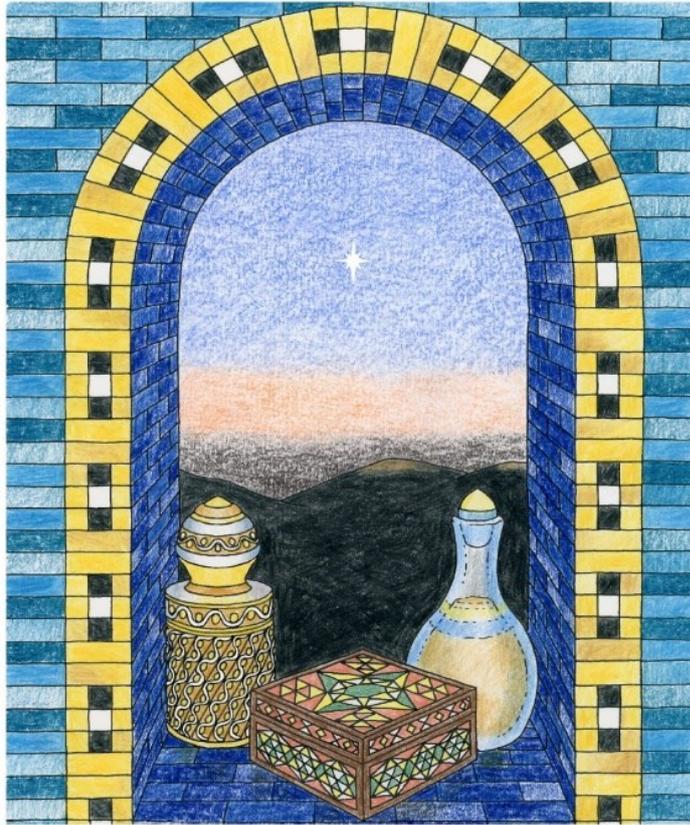


**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM**



THE MESSENGER

PARISH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022

20p

St Andrew's Clergy

The Church is currently in Interregnum

Enquiries – 0121 551 2097 or email vicar@standrews-handsworth.org.uk

Asst Priest – Father John Austen

Church Wardens – Carl Hart – 07967 410155

Phil Bowen – 07935 198787

Lay Readers

Carole Sami – 07447 889657

Alison Thorne

Valerie Powell (Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Representative)

Stuart Jeffs (Director of Music)

Services

Sunday 10.00 – Parish Eucharist. This service is also live streamed via YouTube

Wednesday 7.00p.m. Evening Prayer.

Every second Wednesday of the month at 7.00 p.m. Book of Common Prayer.

Wednesday Services are led by Lay Readers Valerie Powell, Stuart Jeffs and Alison Thorne.

The Wednesday services take place via Zoom. Details are available on St Andrew's Website.

Church Website <https://www.standrews-handsworth.org.uk> Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StAndrews.Handsworth>

Twitter @StAndrewCE_HW

**St Andrew's WhatsApp Group – if you wish to join please contact
Carl Hart 07967 410155, Valerie Powell 07540 890068 or Stuart Jeffs
07910 484505**

St Andrew's PCC

Carl Hart- Church Warden

Leonora Dore - Secretary

Richard Paton-Devine – Treasurer

Mary Bairstow

Chris Baker

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John Emmins

Rachael Emmins

Stuart Jeffs

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Letter From The Parish

I remember well climbing Ben Nevis – the highest mountain in the UK – when I was about 13. We couldn't see the summit, and every time we thought we must be getting near, another bit of the mountain appeared in front of us, and another, and another..... We got tired and dispirited.

The Covid pandemic seems like that. Every time we think we are getting near the end, there's something else. Like the Omicron variant..... and maybe the long-awaited hospital appointment that suddenly gets cancelled – again. And at St Andrew's, we'd hoped that by now a new vicar would have been appointed. That wait can be tiring too: people at church do a great job but really hope for a time soon when there'll be a vicar appointed to lead us into the next stage of our journey as a church.

Advent – the time up to Christmas – has a lot about getting near the end. The end of time, the return of Jesus. Some churches preach a lot about it – that the end times are upon us. Christians in the New Testament thought the return of Jesus would be very soon – in their lifetime. And our Advent hymns have lots about it.

And over the centuries, Christians have had to live in this in-between time – having in mind the prophecies that Jesus will return but having to live very much in the present. Jesus said: *You know not the hour nor the day*. The biblical view of the end speaks into the mind and heart of a world that is so troubled, yet in which we get glimpses of the glory of God. We wait in hope to the time when *thy kingdom come*.

