

# Good News Parish Magazine

## High Downs Parish

*Serving the villages of  
Eastling, Otterden, Stalisfield  
and Throwley*

***ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/  
goodnews***  
for current and past editions

APRIL



2020

## IN OUR CHURCHES

There will be no public services in our churches until further notice but our Rector, Revd Steve Lillicrap will be in Lynsted Church to say Morning Prayer each day at 9am and this will be streamed live on the facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/  
kingsdowncreekside/](https://www.facebook.com/kingsdowncreekside/)



### Throwley Church

is open for private prayer :  
9.30am - 5pm on Saturdays,  
and Good Friday and  
will be there on  
11.30am.



Eastling

is open  
8am -

If another person is in  
when you visit, remember  
the proper hygiene and social  
distancing policies.

# Coronavirus Help in our Villages

## Eastling Help

The Eastling Volunteer Force is on stand by to help  
More details and updates on: [www.eastlingvillage.co.uk](http://www.eastlingvillage.co.uk)  
or phone ring Julia Bailey on 01795 890401

## Throwley Help

If you live in Throwley and would like regular updates  
please email Sarah on [sarah@4reeves.com](mailto:sarah@4reeves.com)  
or to join the WhatsApp group email Simon on  
[sjoy41@gmail.com](mailto:sjoy41@gmail.com)

## A letter from Stalisfield Parish Council

### Dear friends and neighbours,

We know that the current coronavirus pandemic is a very worrying time for everyone living in our village, but we are so fortunate that we are already a close and caring community. We are working hard to introduce some things which we hope will help everyone to cope with, what we know will be, a very difficult time.

Every household in the Parish should have received a letter and a contact form to fill in so that we can make sure that everyone in the village has the support they need. The idea will be that we can form into smaller groups with a contact person who can make regular checks who can then communicate any problems, requests etc. Everyone who wants one will also have an emergency contact number for someone in the village. We will be working to

get this fully up and running over the next few days. Please let Cat know if you have any problems with the form on 01795 890298.

For those on What's App we also have a village chat group. If you've ticked the box on the form saying you would like to be part of it you will automatically be added.

Also, the Plough Inn is now offering a competitively priced shopping service with fresh fruit and veg, meat and other staples. Phone Marianne on 01795 890256 and she will explain how it works.

We will be in touch again very soon but in the meantime take care and try not to worry too much. There will be difficulties ahead but if we work together over these tough times, we will emerge from it even stronger.

Best wishes,  
Stalisfield Parish Council.

## Future editions of Good News

will be in digital format only,

available on [ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews](http://ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews)  
[www.eastlingvillage.co.uk](http://www.eastlingvillage.co.uk) ,  
and [www.facebook.com/highdownsbenefice/](https://www.facebook.com/highdownsbenefice/)

If you do not have access to the internet but would like to receive a copy, please call Hilary on 01795 890338 to make other arrangements.

## Eastling Village Hall - message from the Trustees

In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trustees have decided to close the Hall until further notice. The health of the community matters most and public health information takes precedence when it comes to the pandemic. Also, at this time of year we would normally be holding the Trustees' Annual General Meeting. This will not take place but we will publish on the Hall's website the Chair's annual report and the annual accounts ([eastlingvillagehall.co.uk](http://eastlingvillagehall.co.uk)). If you have any questions/suggestions which you would like to raise with the Trustees, please contact the Chair, Paul Ainsworth, on [kavallach6@btinternet.com](mailto:kavallach6@btinternet.com) or the Honorary Secretary, Sue Parry, on [sueandpeter@live.co.uk](mailto:sueandpeter@live.co.uk) and we will do our best to address them.

The Trustees, like everyone, sincerely hopes that this crisis will be over soon and we can all get back to having our parties in the Hall. In the meantime we wish you all good health.

## Eastling Neighbourhood Watch

Village Warden 07794 010 394

or 01795 890848

Police 101      Emergency 999

The virus that has hit the country has brought out the nasties as well. One scam has been persons knocking on doors saying that they are in the process of disinfecting the whole street and whilst the resident is distracted others burgle the property. Ring the police immediately if this happens

The nasties are also calling on elderly/vulnerable people offering to collect any shopping that may be required and requesting that they pass over their bank card with pin no to pay for the shopping, under no circumstances part with your card. If not sure contact the police or give me a ring.

