

**St George
The Martyr
Shirley**

**Christ
in the
Community**

Dashmvaive: St George: April 23rd



April 2024

50p

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Exploring your faith

The Book Reading Group offers a monthly opportunity to look at faith-based writing and swap your thoughts with others. See Book Reading Group section of church website and page 10.

Little Dragons Toddler Group
St George's: Monday mornings in term time
All under 5's with their parents/ carers welcome

Contact: Regina 07825 428465

Climate Crisis

What can I do?

- Learn the facts YES
- Speak up for change YES
- Work with others YES
- Reduce my own carbon footprint YES
- Resign myself to the worst NO

Slimming World Shirley

St George's Church Hall: Mondays at 7 p.m.

Contact: Andrea
07956 157275

Services at St. George's Church

Sundays 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist. Most Wednesdays 11 30 a.m. Said Eucharist. The Sunday Eucharist will also be available via live-streaming. See website or newsletter for access to the on-line option. There are shared worship opportunities throughout the week. Please see centre pages for details. We aim to avoid any changes, but illness, etc, may change things..

While we are without a Vicar, enquiries should be made to 020 8776 0185: Parish Administrator, and the Church Wardens will contact the appropriate person.

Vicar: Vacancy

Hon. Curate: The Reverend Hilary Fife 19 Greenview Avenue, Shirley, Croydon CR0 7QW 07931 761320

Reader: Mr Ray Wheeler 88 Palace View, Shirley, Croydon CR0 8QN 020 8777 5271

Reader: Mrs Liz Bebington 79 Shirley Way, Shirley, Croydon CR0 8PL 020 8777 4840

**Website: www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk
Parish Office: parish.office@hotmail.co.uk**

Mary Magdalene

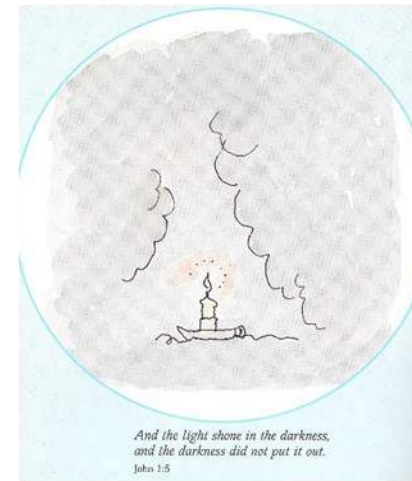


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A View from the Green

On the last day of March we celebrated Easter Day. Lent ended and, with Spring just 11 days old, we kindled the new fire, lit the Paschal Candle, and proclaimed with joy 'Alleluia! Christ is risen!' The Easter Sunday service is always such a joyous occasion filled with light and joy and hope. But it is an inescapable truth that our world at present is filled with so much darkness and pain – in the many places torn apart by war, damaged by climate change, scarred by human sin, joy and hope are conspicuous by their absence. So what are we shouting 'Alleluia!' for on Easter Day?

That's why we need to reflect ever more deeply on the wonder of that first Easter Day. Jesus resurrection was not the fairy tale 'happy ending' of a child's story book nor was it a divine panacea suggesting everything would be cosy and comfy from now on (providing you are a member of the 'right' group of believers). The risen Christ still bore the marks of crucifixion – the scars of Good Friday went with him into heaven when he ascended to his Father. The resurrection doesn't do away with darkness – after all humans still have free will! But what it does show us is that darkness will NEVER have the last word. NOTHING can ever extinguish God's light and life. We shout 'Alleluia!' not because we believe that the journey from now on is going to be plain sailing but because we now know God will never leave us, that his light will, somehow, always shine, that His hope cannot die. Graham Jeffery expresses this so well so I'll let him have the last word.....



It is strange, Lord,
the effect of a candle:
so trivial a thing,
so small a piece of wax.
And yet I light it,
and for a little space
the darkness
is driven back,
so that the world itself
is lighter
—because of my candle,
because of one good deed,
because of one life.

Hilary Fife

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Truth-Adjacent

Sometimes, you hear words that stick with you. In this case, it was Tim Hertford on Radio 4's stats programme "More or Less", He was describing yet another highly dubious use of figures by someone who should have known better. "Truth—Adjacent" is a beautifully delicate term that could be more brutally defined as "untrue but might be thought to be true by the audience", We can't all know the facts about every situation in the news, or indeed do our own fact checking when someone we ought to be able to trust says something that seems open to question. Some politicians and other opinionated folks seem to "think" that if they are convinced their prejudice is right, the rightness of the figures they produce to support that prejudice matters not at all.

Most of us are not in a position to mislead the general public by using the wrong figures. BUT, and especially if we use social media (which is a bit like shouting in the Albert Hall during a moment of silence), we need as individuals to think through and own our own opinions, while remembering that we don't own the facts. If we support our opinions with facts, they ought to be the real and relevant facts, sourced reliably rather than half-heard and half-remembered from someone who had heard them from someone else.

And why does this matter? Because if you say, for example, "I think people with red hair can't be trusted", those who hear you will probably smile quietly at a silly prejudice... And maybe wonder if these awful red-haired people become reliable when their hair falls out or they die their hair. However, once you add: "Nearly 70% of people in prison have red hair", your audience may well begin to sign up to your prejudice. The audience is not to know that the 70% "statistic" is what a van driver leaving a prison saw fleetingly as he passed a small group of men he assumed were prisoners. Maybe a weird example, but "More or Less" was airing real examples of real influencers using unreal statistics to confirm dangerous prejudices that they already share with quite a large group of people already looking for prejudice reinforcement.