Meanwhile, we have to accept the reality of the present situation with all its problems – Covid, gun and knife crime, asylum seekers drowning in the waters of the English Channel, food poverty, global warming and much more. But waiting for the Kingdom to arrive isn't about standing still and kicking our heels – as if we are waiting for the No 11 bus. Waiting for the promised future involves trying to transform the present. Which is why Jesus taught us to pray not just *Thy kingdom come*, but *thy will be done on earth*. And whose job is that? Ours. Where are the hands of Jesus today? On the end of our own arms..... Waiting for the future involves trying to transform the present.

Advent is a time for waiting, for looking ahead, both to the return of Jesus, and to his birth at Bethlehem. It's a time of hope. A time when we try to lift up our eyes from the present difficulties and glimpse the joy of a future when God's kingdom will have come.

And at Christmas, that hope, that joy, is focussed on the birth of Jesus.

May the joy and the mystery of God coming to share our life in that child of Bethlehem give you fresh hope – hope for the world and hope for yourself to enjoy the future that God wants for you.

Fr. John Austen

Christmas Services



Sunday 19 December 4.00 pm – Carol Service

Friday 24 December 11.30 pm - Midnight Mass

Saturday 25 December 10.00 am Christmas Morning – Mass

Sunday 26 December 10.00 - Mass

Saturday 1 January New Year Service 12 noon

Sunday 2nd January (Epiphany) 10.00 - Mass

Tribute to Ms Beverley James on behalf of members of Handsworth and Handsworth Wood Golden Age Forum

Beverley James (daughter of Gloria James) sadly passed away this year. A group of people travelled by mini-bus from St Andrew's Church to Beverley's funeral in Cheshire on 5 August 2021. The following tribute was given by Mrs Johnson, Chair of the Golden Age Forum

I am not saying goodbye, it is just a short journey
I am taking through the sky
My Lord and saviour calls me home
Because his will for my life must be done
Now the curtain of my life has come down
But the un-played scenes must play on

Life is just a stepping stone
A pause before we just make it home
A simple place to rest and be
Until we reach eternity
You may feel a sense of loss when you call my name
But your sad loss is my perfect gain

I am now free from temptation, sorrow, and pain
So, turn not my departure into one of sorrow
Because death can no longer be a terror
Turn not the happy times into mourning
Just think of the joy and peace in my hour of closing

Everyone has a life journey
God guides our steps along the way
But on this earth, we're never meant to stay
Our final destination is a place
Filled with love, His Majesty and grace

Today we celebrate the life of our loved one
Who has gone before us, the race she has won
Her journey has now ended, and her spirit has now set free
Claiming that reward with His Majesty and Lord
In that great celestial city He has gone to prepare for us

MAY YOUR SOUL RISE IN PEACE

Shared by Rose Kelly on behalf of the Golden Age Forum.

October was Black History Month. The following poems were submitted.

I'm black and I'm proud

I'm black and I'm proud",
Why can't I say it out loud?
Is it because I am supposed to be ashamed?
Am I societies lion yet to be tamed?

Is it because I'm supposed to fade to the back,
Mix in with the crowd and blend in with a sea of black.
Is it because "the struggle" was supposed to break me,
Oh please sweetheart the struggle, it made me.

Because my ancestors were beaten and disgraced.
And that history was wrapped around me but yet I escaped.
Escaped all the pain, the hurt, the inhumanity,
All these stereotypes are driving me to the brink of insanity.

Let's not forget that my people are no longer slaves,
But the inequality repeatedly crushes us under it's waves.
Because they were taken from their homes and stripped of their pride,
The unspoken truth that I'm supposed to hide.

Because I'm supposed to be poor with three kids,
Man, all these typical black rumours are just jars without lids.
But I won't let this world bring me down,
Smack me, beat me, bruise me, 'cause I am brown.
No I'm gonna stand up and say out loud,
"Yes Brother I'm here, I'm black and I'm proud!"

Asher Rogers
Age 14

Our Past History

Looking back from whence they came
From their motherland where they changed their name
They stripped them of their identity
Paraded them for all to see
Their ownership saying you belong to me
How hard it was to be
Separated from their history.
To land up in a foreign place
Segregated by their skin colour and race
They became footprints of lost travellers
Sold to landowners for status and to valuers.
Longing for freedom, humanity, and dignity
Instead, they fear chains, and feel the whip of despondency.
Rise up my ancestors take your place in this history
Our continued oppression is real
Not part of no fantasy
We've come this far by faith and by right
No longer to be silenced but to put up the fight
No more segregation by the colour of skin
Every life is important
And this race war we will positively win.