Delivered to Eastling homes with the Good News is a leaflet issued by volunteers in the village which I would recommend that everybody reads.

## Eastling Volunteers.

The volunteers help Eastling residents with transport to medical appointments, shopping and other general needs. Given the current virus problem the need for our services may well increase. Most of our volunteers are in the 'at risk' age group so we need members of our community under the age of 60 years to offer to join our group. Please ring Julia Bailey on 01795 890401 or email

[Julia.bailey98@outlook.com](mailto:Julia.bailey98@outlook.com)

## CANCELLED EVENTS

Race Night on 12th April

Eastling Parish Council

and Village Hall AGMs

Bluebell Walk on 3rd May

VE Day Celebrations 8th May

Plant Sale on 23rd May

and

No church services until  
further notice.



This leaflet applies to everybody within Eastling and is there to assist in these turbulent times. This virus is evil and will be beaten.

There are many good people in the village whom have volunteered to assist in this epidemic and no doubt they will receive our full cooperation.

Should anyone not be sure of a volunteer who may call on them please ring me and I will clarify I have gone into self isolation at this time and should anyone be lonely and worried about anything and would like a chat for any reason please give me a call. Take Care and be well  
Alan



## The Plough Inn, Stalisfield

is now offering a  
**take away service  
for food and drinks,**

please check out the website for  
details or give us a call.

Please call 01795 890256 or email  
[info@theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk](mailto:info@theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk)  
to place your orders in advance or  
to get further details of our full take  
away menu.

We can drop out to your car if you  
need us too also.

In some circumstances we may be  
able to deliver, please just ask, we  
are all in this together!

This is a perfect time to take full  
advantage of our shop. Pre order  
two to three days in advance for  
meat, fish and fresh vegetables, by  
phone or email.

We can bring out to the car so you  
don't even have to come into the  
pub and take payment over the  
phone.

Please contact us for further details.

Keep up to date by following us on  
**Facebook, Twitter or Instagram**

Stalisfield Road, Faversham, ME13 0HY  
Tel: 01795 890256  
[theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk](http://theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk) Email:  
[info@theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk](mailto:info@theploughinnstalisfield.co.uk)

## EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

To book ring Hayley on  
on 01795 890968

[www.eastlingvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.eastlingvillagehall.co.uk)



A beautiful hall in a lovely village location for your  
wedding, club, sports or meetings.

The large hall has pretty grounds, car parking, meeting  
rooms and fully equipped facilities for professional or  
self-catering occasions.

## Otterden and Stalisfield W.I.

At our March Meeting a highly recommended Speaker came along to entertain and educate us - she certainly did just that, keeping us all spellbound with her enthusiasm and knowledge of 'A Maidstone Grammar Schoolgirl's War'. Mary Smith was Head Teacher at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls until her retirement in 2014. Whilst at the school, Mary discovered a Scrap Book in the Archive cupboard that had been compiled by the Art Teacher Helen Keen during the Second

World War covering 1939 to 1946, in the form of paintings and drawings. They are vibrant and humorous whilst depicting life during that period at the school, having lessons in the Wartime Shelters built on the premises. The



Shelters to the rear of the school had been discovered and re-opened to provide real life insight into what life was like for the pupils. With subsequent investigation, the Shelters to the front of the school were also located and the entrances are now being re-built to provide access.

Mary researched various archives to learn the background to this period of the school, but the most valuable information was provided by the 'girls' themselves who attended the School at that time. Some of them were then photographed in the Shelters that were originally used for their lessons as teenagers. Mary's talk finished all too soon, but she has produced a book (which the majority of us purchased) with all the information, paintings and first hand quotations that went towards making that time in history come alive. The proceeds go towards opening up and maintaining the entrances to further Shelters found to the front of the School premises.

Maidstone Grammar School does allow organised visits by Primary Schools to the Wartime Shelters, as the Second World War is now part of the curriculum for that age group. Please contact the School to organise a visit.

April's meeting was to be Melanie Gibson-Barton talking to us about the 'Life and Times of Edith Cavell'. Sadly, due to the Coronavirus outbreak this meeting has been cancelled. Please contact Ellie Cameron on 01795 892016 or Helen Brooks on 07477 580727 if you would like to join us when meetings resume.

