

THE

# CRAYFISHER

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The magazine for the Parish of Cray Valley

No.72

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Valley

***Front Cover Picture: View from Skibbs Lane by Malcolm Hubbard***

## **PARISH LETTER**

### **Cray Valley Parish Lent Course**

**T**his year's Lent course took place, like most things, on Zoom. A virtual meeting of community, formation, laughter and discussion centred around the themes of the spectacular Les Misérables. Over the course of Lent, we used the characters from Les Mis to provoke thought on issues such as compassion, penitence, forgiveness and forgetting - such easy words, such hard themes.

We started every session together in a big group, watching clips from the film and discussing the theme for the session. We then broken into 'rooms' to discuss the themes more closely. These rooms allowed us to explore ideas and to listen to each other's thoughts before we all got back together to share what we had discussed.

I personally enjoyed looking at the role of the Bishop and the impact of his compassion and forgiveness that seeps through the whole story. After we watched the scene where Val Jean is captured, having stolen all of the church's gold and silverware, and returned to the Bishop - who pretends he gave Val Jean all of the stolen items and reminds him he 'forgot' the precious candlesticks (which he then hands over) - Mother Jessie asked what would we do if, in the middle of a service, she gave someone all of our church's precious items? Effectively asking, do we value the tangible items of our church more than the needs of its people? It certainly got all of us thinking.

A common and re-occurring thread of the Lent course was forgiveness but with an emphasis on forgetting. We all agreed that we should forgive (despite how impossible this sometimes feels) but forgetting – surely, we don't need to forget! Actually, the Bible is full of examples that tell us that we should forgive AND then let go completely by forgetting. Forgetting is an essential part of forgiveness! As you might imagine, this led to a lot of discussion about how challenging this is, as well as a fun race to find a relevant Bible quote about forgetting that Reverend Jane came up trumps with!

What was the impact of this course? Perhaps a reminder of how important it is to take time to wrestle with challenging issues, to laugh together, to agree and disagree, to learn from and with each other. A reminder that we all struggle to forgive and we all struggle to forget – that we are all imperfect but that we do have a perfect example in Christ Jesus. A reminder that, like the characters in *Les Misérables*, we are all on journeys of transformation, facing events that change us for a while or irrevocably, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worst, but that as Christians, we never need face the journey alone.

*Bobbie*

### **READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN MAY**

Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Genesis 22.1-18 Acts 8. 26-end Gospel: John 15. 1-8
Sun 9 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 55.1-11 Acts 10. 44-end Gospel: John 15. 9-17
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>	Ezekiel 36.24-28 Acts 1. 15-17, 21-end Gospel: John 17. 6-19
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Ezekiel 37. 1-14 Acts 1. 1-21 Gospel: John 15. 26-27; John 16.4b-15
Sun 30 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 6. 1-8 Romans 8. 12-17 Gospel: John 3. 1-17

## COLLECTS FOR MAY

- Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 9<sup>th</sup> God, our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; 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 16<sup>th</sup> O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

Sun 30<sup>th</sup>

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; 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**

### **SERVICES DURING MAY**

Sunday Services will be in Church **and** on Zoom for April

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May St Andrew's at 10am

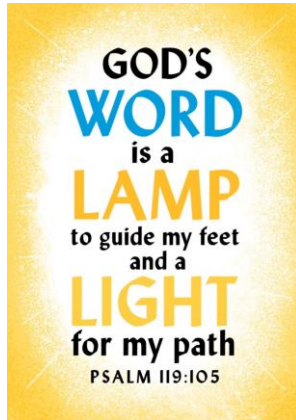
Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May St Mary's at 10am

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May St Andrew's at 10am

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May St Mary's at 10am

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May St Andrew's at 10 am

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE **JUNE ISSUE** OF  
THE CRAYFISHER IS **FRIDAY 14 MAY**. 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 IN 2021**

**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!**

## **PHYL**

**I** spoke to Susan Hobday this morning (1 April) who told me that our lovely Phyl is moving into a care home tomorrow. She has deteriorated quite a lot in recent months and she really does need and deserve 24-hour care plus the company of other people. The home is down in Snodland which is near to her Grandson. She'd lived in Tillingbourne Green for 72 years! She is such a lovely person who loved St Mary's and she played an active part in church life over many years.

