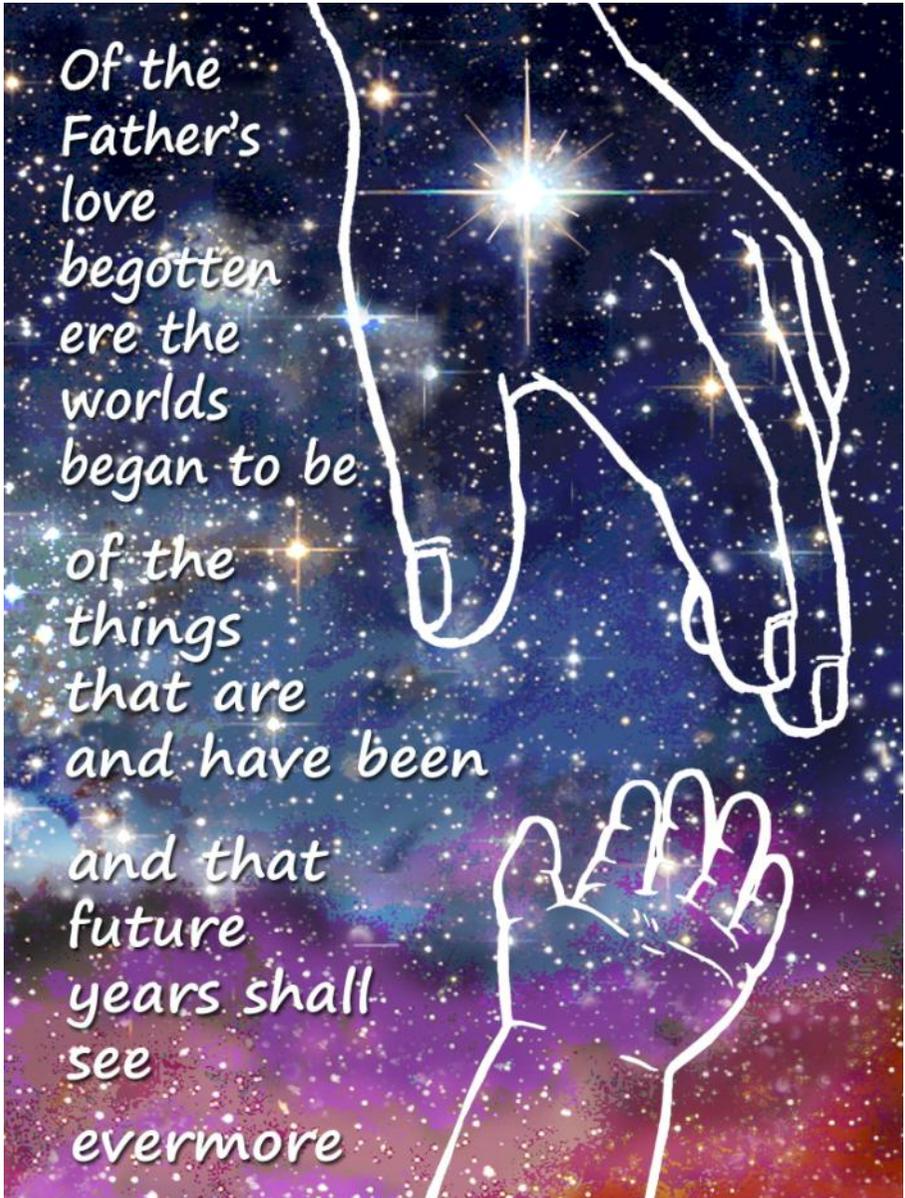


CROSSROADS

The Family Magazine of St Hilda's, Ashford, Middlesex

No. 705 December 2019 / January 2020

Free - but donations welcome!



The Parish of **St Hilda, Ashford** in the Diocese of London
Charity Reg. No. 1134119

Vicar	Fr. Joseph Fernandes	Phone: 01784 254237 e-mail: vicar@sthilda.org
Parish Office	Denise Buttigieg	St Hilda's Parish Office, Stanwell Road Ashford, Middlesex TW15 3QL Phone: 01784 253525 e-mail: office@sthilda.org
Church Web site: Facebook: Streetlife: Twitter:		www.sthilda.org StHildaAshford st-hildas @St_Hilda_Ashfrd
Parish PA:		Contact via Parish Office
Lay Ministers:	Carolyn Clark Rosalyn Young	Carolyn@sthilda.org Rosalyn@sthilda.org
Church Wardens:	Bobbie Bedford Stuart Young	Contact via Parish Office
Church Hall Booking Secretary:	Chris Davenport	Phone: 01784 252170

