

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 2 nd August Trinity 8	9.30 Family Communion	Exodus 16 vv 2-15 p74 John 6 vv 24-35 p1070
Sunday 9 th August Trinity 9	9.30 Holy Communion	1 Kings 19 vv 1-8 p361 Ephesians 4 v25 – 5v 2 p1176 John 6 vv 35-51 p1070
Sunday 16 th August Trinity 10	8.00 Holy Communion	Hebrews 13 vv 1-15 p1211 Luke 12 vv 49-56 p1046
	9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 9 vv 1-6 p642 Ephesians 5 vv 15-20 p1176 John 6 vv 51-58 p1071
Sunday 23 rd August Trinity 11	9.30 Holy Communion	Joshua 24 vv 1-18 p240 Ephesians 6 vv 10-20 p1177 John 6 vv 56-69 p1071
Sunday 30 th August, Trinity 12, 11.00 United Parish Eucharist & Holy Baptism At Halling.		
Sunday 6 th September Trinity 13	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 2 nd August Trinity 8	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Hebrews 11 vv 17-31 p1209 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1045
	11.00 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Exodus 16 vv 2-15 p74 John 6 vv 24-35 p1070
Sunday 9 th August Trinity 9	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	1 Kings 19 vv 1-8 p361 Ephesians 4 v25 – 5v 2 p1176 John 6 vv 35-51 p1070
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Job 39 v 1 – 40 v4 p539 Hebrews 12 vv 1-17 p1210
Sunday 16 th August Trinity 10	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Proverbs 9 vv 1-6 p642 Ephesians 5 vv 15-20 p1176 John 6 vv 51-58 p1071
Sunday 23 rd August Trinity 11	11.00 Holy Communion	Joshua 24 vv 1-18 p240 Ephesians 6 vv 10-20 p1177 John 6 vv 56-69 p1071
Sunday 30 th August Trinity 12	11.00 United Parish Eucharist & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 p182 Mark 7 vv 1-23 p1010
Sunday 6 th September Trinity 13	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Exodus 14 vv 5-31 p71 Matthew 6 vv 1-18 p970
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 James 2 vv 1-17 p1214 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010

Wednesday HC 9.30 Cuxton		Thursday HC 9.30 Halling	
5 th August	Numbers 13 vv 1-35 Matthew 15 vv 21-28	6 th August The Transfiguration	2 Peter 1 vv 16-19 Luke 9 vv 28-36
12 th August	Deuteronomy 34 Matthew 18 vv 15-20	13 th August	Joshua 3 vv 7-17 Matthew 18 v21 – 19 v1
19 th August	Judges 9 vv 6-15 Matthew 20 vv 1-16	20 th August	Judges 11 vv 29-40 Matthew 22 vv 1-14
26 th August	1 Thessalonians 2 vv 9-13 Matthew 23 vv 27-32	27 th August	1 Thessalonians 3 vv 7-13 Matthew 24 vv 42-51

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Copy Date September Magazine 14th August 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday also at 2.00. **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.



The Power of Prayer

The topic of prayer has had a high profile in our parish lately. We have had a number of sick people (including my mother) and prayer has been a very important support for them and for the rest of us who are concerned about them. We also have the prayer chain established after the Bognor conference in January. (See note below.)

What are we doing when we pray? If you don't believe in God or if you don't believe that God gets involved in the affairs of this world, I suppose prayer must seem pretty pointless – though I think it is quite hard not to pray. Old soldiers tell us that there are very few atheists in a fox hole!

But, if we do believe in God, both as omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Lord and King, and as our loving heavenly Father, what do we make of prayer then? God knows everything. So we aren't telling God anything He doesn't know when we pray. He won't forget Grandma and Granddad or famine victims in Africa if we don't "remember" them in prayer. Neither would we expect to change God's Mind about something. God is all loving, all knowing and all powerful. He already wills what is best for us and for our loved ones. We don't need to tell Him what to do or to try to get Him to change His Mind about anything.

