

Rev Amanda would appreciate it if anyone knowing of illness or any other trouble in the Parish would notify her as soon as possible on 020 3940 1897 so that she, or a member of the Church, can call without delay.

**If you have any enquiry about baptism, marriage or another service, or if there is something else you would like to discuss with a member of the team, please make an appointment, through the Church Office (020 8462 1373) or by emailing:
info@stmaryshayeskent.co.uk**

MEET THE TEAM

This month we meet Mary Whytock, our PCC secretary among the many, many other hats that she wears on behalf of the St Mary's and the wider community. She certainly keeps me in order and has been a great support, as many of you have been since my arrival at St Mary's.

Our faith is based on the most generous gift of all. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16.

We receive from God the gift of life itself and new life and new hope in Jesus Christ. Our calling to be generous in our time, skill and resources is just our response to these great gifts. In the parable of the sower, the seed that falls on good soil grows a crop a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Every generous act is revealed to grow further generosity.

We have been looking at the charities that we support and are trying to be more intentional in our giving, to ensure we know where we are giving and how that giving plays a part relieving the needs of others, growing the Kingdom of God.

Our giving is such an important part of our Christian ministry, 'Only a dry as dust religion prompts a minister to extol the glories of heaven while ignoring the social conditions that cause people an earthly hell'. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we look towards Lent maybe we can look at what we can give as we give up or take up, as we remember each day of Lent, what we have been given, the greatest gift of all at Easter.

Rev Amanda

Charities Forum

As you will know from my previous missives we have been examining how, as a Church, we are supporting charities – both individually and also from Church funds. Reverend Amanda, and indeed all those who attended our recent meetings, are very keen to have representatives within the church championing the particular charities we support. To this end we are hoping people will step forward to raise the profile of the particular charity perhaps by inviting representatives to come and speak to us as a Church, be it at a Sunday Service or at a fund-raising event. We hope to continue to support many of the charities we have done in the past and we are striving to find the right balance of our giving as individuals and of course St Mary's. At the APCM I will be enlarging on where we are going forward so there will be an opportunity for you all to have your say!

Mary Whytock

CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

The Flower Rota for the first six months of 2025 is now up in the porch. For those who may not be aware, this gives those who wish to, the opportunity to provide flowers for the four altar vases in memory of a loved one, or to mark a special occasion or anniversary.

There are four pairs of brass vases to choose from, to suit the particular flowers to be provided. Those not in use are kept in the priest's vestry. Each vase will hold five small blooms or three larger ones. The only stipulation is that no flower food should be used as it affects the brass. Those who have provided in the past have chosen to place them on a Saturday morning, in readiness for Sunday services.

Scissors and secateurs are available in the drawer located by the flower sink. It would be lovely to have flowers in church for people to appreciate when they visit. Please do think about whether this is something you would like to do and then sign up on the list. There are specific dates when flowers can be put, as we do not have flowers in church during Lent except for Mothering Sunday. The list for the second half of the year will be put up after Easter.



If you would like to know more, then please do speak to me or Sue who will be happy to guide you.

**Yvonne Pickford
Verger**

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Thank you very much for all the people who have a Children's Society box. I have collected a wonderful sum of £513.91. Thank you for your support.

I was reading the Children's Society newsletter and I thought I would share this story.

Daniel's Story

When Daniel was a teenager, his mental health began to spiral. It was a combination of lots of things like family problems and school. He felt like everything was against him. In desperation, he started taking drugs to numb the pain he was feeling.

Eventually, feeling utterly shattered and broken down, Daniel took two overdoses in a space of a week and was hospitalised. That's when his dad searched online and found the Children's Society.

When Daniel came home, he met Steve, one of our specialist project workers. Steve took the time to understand Daniel and what he needed. In weekly sessions with Daniel and his Dad, they worked to develop a framework they could use to navigate their experiences. Practising mindfulness techniques and having a structured physical routine made a real difference. Daniel's Dad joined one of our family support groups, too.

For Daniel, getting the right support was transformation. With his Dad, he worked hard to rebuild his life and now, he wants other young people to know what a difference it can make to have someone to talk to.

Thank you again for supporting the Children's Society and this story shows where some of your money goes towards helping our young children.