CROSSROADS

Editor:	Rosemary Greenwood	e-mail: crossroads_ashford@hotmail.com
Circulation:	Valerie Scott	Phone: 01784 254748
Advertising:		Contact via Parish Office

Deadline for
February 2020 copy is
Sunday 5th January

Deadline for
March 2020 copy is
Sunday 2nd February

Post typed or written copy,
CD discs or memory sticks
at the Parish Office, or e-mail:
crossroads_ashford@hotmail.com

*An item submitted after the deadline
may be accepted for inclusion IF the
Editor has been informed by the dead-
line that the item is on its way.*

**When is the Vicar not available
in December and January?**

Every Saturday: day off



WHAT I REALLY WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

As we enter the season of Advent, it is the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, and it spans four Sundays. Its name comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming". The season also celebrates Christ's anticipated coming again in the fullness of time to rule triumphantly over life in heaven and earth, as well as the coming of Christ as the infant Saviour whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. And

because the season emphasizes Christ's comings and not just his birth, it's more than just a time to get ready for Christmas. It is a penitential season but is no longer associated with the strictness of Lent. Nevertheless Advent reminds us that the question is not whether Jesus will return to judge the earth, but when.

For many people the run up to Christmas can become a hectic time, shopping for presents for loved ones, attending functions and parties, stocking up on food; the list goes on and on. But what is it that we really want and need for Christmas? One way of finding out is by paying attention to the lyrics of some well-known songs composed about this time:

“All I really want for Christmas is someone to tuck me in
A shoulder to cry on if I lose, shoulders to ride on if I win
There's so much I could ask for, but there's just one thing I need
All I really want for Christmas is a family.

All I want for Christmas is someone who'll be here
To sing me happy birthday for the next 100 years
And It's okay if they're not perfect or even if they're a little broken
That's alright, 'Cause so am I”.

“So please, please, please
Let me, let me, let me
Let me get what I want this time”.

“I don't want a lot for Christmas
There is just one thing I need
I don't care about the presents
Underneath the Christmas tree
I just want you for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true oh
All I want for Christmas is you”. (*All I want for Christmas is you*; Mariah Carey 1994)

The list could go on, and the lyrics speak by themselves.

On another level, if we were to look at Christmas adverts, they seem to present a beautiful, heartfelt and magical Christmas, but ultimately many of them are biased and manipulative. Their aim is to trigger an emotional response, to fill a void that of

course can only be achieved through buying that special present, the perfect present, because at the end of the day, we are worth it...! Consumerism at its best!

But what do I really want for Christmas? In order to find an answer you need to tune in to some of the things your heart desires the most: fulfilment, sense of worth, meaning and belonging. How you pursue this remains for you to find out. Perhaps popping in to church this Christmas might be a step in the right direction. It will not give you all the answers, but it will certainly help you to bring things into perspective, in the context of a supportive, welcoming and friendly community. It might ultimately bring you a sense of belonging, to connect or reconnect with yourself and with God, to recharge your spiritual batteries, to just be. This could also form the basis of a new year's resolution, that might bring you far more benefits than other well wishing, but quickly broken decisions, and does not induce guilt.

What you really want for Christmas is to be the person that God has created you to be, not what the world is telling you are, or you need.

Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and happy New Year.

Fr Joseph



REMEMBRANCE

Last year we made poppies from the bottoms of cola and lemonade bottles, spray painting them red before painting the black markings on the insides and then gluing pea sticks to the back of them. We put them outside the church on the Woodthorpe Road side and shared photos on social media, which generated lots of comments both locally and via the social media.

This year we planted them outside the church again, on Sunday 3rd November, but this time instead of just planting them randomly as a field, we have planted them in the shape of 1914-18 : 1939-45 to remember our fallen heroes. Photos will again be shared, but while we were planting a couple of passers-by commented on how lovely the display was last year, and how lovely it was to see them out again this year.

Christine Makriel

FEELING FLUSHED? - update

The collection on 17th November raised about £300 - this is enough to twin five of the eight toilets in the church hall and so provide five communities with a much-needed toilet.

NOTICES

DECORATING THE CHURCH

The church will be decorated for Christmas from 9.30am on Saturday 21 December. Helpers and greenery welcome!

