

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 5 th April Palm Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 Mark 12 vv 1-12
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9a p737 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Mark 14 & 15 p1020
Thursday 9 th April Maundy Thursday	9.30 Holy Communion	1 Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 p1152 John 13 vv 1-35 p1081
Friday 10 th April Good Friday	12.00 Three Hour Devotion	
Saturday 11 th April	11.30 pm Easter Vigil, Renewal of Baptismal Vows and First Communion of Easter	Genesis 1 v1 – 2 v4a p3 Exodus 14 vv 10-31 & 15 20&21 p72 Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Romans 6 vv 3-11 p 1133 Mark 16 vv 1-8 p1024
Sunday 12 th April Easter Day	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Luke 24 vv 13-35 p1061
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 25 vv 1-6 p704 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 1 Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 p1155 John 20 vv 1-18
Sunday 19 th April Easter 2	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Exodus 14 vv 10-31 p72 Exodus 15 vv 20 & 21 p73 Acts 4 vv 32-35 p1096 1 John 1 v1 – 2v2 p1223 John 20 vv 19-31 p1089
Sunday 26 th April Easter 3	11.00 Holy Communion	Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Acts 3 vv 12-19 p1095 1 John 3 vv 1-7 p1226 Luke 24 vv 36-49 p1062
Sunday 3 rd May Easter 4	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Revelation 2 vv 12-17 p1234 John 6 vv 30-40 p1-70
	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 7 vv 1-5, Genesis 7 vv 11-18, Genesis 8 vv 6-18, Genesis 9 vv 8-13 Acts 4 vv 5-12 p1095 1 John 3 vv 16-24 p1227 John 10 vv 11-18 p1076
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 5 th April Palm Sunday	9.30 Family Communion (Meet at Church Hall for Procession.)	Mark 11 vv 1-11 p1016 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Mark 14 & 15 p1020
Thursday 9 th April Maundy Thursday	7.30 pm Holy Communion (said 1662)	
Friday 10 th April Good Friday	8.45 Mattins/Litany/Ante-Communion, 5.00 Evensong.	
	10.00 Family Service	
Saturday 11 th April	8.45 Mattins/Ante-Communion, 5.00 Evensong.	
Sunday 12 th April Easter Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 25 vv 1-6 p704 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 1 Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 p1155 Mark 16 vv 1-8 p1024
Sunday 19 th April Easter 2	8.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 26 vv 1-19 p709 Luke 24 vv 1-12 p1061
	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 14 vv 10-31, Exodus 15 vv 20 & 21 Acts 4 vv 32-35 p1096 1 John 1 v1 – 2v2 p1223 John 20 vv 19-31 p1089
Sunday 26 th April Easter 3	9.30 Holy Communion	Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Acts 3 vv 12-19 p1095 1 John 3 vv 1-7 p1226 Luke 24 vv 36-49 p1062
Sunday 3 rd May Easter 4	9.30 Family Communion	Acts 4 vv 5-12 p1095 John 10 vv 11-18 p1076

There will be Holy Communion at 9.30 on Monday 6th at Cuxton and daily at 9.30 throughout Easter Week except on Thursday 16th, when it will be at Halling.
There will be no other services in Easter Week. roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

Copy Date May Magazine 10th March 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons (not 16th) we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday (not 15th) also at 2.00. **Saints Alive!** (formerly Sunday School) is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

Wednesday Communion 9.30 @ St Michael's		Thursday Communion 9.30 @ St John's	
1 st April	Daniel 3 John 8 vv 31-42	2 nd April	Genesis 17 vv 3-9 John 8 vv 51-end.
8 th (Holy Week)	Hebrews 12 vv 1-3 John 13 vv 21-32	9 th (Maundy Thursday)	1 Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 13 vv 1-35
15 th (Easter Week)	Acts 3 vv 1-10 Luke 24 vv 13-35	16 th (Easter Week)	Acts 3 vv 11-end Luke 24 vv 35-48
22 nd April	Acts 5 vv 17-26 John 3 vv 16-21	23 rd April (S George)	2 Timothy 2 vv 3-13 John 15 vv 18-21
29 th April	Acts 8 vv 1-8 John 6 vv 35-40	30 th April	Acts 8 vv 26-end John 6 vv 44-51



Holy Week and Easter

April this year includes both Holy Week and Easter, the season in which our public worship concentrates on the wonderful events of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. It is Good News. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* If you believe in Jesus, all your sins are forgiven through the sacrifice He made of Himself for you on the Cross. If you believe in Jesus, you have the gift of eternal life manifested in His Resurrection revealed on Easter Day.