Pauline Muggridge

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Sunday 6 April** following the **10am Morning Service** in the Church.

We are combining our 8am Communion and 10.30am Morning Worship in the expectation that as many as possible can be with us for this important part of our on-going Church administration.

We will be electing two new Churchwardens and new PCC members: Rosemary Smith, Mary Stannard and Kate Davies will be retiring, as they have served their three-year term. We are extremely grateful to them for their service and input into our deliberations.

If you would like to stand for election, please indicate this to Reverend Amanda, Reverend Tim, Churchwarden Sue Powell or any member of the PCC. Please consider standing as a Churchwarden or an Assistant Churchwarden and for PCC. There is a great need for members of our Church to volunteer for these roles – do not be daunted in offering your services in any way! These are exciting times for St Mary's and you can play your part and support the organisation and running of YOUR church.

So make a note in your diary and do think about standing for election.

The documents and papers will be available towards the end of March.

Mary Whytock
Secretary to the Parochial Church Council

YOUR QUIET SPACE

Times of quiet and stillness are important for all of us, even for those who like busyness and excitement. Such times can help set day to day concerns to one side, and allow us to reflect on important, deeper parts of our lives. Many people find that such times help to bring profound rest and peace.

Did you know that St Mary's is open throughout the week for just this purpose - to offer a quiet space for everyone? Our beautiful building, with its history of prayer and worship reaching back over 800 years, remains a place of stillness, peace and prayer today. The church is open as a Quiet Space most mornings, and often at other times too. Everyone and anyone, of whatever background or belief, is welcome to come

inside and take some time for quiet and stillness, whenever the doors are open.

Many people also find that stillness and silence is very helpful for prayer. There's a long tradition for this, right back to Biblical times. Indeed, in many places in the Bible the writers speak of encountering God in quiet and stillness. Jesus himself took time out of his busy ministry to be alone with God (Mark 1:35) and encouraged his disciples to pray in solitude (Matthew 6:6). Reaching back into the Old Testament, the Psalmist writes that "for God alone my soul waits in silence"(Psalm 62:5). Famously, the prophet Elijah finds that God speaks to him in "a sound of sheer silence". It is no surprise that Christians across the centuries have found that in silence and stillness they have become aware of God's presence in ways that are life-giving and life-changing.

If you feel drawn to pray in the quiet but don't know how to start, at St Mary's we have some prayer cards to help, a prayer station where you can light a tealight or leave a message on our prayer tree, or someone from the St Mary's team will be pleased to speak or pray with you.

I pray that St Mary's can be a quiet and still space for you amid the busyness of life.

Rev Tim Aldred



It is lovely to see the daffodil leaves lining my lawn, reminding me that **"Spring is in the air!"**

We have a very busy month ahead with Lent, Mothers' Day and our own Rochester Diocese commissioning service on Lady Day, as we start a new Triennial term.

We welcomed our Diocesan Mothers' Union President, Mary Margaret Yates to our February meeting. She is coming to the end of her Triennial term as Diocesan President, and has been elected to be our

DP for a further three years. This gave us the opportunity to say thank you to her for all her hard work over the past three years and to wish her all the best for the next three. Our meeting was entitled 'Getting to know you'. We were able to say a little about ourselves – where we grew up, the school we went to, the jobs we did, our interests etc. It proved to be a very interesting meeting as we learnt a little more about each other. I found out that several members knew my father as he was the group Scout Master when their sons attended Scouts and Cubs. He was in fact at the forefront of having the Scout hut built! It was really interesting to hear all that Mary Margaret had experienced in her life. In fact, we will continue with this at our March meeting as many members couldn't make the February meeting. Hearing about the work of Welcare in Bromley has had to be postponed until later in the year. We will also discuss projects for our group to undertake in the future to help support the work of the church.

Our next meetings are

Tues: 4th March 11.00 am, Social gathering at The New Inn, Hayes.