Valerie Powell

Remembrance Day

The Remembrance Day Service was very different for me this year because instead of being at the service at St. Andrew's Church I went to a service in Bembridge on the Isle of Wight where I was on holiday. I went to Holy Trinity parish church in Bembridge and at the end of the service at 10.35.am the whole congregation walked about 50 yards up the road to the Bembridge War Memorial where the service of remembrance was to take place. There must have been over 250 people gathered round the memorial including people on horseback. As we all stood waiting, local dignitaries, police officers and members of the scouts, cubs and beavers processed onto the green many carrying poppy wreaths.

The service began with a welcome from the priest and we all sang a hymn. Some prayers were said and then one by one the names of all local people who had died in the First World War, The second World War, The Korean War and The Falklands War were read out after which the remembrance poem was read and the Last Post played to start two minutes silence. Reveille was played to end the two minutes silence and the Kohima Epitaph read. Wreaths were then laid on the war memorial steps followed by a hymn and prayers. All of those present then made an Act of Commitment to responsible living and faithful service. The National Anthem was sung, and a final blessing given and people slowly began to disperse. I found the service very moving and different to our own, but it also made me think perhaps we could adopt some of the service for our own service next year.

Chris Baker

Remembering Them

The trumpet sounds to remind us all
Of the day they all fell and the roll of the call
All the men and the women who gave up their lives
Every husband, father, mothers and wives
Every war tells the story of a life that was paid
From the poppies we wear to the many unmarked graves.

Names not remembered and time that has stood still.
On the going down of the sun
Remembering them we will
To the war that took many in the past and today
We stand in solidarity as we all come to pray
Lest not we forget how our brave soldiers fought
The cost of their lives is our freedom brought
Oh Lord please have mercy on those that have gone
Remembered through our Father, Holy Spirit and Son.

Amen.

Valerie Powell

Church launches consultation on plans to get to net zero carbon in just nine years

The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support.

The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson.

He said: "God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community.

"Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs.

"I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78 per cent reduction, set in April 2021.

Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 28 February 2022, with responses particularly requested from Dioceses and Cathedrals.

c/o Parish Pump

Bishops demand climate action at COP26

Bishops join leaders of other major faiths to demand climate action at COP26 in Glasgow

Faith leaders have been joining together to demand climate action ahead of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow (1st - 12th November).

Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich, and lead Bishop on the Environment for the Church of England signed the letter alongside leaders of every major Christian denomination and representatives from Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

The declaration states: "We remind governments of their commitments made in Paris in 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity.

"We call upon them to take the urgent action needed to avert the loss, damage, and forced migration threatened by climate change.

"Across our doctrinal and political differences, we know that we must change our ways to ensure a quality of life which all can share, and we need to provide hope for people of all ages, everywhere, including future generations.

"To offer hope in the world we need to have confidence that those in power understand the vital role they have to play at the Glasgow COP26."

The Glasgow Declaration pledges a response to the challenge set by the climate emergency through being "advocates for justice by calling on governments, businesses and others who exercise power and influence to put into effect the Paris agreement; to make the transition to a just and green economy a priority; and to commit to science-based targets that are aligned with a healthy, resilient, zero-emissions future."

c/o Parish Pump

Churches awarded £6m in latest Cultural Recovery Fund grants for major works

The Government has announced awards totalling just over six million pounds from the Heritage Stimulus Fund, part of the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, to Church of England churches and cathedrals. A total of 21 grants have been made directly to the Church of England, with a further 12 Church of England churches being funded through a grant to the National Churches Trust. The Churches Conservation Trust, Friends of Friendless Churches, and Catholic Church were also successful in bids for funding.

All of the funds awarded to places of worship will be channelled into work by specialist builders and craftspeople allowing these places to deal with urgent repair needs. Places of worship make up the largest category of listed public buildings in England, totalling 14,600 across every community in England.

The Church of England's lead Bishop for Buildings, Viv Faull, who is Bishop of Bristol, said: "The enthusiasm for this scheme shows the scale of need across our churches and cathedrals...it will help them to continue to serve their wider communities as centres of heritage, community and faith."

c/o Parish Pump

Daily Hope phone line receives more than 550,000 calls

Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls. The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.

Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range of audio, including the Church of England's national weekly service, hymns and daily prayer.

Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.

c/o Parish Pump

Be Kind

Try to be kind to each other this Christmas: many of us could do with some gentle encouragement. Depression and anxiety have risen by more than a quarter since the pandemic, according to the first global estimate of Covid's impact on mental health last year. The reduced interaction of people, the increase in isolation, coupled by high infection rates, were the cause of more than 125 million extra cases of depression and anxiety disorders in 2020.

The findings, published in the Lancet, reported that globally, depressive disorders have increased by 28 per cent, and anxiety by 26 per cent.

c/o Parish Pump

Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning is held every Thursday between 10.00 – 12.00 in the Good Shepherd Hall. (The Hall at the back of church). All are welcome.

Over the Christmas period please note the Coffee Morning will be closed on 23 December and 30 December.

Thank You

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all the people who attend St Andrew's Church.

You rallied round me at my hour of greatest need, when I was run over by a hit and run driver.

God bless you and may you all have a very Merry Christmas.

Margaret Wiwczaryk



Shebina Gill is new to St Andrew's, and wrote the following poem about herself.

It became apparent, my ring of confidence appeared in the most difficult times of growth.

Across the bridge of my nose, my mother reminded me every day how beautiful my purpose in life was and that I was made from Love against all odds.

The little girl sitting pushing dirt with a stick – so bored she became sick.

The runaway family forced to quit a society that could not stand the blend.

The teen girl, sitting behind the nets picking wallpaper whilst others run with freedom.

The Teen girl, carer to toxic needs – generations of silence and fear.

The young woman, enthusiastic to prove that She will. She can. She has a plan.

The young woman at work not blending in, refusing to do what generations before her opted for.

The young woman at work, the tick-tock of the maternal clock, her perceived expectations of the married world.

The woman grows new life – building a fortress around her, navigating a movement of opportunities for her to grow.

The woman with unseen conditions – will they debilitate her progression?

The woman bears a male child teaching him to respect the meaning of 'self'.

The woman in a sanctuary of friendship, love, and marriage, balance for identity to shine through.

The woman losing her mother to a disease that would pause the world of work that stopped her in her tracks.

The woman rejuvenates herself to inspire others through the wilderness.

In tribute to all the women we knew, those we are still learning to be, for those who were before me, I am Girl, I am Woman, I am Me and I will arise with my nose displaying the ring of confidence.

Shebina Gill

MUSIC AND THE PANDEMIC

This month I thought it would be good to look at songs and music that have helped us through the pandemic.

During the pandemic I have spent more time than usual listening to music. I have particularly enjoyed listening to gospel music, Taizé music, traditional anthems, and modern worship songs. In an environment that felt out of our control - when we were looking for strength through difficult times - I came across this modern worship song 'The Voice Of Hope' which I felt reflected the time that we were going through.

The Voice Of Hope

As high as the heavens above the earth
So high are Your ways to mine
Ways so perfect they never fail me
I know You are good all the time
And through the storm yet I will praise You
Despite it all yet I will sing
Through good or bad yet I will worship
For you remain the same King of Kings.
You are the voice of hope
The anchor of my soul
Where there seems to be no way
You make it possible
You are the Prince of peace
Amidst adversity
My lips will shout for joy
To you the Most High
You were the One before time began
There's nothing beyond Your control
My confidence my assurance
Rest in Your unchanging word

Lara Martin

(Abundant Life Ministries, Bradford, England

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CD 'The Best Worship Songs...Ever!'

Eileen Lawrence

Has music helped me through Covid

Has music helped me through Covid and lockdown? The answer is yes, it has helped me tremendously.

Before Covid and lockdown when I went for a walk it was usually to the post office or Tescos or just a walk to College Rd and back. I never went walking over Sandwell Valley on my own as I never felt able to do this. Then came Covid and lockdown and after praying about my fears and asking the Lord to be with me I found the courage to walk over Sandwell Valley, and as I walked, I began to sing some of my favourite hymns to myself. Things are now more normal, but I still regularly walk and sing in Sandwell Valley.

The hymns which I gain strength from are **Guide me O thou Great Redeemer, O Lord My God When I In Awesome Wonder, Give me Joy In My Heart** and some of the hymns I sang with the children when I worked at St. Augustine's School. I have even made up my own words to some of these hymns to thank God for the wonders of his creation.