You know that song, *He's got the whole world in His Hands*? I start from there. Everything that happens, happens within the loving providence of God. He creates everything that exists. He sustains everything that exists. The end of everything is in Him. Nothing is meaningless. I find it impossible to believe that anything truly happens by chance, though we won't go into that here! The purpose of your life and mine (and the life of everyone who has ever lived on this planet) is in the loving providence of God. We are made to be His children. We are created in His image. Our true home is in Heaven.

Prayer is aligning your will with God's Will. It is working with Him, co-operating with God in love. Our prayers don't change God's plans for our lives or for our loved ones or for the world; our prayers are part of God's plan. When we pray we are accepting our own part in God's loving purposes. We are joining our own love with God's love in caring for Grandma and Granddad and for those famine victims in Africa.

When we pray for ourselves – that we may pass our exams, get over an illness, find a job, marry the right person, find a parking space at the hospital or whatever, we are really praying that *we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in* – as we are invited to pray after receiving Holy Communion.

We are very imperfect creatures and we cannot always know what to pray for, what it would mean to say *Thy will be done* in any given situation. We can always pray, however. We can only pray for what we think is right. I doubt very much that we ought to engage in any activity on which we don't feel able to ask God's blessing and I am sure we ought not to pray for things we really know are contrary to the love of God. Pray for what you believe would be good for yourself, for your family and friends, for the Church and for the world. Pray as you feel moved, but always pray, as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the proviso, *nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt*.

When we pray, we are joining with God in caring for the people we pray for. That care may be intangible as when we pray generally for a relative in Australia. It might be asking for specific help for someone who is, say, sick or unemployed. We might even be part of the answer to our prayers. Maybe we should go and see Grandma, do Granddad's washing for him and send some money to those famine victims in Africa!

St Paul tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5 v17). It immediately follows *Rejoice evermore*. Jesus came that we may have joy in all its fullness. Prayer is fellowship with Jesus. He is always with us. In the words of another chorus, *He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way*. We are always in God's presence and ACTS is always appropriate – adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. God knows our thoughts. When we remember God's presence with us, our thoughts become prayers.

We ought also to take some time each day to pray. We are very busy with the things of this life, but they are not what matter in the end. What matters is your eternal life. Surely you can find enough time each day to be open to eternity!

What should we say? I don't think it matters so much what we say in prayer as the spirit in which we say it, the Spirit in which we say it. You can use your own words. You can use no words. You can use other people's words. You can use the Church's words. The more I think about the Lord's Prayer, the more it seems to cover everything we need to say in prayer. If you are lost for words (or maybe especially if you aren't lost for words) just say the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer sometimes makes you feel wonderful. But that isn't the point of it. Sometimes you are too bored to pray, too arid, too depressed or fearful. But that is not the point either. The point is to be faithful in prayer and God, Who is faithful, will not let you down. St Paul assures us that when we are struggling to pray, the Holy Spirit prays on our behalf (Romans 8 v26).

As well as being conscious of God in all our daily activities and finding time each day to immerse ourselves personally in eternity, we need also to share in common prayer. The Christian faith is about sharing. Jesus says, *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* (Matthew 18 v20). As Christians, we are members of Christ and members one of another. The popular belief that *you can be a Christian without going to Church* makes for weak Christians and a weak Church. *Hebrews* (10 v25) warns us against *forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.* Christian worship is corporate. So is Christian service. At the very least, we ought all to gather together on the Lord's Day for the service He Himself instructed us to perform, the service of Holy Communion. Is this what *Hebrews* means in chapter 13 v16, *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased?* I am not at all sure, but look at the context!

Anyway, it is as natural to pray as it is to breathe. Prayer is our life-blood. It is our immersion in the love of God. Another chorus says *Prayer Changes Things.* God acts in nature and in human lives. As we pray, so we cooperate with Him to make the world go round and come out right.

I am well aware of what a difficult subject this is to write about and talk about, but I am not trying to exhaust its potential in one magazine article. You will really learn about prayer only through praying: walking every day with Jesus, taking time each day for personal prayer and participating in the worship of the Church. You've got all eternity to get it right, but don't be afraid to ask the advice and support of others on the same journey into the infinity of God.

Roger.