Phyl also helped raise money for the hydrotherapy pool at Orpington Hospital.

*Gill Wood*

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## **FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART**

*The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...*

### **On the perils of holding a Rose Queen celebration**

The Rectory  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

On reflection, inviting your parishioners to join in our annual Rose Queen celebrations may not have been entirely wise. It was cheering to see that your people arrived on carnival floats, although it was less happy that some of them should have chosen to dress up as coronavirus bugs, full of those nasty spike proteins – that startled some of the timid residents in our community.

Once the procession started, your drivers did not seem to have grasped the fact that the vehicles were expected to tour the village slowly, for the benefit of spectators, instead of treating it as a competitive race. I noticed that numbers on your floats gradually diminished as they were flung off while careering round corners. Those who had a walk of several miles back home while dressed as pirates and ballerinas had my sympathy. Our tea ladies, however, were less sympathetic when one of your hay bales was spun off on a tight corner and went through our Women's Guild like a row of skittles.

The local police normally use the afternoon to do a little gentle point duty while drinking gallons of sweet tea; this year, the number of tickets issued for speeding, and not social distancing, should boost our constabulary's figures for the next 12 months.



I must concede that the group who decided to make a *papier mache* swan for one of your floats showed great imagination. It was such a pity that they did not know a 15-foot-high swan would be driven under a 12-foot bridge. The drama of its emergence, headless, was only exceeded by the following float which appeared to have a group of Brownies being savaged by a demented, bodiless, vulture.

I am sure that some of your people's offers to help this year's Princesses campaign for election for Rose Queen next year were well-meant. However, I don't think our parish really wants a full-blown social media campaign for next year's Rose Queen, and so we will have to decline your offer.

The crowning of the Rose Queen is always a high point to the afternoon, but could I point out that the 'gold' crown is only metal foil, and the 'diamond' sceptre is only a piece of glass? So, whoever it was in your crowd who walked off with them, please may we have them back before next year?

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### **Give Thanks appeal raises funds for vulnerable people**

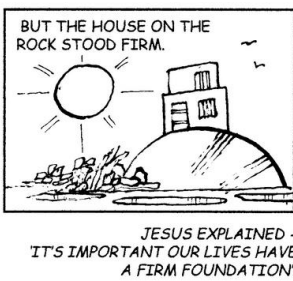
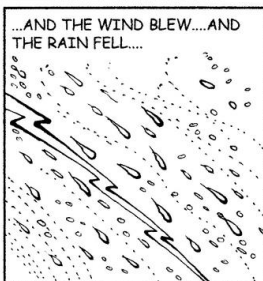
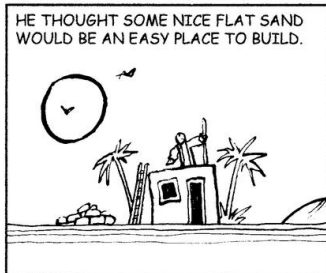
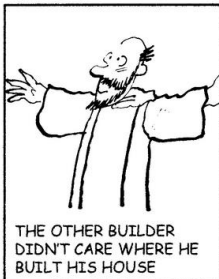
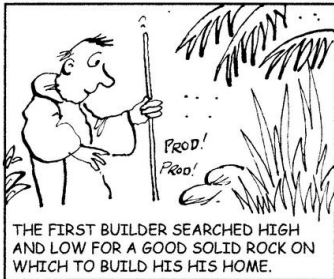
Christian Aid's latest appeal, which enables people to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccine and help others in crisis across the world, has raised £130,000.

Many people in the UK are feeling a sense of relief as loved ones receive their vaccines. Christian Aid's Give Thanks appeal encourages people to pass the blessing on, by helping others who have little protection from the pandemic.

Funds from the appeal are helping vulnerable communities around the world access soap, water, food and vital health information as Covid-19 continues to destroy lives and livelihoods. Christian Aid partners have so far directly helped over half a million people in 27 countries.