In my Easter letter this year, I thought I would go through the services we hope to put on at this most wonderful time of year. I must here enter a caveat. The intention of the Holy Week and Easter services is that the whole worshipping community experiences them together (the liturgy of the Passion and Resurrection). Necessarily, however, in this parish we have to divide our worship between two parish churches (plus the Jubilee Hall) in two (or three?) communities and put on services that will give all the people who live in Cuxton and Halling the opportunity to join in in ways appropriate for them. You might, of course, plan your Holy Week and Easter observances to include worship in different churches.

There is a three-fold point to our Holy Week and Easter services: to glorify God for all that He has done for us in Jesus; to enter ourselves into a deeper understanding of the mysteries

of our faith; and to proclaim the Good News of Christ crucified to the world.

One easy way to proclaim the Easter faith is to take one of our Holy Week posters or car stickers and display it from 5th April at least until 19th. If we don't tell people what is special about these two weeks, how are they supposed to find out? Can you blame them if they shop or play football on Good Friday instead of worshipping the Christ Who died for them?

Public worship is, of course, not merely the words of our services. There have been no flowers in church during Lent. The bells will not ring in Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, all the coloured frontals and ornaments will be removed to leave the church bare for the days on which Jesus died and lay in the tomb. The setting of worship thus underlines the solemnity of what we are commemorating and helps us to experience something of the depth of what it all means. On Easter Day, the church will be filled with flowers. The bells will ring out joyfully and our organists and choirs will lead us in our exaltation of the Risen Saviour. Flower arranging, brass polishing, church cleaning, bell ringing and music practice are all acts of worship in themselves.

On **Palm Sunday**, our service at Cuxton begins at the Church Hall at 9.30. We shall bless the palm crosses and every worshipper will receive one to take home as a sign of the presence of our crucified King in our homes and in our hearts. We shall then process to church singing the Palm Sunday hymn – a celebration of what Jesus did for us and a

witness to any passing dog-walkers! At Halling the procession will be from the lych gate at 11.00.

Some people like to attend church every day in **Holy Week** and that is a good discipline. So there will be a celebration of Holy Communion at 9.30 am at St Michael's in addition to the 7.30 on Tuesday and the 9.30 on Wednesday which take place throughout the year. I am sure that these Holy Week Communion services are important for God and His Church and I hope you will want to join me.

On **Maundy Thursday** we commemorate Christ's Last Supper with His disciples. He washed their feet and gave us the ancient and always new commandment to *love one another*. Knowing what awaited Him on the next day, it must have taken extraordinary courage on the part of Jesus to celebrate Passover with them, to give them and us so much wonderful teaching and to pause to give us the Holy Communion so that every generation of Christians would be able to participate in His Death and Resurrection until He comes again. At Maundy Thursday we try to imagine ourselves into the atmosphere of that bitter sweet occasion, that wonderful celebration of Passover, the astonishing teaching of Jesus, our commission to complete His work and then the departure into the dark garden, the arrest and betrayal, the mockery of a trial, the lead up to the scourging and crucifixion.

In the morning at Halling we observe Maundy Thursday with our usual Thursday 9.30 Eucharist. Then I have to hurry off to the 10.30 Maundy Thursday service at the Cathedral (I'm usually one of the last to arrive!) where we clergy renew our ordination vows on the day on which Jesus consecrated Himself as priest and sacrifice and consecrated His Church to God. It is at this service that the Bishop blesses the oils we use in Baptism, Confirmation and healing services.

In the evening, some years we have celebrated the Eucharist and stripped the altars to the singing of Ps 22, attempting to recover the atmosphere of the Upper Room and the Garden of Gethsemane. Other years we have re-enacted the Passover. This year at 7.30 pm at St Michael's, we shall hold a said service of Holy Communion. We'll bring the altar table into the chancel and gather around it, making it more like a supper table. We shall use the 1662 rite partly because I hope that doing something different will make us think, partly because the altar in the chancel was what the English Reformers intended, and partly because I hope it might encourage you who say you love 1662 to attend.

On **Good Friday** and **Holy Saturday**, our thoughts are with Jesus hanging on the Cross and buried in the tomb. We even deny ourselves the joy of Holy Communion. The set services are the offices at 8.45 & 5.00 at St Michael's with appropriate readings and prayers for these very solemn days.