Wise Ways with Water: A summary of RHS advice from the March "The Garden"

1. Diverting your downpipe to a low-lying garden can create a rain garden—a resource for swallows, solitary bees, and frogs, toads and newts.
2. Mulching with compost and wood chip allows rain through to the soil while reducing evaporation.
3. "Grey" water from shower or kitchen can be re-cycled for use on plants you don't intend to eat.
4. Keeping gutters clear maximises rainwater collection - though be careful in getting to the gutter.
5. Even the smallest of ponds helps wildlife.
6. Plant to suit soil conditions, rather than trying to grow against the grain.
7. Log piles and such-like are ultra-low maintenance, and encourage diversity.
8. Planting drought-resistant plants in crevices between slates, in soil+compost+gravel/course sand, looks good and saves water.
9. Healthy small prunings dropped on soil reduce evaporation and add organic matter to the soil.
10. Fewer and bigger plant containers improve retention of water and nutrition.
11. Go peat-free. (But do read the label on the peatless substitutes.
12. If you must have a parking space, make it as porous as possible, and think about planting in the gravel where the tyres won't go.
13. If you are having building work done, consider hiring a mini crusher to crush hardscape or concrete that can then be used as 10cm mulch for drought-tolerant plants.
14. Maximise rainwater watering. Mains water has chlorine and chloramines, which kill vital soil microbes. Mains water left standing for 10 minutes reduces chlorine. Humic acid can reduce the chloramines.
15. (This is from earlier RHS water advice.) Remember that on the whole lawns do recover from dry spells... Whereas water supplies are less resilient!"
16. (Again from earlier advice.) Well-established plants etc do better without extra watering than newly planted things which have not had time to get established. .

St George for.....



The cover picture has the visual aid advantage of making the slaying of the dragon look more of a challenge than the traditional picture where George and horse have a distinct size advantage. The G and D story is not edifying (as well as not being credible). A community which has been feeding the local dragon sheep to keep it quiet, begins to run low on sheep, and starts substituting women. A knight turns up, tames the dragon with minimum effort, and then offers to kill the now tamed dragon if everybody gets baptised. Deal done. Dragon killed. Not even a decent fight. And George, bless him, had

probably never heard of England. Another case of military tourists hearing about a local (largely fictional) saint, trying their luck with that saint's name as a lucky charm, winning a battle....and yippee!

The valiant male in shining armour (that didn't exist in the 3rd Century AD) proved popular in many countries. Rome tried in 1969 to de-mote George, but Rome made little impression on English Nationalists. At least the previous English top saints, such as Edward the Confessor and Edmund, had lived in what is now England! A pity Britain/the United Kingdom doesn't have a Patron Saint. (If you Google Britain Patron Saint, you get the various "national" Patron Saints: two of whom did have some connection with the countries that adopted them.)

What we can usefully take away from George the Martyr (as opposed to George the Dragon Murderer) is the word "martyr". It means primarily WITNESS, rather than victim: someone who retains control, and who maybe dies still in charge. The martyr is the ultimate exponent of self-control (backed up by God control). "My faith is bigger than your gun...or whatever else you are threatening me with." If the real George was, like the real (and more English) St Alban, a Roman soldier; here is someone, formally under a secular authority, ready to let love for God triumph over respect for that secular authority. Good on you, George.

Churches Together in Shirley

St John's
St George's
All Saints
West Wickham
and Shirley
Baptist
Shirley Methodist



Our Lady's
Church of God
Apostolic
Shrublands Christian Fellowship
Longheath Baptist Church

Monthly Prayer Meetings: on Zoom until September
Wednesday April 3rd
Thursday May 2nd
Tuesday June 4th
Wednesday July 3rd
Thursday August 1st
(Duration 7 30 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

Zoom contacts as follows:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83660642432>
Meeting ID: 836 6064 2432

Tuesday September 3rd 7 30 p.m. Lady Chapel at St George's—with Zoom option if possible

Prayer notes will be Emailed to member Churches when available. Ask dunaigh2@btinternet.com if you would like a copy. You can of course use the notes for private or family prayer whenever, and as often, as you want to.

Churches Together in Shirley
Advent Quiet Day
Saturday December 7th
St John's, Shirley
Leader: Gillian Fenner

Please put the date in your diary. Further details in due course

*"The Soldier" is reprinted from "1914" Five Sonnets. Rupert Brooke.
London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1915.*

*F I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust conceal'd;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Wash'd by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.*

Perhaps the best of all "English" poems. Those of us who are not English, can readily substitute our own country or countries.. though the substitute may not scan as well. The little we "know" about heaven tells us that, for each and every-one of us, heaven will be both entirely unpredictable and exactly what we always wanted. You can't beat that for a combination of desirable characteristics.

Some notes for you to note

- ♥ **Deadline for the May Magazine: Sunday April 21st .**
- ♥ **The Bible Reading Group** We are reading the **Book Ecclesiasticus**. Please note that this is **NOT** the same as **Ecclesiastes**, which is also a Bible book. Your Bible may not include **Ecclesiasticus**. I'm guessing that very few of you will be able to complain "I have read this book already!" If you want the relevant paperwork and/or the link to join us on Zoom on Monday evenings for 40 minutes, contact Brian McGinnis. Why not give it a go?
- ♥ **The Book Reading Group: The April reading choice is Studdert Kennedy's "The Unutterable Beauty"**. This is a poem within a poem: the title of a short poem within a collection of poems with the same title. Copy of the short poem available on request; or you can google the title and access the short poem and all the other poems in the collection. Kennedy felt what he wrote, and wrote what he felt. The poem challenges our glib attempts to capture the reality of God in a few words, a few brush strokes, or a few notes...though maybe the notes do the best job?
- ♥ **Christian Aid Week 2024: May 12-18:** These 7 days are very important for an international aid charity which tries to help people permanently out of extreme poverty 365 days a year. Once upon a time, we were able deliver CA envelopes to, and collect envelopes from, most of the houses in the parish. Cold Calling rules (and lack of human resources) make that scale of fund-raising impossible. We have to rely on: deliveries with a **local** collection point, sponsored events, and hosted initiatives such as coffee mornings. *A sponsored 70K in May is one option, If you would be willing to Do 70K, deliver envelopes, receive envelopes, host a fund-raiser, or do something more imaginative, please let Brian McGinnis or Pauline Russell know as soon as possible.* There will be envelopes available in church, and, of course, the on-line giving option. *Every contribution is important. What might seem to you a very modest offering might well be more money than someone in extreme poverty sees in a normal week.*
- ♥ **Maybe an Autumn Christian Aid Concert?** *Thoughts on date and timing, and volunteers welcome.*



