

The

CRAYFISHER

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40p



The parish magazine of the Cray Valley Benefice

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CONTACTS

Vicar: Rev. Paul Prentice (01689 823775)

Curate: Rev. Jane Winter (01689 872282)

Reader: Elaine Chapple (01689 874325)

Pastoral Assistants: Jill Renwick (01689 825582)
Muriel Unsworth (01689 835275)

Churchwardens: Colin Chapple (01689 874325)
Malcolm Hubbard (01689 601827)

*Child Protection Officer and
Parish Administrator: Suzanne Diamond* (01689 823775)
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday Mornings

Magazine Editor: Brenda Smith (01689 829556)
Email: brendaknicknock@gmail.com

St Mary's, High Street St Mary Cray: BR5 4NJ
www.stmaryatcray.com

St Andrew's, Lower Road St Mary Cray: BR5 4AL
www.standrewatcray.com

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PARISH LETTER

Merry Christmas! You may well be asking why on earth I am wishing you a merry Christmas in January. Quite simply, we are still within the season of Christmas and will be until we reach Candlemas in February. By now, you may have had enough of Christmas cheer and tinsel, but that is precisely my point, we are used to starting Christmas far too early.

The season of Advent that precedes Christmas is usually spent running around looking for presents and being generally stressed out. We have succumbed in many ways to the creeping tide of consumerism that begins Christmas as early as late September in certain stores. Because of this, Advent gets swept away and that season of watching and waiting is erased from our consciousness as we are urged to partake in the annual ritual of emptying our current accounts.

In all of this, the cry of the Christ Child longs to be heard. In the busy shopping centre, on the hospital ward, in the Foodbank, on the street where the homeless person sleeps. The danger of a very secular Christmas is that it negates the true message of Christ's birth, that hope is coming into a dark and troubled world.

The season of Epiphany which we are now in, retells the story of the visit to the Christ Child of the Magi, those wise men from the east (although we do not know how many they were, only that they were bearing three gifts!) The wise men came to visit the baby Jesus, but in one sense it was Jesus who drew the wise men to him, as he did with the shepherds, and indeed the angels, and he continues to draw people to himself today.

We also would be *wise* to contemplate this season with its many gifts, gifts of evocative liturgy, meaningful readings and stirring music. Too often we fail to find the space needed to contemplate these gifts. If you feel Christmas has passed you by, then do not fret, as Christmas is still very much alive at the moment in this January month, and the true message of Christmas lasts for much longer than that.

Happy Christmas!

*Yours in Christ,
Paul*

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**A NEW YEAR BLESSING**

Well it's over, all the hustle and bustle, the presents and tinsel, the food and...more food, fun, family and of course the sales!

I hope Christmas was very special for you however you celebrated it and the birth of the Christ Child touched you in a new way.



Now the clearing up begins with all those good intentions of recycling everything possible, writing properly to those who we drop a card to year by year and of course finishing up all that food.

New Year is a time of transitions when we cross from one time to another: 2015-2016. In one sense it is a marking time with all the hopes and dreams of New Year expectations. In another sense it is just another day.

The first festival we celebrate in New Year is Epiphany, the coming of the wise men. They didn't have all the hustle and bustle of Christmas that we now enjoy, but they did have gifts. Tradition says they visited the holy family up to two years following Jesus birth because it took all that time to travel following the star. I guess they crossed some time zones as well.

Unlike King Herod who didn't visit the baby and didn't have a gift, the wise men did both, and in doing both they brought blessing. The gifts were given, purposefully and more importantly they spent time with the holy family worshipping the new born (or toddler!) king.

I have recently discovered a lovely tradition associated with the wise men which I share with you at this time of hope and expectation. It is a house blessing. It is very simple but very meaningful. Chalk or some other material that won't permanently mark your property is used to write this inscription on the house. The front door would be ideal, but you could do it for every room:

$$20 + C + M + B + 16$$

The numbers signify the new year. The letters are a play on the names associated with the three wise men: Casper, Melchior, and Balthasar. Here is the tricky bit: the blessing, which is just three words in Latin:

Christus mansionem benedicat. It simply means Christ bless this house.