Mon: 17th March 10.30 am in the Meetings Room "Getting to know you" Part 2

Sat: 22nd March 11.30 Commissioning Service of Diocesan Officers with Eucharist

Lady Day

*We will be celebrating Lady Day, The Feast of the Annunciation, on **Saturday 22nd March 2025** in the Cathedral with our Commissioning Service. Bishop Jonathan will be presiding and preaching. If you would like to attend, please let me know. (Avril Ashford) 02084687785.*

The Mothers' Union Lent theme for 2025 is Living Hope. This theme invites us to reflect deeply on the hope we have in Christ, even as we walk through the challenges and complexities of life. During Lent, we are called to journey with Jesus along the difficult road that leads to the cross, a road marked by sacrifice, pain, and ultimately, redemption. It is a journey that resonates with the struggles we face in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

Living Hope reminds us that even in the darkest moments, God's presence shines as a beacon of light and renewal. Through prayer, reflection, and acts of love, we are invited to bring our personal burdens, as well as the brokenness of our world, to God. As we do so, we open our hearts to the transformative power of Easter, where death gives way to life, despair to joy, and sorrow to hope.

This Lent, the Mothers' Union encourages us to explore what it means to carry and share this living hope in our families, communities,

and the world. It is a hope that sustains, heals, and restores—a hope we are called to embody and extend to others, especially to those who feel most burdened by life’s trials. Together, let us journey with Christ and embrace the living hope that empowers us to face life’s challenges with faith, courage, and love.

This Lent also gives us a unique opportunity to align with our new triennial theme, Join In, Join Us. It is a time to reach out and invite others to share in the transformative journey of faith. Whether through MU groups and gatherings, or our work of social justice acts of love, we can extend a warm invitation for others to join us on this Lenten journey of living hope. Together, we can build a stronger, more connected community rooted in faith, love, and the hope that Christ offers to all.

Lent Resources

I can recommend the Lent studies both on the website and those in the latest MU e-catalogue. In the catalogue there are a number of books for private devotion and study and over the years I have used a few and found them interesting and useful. There are new ones this year.

Mothering Sunday falls on March 30th 2025

Mothering Sunday has evolved over the years; from the time when people would return to their “Mother Church” during Lent to when those in service and apprenticeships went home to their mothers with gifts such as hand-picked flowers. By the early 20th century celebrating Mothering Sunday had waned in many places, but the institution of Mother’s Day in the United States brought about renewed interest. This was a cause championed by Mothers’ Union, amongst others. By 1938 it was claimed that Mothering Sunday was celebrated in every parish in Britain and in every country of the Empire. Now a staple in the church calendar and celebrated on the fourth Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday is a time for us all to recognize the importance of those who have cared for and mothered us throughout our lives.

Please take a pamphlet “Give the gift of PEACE this Mothering Sunday” from the Mothers’ Union notice board. If you wish, choose one of the gifts in memory of your mother or to say thank you to her.



Avril Ashford

ST. MARY'S CHURCH DIARY MARCH 2025

Morning Prayers take place daily at 9.15am Monday to Wednesday on Zoom* and Monday to Friday in Church (10am on Saturday) throughout the year, except Bank Holidays.

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

Sunday 2nd	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Morning Praise Sunbeams session** (age3-6)
Tuesday 4th	11.00am-12.15pm	Bible Study**
	4.00pm	Pancake Party**

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 5th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	10.30am-12.00noon	Coffee Morning for the bereaved and those living on their own**
	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
	2.45pm	Hayes Men's Fellowship in OCS
	7.45pm	Holy Communion (with Bromley Parish Church; their choir will also be singing)

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 8th	12.30pm	Churchyard Tidy Up
Sunday 9th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
	10.30am	Parish Communion CW Blaze session** (age 6-10)
Tuesday 11th	11.00-12.15am†	Lent Course**
	7.30pm†	Lent Course**
Wednesday 12th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Thursday 13th	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group**

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday 16th	8.00am	Holy Communion BCP
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	9.15am	Fresh Start
	10.30am	Morning Praise: Bishop Simon preaching
Monday 17th	10.30am	Mothers' Union**
Tuesday 18th	11.00am-12.15pm† 7.30pm†	Lent Course** Lent Course**
Wednesday 19th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Friday 21st	10.00am-11.00am	Twinkles – singing, story, snacks**

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday 23rd	8.00am 10.30am	Holy Communion BCP Parish Communion CW Blaze session** (age 6-10)
Tuesday 25th	11.00-12.15am† 7.30pm†	Lent Course** Lent Course**
Wednesday 26th	12.30-3.00pm	Warm Welcome Space**
Thursday 27th	10.30am-12.30pm	Craft Group**
Saturday 29th	2.00-4.00pm	Workshop on Assisted Dying

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday 30th	10.30am	Morning Praise: Mothering Sunday
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*For Zoom link contact the church office ** denotes Meetings Room
† Timing of the Lent course may change: please see pew sheets.