Regular worshippers were upgraded to first class

Comfort in Church

I'm not advocating privilege in the church building—quite apart from the difficulties in defining “regular” [“frequent”?], and deciding what to do if regular becomes less regular. But, should churches at least be *comfortable*, for everyone? Comfort does not seem to have been a major consideration in the building of many churches! And worship routines have not always been designed with comfort (in any of its senses) in mind. Accepting that there is space and need for being made to feel uncomfortable about both me and the world, I think feeling

comfortable in church is important. That probably means: feeling welcome, feeling at home, feeling involved, feeling wanted (as participant and not just observer), and being physically as comfortable as possible. *P.S. Non-regulars wearing hats?*

How much can I remember?



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

First, the mistake: the numbers in the hymn board would fall out were the board held like this. And, the warning: If like many of us, you do carry your PIN number with you, please don't make it that visible. Then to the main point - a point also made on the Smile Lines page.

We do all have to grapple with an awful lot of entry codes, goaded on by the pressure not to use the same password or whatever for more than one purpose. The first time I saw a Zoom link, I thought I had to remember it....and my heart sank: something like 28 digits. I don't know what the answer is; but, especially when you are young and have so much to cram in, or are old and running out of mental space, the entry code memory demands are becoming excessive.

Maybe a smile..... (Thanks to Andy Bebington)

- *The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but the ability keep your mouth shut in any language is priceless.*
- *When I get a headache, I take two aspirin, and keep away from children just as the bottle says.*
- *Just once, I want the prompt for user name and password to say “Close enough”.*
- *If you see me talking to myself, just move along. I'm self-employed. We have a meeting.*
- *“Your call is very important to us. Please enjoy this 40 minute flute solo,”*
- *Tip for a successful marriage: Don't ask your wife when dinner will be ready while she's mowing the lawn.*
- *So you drive across town to a gym to walk on a treadmill?*
- *Old age is coming at a really bad time.*
- *Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.*
- *You don't need anger management. You need people to stop irritating you.*
- *Your people skills are just fine. It's your intolerance for idiots that needs work.*
- *Even duct tape can't fix stupid - but it sure does muffle the sound.*
- *Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.*
- *“One for the road” means peeing before you leave the house.*

And from Parish Pump resources:

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road? (Theological Version): *Billy Graham: The chicken was surrendering all. Rick Warren: The chicken was purpose driven. John Wesley: The chicken's heart was strangely warmed. John Piper: God decreed the event to maximize his glory. OR . . . it was an act of Christian hedonism. The chicken realised that his greatest joy would only be found on the other side. C.S. Lewis: If a chicken finds itself with a desire that nothing on this side can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that it was created for the other side. N.T. Wright: This act of the chicken, which would be unthinkable in British barnyards, reeks of that American individualism that is destructive to community. Pluralist: The chicken took one of many equally valid roads. Universalist: All chickens cross the road. Tim LaHaye: The chicken didn't want to be left behind. Emergent: For this chicken, it's not the destination that's important. It's the journey itself.*

Shakespeare's Ladies

Can you name the ladies who said the following?

1. *"And what should I do in Illyria? My brother he is in Elysium."*
2. *"The quality of mercy is not strain'd; It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven."*
3. *"Nay, an you be so tardy, come no more in my sight; I had as lief be woo'd by a snail."*
4. *The moon! The sun: it is not moon!"*
5. *"Say that the last I spoke was Antony, And word it , pr'ythee, piteously...and bring me how he takes my death."*
6. *"Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud; Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds, With harlocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers, Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow In our sustaining corn."*
7. *"Do not swear at all; Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self, Which is the god of my idolatry, And I'll believe thee."*
8. *"I have given suck, and know How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me: I would, while it was smiling in my face, Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you Have done to this."*
9. *"When shall we three meet again In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"*
10. *Do not, as some ungracious pastors do, Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven..whilst Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.*

**That odd business of praying: Number 151:
Confessing the good things**

The impartial psychologist might look at our services, our texts, and our teaching; and conclude that those who have helped to create these things see human beings as naturally inclined to over-rate themselves and in desperate need of being forced to confront their short-comings. The same psychologist might want to point out that quite a lot of people most of the time, and a lot of people some of the time, are actually inclined to exaggerate their own short-comings. I had a work colleague who went on an assertiveness course, and came back more forcefully apologetic for being alive.

To put it another way: We encounter in church much more *"Sorry for all the bad things I have done"* and *"Sorry for all the good things I have failed to do"*, than *"Thank you for the good things I have done"*. We do, of course, thank God for the good things He has done for us; and that prompts the question whether Christians see all the good in the world as good God has done, and all the bad and short-comings in the world as our doing? Have we avoided the *"I'm better than other folk"* trap at the cost of denying ourselves that well deserved smile of happiness on the winner's rostrum: not even a *"Well done you good and faithful servant"*?

The Pharisees (the folk who tried very hard to keep the God rules) get a bad press in the New Testament... Though remember St Paul came from that group, and so did some other named and prominent Jesus followers. As portrayed, the Pharisees seem to have done too much box ticking and done too little loving. However, the New Testament (like the Old Testament) does give gold stars to various folk who lived out their faith in their daily lives. They were not perfect, but they are acknowledged as good folk always trying to do good - not because the empty tick boxes governed their behaviour, but because they loved God and loved their neighbours.