R M Benson: God appointed prayer, not because he had any delight in our formal homage, but because he desired, by forming in us the habit of prayer, to draw us to himself, the fountain of all good.

Prayer chain

A new prayer chain has been set up in our two churches with the aim of offering support to Roger's own ministry of prayer. Any villager with something to celebrate or someone for whom prayer is requested, maybe for themselves in trouble or in joy may ring me on 01634 727126 or e-mail me on elizabeth@rabhutch.demon.co.uk. The request will be listened to in confidence and passed on to the 4 members of the prayer group. We have now supported in prayer several villagers and would be pleased to receive further requests.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians, ch.4,v.6.

A date for your diaries – A murder mystery party, Sat. 17th October at 7:30pm.
St. Michael's Players proudly present a play in two Acts:

"Murder"
By Helen Bradshaw

Watch Act one and then sit back and enjoy a meal. In teams, decide who is the villain.
Watch Act two, when all is revealed. Small prize for the winning team

Tickets limited – first come, first served, available from Sept 1st from Shirley and Peter 724997, Julia and Matthew 727424



Halling WI

June has been and gone. So has the Halling W.I. birthday party. How time flies. Once again we had a jolly good time, thanks to Betty Head and her team. Ann Heaseman took on the roll of Evelyn Low and did the pretty flower arrangements. The flowers make such a difference. Jenny Papadopoulos, our W.I. advisor, and Sheila Miles, our new County Treasurer, came to join us and celebrate.

After a lovely meal we were all wondering who or what we would have for our entertainment. Margaret Sullivan, our president told us that the "booked" entertainment had cancelled the night before and landed her right in it. I wasn't really in the mood to do a turn, but, with quick thinking on Margaret's part, and a few phone calls, she managed to find Mr Ray Spiller, a little cockney man who now lives in Essex with a key board or so it seemed. I thought the music was too loud. W.I. ladies do like to chat (notice I said chat, not gossip) when we get together, and we couldn't hear ourselves think. Turned out that Mr Spiller's hobby has been to collect no 1 records ever since the music industry started it in the late forties. His stories and the way his No1s fitted in were very amusing and we all had a good laugh, even more

so when he asked some of the ladies for special dates in their lives. By the end of the evening we were all tapping our feet, singing along and remembering. another W.I. year gone.

On Friday of the same week, we had the Malling District Conference at the Brassey Rooms Aylesford. We went Oriental. Jenny Papadopoulos was in the chair, and in her address emphasized how everyone should be made to feel welcome when they come for the first time. Perhaps that should apply to all other organizations. It is sadly lacking at the present time. Ann Heaseman and Trudy Fenton-Scott made some pretty cards for our entry for the competition. Sadly we didn't win. West Malling was the winner. I was very glad that I didn't have to judge the cards. They were brilliant. We have some very crafty ladies among us, and it isn't the winning it's the taking part what counts.-

The speaker told us about some of the customs in Japan. Although they don't do Christmas and Easter as we do they have very similar celebrations. W.I. is not just about Halling and Cuxton W.I. The District is just the second rung on the ladder, followed on by the County and National Federations, May they long continue. Phyllis.

Halling Bell Ringers

On June 13th five ringers from Halling (Julia, Jane, Janet, Pat & myself) went with Cuxton Bell Ringers' Outring to West Sussex – a very enjoyable day. We thank Cuxton ringers for organising the trip.

Also our young trainees are progressing well and hopefully will be ringing for services shortly at Halling.

Peter Silver.

St John's Draw June: £5 each to Mrs Burren (55), Mrs Fennemore (71), Mr Silver (76), Mr Tower (146) & Mrs Yates (149) – drawn by Mrs Carter.

Church Hall Draw June: £5 to Mary Morren, drawn by Peter Crundwell.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

28 th June	Sonny Josh Williams	Strood
28 th June	Harrison William Bullen	Strood
5 th July	Logan Rafferty Baxter	Ditton

Weddings:

4 th July	Richard Alan John Marchant Holmes & Saffron Maria Illana Benger	Halling
18 th July	Leigh Francis Tucker & Sarah Patricia Crittenden	Halling

Funerals:

18 th June	Maurice Knight (75)	Snodland
25 th June	Joan Anne Bowles (46)	formerly of Cuxton
26 th June	Josephine Mary Harris (79)	High Street, Halling

Thanks

Eileen Knight would like to thank everyone for all the kindness she received in her recent illness. Thank you for the cards, best wishes and prayers. They made such a difference.