The letter from Councillor Bowles is available on the Parish Council page of [eastlingvillage.co.uk](http://eastlingvillage.co.uk)



BelmontHseGdns



Belmont House and Gardens



### BELMONT HOUSE & GARDENS

#### Coronavirus

The Trustees are continuing to observe and monitor the current Government advice about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it affects Belmont House, the Gardens and the Estate as a whole.

Our priority is the health and wellbeing of our staff, visitors and volunteers.

Following that advice, we have decided that the House and tearoom remain closed until at least the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, when the position will be reviewed in light of the circumstances prevailing at that time.

This will include **all** group visits, events and workshops scheduled up to that date.

We will continue to review the position and will keep you regularly updated via our website and on social media.

Whilst recognising the importance of social distancing and staying indoors to help fight the spread of the virus we also appreciate the benefits to people of being able to spend time outside, in the natural world.

Accordingly, the Trustees have taken the decision to keep the gardens and grounds open for visitors, free of charge, and we hope that you will take the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and quiet serenity of our gardens during this period.

Our priority is to ensure you have a safe visit - we will maintain a high standard of cleanliness around the gardens and would ask you to respect other people's personal space in order to minimise both the risk of any infection and the spread of the virus.

**Belmont House & Gardens, Throwley, Nr Faversham, Kent**  
**ME13 0HH**  
**[www.belmont-house.org](http://www.belmont-house.org)**



## Lent to Easter 2020

It is the season of Lent, in terms of Church seasons as I write. Lent that is officially 40 days leading towards Easter with its remembering of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection on the 3rd day.

Lent lasts for 40 days, which is the length of time that Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting. Matthew, in his gospel, gives what I think as the biggest understatement in the bible:

Matthew 4:2

*After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

I should think he was!

Lent has often been the time when people have given up something for the season, for example chocolate. I am coming across stories of people doing something extra for the 40 days of Lent. Doing something positive during this time.

Quite a few years ago, I joined in with many from my church, with a project called 'Faith comes through Hearing'. It was designed for the season of Lent and the idea is that you listen to a portion of the New Testament being read each day for the 40 days. Right, I said, I can do

this. I purchased the pack and put the first cassette tape into the cassette player in my car and off I went.

Now I realise that has already dated me! Faith comes through Hearing has moved through the CD phase now to downloading onto a Smart device!

So I set off on my 40 day journey, as it were, and I was really pleased with myself as I managed not to miss a single day. They say pride comes before a fall, though, and having not missed a single day in those 40 days, and having reached the end of Revelation 22, I was mighty puzzled to discover that there was still a week to go before Easter - I had finished on Palm Sunday.

What had gone wrong? Had I miscounted and missed some days? I was sure that I hadn't. Had 'Faith Comes through Hearing' made a fundamental mistake? I thought that was unlikely. I looked back and, yes, I had listened to 40 days of recordings.

It was only when I spoke with someone else that I discovered my mistake. Traditionally, in the Church, Sundays are not counted as part of the 40 days of Lent as they are feast days.

I was told recently that our former friend and colleague, Gordon Sherwood, usually gave up chocolate biscuits for Lent, but then would say with a smile on his face, that he always ate one on a Sunday!

However the days of Lent are counted, it is a time, in the Church, of reflection and remembering what God is about, through His son, Jesus, in his relationship with human beings that is particularly shown in the events of the Cross and Resurrection that we will celebrate at Easter. The events that reveal the perfect love of God in His relationship with human beings.

This year, we are going through the season of Lent and looking towards Easter with the daily news of what is happening in terms of the spread and effects of the 'Covid19' virus.

As I write there are reports of panic buying and general fear of what might be in our Nation. (I am writing after the move from containment to delay).

I am reminded of a verse from what we know as the first letter written by the disciple John:

1 John 4:18

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*

As I write I cannot know where we will be, but I pray that we will as a nation, and as neighbours, find a way to show love to one another and to continue to care for those in need even if it means having to go out of our way and do something extra or if it means having to give up something that we would normally do.

After all that is part of who we are called to be as human beings, called to love and be loved.