In prayer terms, it is healthy to bring to mind (confess) sins of omission and commission . It is also healthy to bring to mind ("confess") our probably quite frequent good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. You probably don't want to dwell on failures in your job CV: that CV is expected to be a bit prejudiced. However, in your God CV, remember God knows the good and the bad - so feel free to give yourself a balanced reminder!

The North Wall Annexe at St.George's Church, Shirley

The original basis for the proposed new annexe to the church was to make provision for fully inclusive toilet facilities on site. Once discussions opened up, it was considered ideal if we could increase in-church toilet facilities even further, build a kitchenette, add some storage capacity, cover over the steps leading down to the boiler room (which often floods), and to have space to run Junior Church . The idea for the new annexe was born.

The church does not have a great deal of money, but we have key assets. To fund the new annexe, Church Cottage was sold. [A requirement to have to spend upwards of £100,000 to fully refurbish the cottage was the prompt to sell .] The funds from the sale remain ring-fenced for the annexe.

Architects were hired to start the build process and a number of surveys undertaken to make sure we could build a lasting structure – given Vicarage subsid-ence! To prepare the site (along the North side of the church) we had to remove a yew tree amongst others, with the intention to plant new trees, in greater number,. We have a Quantity Surveyor, Structural Engineers, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and a number of other consultancies in-putting.

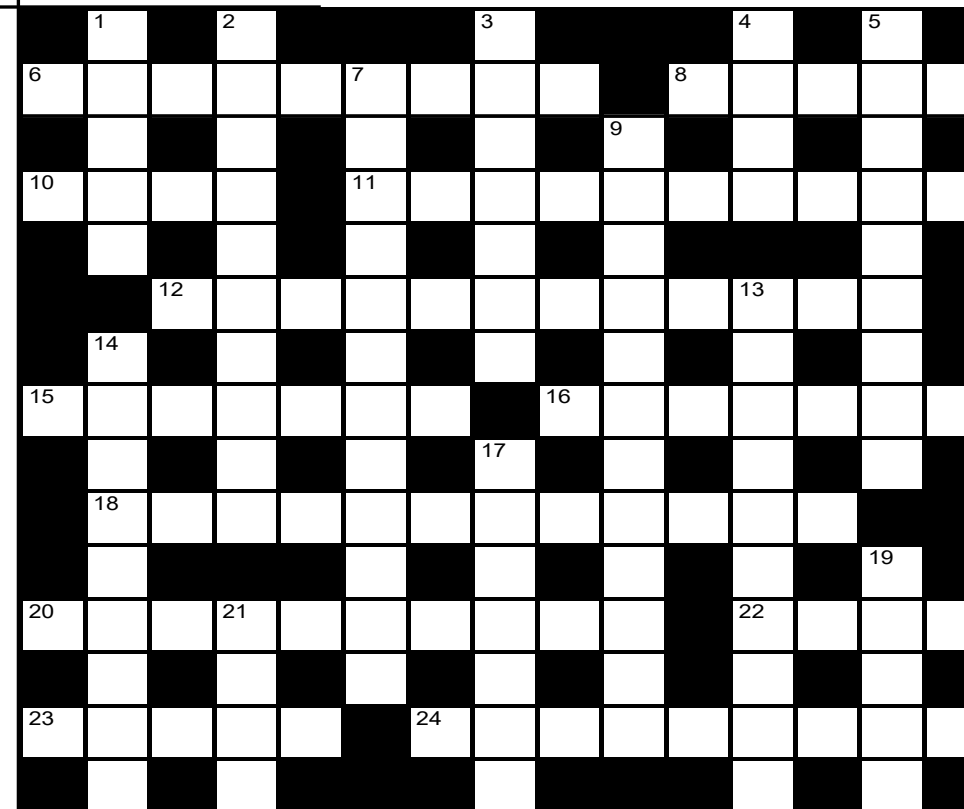
We have been faced from the outset with two 'hurdles' to overcome; The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and Croydon Council's Planning Committee. It took us well over a year to come to a point of compromise with the DAC A second attempt to gain planning permission from Croydon Council was successful . However, that meant going back to the DAC to see if they were also happy, as without a 'faculty' from the Diocese we cannot progress the build! A faculty was in fact granted just a short time ago. However, we are 'not there yet' as the faculty came with six conditions that we need to meet..

The next step is to complete what is known as a 'Contractor's Pack' – this details fully what the annexe will look like, all services to it, and how it will be internally fitted out. On the basis of this document pack, we will be able to get a final approval to build from the DAC whilst simultaneously, be able to choose the contractor that will actually build the annexe. We hope to see a positive outcome to this stage of process by just after Easter. **Continued on page 27**

CHURCH DIARY FOR APRIL 2024

	▼ Mon 1 April EASTER MONDAY	▼ Tue 2 April	▼ V
	BANK HOLIDAY		11.30am F Chapel
Sun 7 April EASTER 2	▼ Mon 8 April	▼ Tue 9 April	▼ W
10.00 All-Age Live Sung Eucharist lead by Rev Barry Goodwin	10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Chapel
Sun 14 April EASTER 3	▼ Mon 15 April	▼ Tue 16 April	▼ W
10.00 Live Sung Eucharist lead by AD Moira Astin	9.30-11.30 Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Chapel
Sun 21 April EASTER 4/PATRONAL FESTIVAL	▼ Mon 22 April	▼ Tue 23 April	▼ W
10.00 Live Sung Eucharist lead by Bishop Rosemarie	9.30-11.30 Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Chapel
Sun 28 April EASTER 5	▼ Mon 29 April	▼ Tue 30 April	
10.00 Live Sung Eucharist lead by Rev Hilary Fife AVM/APCM 11.30am	9.30-11.30 Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group Shortlisting deadline for prospective new incumbents		