Nature Notes June 2009

Brilliant sunshine beams down from azure skies on the first day of the month. I drive Murphy to the river and we walk the grassy paths by the rippling river and round the ponds. Bloody cranesbill, cow parsley, speedwell and sandwort bloom. Rabbits dash across the path at our approach and disappear down the bank. There is a much needed cooling breeze. The 2nd is another beautiful, warm, sunny day with blue skies and golden sunshine. I walk up the path by the churchyard to the fields where fumitory is fading. Grasses grow tall and mallow, clover and buttercups bloom. Cow parsley in Mays Wood has faded. Everything is so green- brambles, nettles, saplings- and a blackbird sings. I observe bindweed tendrils climbing up a tree, all of forty feet and there is ivy at the top. A squirrel bounds across the undergrowth as I approach the top of Dean Valley. Herb Robert flowers peep out from among brambles. Pink clover, black medick and wayfaring tree flowers bloom. I gaze across the silent valley where, in North Wood, I can hear birdsong. A cool easterly breeze blows. Carpets of speedwell and banks of upright hedge parsley bloom in all their beauty. I see hawkweed and white clover as I walk down to Purty's Shaw. I drink in the pungent perfume of elderflower. A greenfinch sings in Six acre Wood where large clumps of herb Robert grow in the open spaces. I have seen so much beauty. The 3rd is grey and chilly after early morning sunshine. The following day I collect elderflowers to make cordial. In the garden the blue tit box has been invaded for another hole has appeared. I fear the chicks did not survive. Several chilly days follow. On the 8th I watch a squirrel swimming across the pond. Despite heavy rain on the 8th, the family of great tits

come to the feeders while other birds are not so keen. The skies remain grey all day and there is a distinct chill in the air.

Murphy and I walk by the river again on the 11th and the grassy banks are aflame with beautiful wild flowers. The sun shines warmly again on the 14th when blue skies bear billowing white clouds and birdsong fills the air. I walk through the greenness of six-acre Wood, climb part of the hill and skirt the field where crops are ripening. Flowers bloom along the edge of the path, including hedge woundwort which I see for the first time this season and white campion stands tall. I hear bird calls in Mays Wood, darker now that the trees' leaves arch over the paths which lead down to Church Fields where buttercups bloom along the edge of the grass. Hawthorn berries are filling out and beginning to redden. Dark clouds build up from the west on the 15th and they eventually drop their rain which becomes very heavy. Loud claps of thunder make everything shake. The late evening sky on the 18th is beautiful as the setting sun lights up the white and slightly grey clouds to become salmon pink. As I walk through Six-acre Wood on the 19th I see that the once beautiful cow parsley is now lifeless. A large clump of enchanter's nightshade captures my gaze and ivy stems, denuded of leaves, spiral the tree trunks. The next day, a jackdaw comes to the garden soon to be followed by a jay. On the 21st, while walking in Church Fields, I watch bees collecting nectar from the burdock blooms. Nettles stand tall and elder bushes, the flowers of which have almost faded, have developed tiny green berries.

I take Murphy to the river on the 23rd. the water, which is high, sparkles in the sunlight and reflects the

blue of the sky. Meadow brown butterflies hover over the flower covered banks. In the late evening, I watch bats flying to and fro across the garden and the embankment. I am transfixed by these creatures. The next evening Murphy is surprised by a hedgehog which has come to the step by the back door. On the 26th I watch great tits, blue tits chaffinches and collared doves come to the feeders while duncock

forage on the grass. In the evening, as the light fades, I listen to a song thrush trilling from a tree on the embankment. Heavy rain then hail falls accompanied by thunder and lightning on the evening of the 27th which is very sultry. The last three days of June are very hot, the beginning of a heat wave. I have enjoyed this month which has been full of beauty.