CHRISTMAS CARD AT ST. HILDA'S

We will again have a single large card in church addressed to everyone in St. Hilda's, which anyone can sign. This should save some hassle for you, and a tiny bit of the Earth's resources. The money you save in individual cards can be donated to a charity supporting refugees. You are, of course, still free to give individual cards to your friends. The card will be in church during December.



1st Thursday in the Month
2.30 – 4 pm in the Church
Tea/coffee, cake and a donation of £1
All Welcome

5th December The Christmas Stories

No meeting in January

Ideas for topics for 2020 meetings to Rosalyn Young

The Editorial Team wish our advertisers, contributors, the collating and distribution teams, and all our readers a joyful Christmas and happy New Year, with best wishes for 2020. Thank you all for your support this year.

*Rosemary Greenwood, Mike Davenport, Chris Holliday,
Pauline Milton, Terry Rickson, Valerie Scott*

WHAT'S ON in DECEMBER 2019

SUNDAY		
8am	Said Eucharist (BCP)	Advent Sunday
1st 9.30am	Family Service	
8th }		Advent 2
15th } 8am	Said Eucharist	Advent 3
22nd } 9.30am	Eucharist and Junior Church	Advent 4
29th }		1st Sunday after Christmas
8th 4pm	Christingle Service	
15th 9.30am	Nativity from Scratch in service	
	11.30am Nativity Festival and Memorial Tree	
29th 6pm	iPray (service in church)	
MONDAY:		
2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd	8pm	Advent Study in church (see page 13 for details)
TUESDAY		
Every Tuesday	9.45am	Eucharist ; 3rd is MU Corporate Communion
24th		CHRISTMAS EVE
	3pm	Crib Service with Nativity
	11pm	First Mass of Christmas
WEDNESDAY		
11th	5pm	Ashford Church of England School Carol Service
	8pm	Mothers' Union Carols and Mince Pies
25th		CHRISTMAS DAY
	8am	Parish Eucharist
	9.30am	Parish Eucharist
THURSDAY		
5th	2.30pm	Feed My Sheep in church: <i>The Christmas Stories</i>
12th	all day	St. James' School using the church
FRIDAY		
Every Friday	7pm	Choir Practice in church (not 27th)
6th, 13th	7.30pm	<i>Aladdin</i> in Church Hall - see page 18
13th	8.15pm	Community Singing in church - all welcome

SATURDAY

Every Saturday 9.30am-noon **Church Open**, refreshments available;
Knitting Project for the Upper Room

7th 10.30am, 2.30pm, 7pm **Aladdin** in Church Hall - see page 18

14th 10am **Nativity Festival and Memorial Tree** (see page 14)
2.30pm, 7pm **Aladdin** in Church Hall - see page 18

21st 9.30 Decorating the church for Christmas
4pm **Service of Nine Lessons and Carols** followed by
mulled wine

WHAT'S ON in JANUARY 2020

SUNDAY

5th	8am	Said Eucharist (BCP)	2nd Sunday after Christmas	
	9.30am	Family Service		
12th	} 8am	Said Eucharist	Epiphany 1	
19th		} 9.30am	Eucharist and Junior Church	Epiphany 2
26th		}		Epiphany 3
26th	6pm	iPray (service in church)		

MONDAY: 6th

Epiphany

TUESDAY

Every Tuesday 9.45am **Eucharist**; 7th is MU Corporate Communion

14th 12.45pm **Mothers' Union Lunch** in Small Hall

28th 7.30pm **PCC Meeting** in Church

WEDNESDAY

Every Wednesday 8pm **Bible Study** at 6 Seaton Drive

8th, 22nd 7.30pm **Ladies' Homegroup** at 148 Feltham Hill Road

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Every Friday 7pm **Choir Practice** in church

10th, 24th 8.15pm **Community Singing** in church - all welcome

SATURDAY

Every Saturday 9.30am-noon **Church Open**, refreshments available;
Knitting Project for the Upper Room



GET READY FOR FEBRUARY!

The Bishop of Kensington, the Rt Revd Dr Graham Tomlin, has planned a series of Kensington Deanery Missions.

He is reserving one month for each Deanery, spread over two years and during that month is making himself available, as much as possible, to assist the parishes in that Deanery in their activities. Spelthorne is first, in February!

This is for a mission of reconciliation, based on 2 Cor. 5.17-20:

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

This gives us two months to plan our actions, by individual parish, group of parishes, or Deanery-wide. There is no outside team - we are the team! Activities could be evangelistic, a social outreach initiative, acts of compassion etc.