The beginning of this new year will be full of expectation for what we know; and also of the unexpected which we may be unsure about. Taking time to bless our homes reminds us of God's constant presence with us and his assurance of safety, as well as the eternal home prepared for us in heaven.

Have a very blessed New Year.

Rev. Jane Winter

REGULAR WEEKLY SERVICES AND EVENTS AT ST ANDREW'S

- Sundays** 09:00 Said Eucharist in the Lady Chapel.
 10:30 Sung Parish Eucharist.
 (On the first Sunday of the month, the 10:30 service is an All Age Family Eucharist.)
- Mondays** 17:00 Rainbows in the hall, excluding school and bank holidays.
- Tuesdays** 09:00 Said Eucharist in the Lady Chapel.
- Wednesdays** 09:30 Funshine Club in the church excluding school holidays.
- Thursdays** 19:00 Said Eucharist in the Lady Chapel with homily.
- Fridays** 12:00 Said Eucharist with Healing and Wholeness, followed by the opportunity for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.
- Saturdays** There are different regular Saturday events throughout the month. See the following 'What to look out for this month'.

NEXT DEADLINE FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY WILL BE 18 JANUARY - PLEASE GET YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN BY THEN OR EARLIER

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR THIS MONTH

- Sat 2nd 10:00 **SAID REQUIEM EUCHARIST**
- Mon 4th 12:00 **SINGLETONS LUNCH at Petts Wood.** See Jill Renwick for full details.
- Wed 6th 19:30 **ECUMENICAL EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE** at Holy Innocents, Strickland Way, Orpington.
- Sat 9th 10:00 **ST MARY'S COFFEE MORNING** - Do come and join us at the church centre. You will be very welcome.
 -
 12:00
- Wed 13th 19:45 **ST ANDREW'S DISCUSSION GROUP** - See Malcolm Deering for full details.
- Wed 13th 15:00 **AFTERNOON TEA** at Apsley Court - Please join us.
- Mon 18th TBA **GOING PLACES AGM** in the narthex (porch area). It is important to attend if you are paying subs.
- Sat 30th 10:00 **ST ANDREW'S COFFEE MORNING** - Please come along for a cup of coffee (or tea) and a chat.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO SERVICES ON NEW YEAR'S EVE OR NEW YEAR'S DAY

READINGS FOR JANUARY

Sunday 3 rd	THE EPIPHANY FAMILY EUCHARIST (The celebration of the Epiphany is transferred from Wednesday 6 th .) Ephesians 3: 1-12; Matthew 2: 1-12
Sunday 10 th	THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST The First Sunday of Epiphany Isaiah 43: 1-7, Acts 8: 14-17 and Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22.
Sunday 17 th	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY Isaiah 62: 1-5, 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 and John 2: 1-11.
Thursd 24 th	THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY Homelessness Sunday Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 and Luke 4: 14-21.
Friday 31 st	THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (The celebration of the Presentation is transferred from Tuesday February 2 nd .) Malachi 3: 1-5, Hebrews 2: 14-18 and Luke 5: 22-40.

REGULAR WEEKLY SERVICES AND EVENTS AT ST MARY'S

Sundays	10:00	Holy Communion
Mondays	09:00	Morning Prayer
	17:30	Evening Prayer
Wednesdays	12:00	Midweek Eucharist

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM ST MARY'S

MOTHERS UNION

First Sunday of the month - 11:30 in the church centre (hall).

First Tuesday of the month - 13:30-16:00 at various venues. Please listen to notices and see the notice board.

OPEN DOOR LUNCH

Second Tuesday of the month at 12:00 (Cost £5.00)

Rosemary Lathey (01689 872742)

SOCIAL CLUB

Second Tuesday of the month 13:30 to 16:00

Tony Lathey (01689 872742)

COFFEE MORNING

Second Saturday of the month 10:00 - 12:00 (Cost £2:00)

A JAR OF JaM

Some ideas of JaM children to be 'Followers of Jesus'.
Perhaps good for New Year resolutions?
Listen to the word of God and have faith.

Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Look after the world and each other.

Think of good things about other people.

Be truthful and loyal.

Forgive others and be helpful.

Pray every day, quietly or in your normal voice.