The Poem I've chosen is "The Apple Tree" by Oliver St John Gogarty

Elizabeth Summers.

Let there be Light
In pink and white
The apple tree blooms for our delight.
In pink and white,
Its shout unheard,
The Logos itself, the Creative Word,
Burst from nothing; and all is stirred.
It blooms and blows and shrivels to fall
Down on the earth in a pink and white pall,
Withered? But look at each little green ball,

Crowned like a globe in the hand of God,
Each little globe on a shortening rod;
Soon to be rosy and well bestowed,
A cosmos now where the blossoms glowed
Constellated around the tree,
A cone that lifts to infinity.
Each rosy globe is as red as Mars;
And all the tree is a branch of stars.
What can we say but, Glory be!
When God breaks out in an apple tree?



Cuxton WI

This time we had 29 people present which is very good for July as so many are usually away on holiday - perhaps the credit crunch is working to our advantage! We were so pleased to have received a letter from Ann Harris who has been in hospital for the past 6 months. She is now out and staying with her daughter and it seems that, at last, she is beginning to make steady progress. It was a cheery letter with a good positive attitude.

Four members had gone to the West Malling Area AGM and had really enjoyed a talk on the speaker's life while in Japan. We certainly learnt a lot about the Japanese way of life and culture. A report was read from our rep at the yearly AGM held in the Albert Hall for the whole WI movement. Pam Hart had also gone and both said

how much they had enjoyed the speakers - Eve Pollard, Maureen Lipman and Richard Stilgoe with his school of disabled youngsters. There were many damp eyes in the audience when they performed. Our reps reports seemed to dwell on food for most of the time - Strawberries, profiteroles and picnics in the park were all part of the summer scene and keep us all going at this time of the year.

The speaker told us of the joys of a Saga holiday. Our annual garden party is in July, a talk on World Plant Collecting at Halling and a supper and sonnets evening soon in Snodland. So we have much to look forward to in the coming months. Perhaps, always time for Jerusalem but very little time for the jam making!

Sheila.

PCC

For the first time ever, after our PCC on 8th July, I wondered whether our parish is financially viable for the future. Every meeting, it seems, we learn that our finances are impossibly dismal. We only survive by not meeting our financial liabilities to the Diocese and, given that the Diocese is currently conducting a review of its own finances because of its own dire financial condition, I am not sure how long this can go on. I have always believed that, so long it is God's Will for there to be churches in Cuxton and Halling, we shall find the resources we need. I have always been a great believer in the parish system – that every community ought to have a parish church and a parish priest, a worshipping community to evangelise, provide pastoral care and to influence society for good and I have generally thought that this was God's Will for England and that we should work and pray to maintain parishes in every town and village throughout the country. I now have two doubts.

My first point is that God is faithful. He has supplied the resources to maintain churches in Cuxton and Halling, but He puts those resources in the hands of people. People choose whether to give of the money, time and talents God has given them and how much to give. If people decide to keep what God has given them for themselves or to use up their time, money and talents on things other than the Church, we will just not have the resources to continue even if it is right to maintain the parish system in general and our two parish churches in particular.

My second point is that the parish system is predicated on three propositions.

1. England is, or at least ought to be, a Christian country.
2. Public worship is a sacred duty.
3. The best way to serve people is to be physically present in the communities where they live.

But how many people believe any of these things any longer? Don't most people think like this?

1. England is a multicultural society where people practise a variety of religions within their own communities. The default option for the state is secularism – no religion at all.
2. Public worship is a lifestyle choice and an increasingly unfashionable one at that.
3. Given the mobility of modern society with so many people owning their own cars, it makes no economic sense to provide services locally. People can travel to shops, health centres, post offices, schools, etc where they can be most efficiently established and maintained. There is no need for facilities in every village and on every housing estate. Likewise churches! Instead of resident village bobbies, it is more efficient to send a police car when police services are needed. Likewise non-resident vicars could be despatched to where they are needed.

Is it realistic to maintain parish churches and a resident clergyman in places like Cuxton and Halling? Is it viable? And would the Church in fact be more effective if it closed all these “unprofitable branches” and developed its core business in places where there are sufficient numbers of people who actually want to go to church and are willing and able to offer sufficient of their time, talents and money to support a church in their locality?