The church is also open for quiet space on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 12.00noon unless there is a wedding or funeral taking place. Details of these will be given in the weekly pew sheets.

RECENT FUNERALS IN THE PARISH

Paul Marsden
Stuart Whitehead
Beryl Kirk

HAYES MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We shall spring outdoors into March with an outing to Audley End House, an English Heritage historic building with magnificent landscaped Gardens originally designed by Capability Brown. Our visit is scheduled just one day ahead of the actual Spring Equinox although these days the meteorologists regard the start of the season as the beginning of the month, something to do with simplifying comparisons year by year. The day out will conclude in Saffron Walden, a picturesque medieval market town in NW Essex. Details of all our forthcoming events for 2024/2025 are on our website www.hayesmensfellowship.org together with all you need to know about deciding to join our convivial and friendly organisation. You just have to be a retired or semi-retired man of any faith or none and willing to pay our modest annual subscription of £20.

Before our usual report, we have recently paid tribute to member Brian Bugler who died recently. He was not only our oldest member at 97 but also one of the longest serving and an Honorary Vice-President. And so to our usual reports starting with our Annual HMF Lunch. This was briefly reported here last month but a fuller account can be found on our website referenced above.

Our latest walk was in the One Tree Hill area – the one near Sevenoaks in Kent rather than Lewisham. Despite some very muddy tracks, the seven walkers enjoyed a walk without rain and the weather was not chilly in the sun. The main challenge they encountered was discovering that the planned pub was not opening until the evening – and then for drinks only. However, the National Trust's Igham Mote provided a very good lunch and also served local bottled ale.

At our latest meeting we had a talk entitled "Bluebell Railway, Past, Present and Future" by Tony Penn. He explained that the line to Brighton, that includes what is now the Bluebell Railway, was built in the heyday of railway expansion to provide an alternative route to the south coast. But apparently there was a more sinister motive too as the southeasterly direction of the planned track cut across, and thus blocked, other possible routes to the coast. In 1878 an act of parliament authorised construction of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company (LB&SCR). As an indication of its commercial success, the line closed initially in 1955 and then finally in 1958 – ahead of the Beeching cuts.

Just the next year the BRPS was formed – the first railway preservation group in the country - intending to reopen the whole line from East Grinstead to Culver Junction as a commercial service. An initial step was to purchase 5 miles of track and services began in 1960.

Less ambitious than the original plan, this ran from Sheffield Park to Bluebell Halt just south of Horsted Keynes, extended to Horsted Keynes itself in 1962. Further extensions paved the way for the line to reach East Grinstead in 2013. This was after four years' work reinstating the



Sharpthorne tunnel, installing the new Imberhome viaduct and clearing a cutting filled with domestic waste. Meanwhile BRPS thrives with around 10,000 members and 95% of its labour provided by volunteers.

We hope the foregoing has whetted the appetite of any prospective members who are always welcome to experience us for free (tea and bikkies included!) at a meeting on the first Wednesday of any month, except August and September. Please call us on the contact number below to arrange a visit.

Looking forward to meeting up in these pages or in person, au revoir until April.

Allan Evison, HMF Chairman Graham Marsden, HMF Secretary
Contact details: secretary@hayesmensfellowship.org
or phone 07764 153383

THE HOLOCAUST

Today I have been watching the remembrance service for the holocaust which is an annual event. It always makes me feel sick with the horror of it. I saw photographs of the entry into Belsen in the 1950s when I was a child and the images have remained with me all my life – the emaciated, skeletal bodies of women and children stacked in huge piles awaiting transfer to the crematorium. The other image was of enormous piles of shoes and spectacles which would not burn well in the flames and had to be dealt with as rubbish. I was reminded of the television programme 'Inside the Factory' which demonstrates the amazing efficiency of a food production facility. The gas chambers and crematoria were designed scientifically to provide the maximum kill in the shortest time with the best lethal gas. It would be hard to write a worse horror story. I am so glad that this massive, vicious assault on God's chosen

people and some minority groups is regularly brought to the world's attention.