<p>Key ▣ Morning Prayer: Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri 9.00am Zoom only</p>			
▣ Wed 3 April	▣ Thurs 4 April	▣ Fri 5 April	Sat 6 April
10am Reflection - Lady el			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
▣ Wed 10 April	▣ Thurs 11 April	▣ Fri 12 April	Sat 13 April
10am Eucharist - Lady el	Georgettes' Eco-Swap		10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
▣ Wed 17 April	▣ Thurs 18 April	▣ Fri 19 April	Sat 20 April
10am Eucharist - Lady el			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
▣ Wed 24 April	▣ Thurs 25 April	▣ Fri 26 April	Sat 27 April
10am Eucharist - Lady el			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
<p>Dates for your Diary: Church Hall - Polling Station: Thursday 2nd May - Hall out of us all day Interview Day for prospective new incumbents: Friday 24th May Quiz Night: Saturday 25th May (in Church) Church Summer Fete: Saturday 29th June Christian Aid Coffee Morning: Friday 5th July (Liz Bebington's 10.30-12.30) Murder Mystery Evening: Saturday 28th September Churches Together Advent Quiet Day: Saturday 7th December - St. John's Tamberlin Room</p>			



Solon 171

Across

- 6 Not a weak set to put your valuables in (9)
- 8 London authority about to look sternly (5)
- 10 A type seen in church (4)
- 11 Severe remarks seen in Southeast ring enterprise (10)
- 12 Anonymous flying object? (12)
- 15 Ages to take ten from outside (7)
- 16 Online sport? (7)
- 18 Watch out for old pop group as they say underground (4,3,5)
- 20 Study areas in Carol's moss collection (10)

Down

- 1 Pet found in backward harbours (5)
- 2 Liquid press can be cast (6,4)
- 3 Sandwich, say, around a number - it's a sign (7)
- 4 Not a record seen on the web? (4)
- 5 Endearing sort of fruit syrup (9)
- 7 Relatives almost curt looking for mates (12)
- 9 Laughably lid curiously is broken (12)
- 13 Inwardly fox-trot not tango found to be hellishly unpleasant (10)
- 14 Copy containing last of text may excite (9)

- 14 Copy containing last of text may excite (9)
- 17 Spray out ale or so it appears (7)
- 19 Politician not put out (5)
- 21 Lonely fish (4)

Thanks to Solon for puzzles
For questions or help, contact Solon at
Solon1across@gmail.com

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

Answers to March puzzles:-

Across: 1 Additive, 5 Streak, 9 Oxbridge, 10 Treble, 12 Electric chair, 15 Abhor, 16 Brass band, 17 In order to, 19 Rhino, 20 Overemotional, 22 Amidst, 23 Dirtying, 25 Untidy, 26 Starkest. **Down:** 1 Aposematic, 2 Dab, 3 Twister, 4 Veggie burger, 6 Threats, 7 Embarkation, 8 Keep, 11 Oceanologist, 13 Ethnologist, 14 Idiot light, 18 Dressed, 19 Roister, 21 Baku, 24 Ice.

Sudoku: 569217348/
123584769/ 874396251/
281745893/ 435169827/
796823514/ 318952476/
657431982/ 942678135

Fear (continued)

Don't fear tomorrow: God is already there.

Someone who is afraid of doing too much is always in danger of doing too little.

Fear

If you are not afraid to face the music, one day you may lead the band.

Fear of the future is a waste of the present.

Don't be afraid to go out on a limb: that's where the fruit is.

Who is more foolish: the child who is afraid of the dark, or the adult who is afraid of the light?

Courage is being the only one who knows you are afraid.

Being afraid is sometimes necessary. Being aware is always necessary.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Exodus 7:14-10:29, 12:21-23, 29-33, 14:5-29

God told Pharaoh to let the Hebrew slaves leave Egypt, but he refused. God then showed his power over Egypt (and its gods)...

How can it be?

First, note exactly what the cartoon summary says. It says "Reed Sea", not "Red Sea". Different Bible translations say different things, but the version that sticks in most people's minds is "The Crossing of the Red Sea". Most experts are agreed that this is NOT the correct translation of the Hebrew. Sea of Reeds still means something unexpected about the escape; but not something as dramatic as the Red Sea piling up. A sea of reeds implies rather more shallow water in normal conditions; and not what most paintings show.

But what about the rest of the story? It tells of ten horrific plagues inflicted on Egyptians in general: each in its own right bad enough seriously to damage ordinary folk, threaten any accountable government, and (if, as is suggested, the Hebrew "slaves" somehow got off scot free) to bring down mob vengeance on the Hebrews. Historians among readers will be puzzled that "slaves" lived in self-contained communities and owned sheep. Those historians might also be thinking that Joseph's regime in Egypt during the "seven fat years" and "the seven lean years" effectively turned ordinary Egyptians into slaves.

Maybe even more important, If you are a reader with God beliefs, you will be asking the serious moral question of why a God who could safely evacuate the Jews without harming anyone, chose instead eight plagues followed by mass infanticide to punish ordinary Egyptian families who had absolutely no control over government immigrant policy....and then wiped out the whole Egyptian army (just obeying orders), leaving numerous widows and orphans?

Moses did not, as far as we know, keep a diary; and it is not unreasonable to think that, in a story written centuries after the event, we have vengeful God theorists over-laying the true story of a people migrating yet again to improve their lot. All this matters: not just because morality always matters, but because today we have vengeful God theorists attributing to God what different factions are doing to each other in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Spoiler alert: Only two of the Hebrews who left Egypt reached and sort of settled in the Promised Land,

Do you believe in angels? Andy Bebington

I do, as did Mary. And Joseph. And the Magi and numerous other Biblical characters. I recently re-read *The Screwtape Letters* (C S Lewis, 1942) which is a one-sided view of a series of letters from Screwtape, a senior Devil, to his nephew Wormwood, a probationary devil who has been tasked with bringing a particular man into deep sin and thus, on death, into Hell.