A [donation page](#) has been set up where people can give to Christian Aid's Coronavirus Appeal at [www.christianaid.org.uk/give](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/give)

## A PICTURE PARABLE



## **All in the month of MAY**

It was:

200 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1821 that Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France (1804 – 1815) died of stomach cancer. He was in exile on the island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic, aged 51.

175 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1846 that Peter Carl Fabergé was born. This Russian goldsmith and jeweller was best known for his fabulously decorated Fabergé eggs.

100 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1921 that Ireland was divided into Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland (now known as the Republic of Ireland).

Also 100 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> May, that the British Legion was founded.

60 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1961 that betting away from racecourses was legalised in the UK and the first betting shops opened.

Also 60 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1961 that Amnesty International was founded in London.

20 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001 that Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs returned to the UK from Brazil where he had lived as a fugitive for 36 years. He was immediately arrested and sent to prison to complete his sentence. Released on compassionate grounds in 2009, he died in 2013.

10 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 that Osama bin Laden, Saudi Arabian-born terrorist, died. Founder of al-Qaeda, he was thought to have masterminded the 9/11 attacks on the USA. Shot dead by US forces in Pakistan.

*For the Young and Young at Heart is courtesy of [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk)*

And it is on 15<sup>th</sup> May this year that our very own Bobbie is to be licensed by Bishop James as the first Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) in Cray Valley Parish. Please pray for Bobbie as she prepares for this new phase of ministry. We are blessed to have her.

***Rev Jane***

## **Jar of JaM + An Acrostic of HOLY SPIRIT by Zina**

**H**e sent this down to look over us.  
**O**ut of nowhere it came down.  
**L**ike strong wind it was said to be  
**Y**es it was the Holy Spirit!  
**S**pread the word to many people  
**P**eople all are the world  
**I**t made the disciples speak in tongues  
**R**ighteousness and peace sent to all.  
**I**t gives us encouragement when we are low  
**T**he Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Zina wrote this acrostic a few years ago, before we were part of the Crayfisher. She was about 13 at the time!!*

### **My Opinions reflecting Easter by Mirabelle of JaM+, written 17.3.2019.**

I think Easter is a very special event, remarking how Jesus was crucified on the cross and resurrected from the dead. It is important because it concerns how Jesus went through the betrayal, pain and hatred to die for the sins we committed and show us the way to Eternal Life. If Jesus had never sacrificed himself for our sins, there would be consequences in the world because he didn't follow His promises to God. He died so that the Holy Spirit would come.

*Submitted by Jackie Cook*

### **DADS**

**F**rom 1950 until 1953 I lived in a prefab with my Mum, Dad and Sister, Joyce. Dad was never very keen on gardening, but he did have a vegetable patch.

One Saturday morning Mum asked Dad to dig up some potatoes for dinner. Grumbling he set off down to the patch, he slammed the fork down missing the potatoes, but the fork went into his boot and foot, he hobbled back to the kitchen still holding the fork. Looking out of the

kitchen window all Mum, Joyce and I could do was laugh, but poor Dad was obviously in a lot of pain. Joyce and I made ourselves scarce – as laughing at our Dad didn't go down very well.

Mum sorted his foot out, as in our village there wasn't any A & E, luckily his heavy leather work boots took much of the damage. (I expect Mum dug the potatoes up later).

*Rosemary Lathey*

### REMEMBERING MY DAD

**M**y Dad was Michael William Dowlen (1920 – 2004). He told me that his very first memory of childhood was being taken to the window of his parents' house in Streatham to see soldiers



driving the buses during the General Strike of 1926. In the attached photo dated 1948 my Dad is running away from me! Oh dear - was I that awful? Another amusing thing to note is that in every photo of my Dad in the 1940s and 1950s he is always wearing a jacket and tie or blazer and tie (his stripy school blazer more often than not) – even on what I presume must have been hot summer days. Leisurewear hadn't been invented then!

My Dad worked in the City and I can vividly picture him in his bowler hat, dark suit, white shirt with stiff detachable collar, soberly coloured tie, and rolled-up umbrella. When we moved from north London in 1956 my parents chose to live in Orpington because of the excellent commuter rail service to London. At weekends he would allocate generous time to play cricket with me in the park or the back garden; or on wet days or during winter a cricket board game 'Stumpz'. My favourite cricketer was Peter Parfitt of Middlesex and England. In our games I always was Middlesex or England and Dad was fobbed off with being one of the other counties or countries. Looking back on it I realise that my Dad was generous because somehow or another in our games Peter Parfitt always scored the most runs and my team always would win!