Chris Baker

Music that helped me through Lockdown

On one particularly bleak day in lockdown I heard on the radio the Bach aria for bass voice Cantata BVW 82 Ich Habe Genug. I have very little German but could manage to translate this as 'I have enough'. A complete translation of the lyrics goes

It is enough.
I have taken the Saviour,
the hope of the devout, Into my longing arms;
It is enough!
I have gazed on Him, My faith has pressed Jesus to my heart
I would now, even today,
Gladly wish to leave this world.
It is enough!

This is Simeon in the temple when Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus to present him to God. So, the occasion is the same as 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'. And the feelings expressed are parallel but refreshingly reworked. The music of course is sublime, but it was the words which struck me. There are many places in the Bible which tell us that if we have God that is all we need. If we have God, we have everything. What am I saying, "If we have God"? We have. Not "if" but "when" or "because". God is available to everyone. Perhaps especially he is available to those who choose not to avail themselves of him. He is a God who knocks on doors. And no one knocks on an open door.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Because God looks after me, there is nothing I don't have. It is enough. But we do want. I want a new car. I want you to be nice to me. I want a bigger salary, a better house. Want want want. Lord teach us not to want. It is enough. Simeon is completely fulfilled by holding the infant Jesus in his arms. Let us hold him too. And say Enough.

Alison Thorne

'You Know My Name Tasha Cobbs Leonard ft Jimi Cravity

During the pandemic I played this song so often I truly believe it changed me and changed my life for the better in terms of belief and trust in our Lord and allowed him to lead me to where he wanted me.

He knows my name
Yes, he knows my name
He knows my name
Yes, he knows my name
And oh, how he walks with me
Yes oh, how he talks with me
And oh how he tells me
That I am his own
You know my name

And oh how you comfort me
And oh how you counsel me
Yet it still amazes me
That I am your friend
So now I pour out
My heart to you
Here in Your presence
I am made new

You know my name
And oh how you walk with me
Oh how you talk with me (you talk with me)
Oh how you tell me
I am your own
Oh you got to know me
So I trust you with my life, yeah
No, no fire can burn me
No battle can turn me
No mountain can stop me
Cause you hold my hand
And now I'm walking in your victory
Cause your power is within me
No giant can defeat me
Cause you hold my hand
You hold my hand (you hold my hand)
To be afraid, no (you hold my hand)
I don't have to be afraid, no (you hold my hand)
You know my name

Oh how you walk with me
Oh how you walk with me
I'm in love with you, Lord
Oh how you talk with me
Just to commune with you
Oh how you tell me I belong to you
That I am your own

Source: Musixmatch. Songwriters: Brenton Brown/Natasha Leonard (**Verses have been abbreviated**). The full song can be heard on YouTube <https://youtu.be/t7owFiihXgg>

Val Powell

Sitting down in church

Did you ever wonder how our churches first acquired pews? Dr Nicholas Orme, Emeritus Professor of History at Exeter University, has written a book, *Going to Church in Medieval England* (Yale University Press), in which he points out that “no medieval church pronouncement ordered the provision of seating in churches other than for the clergy. General seating was a lay invention.”

It is easy to understand those laity of long ago: the services could go on for hours. And so, as Dr Orme explains, general seating “seems to have begun with the nobility and gentry who wished for comfort The desire spread downwards to the congregation during the 14th and 15th centuries.”

c/o Parish Pump

Open your window

When you have friends come to visit you, open the window for ten minutes of every hour that they stay. It will help to reduce the level of any Covid particles that may be in the air.

As one medical officer for England explained: “People with Covid release virus particles into the air whenever they speak, breath, or cough. These can linger in unventilated settings. So, it’s vital to open windows, to keep the air moving and help prevent infections.”

c/o Parish Pump

Help a donkey in the Middle East

Donkeys have two walk-on parts in the story of Jesus' life – from the donkey that took His pregnant mother to Bethlehem, to the donkey which He rode into Jerusalem.

And so Christmas may be a good time to remember the charity Safe Haven for Donkeys, which was set up in 2000 to help the thousands of working donkeys in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Today, its sanctuary in Israel is providing life-long care to around 200 unwanted and abused donkeys of all ages.

The charity also has a mobile clinic which helps around 500 working donkeys, mules and horses across the Palestinian Territories. It also has a permanent clinic in the Palestinian city of Nablus. Common injuries such as those from poor harnessing, overgrown hooves and bad teeth are easily treatable and go a long way in improving the lives of the animals.

Advice and education are key parts of Safe Haven's work with the owners and their children. If you would like to help a donkey, please visit: www.safehaven4donkeys.org

c/o Parish Pump

Dwindling wildlife in Britain

Be kind to the wildlife in your garden – what little of it remains. The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, and it may not even have enough biodiversity - variety of plant and animal life - to prevent an ecological meltdown.