Belief in Angels has lasted through the millennia. Two angels in particular were introduced to me at school: my own personal Guardian Angel and its opposite number. One, clearly, comes from God and one from Hell. Each has a rôle in temptation – Wormwood's colleague on one side, Guardian Angel on the other. We were asked to imagine having one on each shoulder, one for each ear if you will, whispering their "wisdom" to either tempt you into error or to warn you against it. The good one would also warn you against "occasions of sin" (nudging you away from that sweetshop where you find it all too easy to filch a chocolate bar while the other tells you how nice the last bar was and how careless the shopkeeper is). You may imagine for yourselves what other "occasions of sin" you might come across.

We were told that, as good Christians (or at least, boys trying to be) paying attention to the Guardian Angel was a discipline to be developed and strengthened – and that Lent was a very good time for this. After all, if one gave something up for Lent, the Devil's angel would seek occasions to tempt you to break that resolve (along with all the usual temptations which run 24/7). As a result, there was a "stiffening of the will" which would stand us boys in good stead in adult life when other temptations came along.

As a personal example, a stronger "will" comes into play when you are told that you have type 2 diabetes and that certain foods and drinks have to be curtailed or possibly eliminated. If you have experience of successfully giving up alcohol, for Lent for example, it's easier to give up on doctor's orders as part of a "diabetic diet".

I like to think of angels, and my angels in particular, as battling for my attention (and/or seeking to distract my attention ...) one is backed by Satan and the other by The Father. We know who's stronger in the long run, and we merely need to sacrifice our own desires, knowing that God's way is better.

And all because an angel sits on my shoulder whispering God's strength into my ear.

As Abba sang – "I believe in angels"

Younger Readers Page: Eating Meat etc

Most of us start life eating what we are given. Our parents may discover that some things are good for most people but not good for us. Rather sad if Dad grows oranges, and his daughter can't eat oranges. As we grow older, we both experiment, and develop likes and dislikes. A girl growing up on a farm had two older brothers, who were sometimes a bit nasty to her. At lunch one day, her brothers asked her what she was eating. She thought, and then said "pig". The brothers said, "That's not just any pig. That's your favourite Porky." Much to the brothers' disappointment, the little girl paused, then said "Oh, right"; and carried on eating. She had got used to planting things, looking after them, and then pulling them up (washing them) and eating them. Porky was on the farm to be eaten eventually. Otherwise, he would not have been.

Vegans say both that the animals from which we get food (e.g. milk and butter and cheese) or make food are often badly treated, and that it is wrong to make use of other living creatures in this way even if they are kindly treated. The girl's father the farmer also grew vegetables and fruit, and said that he had to kill hundreds of (small) living creatures to save each vegetable and the fruit he grew! No farm without killing things. No farm = no food. The Father also said he would never dream of killing and eating his farm dogs (sitting trustingly beside him). Some people say pigs are as intelligent as dogs.

Whatever side you take - omnivore (eat lots of different things), vegetarian (cheese and milk and eggs might be OK), or vegan (no animals involved) - you need to think about climate change (methane from farm animals and loss of wilderness), countryside with no farm animals, human health, and your own health. Whatever side you take, you will probably want to emphasise kindness to farm animals, and least bad ways of killing them. "Wild" cows and chickens do not produce such enormous quantities of milk and eggs. Interestingly, if you take the Book of Genesis literally, it does seem that picking to eat was the "original" plan, and killing to eat came later. I'm not sure that this is what evolution tells us.

A little thinking (and thanking) before eating is good.



**He died that we might be forgiv'n,
He died to make us good;
That we might go at last to heav'n,
Saved by his precious blood.**

The familiar hymn words are at the heart of Christianity. They are not presented to us by a theologian as a doctrinal statement, but, for many of us, they probably rank alongside the Creed as what - if challenged - we believe about the Crucifixion. (The Creed we commonly say gives us "For us and our salvation he came down from heaven...For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate".)

Another hymn makes some of us much more uncomfortable: "Til on the cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied". Angry God, horrified by sin, takes it

out on His Son, instead of taking it out on us! This is, at best, a questionable way of talking about The Atonement: the mysterious process of reconciling Holy God and sinful humanity. This page can only scratch the surface: whole books have struggled to "clarify". Just some thoughts that might help you think your own thoughts.

First, if a human dad took it out on his human son, the dad might well feel bad about it, but wouldn't actually experience the son's pain. Struggle as we may with understanding the Holy Trinity, we can be absolutely certain that God the Father experiences what God the Son experiences. Father and Son are One. Second, atonement is therefore about God taking on Himself the pain associated with our sin—though if anyone thinks that humans don't suffer as a result of sin, that "anyone" is deaf and blind!

In a way, the mystery (and the thankfulness) is all about God abolishing the God/human gap that there would otherwise be between the God who doesn't sin and the humans who do, the God who doesn't experience pain and the humans

Easter Day (Sunday 31st March: Croydon Churches Forum: Easter Celebration: 6 30 p.m to 8 45 p.m. at New Life Croydon, Cairo New Road, CR0 1XP. A coming together for all Croydon's churches.

Sunday Readings for April (Message Version): Please note that readings may change

Sunday 7 April: Easter 2

Acts 4.32-35: The whole congregation .. was united: one heart, one mind!
Psalm 133: How wonderful ...when brothers and sisters get along!
1 John 1.1-2,2: We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you.
John 20: 19-end: Jesus said, "Peace to you."