*Jerry Dowlen*

## EASTER SUNDAY

**E**aster Sunday saw us back in church for the first time in many months. It was such a joyous occasion. After the initial problems with getting Zoom to work (and thanks to Danielle's hard work we got it going again) the service went well. The church looked lovely with the Easter flowers too. Janet made some pretty yellow and white arrangements for the pew ends and Rita did some arrangements for the windowsills. Rev. Jessie looked resplendent in gold which is the liturgical colour for Easter. The congregation are still not able to sing but we had four people who were able to sing. Rita, Lorraine, Jill and Malcolm did a splendid job. Peter lit the paschal candle and Trevor read the Gospel. Rev Jessie led the service and Rev Jane gave a brilliant sermon. Here are some photos of the occasion.

*Brenda Smith*



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we are able.**

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Andrew's Church <<***

## **HRH PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

**T**oday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, the country is in mourning for the loss of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh. He was a very well loved and popular figure throughout the country and the Commonwealth. Anyone who had the privilege of meeting him was impressed with his friendly manner and how well he put one at ease in his company.

I had the good fortune of meeting him some years ago and on that occasion, he displayed how friendly and comfortable he was with people and how he didn't always obey the usual procedures. I had been invited to one of the Royal Garden parties and of course I was delighted to attend with my husband. It was a beautiful sunny day, and we were excited to be going into Buckingham Palace, crossing the courtyard and under the entrance arch. With many others we gathered in the Gardens, and had a lovely tea and admired the flowers, listened to the band and strolled about. Lovely.

Then at a set time, the Royal party came out and mingled with the guests. We gathered in a circle to see them and several people had been singled out to be introduced to one of the Party. They strolled round, guided by Equerries who stopped at the appointed places and people. One of the special guests was near us and it was Prince Phillip who stopped to chat. I noticed that he kept glancing over towards us and suddenly, taking his escorting Equerry by surprise, he turned and walked over and stopped in front of us. He said to my husband, 'I noticed your tie, what tie is that?' My husband said, 'RAF Air Gunners Association'. Whereupon he asked him a lot of questions, 'Where did you serve?', 'When was that?' 'Did you see any action?' etc. while the Equerry stood by trying to usher him along politely. But he wasn't to be rushed. They chatted on. He was very interested in my husband's experiences in the RAF and finally said with a cheeky smile, 'Better do as I am told!' and nodded to me as he allowed the Equerry to guide him to the next appointed guest. My husband was delighted and so impressed at the Prince disobeying the protocol just to talk to him. Oh, he did say 'hello' to me.

I think this sums up just what an independent and friendly person he was.

Rest in Peace, your Highness.

*Evelyn Magee*



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## **ZOOMING AWAY**

**F**or the last few months, we have enjoyed seeing our friends and family on Zoom. We have taken part in Farnborough's Mothers' Union talks and services along with Jackie and Grace.

We joined in our parish services and coffee mornings and our daughters take part in the service too from Lincolnshire and Hertfordshire because they still consider St Mary's *their* church as they were baptized and confirmed there.

Each weekday evening, we have a keep fit Zoom just us, our daughter, Jackie Cook and Sallyanne, it's great fun, various exercises and dances.

Each Sunday evening, we have an hour of family Lathey Zoom fun we have quizzes, bingo, karaoke and lots of chatting and catching up.

It is so nice to be able to see each other if not in person.

Thank you to all the technical people who have helped us to achieve this. It is very much appreciated.

***Rosemary Lathey***

## **GARDENING TIPS**

**S**pare 20 mins a day to walk round garden. Pinch the dying flowers off daffodils and allow 6/8 weeks to die back naturally, enabling a better flower next year.

Feed and mulch roses. This helps to guard against blackspot and other pests.

Early May is the perfect time to plant young tomato plants into their final position, but if cold nights are forecast hold back. Water in and leave to dry out slightly, this encourages the roots to search for moisture.