*Steve Lillicrap*

### Prayer Pointers

#### April 2020



**Mondays** - For those working in the community: Medical staff; Clergy; Carers; Police; Shop workers; Bin men; Bus drivers - all who keep daily life running smoothly.

**Tuesdays** - For all pupils and those who teach or run our schools and colleges.

**Wednesdays** - For our Government and their advisors.

**Thursdays** - For our neighbours, especially those who may need our help.

**Fridays** - For the homeless and friendless.

**Saturdays** - For all who live in our villages.

**Sundays** - Happy Easter - Pray the world will see the wisdom of the good news that JESUS is ALIVE.

### Eastling

#### Church

#### Flower Rota



12th April - Easter Lilies.

19th & 26th - Janet Wood

If you would like to join the flower arranging rota please call Bay on 01795 892036.

### Easter Lilies

Bay Lees will welcome donations for Easter lilies in memory of loved ones; their names will be recorded in the church.

## *Services in High Downs and Kingsdown and Creekside*

There are NO services running in High Downs or Kingsdown and Creekside  
BUT

Throwley Church will be open for  
private prayer :

10am - 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and  
Good Friday and Reader Caroline will  
be there on Sundays 10.30-11.30am.

Eastling Church is open every day  
8am - 5pm

### **CONTACT THE *GOOD NEWS* EDITOR**

If you would like to advertise in the May 2020 magazine, submit articles or stories for publication, or would like any forthcoming events publicised, send your contribution by 15th April to: Hilary Harlow, Pinks Farm, Eastling, Faversham, ME13 0BA. Tel: 01795 890338. Where possible, please submit your entry by email: [goodnewsmagazine@me.com](mailto:goodnewsmagazine@me.com)

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on [ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews](http://ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews)

**Please note that future editions will be in digital format until the coronavirus precautions are lifted.**

## *High Downs Parish*

Parish Office Email: [eastlingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:eastlingchurch@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/highdownsbenefice](https://facebook.com/highdownsbenefice)

**Rector** Reverend Canon Dr. Steve Lillicrap  
01795 522510 [highdownsvicar@gmail.com](mailto:highdownsvicar@gmail.com)

**Reader** Norman Fowler (01795 890412)  
4 Meesons Close, Eastling

**Reader** Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)  
4 Glebe Cottages, Eastling

### **Churchwardens**

**Eastling** Andrew Baxter (01795 890598)

**Administrator** Janet Payne  
E mail: [eastlingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:eastlingchurch@gmail.com)

**Stalisfield with Otterden**  
Jean West (01233 712270)

**Administrator** Sheila Moger (01233 463746)  
E mail: [samhawksnest@aol.com](mailto:samhawksnest@aol.com)

**Throwley** Gaynore Moss (01795 890995)

## *From the Registers*

### **Interment of Ashes**

Sylvia May Twyman

Derek Herbert Twyman

12th February 2020 at Eastling

## *Midweek Groups*

Our home groups will not be meeting during the emergency

## **Church minister was inspiration behind 'Great Escape'**

A Church of Scotland minister nicknamed 'Padre Mac' has been named as the inspiration behind the Great Escape.

The Revd Professor Murdo Ewen Macdonald's "fiery sermons" motivated the famous breakout of a German Prisoner of War camp in March 1944, according to an author. Dr Linda Barker said the Great Escape is often heralded as a plan masterminded by English officers, and the theme tune to the 1963 film of the same name is sung by England football fans.

The theologian has been given credit for a minor role in hiding tunnel sand in the famous break-out over the course of a year. However, the historian claims his influence was possibly far more significant, as he had previously made his own escape while in transit to a PoW camp.

He was a chaplain for the men of Stalag Luft III, including RAF Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, who

has always been known as the mastermind of the Great Escape.

Dr Parker is the author of "Nearer My God to Thee: Airborne Chaplains in the Second World War," which examines the full story of padres who accompanied the airborne forces to all theatres of war between 1942-1945.

"Murdo Ewen Macdonald, known as Padre Mac, may have been the 'inspiration that led to many great escapes' during the Second World War," she said. "He was moved to Stalag Luft III, where the Great Escape would take place in March 1944. Here, he befriended Roger Bushell, and Harry 'Wings' Day, both instigators and organisers of the Great Escape.