Pol Pot in Cambodia murdered up to 2 million of his own people by smashing the backs of the heads of workers in the fields and burying them because they rebelled against his cruel regime.

We lit a candle in our street window and reflected on these events with our God.

These images of Belsen have never left me. I am reminded of the verses in Peter's first letter about our adversary the devil who is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. He certainly tried to devour Adolf Hitler but his main target was our Saviour, the Son of God. He tried his best to bring him down at every stage of his life and ultimately on the cross but failed. Christ remained without sin from the cradle to the grave and rose to glory, providing the ultimate defeat of Satan. But, we must remember that, as Peter says, he is still on the prowl.

I find myself having to come to God and ask his forgiveness for so many sins but he tells me that all my sins are covered by the blood of Christ, and that once confessed he remembers them no more, removing them as far away as the East is from the West.

So, once a year we remember the horror inspired by Satan in Nazi Germany but we need to remember our need of Christ every day of our lives and rejoice in his never-ending love for us.

David Langford

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

In a recent episode of the BBC reality gameshow *The Traitors*, one of the contestants was about to be named and exposed as a 'traitor'. The other contestants, sitting around the 'Round Table', in turn read out who they were going to name. As they did so, one of them accidentally spelt the name of the suspected 'traitor' incorrectly. So, even though the writing was on the wall (well, on the table anyway!) that she was about to be exposed, even at that moment of high tension and drama she took it as a personal affront that her name had been misspelt. The other contestant immediately corrected the spelling. Dignity (at least in respect of the name) was preserved. Our names not only identify us but also underpin our sense of self and self-respect (which may be seriously at risk in this gameshow!). Rightly, our names matter to us.

Names of course also play a crucial part within the Biblical narrative. In the Bible we encounter a huge variety of different people

(there are around 1900 people who are individually named) and the name often pointing to a deeper and more personal significance. So for example, when God confirmed His original promise to Abraham that He would bless the whole world through his seed, He changed his name from Abram (which means 'exalted father') to Abraham, father of many nations. And Abraham's grandson, Jacob, after an enigmatic encounter with God, wrestling to secure God's blessing, was renamed Israel ('God strives') for, said God, 'you have striven with God and with men'.

But does **God** have a personal name? And what can we learn about His character from His name?

Interestingly that was Moses' question at the incident of the burning bush (Exodus 3). And God revealed to Moses the special unique name by which the people of Israel were to know Him and know His presence among them. He revealed His name as 'Yahweh'. In most English versions of the Old Testament, this is translated as LORD, in capitals. A little later, on Mount Sinai, God revealed to Moses the content of the name: a God of compassion and grace, full of love and faithfulness, who forgives sin but also judges wickedness (yes, a paradox that was to be ultimately answered in the cross of Christ).

The importance of this name emerged in our recent central *Bible Study, as we reflected on that beautiful psalm of David, Psalm 23, *The LORD is my shepherd*. It is fascinating that the first and last word of the psalm (in the original Hebrew) is that personal name. And through this structure the psalmist is giving emphasis to two things:

Firstly, the reality of God's personal presence and walk with David, even in the darkest times; he is surrounded by God's love and care. Secondly, David is sharing his fears with God, because he has a personal relationship with Him, and can address Him by His personal name, the name that God revealed to Moses in the burning bush.

So why do we as Christians not refer to God by His personal name? We can of course do so. But Jesus has given believers an even more intimate name. Almost without exception every time Jesus refers to God He refers to God as His Father. As the unique Son of God, He invites us as Christians, having put our faith and trust in Him, to join Him in praying to 'Our Father, in heaven'. St Paul is so overwhelmed by the astonishing privilege of intimacy that gives us as Christians that in two of his letters he refers to the original Aramaic term that Jesus used for father, *Abba* (Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6).

David James

* meeting every first and third Tuesday, 11am to 12.15pm, in St Mary's Church meetings room.