Some events have already been pencilled in. For St. Hilda's these are at the end of the month:

Sunday 23rd at 6pm - Confirmation

Tuesday 25th (Shrove Tuesday) - a pancake party

Wednesday 26th (Ash Wednesday) - Ashing at Ashford Station

Look out for further information, think how you can help, and pray!

A Prayer for the Spelthorne Deanery Mission - February 2020

Generous God,
source of all life and growth,
grant us your vision for our planning,
your wisdom for our actions,
and your power for our witness;
that through your Holy Spirit
your church may grow in number,
in faithful service to our communities,
and in love and commitment
to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

LYNDONS

Decorating
and repairs
for the home
and office

07836 693443

01252 519356

Michael Lyndon Smith



The Oven Man®

Your local independent
oven cleaning,
spares and repair service

All makes of ovens, hobs, extractors,
microwaves and BBQs lovingly restored
to their former glory by reliable, friendly
and fully trained experts

www.ovenman.co.uk

Call 020 8185 7069

MUGGERIDGE

FURNISHERS

MAKE YOUR
HOME MORE
COMFORTABLE
WITH FINE
FURNITURE

MAIN AGENTS FOR: **nathan**



LARGE RANGE OF 3 PIECE SUITES AT UNBELIEVABLE PRICES

Disposal Of Old Beds & Furniture Arranged

1 & 2 GROVE HOUSE, CHURCH ROAD, ASHFORD, MIDDLESEX TW15 2UD

ASHFORD 01784 256429



Gentle Pilates Classes

Every Friday Morning 9.00
St Hilda's Small Hall.

The class is followed by a **FREE WEEKLY WALK** at 10:15
(non Pilates members welcome)

For more information visit www.primapilates.co.uk

Please call first as spaces are limited! **07506001406 Richard**



Call today to have your oven, hob, extractor or range professionally cleaned

Mark Gilson contact details

Tel 07961 247550

markgilson@ovenwizards.com

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that He was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of ‘misrule’ – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England’s Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect ‘boxes’ of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop’s robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today’s Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children’s presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.

From: <https://christianity.org.uk/the-history-of-christmas/#.W9LmchNKhsM>

THE NEWS QUIZ FOR 2019

How well did you read the News this year? Try this quiz from Parish Pump and find out...

1. What is a Gillet jaune?
2. The famous fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld died this year leaving his £150 million fortune to Choupette. Who or what is Choupette?
3. In March an aeroplane left London City airport flight with number BA3271 to Düsseldorf. Where did it land?
4. Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky won the Ukrainian Presidential election in April. What was his job before the election?
5. There was a serious fire at Notre Dame in April. Who wrote a book in 1831 about the cathedral and to draw attention to the restoration it then needed?
6. What is Pteridomania? The Victorians had it.
7. Blackpool Tower celebrated its 125th anniversary in May 2019. What landmark inspired it?
8. Which former member of the cabinet was named after a battleship?
9. Which country has coins nicknamed loonie and toonie?
10. Politicians talked about red lines. What was the thin red line?
11. What would you use a French press to make?
12. In July we were told to look out for a “Painted Lady Summer”. What is that?
13. What were male members of the RAF allowed to grow this year that that they have never previously been allowed?
14. What were seaisiders were advised to stare at to stop them stealing chips and bothering them?
15. Which person has the following titles in other languages? (All one person)
Leading Star
The Son of the Big Boss
The Sun Looks at Him in a Good Way
The Helper of the Cows (literally he whom the cows love so much they call for him when they are in times of distress)
16. Which territory did Donald Trump say he was interested in buying for the US?
17. Where would you find a small copper and an Essex skipper?
18. What did Goldsmiths, University of London, ban the sale of to try to fight global warming?

David Pickup

To perceive Christmas through its wrapping becomes more difficult each year.

E B White



ADVENT STUDY at ST. HILDAS's - SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN

On **Mondays in December at 8pm** in St. Hilda's Church

This is an original Advent course based on the classic Christmas movie *Miracle on 34th Street*. Through discussion of some of the themes and characters of this perennially popular film, the course helps us to think more deeply during the Advent season about the coming of Jesus and what the Christmas story can teach us about our faith today. Each session includes watching scenes from the 1994 film, starring Richard Attenborough and Elizabeth Perkins.

2nd Beginning our walk of faith

9th Responding to challenges in our faith

16th What does faith mean when common sense tells us not to believe?