At 10.00 at Cuxton on **Good Friday** we hold our Family Service. This is an opportunity for people of all ages from children to centenarians to join in an informal act of worship on the theme of God's great love for us. It would be a good service to which to bring an interested friend or possible convert!

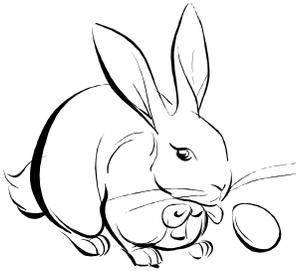
At Halling on **Good Friday** we spend the three hours from 12.00 to 3.00 contemplating the Cross. The three hours are divided into nine segments, each with a hymn, a psalm, a reading and a short address. It is good to spend the whole three hours in church, but, if that is not possible, you are welcome to come for parts of this service. I find it is a tremendous opportunity to grow in our understanding of Jesus and what He means to us.

The Church requires that all confirmed people receive Communion at **Easter** and that is partly why I provide you with four opportunities to do so. My favourite service of the year is the Easter Vigil starting at 11.30

pm on Saturday 11th at St John's. It begins spectacularly with fire and candles as light triumphs over darkness. We absorb the Good News proclaimed in the Scriptures. We renew our Baptismal vows. We are, after all, baptised into the death and resurrection of Jesus – which is why it is so splendid that we have a Baptism at our 11.00 service on Easter Day. After the renewal of Baptismal vows, we share in the first Communion of Easter. Other opportunities for Easter Eucharistic worship with different emphases, different glories and different locations are 8.00 in the Jubilee Hall, 9.30 at St Michael's and 11.00 at St John's. It is exciting to anticipate the splendid music, the marvellous readings and the sheer joy of meeting the Risen Christ on that sacred, special morning in His most blessed Body and Blood.

But Easter doesn't finish on Easter Day. It is a fifty day celebration including Whitsun or Pentecost. (Don't forget to come to church on Ascension Day {21st May} 9.30 at Halling or 7.30 at Cuxton.) Every day in Easter Week (including Easter Monday) there will be Holy Communion at 9.30 - at Halling on Thursday and at Cuxton the rest of the week. This gives you the opportunity to carry on celebrating Easter or to make your Easter Communion if you really could not make Sunday. If you are prevented from coming to Church by ill health, let me know and I can bring you Communion at home that week. Apart from these Communion, there will be no other services that week. I shall want a rest after leading all those services!
Roger.

Paul Davies: The universe is not only more mysterious than you think. It is more mysterious than you can think.



Easter Egg Hunt 2009
Easter Monday (13th April)
Rectory Garden
Hunt begins 2.30 pm.

VESTRY MEETING & ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING

These take place at 10.00 am at St John's Church Halling on Saturday 25th March. Choose your churchwardens and sidesmen. Elect your PCC. Find out what the PCC has been up to for the last year and just how bad the financial situation is – serious, desperate or terminal. You need to be on the Electoral Roll of the parish to stand for or nominate for PCC. Electoral roll members plus those on the civil electoral roll may nominate for and stand for churchwarden, but these nominations must be handed in to the Rector before the meeting.

Bluebell Wood Charity Walk 2009

This will take place on Saturday 25th April in the woods above Upper Halling. Meet at 10.00 in the Browdens Road car park and please join me and my family and friends for a second time in a sponsored Bluebell Wood Charity Wood in aid of registered charity *the Eve Appeal*. This is the charity for research into ovarian cancer and other gynaecological conditions. The walk will be the same as last year (4.2 miles) and will be the same route, taking about 2 ½ hours. Bring a drink and a biscuit!

For sponsorship forms and any other queries, please call Patrick Lawry on 01634 240892. Thanks. Let's do it again. We will make a difference. Pat Lawry.

Christian Aid

A Division of The British Council of Churches



If you can help collect in Christian Aid Week (10th 17th May) this year, please contact Steve Brown (242867). There is terrific need in the developing world and calling door to door raises our profile in the parish. People can see that we are doing something worthwhile.

The Christian Aid Supper for the whole deanery is at St John's Church Halling on 1st May.

Dickens' Country Protection Society



A **barn dance** will be held 23rd May at Bucklands Farm, Cliffe, 7.30 pm – 11.00 pm. Dancing to the Big Ian Petrie Band. Tickets £10 (under 16 £5). Price includes a ploughman's supper. Please bring your own drinks and glasses. Tickets from Elizabeth Dray on 01474 824622.