"As a chaplain, he would have had access to all the troops and would have been able to speak with them, in confidence, to motivate them with the story of his own escape attempt."



...rumours that we would be giving out easter eggs are unfounded - er, there aren't any left!



## School News

Eastling Primary School celebrated World Book Day with a week of exciting activities based on a range of great texts. It culminated in all the children and staff dressing up as a book character.

Acorn class led a lovely assembly on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March on the theme of 'Around the World.' The children shared their learning about Africa and Australia. They showed off some wonderful art including pointillism, colourful jewellery and clay fruits. The children had cooked some food and learnt facts about the places too.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March Miss Johnson took children from years 1 and 2 to participate in an infant agility competition at Herne Bay High School. The children had to complete a range of activities including throwing javelins, jumping and skipping.

The Year 6 children are looking forward to going to PGL (outdoor activity centre), the school's residential trip on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March. They have a full week of activities planned including raft building, abseiling, climbing and Jacobs Ladder.

The school are delighted to be collaborating with Trees for Farms and have some exciting projects planned for the coming year.

There are a few spaces available across the school for an immediate start. Any prospective parents are welcome to call the office on 01795 890252 to arrange a visit. For further information please visit our school website where photographs and newsletters are displayed and updated regularly.

Melanie Dale, Headteacher.



Help feed local people in crisis

## Faversham Foodbank April 2020

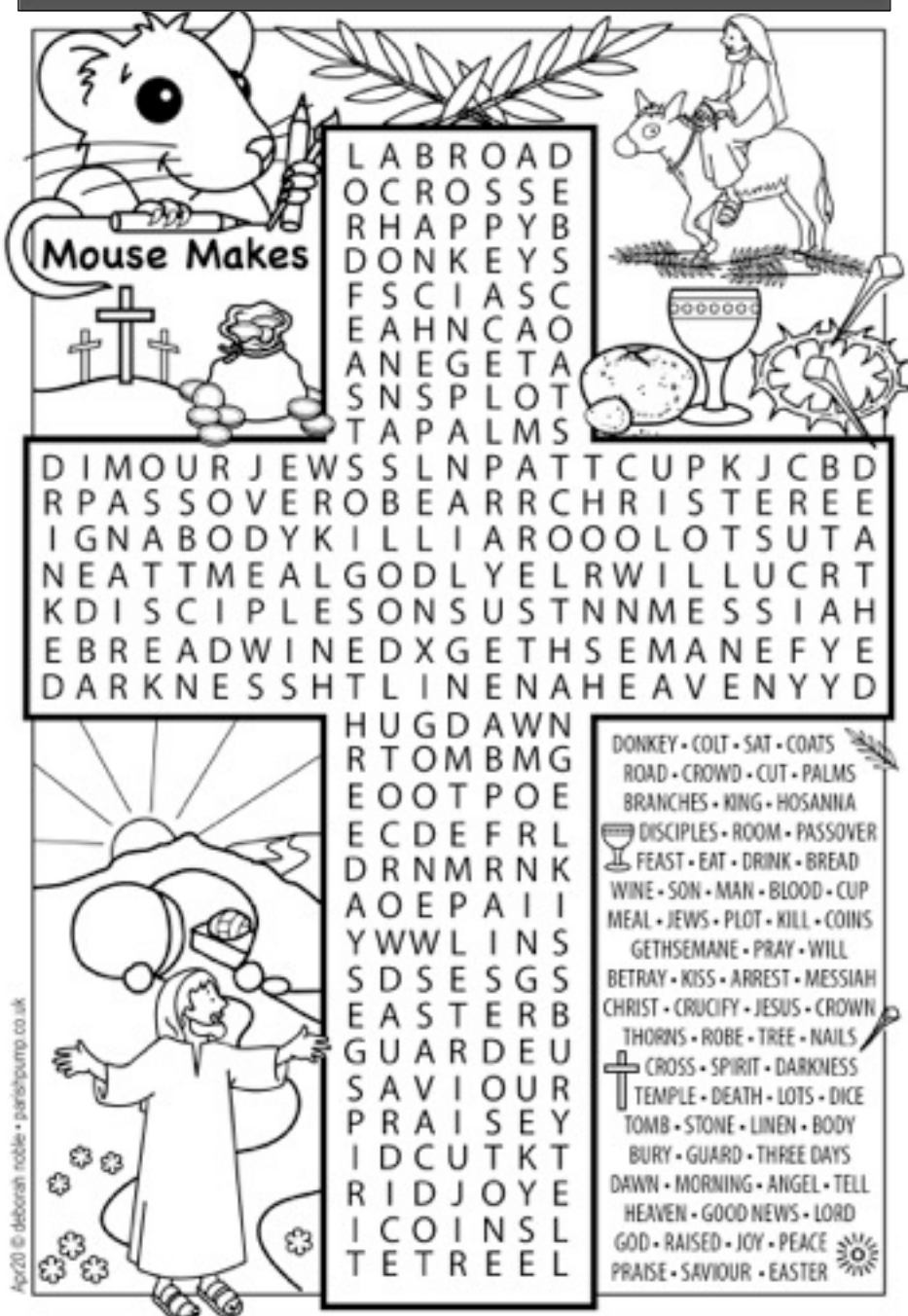
These are difficult times for all of us but those with the least always suffer most in these situations. Thank you for your contributions.