23rd Understanding the gift of miracles

If Mondays are not convenient for you, everyone is invited to join an Advent Study course held at

Laleham Methodist Church

Edinburgh Drive TW15 1PH

on Wednesdays

November 27th, December 4th, 11th, 18th

at 7.30 for 8pm

Using the book *THE MEANING IS IN THE WAITING - the Spirit of Advent*

by Paula Gooder

Capital Vision Prayer

Generous God, You have called us to be salt and light in this great city;
Guide us by your Holy Spirit to discern your will for your Church
as we seek to follow your Son Jesus Christ
in loving and serving our neighbours.

Give us the wisdom and strength to fulfil the vision you put before us
and help us to play our part in transforming our earthly city into a sign of the
Heavenly Jerusalem where you live and reign,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God now and for ever. *Amen*

NATIVITY FESTIVAL AT ST. HILDA'S CHURCH

On Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th December 2019 St. Hilda's Church will be holding a Nativity Festival, displaying homemade and cherished family Nativity sets to celebrate this year's Advent season.



The exhibition will be open from 10am until 4pm on Saturday, with a Nativity Storytime at 11am and 2pm and card making throughout the day for a donation contribution, and from 11.30am until 4pm on Sunday with Storytime at 2pm.

There will also be an opportunity to place the names of absent loved ones on the Memorial Tree which will be on display for the Christmas Season.

The Sunday School will be performing a "Nativity from Scratch" during the 9.30am Sunday service which you are cordially invited to before the exhibition opens.

Teas and Coffees with biscuits or cakes will be available throughout both days.

We will ask visitors to make a donation to their favourite Nativity sets. The money raised will be given to Crisis for their valuable help to the homeless during this time of year. The Nativity Set with the most money raised will win the viewer's choice.

Make a note in your diary: we look forward to seeing you and celebrating the Advent Season.

Alison Garner



ST HILDA'S CHURCH – CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**St Hilda's church offers you a warm welcome
to our church this Christmas**

Sunday December 8th (4pm)

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE



Saturday December 14th (10am - 4pm)

NATIVITY FESTIVAL & MEMORIAL TREES

Sunday December 15th (9.30am)

FAMILY SERVICE including a NATIVITY from
scratch

Sunday December 15th (11.30am-4pm)

NATIVITY FESTIVAL & MEMORIAL TREES

Saturday December 21st (4pm)

9 LESSONS & CAROL SERVICE with mulled wine

Christmas Eve - Tuesday December 24th

CRIB SERVICE (3pm)

FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS (11pm)

Christmas Day - Wednesday December 25th

EUCCHARIST

(8am & 9.30 am)



MISCELLANY

from *Parish Pump*

I'm often struck by the fact that the events of that first Christmas would have passed almost unnoticed by the man in the street. The angels appeared in the night to shepherds out in the hills; Jesus was born up a back alley behind a pub that most people probably didn't even know was there. Was the star even distinguishable from the planets that people were used to seeing? Who actually knew what was happening?

WHO KNEW?

Who saw the man and pregnant girl
Pressing through the crowded street
Struggling through the human swirl
On tired legs and aching feet?
Who knew?

Who heard her cries, in labour's pain
Deep within a battered shed?
Who cared for their impoverished shame
Who thought about her grassy bed?
Who knew?

Who, listening to an infant's cries
Hearing a birth, they thought it strange?
Expressed an int'rest, or surprise?
Who recognised that awesome change?
Who knew?

Who saw the shepherds rush along
Through sleeping streets at dead of night?
Who heard the angels' glorious song?
Or saw the star that shone so bright?
Who knew?

Who, fighting through the Christmas throngs
Or, settling down to watch TV
Eats Christmas food, sings Christmas songs
Who can the coming Saviour see?
Who knows?

By Nigel Beeton

A LIFE FOR A LIFE

Capital punishment was abolished in Britain 50 years ago this month, in December 1969. It ended the macabre ritual of a judge donning a black cap, solemnly declaring that the accused was found guilty and would 'be taken hence to a place of public execution...and there to be hanged by the neck until you be dead.' On the day of execution, a crowd would gather outside the prison waiting to hear the eight o'clock bell confirming the execution was complete.

A movement against capital punishment had grown steadily during the 1950's, fuelled by 'public' shock at the execution of a woman for a crime of passion. Her name was Ruth Ellis and she was found guilty of shooting her lover, David Blake.

Though Ruth's story was tragic the incident that remains on my mind is that of Timothy Evans. Found guilty of murdering his wife and infant daughter he was hanged in March 1950. Subsequently it emerged beyond any doubt that the murder, and several others, was the work of John Reginald Christie. Christie lived with his wife in the ground floor flat of his property 10 Rillington Place, Camden.