Sunday 14 April: Easter 3

Acts 3: 12-19: Faith in Jesus..put this man..on his feet.
Psalm 4: You, God, have put my life back together.
1 John 3: 1-7: That's exactly who we are: children of God.
Luke 24: 36b-48: Then a total life change...

Sunday 21 April: Easter 4/ St George

Revelation 12: 7-12: They weren't in love with themselves.
Psalm 126: Bring rain to our drought-stricken lives.
2 Timothy 2: 3-13: If we stick it out with Him, we'll rule with Him.
John 15: 18-21: The world is going to hate you.

Sunday 28 April: Easter 5

Acts 4: 5-12: We have nothing to hide.
Psalm 23: I don't need a thing
1 John 3: 16-end:
John 10: 11-18: I know my own sheep, and my own sheep know me.

Sunday 5 May: Easter 6

Acts 10. 44-end: The believing Jews couldn't believe the Spirit was poured on outsiders.
Psalm 98: Round up an orchestra to play for God.
1 John 5: 1-6: Every God-born person conquers the world's ways.
John 15: 9-17: Remember, I chose you.

Please remember by name in your prayers the following people for whom prayers have been requested...

Dan Pretty	David Lawn	Gillian Longlands	
Sonia	Sue Moore	Christina	
Pam Purkiss	Jean	Julie	
Margaret Ziolek	Brian	Alison Stiff	
Andy Hamilton	Christine Lutman	Mark Hare	
Ann Hobbs	Pauline Russell	Jean Wells	
Margaret Easton	Dave Boyland	Dave Ashdown	
Martin Easton	Terri Boyland	Yvonne Sussex	
Mike Wilkins	Livingston Dallas	Shirley Ashdown	
Yvonne Harris	Lindsay Morgan	Maureen Fenner	Heidi Alsop
an Jacobs	Ellen Maden	Paul Oates	Brian Jacobs
Garth Smith	Bill Gibson	Heather Orton	
Helen McMullan	Nahshon	Elizabeth Lovell	
Sarah-Jane Herbert	Helen Aylward	Sheila Dennis	
Jill	Rev Andy Dovey and Karen		

We also give thanks for those who have experienced healing, or felt strengthened to cope with ill health or disability. Knowing that others care goes with knowing that God cares.

**Please let the Staff Team know of any additions or deletionsvicarstgeorge@gmail.com or 020 8776 0185
If the person is able to consent, please get their consent before adding their name.**

The North Wall Annexe continued from page 16

There are risks .If the final costs are significantly more than the budget, we will not be able to proceed. If the DAC does not grant final permission to proceed , we will be forced to abandon the scheme – losing funds already spent! We hope and pray that all will proceed – in budget. The proposed new annexe in combination with the church itself, now far more flexible for use following removal of the pews, should give us a very welcoming, all inclusive space, that allows for everybody to enjoy what St.George's has to offer and in addition, to open it up far more to the wider Shirley community.

The current church hall is rapidly becoming 'time expired', with a kitchen now not fit for purpose, non-inclusive toilet facilities, an increasing number of repairs needed, and a heating bill that is unsustainable. Simultaneously, the Vicarage is, is unsafe to live in and has to be demolished (by the Diocese). The Diocese have to provide a new Vicarage for the new incumbent, following our current *interregnum* and to do this they intend to sell the land associated with it. In praise of our forebears, 50% of the land proposed for sale belongs to us as St.George's Church and hence, we may be in the fortunate position of then having funds to construct a new church hall that fits with current regulations (for a kitchen and fully inclusive toilet facilities especially), is low-maintenance, and which will benefit the church and wider community for decades to come.

The Diocese is keen to move their plans forward as quickly as possible. We are looking however, to make sure that all current hall users have the opportunity to be decanted to the church/annexe combined facility prior to any redevelopment of that far end of the church site. Change is coming which can be very unsettling. What we are trying to do is make St.George's even more welcoming and inclusive for our congregation and the wider community, for now and for the future. The PCC asks for your support and prayers as we proceed.

Steve Barker – Project Support Group Lead and PCC member. March 2024.

Advance Notice: Rev Andy Dovey sponsored walk in aid of Prostate Cancer UK Sunday 2nd June: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/march-for-men-2024-57746>

Organisations

St George's Table Tennis Club (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 8—10 p.m. Doubles Table Tennis. £3 per evening, including refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Ron 020 8656 9176, Ken 020 8654 3233.

Whist Drive (in the Church Hall)

Wednesdays 7 45p.m. *Inquire in Hall Wednesday 7 - 7 45 p.m.*

Medau (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 1.30-3.00p.m Mrs Gammon 01689 815646

Shirley Neighbourhood Care Scheme 020 8662 9599 in-fo@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Your Local Councillors and Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams The dividing line between Shirley North and South Wards is roughly the Wickham Road, but some roads at the Croydon end on the south side of Wickham Road (St John's parish) are in Shirley North Ward

Shirley South Ward - Councillors: Jason Cummings (020 8651 2575) and Scott Roche (07783 152370) **Police Contact:** Phone 0208 721 2469 Email SNMailbox.ShirleySouthSNT@met.police.

Shirley North Ward - Councillors: Sue Bennett (0208 768 0561), Richard Chatterjee (07710 183564) and Mark Johnson (07716 092484). **Police Contact:** Email SNMailbox.ShirleyNorthSNT@met.police.uk Phone: 0208 721 2474.

URGENT 999 (Other crime reports 101)

Time

The best thing to spend on your children is time.