Subscriptions are now due - £3 individuals, £5 families.

Kay Roots.

Nature Notes February 2009

The morning of the 1st is grey and cold when I walk to church. Later in the morning dark clouds march from the east across the sky and the first snowflakes begin to fall. It gradually increases and the hills beyond the river become white while a covering hides the grass and decorates the trees and shrubs. For a while there is some blue sky and when darkness falls stars twinkle in the sky, then more snow falls and it becomes very cold. The following day dawns and the world is white. On the patio I see the paw marks of a fox and bird prints. The paw marks continue up the drive. Snow falls all day covering the tray of seed which I'd put out for the birds.

I watch a robin terrorising a dunnock as it attempts to peck the seed. Eventually it succeeds. Two blackbirds investigate the garden and a wood pigeon takes its turn at the seed. On the 3rd the pale sky is brightened by sunshine the beams of which pierce the mist swathing the hills and the river. Snow in the garden is crisp beneath my feet. Spiders have been busy for silky strands stretch the length of the kitchen window. I look up at the moon in the evening and it is shining from a clear sky. I hear bird calls in the trees. In the evening of the next day, as the light fades I listen to blackbirds "pinking" in the undergrowth. I think it is a pleasant sound. The next day is mild and overcast and as it progresses the snow melts leaving the grass sodden. In the evening, the air is very damp and a mist has begun to wrap its fingers around the trees and shrubs and hover over the roofs of houses. It rains all day on the 9th turning the grass at the back of the house to a quagmire. Even the birds do not want to brave the rain. Snow falls again on the evening of the 12th. The flakes flutter down on the trees, shrubs and grass creating a winter wonderland. I stand on the back door step drinking in the beautiful scene and listening to the rooks roosting in the trees. On the 13th, in the afternoon, there are dark clouds to the east but the western sky is golden with sunshine

which lights up the garden. the branches of the trees are coated with green lichen. Birds are singing as the light fades.

A peacock butterfly flies round the church during the Sunday service on the 15th. The sun shines warmly the next day and it feels quite Spring-like.

On the 18th I take Murphy to the river which is low and mirror smooth revealing a wide expanse of mud flats where gulls congregate. We then walk round the ponds over which gulls fly and through tall brown headed teasels. A rabbit darts into the undergrowth as we approach. Hawthorn branches bear golden coloured lichen. Nature sleeps. We go to the river the next day when the weather is damp. On the 20th I hear the call of a greenfinch. On the 22nd I walk along the path of Mays Wood where I see branches broken by the wind and dead elders spiralling across and around tree trunks. At the top of Dean Valley catkins sway gently in the breeze on the hazel boughs. I walk round the edge of the field and up to the path leading to Six acre Wood where clearing has taken place and daffodils have emerged. We experience some grey days then on the 26th a feeling of Spring is in the air.

The 27th is filled with beautiful golden sunshine and blue skies. I sit in the garden which is sheltered and feel the warmth of the sun on my face. Birds sing melodiously. As I walk through the churchyard in the afternoon. I notice celandines raising their golden heads to the sky and pale yellow primroses peeping out from among the grass stems. At home I watch a brim stone butterfly fluttering in the greenhouse. On the final day of the month the sun shines rather weakly but it is pleasant. The sky becomes clear in the evening and stars twinkle in the velvet heavens.

My poem for this month is very atmospheric and beautiful.

Elizabeth Summers

The Shell

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well.

And straightway, like a bell,
Came low and clear
The slow ,sad, murmur of far
distant seas

Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Windswept and desolate.

It was a sunless strand that
never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight

Since time began
Of any quality or stir,
Save what the dreary winds
and waves incur.

And in the hush of waters was
the sound
Of pebbles, rolling round;
For ever rolling with a hollow
sound:

And bubbling seaweeds, as
the waters go,
Swish to and fro
Their long cold tentacles of
slimy grey:

There was no day;
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight

To wonder at the moon:
Was twilight only, and the
frightened croon?
Smitten to whimpers, of the
dreary wind

And waves that journeyed
blind.....
And then I loosed my ear- Oh
it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down
the street.

James Stephens

St John's Draw: £25 each to Mrs Head (1) & Mrs Chidwick (27), £10 to Mrs Homewood (36).
Church Hall draw : £5 to Maureen Holt, drawn by Ray Maisey. Buffy



Halling WI

Our February meeting started with a tribute to our loyal member ,Evelyn Low who had died on St Valentine's day. The few members who were at the meeting sang Jerusalem with gusto, and our meeting got underway. Margaret Sullivan was in the chair. Minutes of the January meeting were read and signed, a donation had been sent to Ethel Hunt Lodge for County funds.