Evans, who was mentally immature, had been persuaded to confess to a murder in which he was not, in any way, involved. It was a grave miscarriage of justice. Years later a friend gave me a book which told the whole appalling story. He had been one of the lawyers in the team that had tried to defend Evans. Today, Evans would have been released, pardoned and paid compensation. But we cannot bring someone back from the dead.

Detection and judicial judgement are not infallible, and people today would not want the abolition of capital punishment reversed. Though the question remains – what is a suitable punishment for murder?

Canon David Winter

EPIPHANY - 6th January

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, Origen, 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.



ST. HILDA'S
ENTERTAINERS

proudly present their
2019 Pantomime,
the ever-popular story of

Aladdin

at St Hilda's Hall

Friday 6th December
at 7.45pm

Saturday 7th December
at 10.30am, 2.30pm and 7.00pm

Friday 13th December
at 7.45pm

Saturday 14th December
at 2.30pm and 7.00pm

Tickets **£10**
(Concessions **£8**)

Box Office
07894 490640



St Hilda's Mothers' Union

JUMBLE SALE & AUCTION

on Saturday

18th January

in St Hilda's Hall

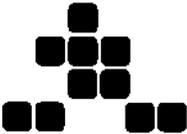
Opens 2.00pm

Admission 50p

Goods to the Hall
from 10.00am

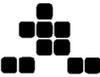
Phone 01784 252170
for collection

When I told my children the story of how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus, my six-year-old daughter was not impressed.
"Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

lockwood 
lettings & management

25 Station Road : Ashford
01784 420222

Successful in Letting Property
within the Ashford
Town and District

lockwood 
lettings & management

*Mention this advertisement
and when your property is
successfully let, Lockwood's
will give a £100 donation to
St Hilda's.*



Renaissance Men for the Modern World

School Tours by appointment



ST JAMES

School Boys' Society

www.stjamesboys.co.uk

Church Road | Ashford | Surrey TW15 3DZ
01784 266933 | admissions@stjamesboys.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 270156

BEYOND THE PARISH

from Parish Pump

C of E WELCOMES FURTHER GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR CHURCHES

Listed Churches in need of vital repairs are to benefit after the Government announced the extension of a grant scheme.

The listed places of worship grants scheme (LPWGS) is to be extended by the Treasury for a further year until March 2021.

The scheme pays grants equal to the VAT incurred on repairs such as urgent structural work and new roofs, reducing the fundraising burden on churches and congregations.

Churches and cathedrals are responsible for fundraising for their own repairs. They contribute £220m a year to the economy and collectively run around 33,000 social action projects.

The *Taylor Report* which was published in 2017 concluded that church buildings play a "vital role" in providing public services and a focal point for communities across the country.

St. Hilda's church is a Grade II listed building and has benefited from this scheme.
Ed

DON'T IGNORE RE!

The number of schools ignoring Religious Education (RE) laws has risen, according to recent research by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE).

In a survey of more than 600 schools across England, it was found that half of academies without a religious character and 40 per cent of community schools do not meet their legal or contractual requirements to deliver RE at Key Stage 4. State schools must teach RE to all pupils, whether they are studying it at GCSE-level or not.

NATRE said that there were many schools who provide excellent RE, and that this made it "all the more unacceptable to hear of schools where pupils are not given the access to the religious literacy they need and deserve to support them in our increasingly pluralistic society.

"RE is a vital part of the curriculum, giving pupils the chance to learn about the people in the world around them, and providing them with the opportunity to discuss and debate important questions."

NATRE is urging the Government to establish a National Plan for RE, as recommended last year by the Commission on Religious Education.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR ANGELS!

Angels make a big appearance in the story of Christmas, but over the next few weeks other kinds of angels will be making appearances throughout the country, on streets and inside nightclubs.

Teams of Street Angels and Club Angels will work hard this month to help to keep communities and people, especially within the night-time economy, safe.

At an hour when most of us are safe at home in bed, these volunteer angels will be out on patrol, offering people in need some flip-flops or a plaster, a bottle of water or time to chat. They will make a massive difference as a result.

Paul Blakey, founder of Street Angels, tells how earlier this year one of the Street Angels teams came across a young man holding his head and kneeling over, very dazed, having had his head bashed against a wall. "The team took him to a safe hub and left him. Three months later this same man came to say 'thank you for saving my life'. It turns out the safe hub team had got him to A&E and a brain scan revealed a bleed on the brain.