(Written by Temi, Cormeagar, Sofii and Stacy)

The children answered some questions about the world. Can you?

1. What are the colours of the rainbow and the order?
2. How far is the sun from the earth?
3. What two colours make purple?
4. Why is it dangerous to look straight into the sun?
5. How fast can leopards run?
6. What are the seasons called?
7. Which month comes straight after July?
8. What is the capital of France?
9. When was the battle of Hastings?



Jackie Cook

ST MARY'S CHRISTMAS FAIR

It was wonderful that everyone helped with the fair, either by being there on the day or donating gifts of money or goods if they couldn't come. Those helping before the day were very much appreciated!

Luckily, the weather improved and families and friends arrived to absorb the Christmas spirit (although the mulled wine was non-alcoholic!)

Our bell ringers opened the bell tower and many showed interest, whilst others went straight for the gifts! Many tried their luck on the tombola, raffle and treasure hunts.

Father Christmas and his elf flew in to talk to the children and if they had been good there was a present to take home. I think they were all good children!

The gifts went like hot cakes as did the cakes themselves and the refreshments. There were a lot of craft items for children to make and parents to buy. Children enjoyed hooking Christmas ducks which were skating on the ice! Painting a mug was a favourite too.

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It was a great community day. The social committee wish to thank everyone who helped to make it so enjoyable. We made a profit of nearly £700 and with the concert money as well, over £1000 has been donated to the Restoration Fund.

Bridget, Joyce, Jackie (Social Committee)

ST MARY'S TOY SERVICE

On Sunday 6 December 2015, Rev. Chris Kitchener and Elaine Chapple took our Toy Service. It was very well supported, and many toys and vouchers for different aged children were donated. Also, St Mary's church at Green Street Green has donated their vouchers and toys to our St Paul's Church of England School. The gifts will be shared among the neediest families of our community. The remainder will be donated to the Orpington Food Bank.

The Head teacher, Jackie Trachina and the Family Worker, Ann Brindle wish to thank everyone who helped these children have a much happier Christmas.

Jackie Cook

DECEMBER 2015 HOUSE GROUP

Our final house group of last year followed the now established pattern. We start with tea and cake, follow this with a lively discussion - no question too large or small to be addressed - and we finish with a time of worship. This time we looked at the relevance of the Creed in the 21st century. This year we are planning to meet in March, June, September and December. The dates are yet to be agreed.

If you have a topic (anything goes) you would like to discuss or a Bible passage that has you scratching your head and you would like to find out more about it, let me, Rev. Paul Prentice or Rev. Jane Winter know.

Elaine Chapple

elaine.chapple@gmail.com

FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

Here is the solution to last month's crossword. Did you do well?

ACROSS: 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

DOWN: 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.

Now try your skill at solving this Sudoku - the solution will appear next month

			6				7	
		7			3	5		
3					7		4	
					2	6		
8	5						1	7
		9	3					
	9		5					3
		4	1			8		
	2				9			

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1ST JANUARY THE NAMING OF JESUS

It is Matthew and Luke who tell the story of how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus - a common name meaning 'saviour'. The Church recalls the naming of Jesus on 1 January - eight days after 25 December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). For in Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

For early Christians, the name of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated his ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord', and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHERE THE NAME 'JESUS' COMES FROM?

The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, 'Yehosua', or Joshua. Or there is the Hebrew-Aramaic form, 'Yesua'. In Greek, it became "Ἰησοῦς" (Iēsoûs), and in Latin it became 'Iesus'.

The meaning of the name is 'Yahweh delivers' or 'Yahweh rescues', or 'Yahweh is salvation'. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-33 told Mary to name her baby Jesus: "because he will save his people from their sins".



THREE KINGS

Does Christmas seem long gone? Well, Christmas doesn't really end until Twelfth Night, 6th January. In the past all the 12 days of Christmas used to be celebrated with feasting and parties. January 6th is also the Feast of the Epiphany, which is the day on which the wise men, led by the star, arrived at Bethlehem. At Christmas we sang about Three Kings but we don't really know who they were, kings or wise men or where they came from – you can check the details in St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 2.