A committee usually keeps minutes and wastes hours

Killing time is not murder, it's suicide

Organisations

St George's Church Hall Bookings -		
Mrs Jan Payne		020 8776 0185
Overseas Missions Committee		
Mr Brian McGinnis, Ms Pauline Russell		020 8654 6190
Georgettes		
Contact	Mrs Jan Payne	020 8776 0185
Beavers (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 6 to 8 approx.		
Wednesdays 5-6.15p.m	Rachel Dominguez	07956 155909
Cubs (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 8 to 10.5 approx.		
Wednesdays 6.30-8.00p.m	Mr Trevor Thairs	07843 752895
Scouts (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 10.5 to 14.5 approx.		
Thursdays 6 30 - 8 p.m.	Mr Darren Hawken	07903 399185
Rainbows (Church Hall) Girls age 5 to 7		
Tuesdays 5 - 6p.m	Mrs Ruth Clery	020 8651 4116 07702 870030
Brownies (Church Hall) Girls age 7 to 10		
Tuesdays 6.15-7.30p.m	Miss Sheila Fenner	020 8655 0023 fenner240@btinternet.com
Guides (in the Church Hall) Girls age 10 to 16		
Fridays 6.00 -7 30p.m	Mrs Ruth Clery	020 651 4116 07702 870030
Pop In (in the Church Hall)		
Mondays 10.30-12noon	Mr Ron Bright	07972 607823
Little Dragons (in the Church) Toddlers 0-4		
Mondays 9 30a.m. -11 30a.m.	Regina	07825 428465

Time

Time is what we want the most, and use the worst

Time invested in improving ourselves cuts down on time wasted in disapproving of others.

St. George's Church Directory

Churchwardens: Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185
Mrs Heather Barker 020 8777 9280

Members of the PCC
Mr Stephen Barker, Mr Evan Russell, Mrs Marjorie Russell, Mr Alexander Baldwin-Smith, Mrs Jan Turner, Mrs Susan Wheeler, Mrs A-I Clayton, Mrs Katie Francis, Dr Toyin Magbagbeola

Hon. Secretary PCC.
Mr Eric Baldwin-Smith

Treasurer
Mr Alan Chitty

Synod Representatives (also on PCC): Mr Ray Wheeler (Diocesan Synod), Mrs Helen Aylward, Mrs A-L Clayton, Mrs Liz Bebington (Deanery Synod)

Stewardship Covenant Secretary
Miss Sheila Fenner 020 8655 0023

Electoral Roll Officer
Mr. Owen Whalley 020 8655 1349

Organist and Choir Mistress
Miss Sophie Clayton 07703554159

Safeguarding Representatives
Mrs. Susan Wheeler. 020 8777 5271
Dr Toyin Magbagbeola

Church Flowers
Mrs. Marion Sheehan 020 8777 7308

Environment (ECO) Group
Mrs Jan Turner 020 8654 6552

Magazine Editor:
Mr. Brian McGinnis 31 Woodmere Avenue, Shirley CR0 7PG 020 8654 6190

Accounts
Mrs. Janet Fitt 020 8777 7823

Adverts
Janet Fitt or Brian McGinnis

ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

Making friends with your Bible

The Monday Evening Bible Reading Group offers you Zoom joining in, or notes to support your own personal Bible reading. See Bible Reading Group section of church website and page 10.

Shirley Neighbourhood Care
St George's Church
Elstan Way
The Glade
CR0 7PR
020 8662 9599
info@dhirley neighbourhood-care.co.uk

Weekday mornings 10 a.m.—12 30

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241 Long Lane,
Croydon, CR0 7TF
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Gifts to share?

if you feel that St George's is not doing something it should be doing, or that you have a gift to offer/ share that is not being used by St George's, please do not keep your mouth shut!

Prayers on weekdays

Tuning into God doesn't require a minimum number of people: one to One is fine.! But if you want prayer Company, there are Zoom prayers at 9 a.m. Monday to Friday. All are welcome.

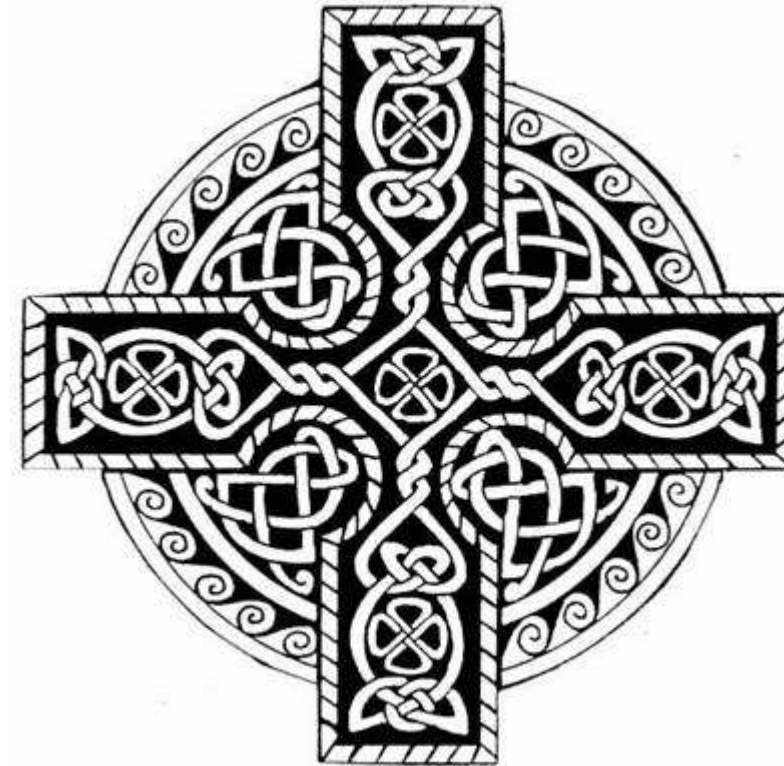
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+ Welcoming All +*



St.

George the Martyr

Elstan Way, Shirley, Croydon. (off the Glade)
parish.office@hotmail.co.uk
www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk
(Charity Number: 1134140)