"We are called to be angels! We can all be God's hands and feet, delivering good news of great joy through words and action. We can all take the time to look out for others. We can all ask God to make his Kingdom known through our daily living.

"So, this Christmas do pray for our teams out on the streets and in clubs. Or maybe you could even consider volunteering if there is a team near you!"

Meanwhile, if you are going on a night out yourself, have a SafeNightOut.party and remember these top tips:

- Stay with friends, don't go off alone, and have contact info somewhere other than your phone.
- Ladies - carry a pair of slip-on shoes for when high heels become unbearable.
- Always eat before a night out and don't start cooking once you get home.
- Know what you are drinking and how much you have - mix alcohol with soft drinks.
- Pick a venue right for you - if you feel out of place, leave!
- Keep your taxi money in another part of your handbag / wallet. Take a picture of the taxi and taxi drivers ID and message it to a friend.

For information on Street Angels in Staines, who work with the homeless more than with party-goers, see <https://www.stainesbaptist.org.uk/street-angels.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/stainesangels/> Ed



C of E'S ENVIRONMENT GROUP CALLS FOR GREATER ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



The Church of England's Environmental Advisory Group has called for all parts of the Church to recognise the Climate Crisis and step up its action to safeguard God's creation.

In guidance sent recently to bishops, dioceses and church leadership teams, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) points to the ambitious programme of action required, covering everything from the Church's buildings to its investment assets.

The paper also highlights future mission challenges including a need for churches to be ready to provide sanctuary for those affected by extreme weather events in this country and beyond as the impact of climate change accelerates.

With work already underway to develop an Energy Footprint Tool and to offer local energy audits for churches, schools and houses, the EWG says the assessment of our carbon footprint must extend to all areas within the overall Church of England portfolio such as investment holdings in farming and forestry.

The EWG brings together experts who oversee the Church's Environmental Programme. They plan to bring a motion to General Synod in 2020 proposing revised carbon targets for the Church with an ambition for net zero emissions by 2050.

The work of local Diocesan Environment Officers is also identified as key, and they can help resource parishes and local communities.

For more information see <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-englands-environment-group-calls-greater-action-climate-change-across>

MILLENNIUM YEW TREES – 20 YEARS ON

20 years ago, as 1999 drew to a close, the Church of England marked the Millennium by distributing thousands of young yew trees across England. In all, about 7000 seedlings were given to parishes requesting them. It was explained that the yew tree could be seen as 'a metaphor for the life of faith in this country over the last 4000 years', as well as a symbol of the spiritual life, 'with its dormant periods and its coming to life'.

David Shreeve, director of the Conservation Foundation, said that the yew trees were "planted in the spirit of a living link with the birth of Jesus, and as a symbol that, if we wanted this millennium yew to live for another 2000 years, we would need to care for and cherish our local environment." Mr Shreeve believes that the project made an impact on the Church, helping to pave the way for a greater emphasis on caring for Creation, including the appointment of more diocesan environment officers.

Yews are the oldest living things in Britain. The Woodland Trust explains that a yew is not even considered 'ancient' until it is over 900 years old. The oldest tree in the UK, the Fortingall Yew, is estimated to be between 2000 and 3000 years old.

Did you hear about the bakery that was burgled at Christmas?
Everything was stolen!

What is a webmaster's favourite hymn?
Oh, dot com all ye faithful!

Why doesn't Father Christmas suffer from claustrophobia when he climbs down the chimney? Because he has had his flue jab.

What did the reindeer say before launching into his comedy routine?
'This will sleigh you.'

BETHLEHEMIAN RHAPSODY

And finally, if you enjoyed the song Bohemian Rhapsody, and would like the 'Christmas version', complete with singing puppets, do visit this on You Tube. It is from last year, but still well worth the visit! <https://youtu.be/IxvMkSKRWOA>

18. Goldsmiths, University of London, banned the sale of beer

17. They are butterflies. You might find them in a churchyard.

16. Greenland. It was not for sale

15. HRH Prince Charles

14. Seagulls

13. Beards.

12. A "Painted Lady Summer" is lots of butterflies.

11. Coffee

10. The Thin Red Line refers to an episode in the Battle of Balaklava during the Crimean War. Around 500 men of the 93rd (Sutherland Highlanders), aided by a small force of 100 walking wounded, 40 detached Guardsmen, and supported by a substantial force of Turkish infantrymen, led by Sir Colin Campbell, fired at the Russian cavalry.