In order to protect volunteers at Faversham Foodbank the manager has asked that donated items be deposited in the food bins in local supermarkets though we will continue to collect any items left in Eastling church. Alternatively you might prefer giving a donation of money at this time, to give the Foodbank the facility to respond to unexpected demand.

Details of how to do so may be found at [www.faversham.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.faversham.foodbank.org.uk)

### Urgent items required for April

Tinned fish; tinned ham; surface cleaners; sponge puddings; long life fruit juice; squash; tinned fruit and anti-bacterial hand gel for their volunteers to use.





## Why Easter will never go away

How do you make sense of the Resurrection? Dead men don't rise, so why believe that this particular dead man did rise?



At the end of St Luke's Gospel we read that: "they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement" (Luke 24.4). This is highly significant. The Gospels do not show us a group of disciples who were in a receptive frame of mind. After the crucifixion, they were in hiding, frightened and scattered. Then suddenly, they came out of hiding and were totally different; excited, joyful. By Pentecost they were confident, with one firm message: "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him up!"

How did they know this? Because of direct personal experience. Some of them had visited the tomb of Jesus: it was empty.

Others claimed to have seen and touched the risen Lord. Were they

hallucinating? People can hallucinate in groups – when taking drugs, for example. But, of course each one will see a different hallucination. But the disciples all saw the same thing. Or rather, the same person. Jesus.

Were they lying? Jesus had died a humiliating death as a criminal. Perhaps they wanted to rescue His good name. So did they pretend they had seen Him?

This theory has a big problem. Their preaching led them into trouble with the authorities. They were beaten and imprisoned and some of them killed. People will die for ideas and causes which they believe in passionately. But not for things they have made up. We might suffer for our convictions, we will not suffer for our inventions.

What about the 'swoon' theory? That Jesus didn't die on the cross, despite terrible wounds. He recovered in the tomb, and then escaped. The disciples nursed Him back to health. But Roman soldiers knew when a man was dead; and there was the guard on the tomb. Also, the events which followed simply don't fit. If the disciples had been hiding Jesus, they would have kept very low-key, and out of the way, so that the authorities did not come after Him again.

Besides, to preach that God had raised Jesus from the dead – which is exactly what they did preach – would have been a lie. Beatings and threat of death would soon have loosened their tongues. Inventions crumble under pressure; convictions hold fast.

Another reason for believing in the Resurrection is this: Jesus' continuing impact. Thousands and soon millions of people in every generation since have shared an inescapable sense of being 'accompanied' through life. Though unseen, they identify this presence as the Risen Lord. Sometimes this experience of meeting Jesus is gentle and fitful.

Sometimes it is dramatic and life-changing. This reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus is not just an interesting historical puzzle. It is a vital, present day reality. It brings wonderful comfort, assuring us of the central Christian truths: death is dead; Jesus is alive; God is love.

This central notion was captured, most movingly, by the great Albert Schweitzer: 'He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me", and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is.'

Have a joyful – and a challenging – Easter.