That is the finding of new data by the Natural History Museum. It says that the UK has an average of only 53 per cent of its natural biodiversity left, well below the global average of 75 per cent.

Worldwide, scientists warn that the variety of plant and animal life of earth is dwindling fast. It will have a serious impact on human life: "those systems have lost enough to mean that we have to be careful about relying on them functioning in the way that we need them to."

c/o Parish Pump

David Bowie and God

It was 75 years ago, on 8th January 1947, that David Bowie, pop/glam rock singer, songwriter and actor, was born in London. He became one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, dying in 2016.

Born David Robert Jones, he studied art and design before transforming himself into an enigmatic and exploratory singer, specialising in songs about being a misfit and an outsider - sometimes literally, as when, early on, he became Ziggy Stardust - a gender-bending role some Christians found threatening.

But he was always interested in spirituality, though he questioned organised religion. Towards the end, when he had liver cancer, he found comfort in God: the day after he died his wife Iman posted an Instagram message: "The struggle is real, but so is God."

One of Bowie's definitive acting roles was as *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, during which he experienced an occult incident that led him to wear a Cross afterwards. He also collaborated in a kind of sequel, *Lazarus*. He once said: "Searching for music is like searching for God."

Bowie became a musician in 1963, his first major hit being *Space Oddity*, in 1969. He moved into glam rock in the early 70s. His record sales were estimated at over 100 million during his lifetime: he was one of the best-selling artists of all time and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996. After his death the magazine *Rolling Stone* called him "the greatest rock star ever".

c/o Parish Pump

13th December Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse

Lucy was a Christian girl who got caught up in the fierce and widespread Diocletian persecutions of 303-4. She refused to give up her Christian faith, and so was put to death. Her tomb can still be found in a Catacomb in Syracuse (Sicily), and there are early fourth-century inscriptions bearing her name (Euskia).

Lucy's full story has been lost in the mists of time, but a romantic legend of her martyrdom grew up after her death. According to the legend, Lucy was arrested while giving to the poor at the height of the persecution. Her own fiancé had betrayed her, telling the authorities about her faith. The judge ordered that she be burned, but all attempts to inflict such punishment on her went amiss, because God protected her. At last, Lucy was killed by the sword.

Lucy's legend was written in the 5th century, and she was honoured in Rome from the 6th century. The name Lucy means 'light', and so in time she became the patron saint for those with eye diseases. Her feast day is close to the shortest day of the year, so it is celebrated in Sweden as a festival of light. As the full details of Lucy's martyrdom will never be known, she can represent all the young women who have been willing to die for Christ, and whose full stories will also never be known to us.

c/o Parish Pump

17 December Eglantyne Jebb – founder of ‘Save the Children’

Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives.

Eglantyne did not begin as an obvious ‘mover and shaker’ of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action.

She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she’d found in Cambridge. Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts. The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children. And so in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the ‘Fight the Famine’ Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations.

One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: “Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death.” She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne’s commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone. When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain’s biggest charities. Eglantyne’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it. But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne’s fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.

c/o Parish Pump

25 December Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew! The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!

c/o Parish Pump

28th December: Holy Innocents

The death of a very young child is perhaps the hardest grief of all to bear. So the 28th December is a very poignant day in the church calendar. It is when the worldwide Church joins with bereaved parents to grieve the loss of babies and young children. For Holy Innocents day recalls the massacre of the young male children of Bethlehem by Herod the Great.

Herod had been told by the Magi, or Wise Men, that a great king had been born in Bethlehem, and he felt shaken. How could a child in unimportant little Bethlehem be so powerful that the stars in the night sky honoured His birth?! Herod took the Magi so seriously that he decided to try and kill this new young rival. He decreed that every male baby of two years and under should be killed. (Matthew 2:1-18).

Bethlehem was not a large place, and Bible commentators estimate that between six and 25 infants were slaughtered by Roman soldiers. Their mothers were inconsolable at the death of their babies, as indeed mothers have always been.

The death of these innocent baby boys of Bethlehem became a feast-day in the western Church by the 4th century. This was because the Church considered them to be martyrs because they not only died *for* Christ, *but instead of* Christ.