9. Canada. The loonie is the type of bird featured on the dollar coin. Toonie refers to the two-dollar coin.

8. Penny Mordaunt was named after the Arethusa-class cruiser HMS Penelope.

7. Blackpool Tower was inspired by the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

6. Pertidomania is the love of ferns.

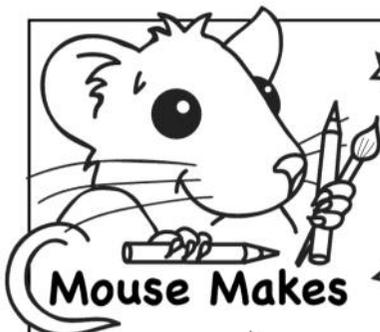
5. The Hunchback of Notre-Dame by Victor Hugo

4. Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky was a comedian.

3. It landed in Edinburgh by mistake.

2. Choupette is a cat, a very rich cat.

1. A Gillet jaune is the yellow reflective vest French drivers have to carry by law in their cars. It became associated with protest.



Where was
Mary's baby born?
Why were Joseph
and Mary there?
Read Luke 2:1-6

Good news!

Where did
Mary lay
her baby
and why?
Read
Luke 2:7

What did
Mary dress
her baby in?
Read
Luke 2:6

Glory to God

Why were
the
shepherds
afraid?
Read
Luke 2:8

A Saviour is born

What did the angel
tell Joseph to name
Mary's baby and why?
Read Matthew 1:21

What good
news did
the angel tell?
Read
Luke 2:10-11

What did the
shepherds
do after they
had seen
the baby?
Read
Luke 2:16

Who
appeared
praising God
and what did
they say?
Read
Luke 2:13-14



Colour a
star each
day until
Christmas

St Hilda's Church Hall

Stanwell Road, Ashford,
Middlesex, TW15 3QL

Halls for hire

*Planning a celebration, party or
meeting?*

Need a venue for a function?

The Main and Small Halls at
St Hilda's are available for Hire.

Rates start from
under £10 per hour.

For details and availability, contact
the Hall Booking Secretary:
Chris Davenport 01784 252170

Happy tots



Pre-school

at St Hilda's Church Hall,
Stanwell Road, Ashford
OFSTED Registered Pre-school
for Children aged 2½-5 years

**For more information and a
prospectus please call Alison on
01784 243570**

Term Time Only:

**Mon—Thu (9am - 3pm) &
Fridays (9am - 1pm)**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - ESPECIALLY DRIVERS!

Ashford Helping Hands

is a voluntary organisation which provides help to people in the TW15 postal area. They can always use more volunteers and at the moment are particularly short of drivers to take people to medical appointments etc.

If you can help, please phone

Olive on 01784 245203

If you need help, phone
the AHH Duty Officer on

07754 083502

between 10am and noon

Monday - Friday

For more information see:

www.ashfordhelpinghands.btck.co.uk

WANTED: used British and foreign stamps for Princess Alice Hospice, trimmed ¼" all round. Place in box at back of church or give them to

Pauline Milton

Our Mission Prayer:

*Bless our Community.
Make its people;
Strong in Faith,
Steadfast in Hope,
And Generous in Love.
Amen.*

HOLMES & DAUGHTERS

FUNERALS SINCE 1893

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS & MEMORIAL MASONS



PRIVATE CHAPELS OF REST
PRE PAID & PRE ARRANGED FUNERALS
24 HOUR PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL SERVICE

3 Church Road, Ashford ● 01784 421015
461 Upper Richmond Rd West, East Sheen ● 0208 392 1012
4 Cavendish Terrace, High Street, Feltham ● 0208 893 1860
161 High Street, Teddington ● 0208 977 9532



WWW.HOLMESDAUGHTERS.UK

NAFD Member



FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND MEMORIAL STONEMASONS



THE FAMILY YOU CAN TURN TO...

Seven generations of our family have been helping and advising local families in their time of need. For over 230 years we have been providing funerals, both modest and traditional, with care and compassion.

ASHFORD:	23 Church Road	01784 252226
BEDFONT:	420 Staines Road	020 8890 7902
FELTHAM:	108 High Street	020 8890 2231
HANWORTH:	13 Market Parade, Hampton Road West	020 8894 9731



Lodge
BROTHERS 1780
the family you can turn to

www.lodgebrothers.co.uk



ASK ABOUT OUR PRE-PAYMENT
FUNERAL PLANS