!

Roger Harris

Roger Harris is a former resident of Orpington now living in Coventry.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

was given a nature diary recently. Every day there is a topical entry to enjoy. One in January was Yellow or Sunburst Lichen. Having read the short entry I decided to look out for it on my walk. I found it! (It is very common). I also spotted some Shield Lichen and Oak Moss.



Yellow Lichen



Shield Lichen



Oak Moss

Fortunately, I have an app which tells me what I have seen – I'd never have known otherwise!

Lichens are tiny plants easily overlooked and yet grow in abundance on tree bark, walls, stonework even pavements without damaging the host. They are everywhere but we don't see them unless we decide to look. They are not only tiny, they are very slow growing, just 1-2 mm a year! The Woodland Trust website

(https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/04/what-is-lichen-seventypes-of-lichen-found-on-trees/) tells us lichens comprise two organisms which need each other to flourish. One is a fungus the other an algae. The algae needs the shelter the fungus provides. The fungus needs the carbohydrate the algae produces through photosynthesis. It's is a great partnership that splashes buildings and trees with colour from pale grey through a variety of green, orange, and yellow. The lichen provides hiding places for little insects – food for birds. It has a critical role in the biodiversity of any place. Lichens act like an air quality controller. Only the very hardy ones can survive in polluted atmospheres. The more lichen – the cleaner the air.

So small is not only beautiful. Lichen is an essential component of our environment – look out for some next time you are walking.

Rev Jane

A NOTICE FROM FUNSHINE CLUB

In the still not able to meet in person, but we are missing our little people and their grown-ups! So, we will be posting a weekly story video to try to ease these winter months in lockdown. We hope you enjoy them.

Tune in every week for a new story from one of our volunteers.

Keep safe, and we hope to be able to see you all in the near future.

From all the Funshine Toddler Team xx