Down the centuries, the tragic loss of the Holy Innocents has touched the imagination and hearts of poets, preachers and artists. Though heart-broken parents still grieve today, the Church can offer them one firm assurance: that young children who die to this world will undoubtedly “this day be with Me in Paradise.” The One who eagerly said “Suffer the little children to *come unto Me*” will be the last person to turn them away.

c/o Parish Pump

2nd Jan: St Basil the Great, champion of the Church

Basil was most people's idea of the perfect diocesan bishop. He was a theologian of distinction, who as a monk devoted himself to much prayer and teaching. He leapt to the defence of the Church from the persecution of the Arian emperor Valens, but also appreciated great secular literature of the time, gave away his inheritance to the poor, knew how to run a soup kitchen, and counted thieves and prostitutes among his converts. Not your everyday bishop!

Basil (c330-79) came from a distinguished and pious family, and he had the best education available at Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens. He decided to become a monk with Gregory of Nazianzus, and settled as a hermit near Neo-Caesarea. He became bishop of Caesarea in 370, with 50 suffragan bishops to look after. It was the time of the great Arian heresy, and Basil would come to be seen as one of the great champions of the Church, defending it from secular encroachments.

Basil loved his people and was known for his generosity and care for the poor, both through food and medical care. He was a great preacher – preaching both morning and evening to vast congregations, and organising services of psalms before daybreak.

He was interested in monastic legislation, and to this day, nearly all monks and nuns of the Greek Church follow his rule. His emphasis was on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual work, rather than on solitary asceticism. His rule allowed for almsgiving, hospitals and guesthouses. Basil also wrote some important works on the Holy Spirit.

He died at 49, worn out by austerities, hard work and disease. He was so loved that even strangers mourned his death, and in the centuries that followed, many artists painted pictures of him. His cult spread rapidly in the West, through Greek monks in Italy and through St Benedict admitting that his rule had been inspired by "our holy father Basil."

c/o Parish Pump

6th Jan: Epiphany

On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

c/o Parish Pump

Afghanistan crisis: advice for parishes on helping refugees

The Church of England has published a 'toolkit' of resources for parishes seeking to help refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban takeover of the country.

The material, available online, brings together links and information on how churches can welcome people arriving from Afghanistan through giving, longer-term practical support such as community sponsorship, prayer and advocacy.

Staff in the Church of England's national Mission and Public Affairs team say they have been overwhelmed with messages from churches and individuals concerned by the situation in Afghanistan and asking what they can do to help.

The toolkit includes a range of prayer and theological resources from the Church of England and other sources alongside details of an array of charities and NGOs also working to support refugees and asylum seekers.

It also includes a simple explanation of the two main resettlement schemes and the asylum system and offers suggestions on how Christians can speak out on behalf of those unable to do so.

In a foreword to the toolkit, the Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, the Church of England's Lead Bishop for Refugees and Asylum, said: "The challenge for the whole nation is to welcome these families and help them build new lives here in the United Kingdom.

"Alongside this is the reality that there are thousands of Afghan citizens already here and stuck in the asylum system awaiting a response to their claim.

"God's call on God's people has always been to welcome the stranger and help provide for them. So here is a fresh opportunity to live out this calling.

"It is not a quick short-term response that is most needed but a willingness to befriend families and support them for the long haul.

The Church of England is a longstanding supporter of refugee programmes. The material is available online at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/toolkit-supporting-afghan-refugees>

c/o Parish Pump

Reaching for the Exit

I am a small old-fashioned man
Who loves not all this giddy stuff.
When I look up and see the moon
- That clown's face – in the autumn sky,
Man's race to be the very first
To pepper that broad kindly grin
With rockets seems irrelevant
And rather vulgar don't you think?
And when the scientific men
Are even cleverer than now
And all the eager human race
Set off from this earth's sad old crust
To travel at the speed of thought –
"Spend a Week-end Among the Stars!"
"A Sun-burn Trip to Father Sol!"
When they who've littered earth's small face
Spread fish and chips in outer space
Or make a bright and noisy day
Excursioning the Milky Way
I am not coming. I shall stay.

George Philip Hussey

George Philip Hussey is Alison Thorne's father. This poem is taken from his book, Studley Poems.

Alison Thorne

Wordsearch for December

Christmas is nearly here! Two thousand years ago the Jews were longing for the coming of their Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort all who mourn and to bestow on His people a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Jesus did all those things. He was and is the Son of God, and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Whoever believes in Him will have the best gift of all – His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life. **c/o Parish Pump**

Messiah Broken
Heart Freedom
Darkness Favour
Prisoners Comfort
Mourn Bestow
Crown Beauty
Ashes Son
God Jesus
Seen Father
Whoever longing
Thousand



Wordsearch – January 2022

Where did the Wise Men come from?