Not much correspondence, but quite varied, Aylesford and Eccles W.I. were having a Barn Dance in March, Notice of the Annual Council Meeting at Tunbridge Wells, Jeremy Spaitte to be one of the speakers. A day trip to Denman College is being arranged sometime in the future. This is a lovely day out as the country side around Denman is delightful ,and Denman serves up lovely grub. We have sent a donation to the Macmillan Nurses in memory of Evelyn. Financially, we are doing O.K. but we do need some new members, perhaps we should put up our monthly posters as this has lapsed over the last few years, I've still got plenty of posters. Margaret Sullivan, our president, may be able to persuade her husband Jim to be a W.I. husband and produce them for us each month. Home Economics days are on 7th and 8th April at Ditton community centre, as are the Arts and Craft days in May when one of the speakers will show us how she makes her rag rugs.

As circumstances beyond our control meant we did not have a speaker for February, Ann Heaseman arranged for anyone who wished to have a go at card making, something that our Evelyn was a dab hand at. Ann produced cards, stickers. edges, glue and scissors and all the paraphernalia needed to make cards and some very good cards were made. Trudy Fenton Scott, one of our new members has been hiding her light under a bushel, as it turns out , she can make lovely cards ,some very unusual ones, both her little girls (who she had brought to our meeting, seem to be going the same way. They knew exactly what they were doing when it came to card making) Those members who didn't want "hands on" watched and chatted. We were all a bit subdued.

After tea the competitions were judged. Flower of the Month produced a lot of Snowdrops. Ann Graves was the winner. The competition for the best card was won by Trudy The March competition is "A Talking Point". I wonder what will turn up as I have got to do the talking, one or other of our bright sparks will bring something that I don't know what it is, then I will have to make something up. It will be a laugh, and by the time I've finished they will see how easy it is and will all have a go at public speaking. Why not come along and have a listen, you are very welcome?
Phyllis.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

15th February
8th March

Thomas David Bruce
Harry David Pease

Pilgrims Road
High Street

Funerals:

17th February
27th February
3rd March
6th March
10th March

Audree Keating (61)
Colin Brown (62)
Evelyn Virginia Low (65)
Frances Mary Baker (74)
Vera Lillian Florence Moore (82)

North Down House
High Street
Pilgrims Road
Bush Road
formerly of Halling



Cuxton WI

We were so lucky - we had been unable to hold a January meeting as it would have fallen on New Years' Day and we did not think that this would be a very popular time for people to come. Therefore fingers were crossed for February as the snow had come! But, somehow we found a slot and a fine evening for everyone. Two visitors were welcomed, monthly birthdays announced and then it was down to business and there was plenty of that. Dorothy had attended the Resolutions meeting where 5 resolutions were put forward ranging from the plight of Honey Bees to Hospital in-house cleaners. Another meeting in April will choose the final 2.

We are fortunate in that so many of the Cuxton members are willing to take on clubs and run them for everyone and they are all well supported. We cover all manner of crafts in the craft group, other groups are walking in the local area, china and water colour painting, poetry, cookery, music and drama, home economics etc. We had not booked a speaker for this month and instead had what is becoming an annual event - namely our Beetle Drive. This, of course, is taken very seriously and as usual within minutes descends into complete chaos with everyone laughing their heads off. I think we enjoyed it and it certainly cheered us up after all the terrible weather.

Our March meeting was held in reverse this month as we started with the speaker Mrs Allinson. She brought back many happy memories by showing and talking about by-gone toys.

Jokes: A blonde was fed up with being stereotyped as dumb. So she dyed her hair black and started on her new life. She drove out into the country and asked a farmer, if she could correctly calculate the number of sheep he had, could she have one? The farmer agreed and she rightly guessed 597 sheep. So he allowed her to go and select the one she wanted. Then he said to her, "If I can correctly calculate the original colour of your hair, can I have my dog back?"

Although technology is now in to most toys, the old ones that we all enjoyed as children, which cost very little, still have a interest for our young people. And we all agreed how much freedom today's children are missing out on compared to our own childhoods. After tea we returned to our usual business session. Cuxton will be organising a Craft "Dabble Day" to be held at Snodland Christ Church hall on 3 July. Crafts for you to have a go at will range from Stump work to Transfer paint. There will be 6 different crafts altogether so should be a very interesting day and all for £5 plus materials. Walking group had enjoyed a walk around the Shorne countryside with a very good pub lunch at the end. Poetry had also had a good pub lunch and their next subject is Old Age but not necessarily human!