### The Fox

by Audrey Keen

Quietly, quietly as we tread  
We see the red fox leave his bed,  
We stand where pussy willow grows  
To watch dear reynard as he goes.  
Quickly, quickly he does dash  
His paws into the puddles splash,  
His head alert, his brush erect,  
His colouring and pace perfect.  
Bold and beautiful his stride  
Onto the broad and open ride.  
Though no red hunt or farmer's gun  
Has caused the fox this day to run,  
Just his own spirit sends him where  
His fellows scent the very air.  
And yes, perhaps his lively ear  
Guessed that we two were standing here,  
And this decided him to find  
The wood frequented by his kind.  
But I wish he would come again  
To rest within his bramble den.

### Spring

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely  
and lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and  
wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing.  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they  
brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing  
lambs too have fair their  
fling.



What is all this juice and  
all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the  
beginning

In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with  
sinning,

Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,  
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the  
winning.

**CANCELLED**  
**Cancer Research North Downs Walk**  
14 June 2020  
Harrietsham Village Hall

Regrettably we have had to take the difficult decision to cancel THIS YEAR'S walk, in light of the recent escalation regarding coronavirus. We had hoped to be able to go ahead with the walk but all advice and common sense dictates that we put the health of everyone at the forefront. With apologies to you all for the disruption and disappointment.  
Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent

*We offer you this article by the Ven John Barton, commenting on coronavirus. But we are well aware that things are changing rapidly....*

### **The spread of Coronavirus**

Thorough and frequent hand washing with soap and water is recommended by the World Health Organisation as the first step to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

I don't know who first said, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness", but you won't find that phrase in the Bible. Ritual washings are practised by many religions, but they usually signify spiritual cleansing, not physical sanitisation. Piety isn't a substitute for hygiene, nor vice versa.

The Coronavirus, now called Covid-19, has been a daily news item for months, with the result that fear is spreading more rapidly than the disease itself. Stock markets throughout the world have plummeted; sales of disinfectant have soared. Sports fixtures have been cancelled, whole towns have been quarantined and worldwide trade is threatened.

Statistics change hourly, so anything quoted here will be out of date by the time you read it, but we need to put this plague (if that is what it is) into perspective. Do you remember the Ebola epidemic which swept through regions of Africa from 2014 onwards? More than one in three sufferers died from that virus, but there's now a

vaccine which can be used when Ebola threatens. Past influenza pandemics have been nowhere near as severe. 'Asian Flu' in 1957, led to 3,550 deaths in England and Wales, or something like 2.4% of actual cases. In 2009, the fatality figure for the swine flu epidemic was about 0.026%. The figures for today's Covid-14 virus suggest that around 80% of cases are mild, 14% develop severe symptoms, 4% become critically ill and the death rate is 2%.

This virus was first publicised by Doctor Li Wenliang, who was detained and censured by the Chinese police for "spreading false rumours". Although he himself subsequently died of the disease, there can be no doubt that his courage saved many lives. There are echoes here of words from St John's Gospel: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." As for the people of China where the virus originated, the Bishop of Newcastle, Christine Hardman, tweeted a Sri Lankan poster, which shows the right Christian attitude. It says, "HATE THE VIRUS, NOT THE CHINESE. Let's pray for them instead". Amen.

And do wash your hands.



*Tim Lenton on the telescope that lets us look into deep space.*

### **The Hubble Space Telescope**

The Hubble Space Telescope was launched 30 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1990. It was named after Edwin Hubble, an outstanding expert on extragalactic astronomy in the 1920s and 1930s.

The launch, originally scheduled for 1983, had been delayed by technical and budget problems and by the Challenger disaster. Ironically the NASA error that caused the Challenger tragedy was similar to the one that led to the Hubble telescope being launched with a defective mirror – unwillingness to accept technical warnings when there was great pressure from above to go ahead.

In the case of the Hubble telescope, also built by NASA with help from the European Space Agency, a more basic machine revealed the problem with the mirror, but those in charge did not believe it because a newer, more complex machine had given the go-ahead.

The problem was put right by astronauts in 1993 – the telescope was always designed to be serviced in orbit – and since then its position outside the Earth's atmosphere has enabled it to record many detailed visible light images that have enabled scientists a deep view into space, leading to new theories in astrophysics.

The telescope is estimated to remain in working order until 2030-2040.