We do know that they brought very expensive symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for Jesus, not the usual things that you would give to a small baby. Traditionally the gifts have a special meaning: gold is for a king; frankincense (sweet smelling incense) is for God and myrrh (a spice used to prepare bodies for burial) for mortal man.

GOLDEN ANSWERS

All the answers to this quiz begin with the letters GOLD (well, can you find any words that began with frankincense or myrrh?). Answers at the bottom of the page.

Can you say which GOLD is ...

1. a small bird?
2. kept in an aquarium?
3. made from sugar and used in cooking?
4. a source of wealth? 
5. a tall yellow flower?
6. ate the three bears' porridge?
7. won by a winner at the Olympics?
8. a 50th wedding anniversary?

What do you call a camel that's got three humps?

Humphrey.

Who rides a camel and carries a lamp?

Florence of Arabia.



Answers: 1.gold finch 2.goldfish
3.golden syrup 4.goldmine 5.golden rod
6.Goldilocks 7.gold medal 8.golden wedding

2016 - 'YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN THIS WAY BEFORE'

A poll conducted last year of the top New Year resolutions included: getting healthier (63%); drinking less alcohol (57%); losing weight (34%); getting out of debt (26%) and stopping smoking (22%). However, what are our resolutions for 2016?

Do we want to spend more time reading the Bible and praying? How can we do this? Do we want to be a better spouse? How might we express our love to our spouse? Do we want to be a better parent? How can we demonstrate our commitment to the children? Do we want to make more impact at work? How can we demonstrate an attractive faith to colleagues?

When the people of God stood on the banks of the Jordan ready to cross to the Promised Land they were assured, *'you have never been this way before'* (Joshua 3:4). At the beginning of a New Year, we don't know the future and how we will keep our resolutions. What can we learn from their example?

Keep your focus on God: The people were told to follow the Ark, symbolising God's presence, as they crossed the river. Let's keep our focus on God and His Word throughout this year and keep in step with where He is leading.

Consecrate yourselves: Joshua said, *'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.'* (3:5). God has exciting opportunities ahead for us in this coming year! Let us dedicate our lives afresh to Him, as we let go of known sin and keep our eyes open on seeing God at work in all of our lives.

Will 2016 be a good year for us? *'In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.'* (Abraham Lincoln)

Courtesy of www.Parishpump.co.uk

ST MARY'S CHURCH ALIVE WITH CHILDREN

St Paul's Church of England Primary School held their Christmas services in St Mary's church. Rev. Paul Prentice said the opening prayers. Head teacher, Jackie Trachina welcomed the children, staff and parents and explained how pleased she was to be part of the school again. Dr Jeff Blyth spoke about the children being ready for Jesus birth, along with other good things at Christmas! He emphasised the need for giving and caring for our families and community.



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The younger children celebrated Christingle with Rev. Paul Prentice asking them the meaning of the Christingle and lighting the ones which Year 1 had made. They sang the Christingle song and Away in a Manger bringing tears to the eyes of the mums and dads! The children's poems and prayers were beautifully read.

The older children's service was introduced by Year 6 children who also retold the story of Christmas. Years 3 and 4 did their part by reading their poems and prayers. Year 5 told us some interesting facts about Christmas celebrations in other countries. Everyone had worked very hard to make it a memorable service.

It was lovely to see so many parents supporting their children.

Jackie Cook

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?

Did you know where, in the Old Testament, we are told to love our neighbour? (December Crayfisher) The answer by Rev. Henry Bullock in 1899 to his Sunday school question was Leviticus 19:18. There are various references to how we should treat our neighbour but this does appear to be the only command *to love*.

Malcolm Deering

NOW THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman (1899 - 1981) American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader

Give up trying to pick *your* way.

Even if the *right paths* in which God leads you are paths that you have not known, say, 'Even there shall *thy* hand lead me'.

Let him this year teach you *his* paths, and ask *him* to make your way 'Thy way, straight before my face'.

From Home Words January 1899

Malcolm Deering

CREME DE LA CRÈME

Colour is the key. The eye is the hammer.
 The soul is the piano with its many chords.
 The artist is the hand which plays, touching one
 key or another to cause vibrations in the soul.