REBELLION

When I grow up
I'll stay up late;
I won't eat everything on my plate.
I'll get up in the morning when I choose,
And won't be in trouble for the things I lose.
I'll have a bath when it's really hot,
And just won't bother when it's not.
I'll wear what I like
And do what I like;
When I'm not at the baths I'll be on my bike.
When I break the china I just won't care,
And I won't be forever washing my hair.
When I go to church I won't wear a hat
And I'll never wipe my feet on the mat.
I won't tidy my room;
I'll never use a broom,
No matter how much they fret and fume.
I'll shout and I'll scream if I don't get my way,
And I'll never listen to a word 'they' say.
I won't go to school;
I'll obey no rule.
So what do you think of that?

Grandma said, 'I never heard the like –
Whatever's she doing out on her bike,
When she should be at home and studying
And helping her mother with everything?

But Grandpa said, 'Wait for another day,
She won't always be so keen to have her say.'
So Mum and Dad prayed for that future day,
Hoping she'd eventually see life their way.

Hilary Abrahams



TURNING OUR EYES UPON JESUS

As some of you might know, I have recently completed my Counselling training. This has been both an interesting and demanding journey of discovery. An important part of our training was to consider in great depth our thoughts, feelings and emotions. As I was the only Christian in our group my peers and tutors showed an interest in how my faith impacts on the way I experience myself and others. This made me think...

I became a Christian when I realised how much Jesus must love me if he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for me and that I was saved by grace and I was chosen. In that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of warmth, of peace and of connection. Experiencing the love and acceptance of God for who I really am, rather than who I pretend to be to gain love and acceptance from others, is life changing.

Ultimately, we all desire love and acceptance for who we truly are, along with a sense of purpose and connection with others. God's unconditional "*agape*" love offers all this to us in abundance, so why do I not embrace and live in this love all the time so that I can receive the "peace that surpasses all understanding"? Sometimes, I simply cannot accept this unconditional love because of my internal struggle with the way I perceive myself; often when my own guilt and shame convince me I am not worthy.

The message I have internalised in childhood, that I had to earn love rather than being loved simply for who I am, can make it hard for me to reach out to my God of love or believe in this love. I feel like I am not worthy of God's love; that I must do something or be someone that is worthy of His love, but then feel that nothing I can do is "good enough". The Bible clearly says that we are not saved by works but by the grace of God. I can also get so wrapped up in the things of the world, in my own thoughts and feelings and in trying to "do what I think I ought to" that I do not acknowledge my need to reconnect with God who is my source and my guide and God's desire to meet with me no matter what I do and say.

In counselling we explore what it is that we say to ourselves - we all have different "voices" in our minds that tell us stories about ourselves - some of these voices are far unkind and more unforgiving than anything we would ever say to others. These voices make it hard for us to accept love and be compassionate to ourselves which is what we need.

Counsellors aim to provide a space in which our clients feel safe enough (where they feel accepted and free from a fear of judgement) to

explore and ultimately adjust their relationship with the “voices” in their heads in a way that helps them to manage their thoughts and feelings.

For me, when I allow myself the time and space to embrace God’s love and focus entirely on my God; my own insecurities, fears and frustrations, caused by those negative voices, seem to be stilled and I feel at peace.

In the words of the hymn *“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face and the things of the earth do grow strangely dim in the light of His Glory and Grace.”*

During my training we were taught that we see ourselves through a lens that we develop because of our personal experiences particularly in infancy and childhood. The expectations of my parents had left me with an inherent belief that, to be loved, I had to put the needs of others before my own; I needed to be “a good girl”; I always had to work hard, and I had to be kind. I interpreted my mother’s praise of my sisters’ abilities in Maths and English respectively as opposed to praising me for “working hard” as “what I lack in talent and ability, I need to make up for in working hard and doing my best”.

My experience with God was “reparative”- unconditional love - for who I am and acceptance, purpose, and connection.

Peace and hope for the future

People come to counselling because they want to be able to stop feeling the emotions they feel are negative. Our role as counsellors is to create an environment in which a client feels safe enough to explore their thoughts, feelings and emotions so that they can understand them better and in doing so, ultimately learn to manage the impact these thoughts and emotions have on them. In therapy, we hope to give the client an opportunity to see themselves differently, to develop a sense of self compassion that will ultimately lead to a better relationship with themselves.

Brenda Harper

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**Items for the April magazine by 16<sup>th</sup> March please. Copy to the Editor. April magazines will be ready for distribution on 30<sup>th</sup> March.**  
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