I am still committed to the parish system and I am very committed personally to maintaining our parish churches in Cuxton and Halling, with a parish Communion in both places every Sunday, the foundation of pastoral care, evangelism and social action. If enough of you agree with me, that is what we shall do. If, however, I am a lone voice in the wilderness or if there are only a few of us who care, I think you may have to face the fact that, when I am gone, you will have to share a vicar with a number of neighbouring parishes, that you won't get services in your own village every week and possibly even that one or other of our church buildings will close.

Obviously, we need your presence. Obviously we need you to offer your time and talents and to support your church with your prayers. On the subject of money, you may want to review what you give. If you are a tax-payer, you can considerably increase the value of your donation by signing a *Gift Aid* declaration.

If you care about the Church in England and particularly in Cuxton and Halling, I hope you will give these matters some thought and some prayer.

Roger.

On a Much Happier Note

I did ask for contributions towards cutting the churchyard grass. There has been a very generous response from individuals. Halling Parish Council supports us and I believe Cuxton Parish Council are thinking about doing so. Thank you, everybody, for your help in this important task.

Roger.

This came from Wrotham Parish Magazine.

Food for thought - below is a depressing poem, so you might think.....The message becomes clear when you read it twice.

I am part of a lost generation
And I refuse to believe
I can change the world
I realise this may be a shock but
"True Happiness comes from within"
Is a lie, and
"Money. will make me happy"
So in 30 years I will tell my children
They are not the most important thing in my life
My employers will know that I have my priorities straight because
Work
Is more important than
Family
I tell you this
Once upon a time
Families stayed together
But this will not be true in my era
This is a quick fix society
Experts tell me
30 years from now I will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of my divorce
I do not concede that
I will live in a country of my own making
In the future
Environmental destruction will be the norm
No longer can it be said that
My peers and I care about this earth
It will be evident that
My generation is apathetic and lethargic
It is foolish to presume that
There is hope

And all of this will come true unless we use the Easter message to reverse it. What Christ did for us on the cross turned the world upside down. Now read it backwards from 'There is hope'.



Message From Max the Rectory Spaniel

We have certainly had some hot weather. Some days were only fit for lying panting. Master still went out running. You know all about mad dogs and Englishmen. Well, I'm not mad and I think even this Englishman found it rather too much. He likes to go out early. It is what he calls his "me time" when all the sensible people are still in bed and he can do what he wants uninterrupted. Even early, though, it was pretty hot and he'd have been wiser to take a relatively sedate walk with me in the woods. On his day off, the other week, he had the bright idea of cycling home from lunch at Rochester the pretty way through Burham and over Aylesford Bridge. He got a puncture in Lunsford Lane. So, what time do you think he got home? And how hot was he?

Next week he is going to a conference on Darwin and religion at Oxford. Years ago, he got a puncture at Bexley while cycling to Hoddesdon for the Science and Religion Conference. The boy in the bike shop said that Science and Religion were incompatible. Master insists that, although this view is very common with non-believers and believers alike, it is essentially wrong. Science and Religion have faith that there is such a thing as truth and that truth is accessible to the human mind.

A simple way to understand the apparent conflict between Darwin and Genesis is the gorilla in the zoo who asked himself, "Am I my brother's keeper or am I my keeper's brother?" Master says that is nonsense. The problem about Darwinism is nothing to do with the age of the earth or whether one species can change into another. The problem is how is it possible to reconcile belief in a beneficent Providence with the notion that most things came into being by chance? It is another version of the contingency versus necessity and predestination versus free will debates. If we exist by chance, in what sense have our lives any meaning? These issues have been debated for millennia, not centuries. Hopefully the Oxford Conference will advance human understanding, albeit very slightly. If Master himself manages to understand the discussions and if he can think of a way of making them communicable, he will tell you about it himself later!

Meanwhile, Mummy and I get a few days off. The Church enjoys a change of weekday celebrant. And Master gets a break.

Max, the Rectory Spaniel.