Our funds are quite low this year and so we have to look towards some serious fund raising There is a Tombola arranged for our May meeting so if any members could contribute prizes to this please bring them along at the April meeting or give them to a member of the committee. We are very grateful for any help with this.

Next meeting April 2 with Mrs M Wood talking on Magistrates in the Community.
Sheila Underdown.

Owing to the exigencies of copy dates, February and March meeting reports have been included above. RIK.

An unscrupulous painter thought he could beat the recession by making his paint go further with copious quantities of white spirit. Because of his low prices, he got the contracts for the orphanage, the alms houses and the cottage hospital. But, after the first Winter, it was noticed that all of them were losing their paint. Stricken by a guilty conscience, the dastardly decorator asked the vicar what he should do. Came the reply, **Repaint and thin no more.**

Musical Plans For the Future

This Summer the Brook Concert Orchestra and Cuxton Music Group will be putting on a concert at St John's Church, Halling. The programme will be light classics and music from the shows. The date planned is our Patronal Festival, 24th June. The starting time is 8.00pm.

The Patronal Festival Eucharist will be at 6.30 pm.

Prayer

Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many. (II Corinthians 2 v11).

“Prayer changes things” says the old chorus, but not always in the way we expect. If we all prayed for our very sick relative, he or she would not necessarily be healed. Otherwise there would be no sickness in the world.

A group of us plan to offer prayer in the parish. This obviously is in addition to our Sunday and weekday services and the prayers offered privately by the Rector and other Christians. The idea is that anyone who would like to ask for prayer, perhaps because of illness or a problem they face or for some new enterprise or endeavour, could telephone Buffy on 01634 727126 or e mail her on elizabeth@rabbithutch.demon.co.uk She will listen confidentially and relay the request to other members of the prayer group. The request may be praise for a happy event, to pray for help in times of trouble or any other kind of prayer. We hope that the prayers of our group will bring strength to live our lives courageously. Buffy Maisey.

Stewardship

*Graciously Giving for God
Enables Mission.*

“Christian Stewardship” is sometimes cynically regarded as a crafty way for the Church to get more money out of its supporters. If so, it is deservedly regarded with suspicion, not least in this parish. The new diocesan stewardship adviser, Alan Strachan, is naturally anxious to put us right on this. He tells us emphatically, “Stewardship is not a quick fix to solve parish problems or a principle for bridging a gap between income and expenditure. It is about supporting your mission as a church to reach out into your community and fulfil your plan and discipleship. It is about ownership of our vision sustained by our giving.”

Alan says, “It is important for the success of the parish programme that the full backing of the PCC is given but also that the mission aims of the church are shared and owned by the larger church family.”

It is that last sentence which makes me pause for thought. Could we in this parish agree as a church family what our mission aims are? If we held a meeting to agree our mission aims, is it at all likely, that these would be shared and owned by the larger church family? Is it likely that the PCC would give its full backing? Does anyone out there have a vision for Christian Stewardship? If so, talk to me. Roger.



Max's Bit

Last time I wrote to you, I was extolling the snow. Today, Spring has sprung. The sun is shining. The air is quite warm. There are spring flowers opening up everywhere. This morning, Master went for a run along the riverside at Halling. So no walk for me so far, worse luck. He has mentioned he might take me out in the car later, however. Jolly good!

Two afternoons a week I get to meet the children at St Michael's Angels on Wednesdays and Thursday's Children and the After School Club the next day. These events are great fun. There is a lot of laughter and enjoyment. Mums and carers meet for a chat. The children get biscuits – and so usually do I! Let's never forget that enjoyment is worthwhile in itself. It is a good thing to have fun and it is neither necessary nor desirable to feel that you have to justify everything you do in terms of its utility value. A man reads mainly to further his education, runs just to get physically fit, makes friends solely to secure business contacts and he might as well be dead! Life is for living. It is worth doing all these things in themselves, for their own sake, not merely for any profit they might bring.

There is, however, another side to these Wednesday and Thursday afternoons even more important than fun and fellowship. Far too many people don't know enough about the Bible. Far too few people have the experience of taking part in public worship. Too many people don't know how to pray. Well these Wednesdays and Thursdays help to put all that right.

Max, the Rectory Spaniel.