Magi from the East – it isn't a lot to go on. The Magi were a religious caste devoted to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams. Some scholars believe these magi came from southern Arabia, where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She would have learned about the coming Messiah from Solomon.

In Matthew's gospel the Magi ask Herod: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' So it is possible that Queen of Sheba's story of Messiah for Israel had survived.

One thing that supports the theory that the magi came from southern Arabia is this: if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East'. **c/o Parish Pump**

Magi	East
Religious	Caste
Astrology	Divination
Dreams	Scholars
Southern	Arabia
Queen	Sheba
Messiah	Solomon
Herod	King
Star	Worship
Palestine	Caravan

N	R	E	H	T	U	O	S	S	R	H	R
E	E	N	I	T	S	E	L	A	P	E	E
A	L	A	N	N	E	A	O	O	I	R	T
K	I	N	G	Q	U	E	E	N	M	O	N
Y	G	O	L	O	R	T	S	A	A	D	O
R	I	D	S	A	S	R	G	P	A	R	M
N	O	I	T	A	N	I	V	I	D	E	O
R	U	S	C	L	L	G	B	H	S	A	L
S	S	C	H	O	L	A	R	S	H	M	O
V	M	M	B	L	R	H	I	R	E	S	S
S	C	A	R	A	V	A	N	O	B	A	S
U	R	T	A	M	H	O	S	W	A	N	I

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you enjoyed this edition of the magazine. Asher has an amazing talent for writing poetry for someone of such a young age. I look forward to reading more of his work.

Music during the pandemic articles were lovely and it would have been even better to hear the music that people have written about. Maybe sometime in the future, we can have a Music Evening at St Andrews. We could have an evening of singing or listening to Taize music, Gospel music, traditional and modern music.

If you have any prayers, poems, or Bible Verses you wish to share please feel free to write an article for the magazine.

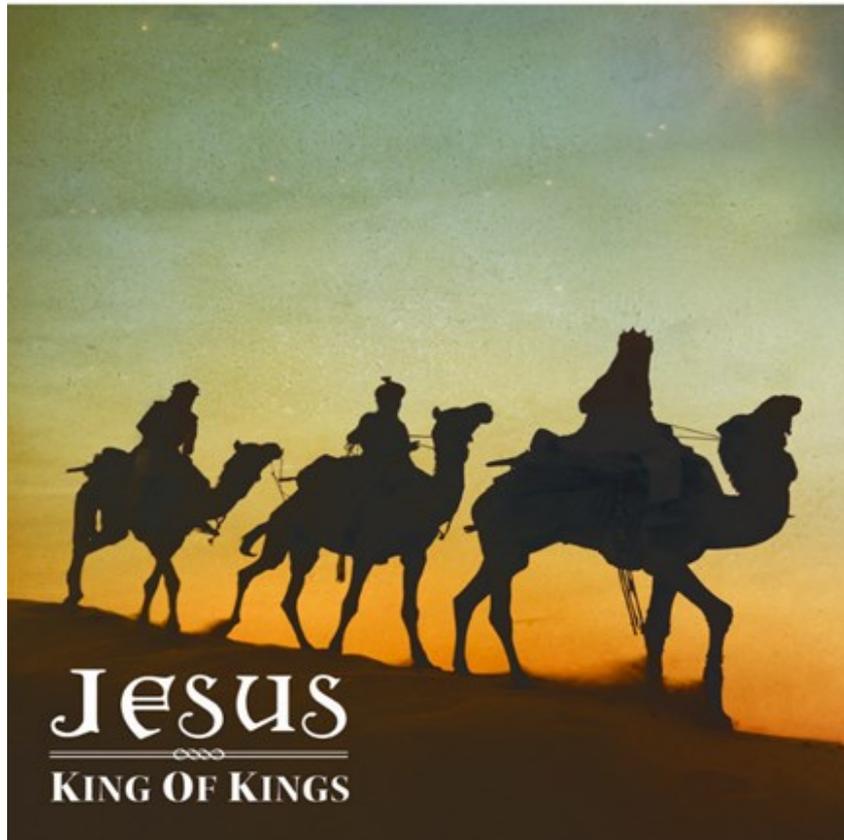
Help Wanted

In the past, local shops have advertised in the magazine. If anyone is able to explore this and visit local shopkeepers, inviting them to advertise in our Parish Magazine, please let me know. This may be something that will have to wait a while, depending on Covid. Thank you.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Eileen Lawrence





**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HANDSWORTH**