Vasilij Kandinskij 1866 - 1944

THE UNITED COLOURS OF BELLENDEN

When I began infant school in Peckham during the autumn of 1962 one of the first lessons I can remember was art. I had been presented with liquid paint, paper, brushes and mixing trays. There were nine different colours to choose from: red, yellow, blue, green, orange, purple, brown, black and white. I decided to mix the first eight colours individually with white to see what would happen.

Light brown, lilac, pale green, pink, peach, sky blue and grey.

I had made seven more colours, pastel shades. I was well chuffed. My favourite was pink.

VATICAN II

I had left one out! The yellow paint bottle was at the back and I had not noticed it. I noticed it now. I stared at it. The first thought that entered my five year old mind was a strange one. Was it possible to mix yellow and white paint together? If so, what colour would emerge? I tried it and produced a rich creamy tint. This so impressed me that I painted an abstract picture with large oblong blobs of cream surrounded by various other colours. The teacher liked it and left it to dry in a safe place. A few days later I was allowed to take it home. My mum thought it was great and stuck it on the scullery wall. It didn't last long. The damp got to it and it soon fell to pieces. C'est la vie!

BIBLE BLACK?

There are seven colours in the rainbow and seven Hebrew words for colour in the Old Testament.



berom, shamats, tala, puk, pas, tseba, riqmah.

Here are a few of the words and phrases used in various translations to describe different aspects of the Hebrew originals.

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Mascara - eye shadow - cosmetic - silvery white - damask - variegated - red - diverse colours - spotted - tapestry - paint - dye - stibium - fair - glistening - to dip into colouring fluid - embroidery - needlework - cloth - glowing - patched - antimony - varicoloured - dyed stuff - dyed work - stones of various colours.

LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES

God thinks colour is important and this is highlighted in a recent three part documentary television series produced by the BBC on the science behind the subject. A programme that for me confirms the sweet simplicity which lies behind the usual unstraightforwardness of life in general. All colour proceeds from white light!

Bill Willis

A huge thank you to everyone at St Andrew's and St Mary's for all the cards and messages of condolence following my mother's death. Your compassion has meant so much and I am deeply touched and grateful.

The little that mum knew of both churches she really enjoyed, especially the warm welcome everyone gave her.

Thank you all

Rev. Jane Winter

JAM

(JESUS and ME)

JaM is our Sunday school group at St Mary's
We meet in the church centre (hall) at
10:00

You are very welcome to join us

Every week is full of activities such as art and craft, drama, games and music
Learning about Jesus and the Bible is fun
For more information please contact
Jackie Cook on 01689 810451
Come and join us if you're aged between 4 and 16

FUNSHINE CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

Another wonderful term over and we finished with our normal Christmas party. Lots of musical fun was had with Paul Brown from Jolly Dinosaurs to start the morning. Princess Elsa arrived to join the party with kind thanks to Royal Bella Parties and Manu, from Tiny Tots Face Painting, treated the children to wonderful face painting during the morning. We ended our morning with party food and a visit from Santa as all our children are obviously on the *Good List!*

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas from Funshine Club. We look forward to seeing you all back on Wednesday 6 January.

Sarah Rideout





Michael Cresswell - Electrician

Please contact me on 07799 767036

or mick@mc-electrician.co.uk

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Funshine Club

St Andrew's Toddler Group

Every Wednesday during term time

We meet in St Andrew's Church
Lower Road.
Car Parking in St Andrew's Church Car
Park

**£1.00 per Adult,
Children free**

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

Enquiries to: Sarah Rideout 0794 1020724

We are a very friendly group for babies to
preschool children, Mums, Grans,
Dads, Grandads, Childminders & Carers.
Please come along & join in the fun.

HALL FOR HIRE
HAVE YOU THOUGHT
OF HIRING ST
ANDREW'S FULLY
EQUIPPED CHURCH
HALL FOR A
FUNCTION? IF YOU
ARE INTERESTED
PLEASE CONTACT
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Church <<**



QUIZ NIGHT
AT ST ANDREW'S
WITH FISH & CHIP
SUPPER
SATURDAY
30 JANUARY 2016

Doors open 19:00

6 only to a team £6.50 per person

COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN
TICKETS ARE ON SALE
IN THE CHURCH NOW!