Enjoy your gardening.

***Rita McKay***

## **EASYFUNDRAISING**

**W**e have raised £25.31p this last quarter, so please would people keep up the good work. If anyone wants information about this then they can contact me via The Crayfisher editor. Anyone can help even people abroad who use Amazon or M&S or indeed any of the thousands of retailers on Easyfundraising, my sister does from New Zealand.

Thanks

*Liz Bertoli*

## **LOCKDOWN PROJECTS**

The new look bread for this last Lockdown!

*Jackie Cook*



## **ST MARY'S CLEAN-UP**

I don't know Ryan, I spoke to him for the first time on a Saturday in April. He has done an amazing job in St. Mary's church yard. The memorial garden flower beds are tidy with wooden borders, lots of trees and shrubs cut down or cut back making the grounds much more open and in full view, done especially to discourage inappropriate use. Our thanks goes to Ryan for his hard work at St. Mary's.

*Joyce Ozsvald*



The weekend of 27th-28th March 2021. Trevor Taylor churchwarden at St Andrew's church and I along with Rev Jane, Sallyanne Decker, June Cade and others went to clear trees round the back and front of St Mary's churchyard. Trevor had hired a chipper for the weekend.

We surprised a young man called Ryan Speller who has been doing the memorial garden at St Mary's. He comes up from Maidstone to do this. His mother used to attend The Temple here in St Mary Cray. He is on furlough from his job as a chef. We cleared a lot of the branches the first day. Trevor, Rev Jane, Cheryl and I went back on Sunday afternoon as Trevor had the chipper for the weekend.

It was a rewarding if not back breaking weekend. Ryan came up again on the 30th March 2021 and Trevor and I again went down to help him. I know Ryan appreciated the help that all who have contributed have done.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Ryan for all his hard work.

*Lorraine McCowen*  
*Churchwarden*



## **POETRY CORNER**

### **Footscray Meadows**

What beauty in a meadow!  
Walking in peaceful mode.  
Daisies in clusters;  
buttercups in pervading groups;  
dandelions springing up  
in every available space.

What noise in a meadow!  
I crave tranquillity.  
Meadow flowers appease me;  
people aggravate;  
machines blaring out;  
dogs barking, children  
shrieking.

What peace in a meadow!  
as humans disappear,  
to clusters, groups, springing up  
in every available space;  
Daisies, buttercups, dandelions  
Nodding in harmony.



**Geraldine Ann Ford**  
**May 2000**

*Photo of Footscray Meadow by Rev Cathy Knight Scott*

## **London's Covent Garden**

A significant amount of time has elapsed since lockdowns began.  
London's Covent Garden is mourning its usual sights and sounds.  
Theatres are silent in the extreme. Closed to the public,  
looking neglected, forlorn, and bare.  
Performers and the workforce obliged to stay away,  
for fear of spreading microbes.  
In their homes they dream of better days to come,  
dreams that can so easily become nightmares.  
Spirits of actors long departed this world, still tread the boards,  
famous and unknown, eager for the company of *live* thespians,  
and the thousands of men and women who work behind the scenes.  
An eerie silence falls on an empty stage;  
tears, laughter, soliloquies, a myriad of characters permeate the walls.  
The landscape of our vintage theatreland may change forever;  
we hope and pray there is no sad lament.

Covent Garden's piazza is crying out for street performers,  
captivating audiences once more; the famous cobbles naked -  
a cultural hub since the time of Samuel Pepys.  
Office workers, who would normally be snatching a few minutes respite  
from an airless office block, are working at home in the suburbs,  
many not wishing to revisit the beating heart of London.  
Pub landlords craving the return of the masses,  
nostalgic for the patronage of locals, visitors, and harried commuters.  
Classical musicians busking in London's famous courtyard -  
a distant memory. Coffee shops, cafes, bistros, and restaurants suffer,  
from the lack of regular activity.  
Chefs yearn to serve their creations to theatregoers and tourists.  
We will certainly rejoice with relief and thanks,  
when lockdowns and social distancing are a thing of the past,  
and I will visit my favourite part of London – Convent Garden.

*Geraldine Ann Ford*  
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