

ST HILDA'S ASHFORD



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

31 DECEMBER 2023

<https://www.facebook.com/StHildaAshford/>

Welcome to St Hilda's. We are delighted that you are able to share in our morning worship today,

If you are new to the church please do take time to introduce yourself to the people at the back of the church and to the ministry team at the end of the service. We would be delighted to meet you.

If you are able please join us for tea or coffee after the service so we can get to know one another.

Should you need any help during the service please do not hesitate to ask those around you and we are sure they will be able to support you.

There is a children's corner in the north aisle which children are very welcome to use.

Praying for peace in Israel and Gaza

Bishop Sarah encourages us to join in with Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem, who has offered the following prayer:

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children – for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

THE GATHERING

Introit Hymn

Of the Father's heart begotten
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain,
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived,
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

[Prudentius, tr. R. F. Davis]

The Greeting

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

All and also with you.

Words of welcome or introduction are said.

Prayer of Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:
'You shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.'
Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God
through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for
us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
All and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect - *The Collect for the week is said after a moment of silence*

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 61 v 10 – 62 v3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading – Galatians 4 v 4 - 7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading – Luke 2 v 15 -21

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

The Creed

All We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord,
who has brought us out of darkness
and into his own marvellous light.

The prayers end with the following:

Merciful Father

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Offertory Hymn

During this hymn a collection will be taken

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord:
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name:
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might:
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore.**

[Timothy Dudley-smith © 1961 Dudley-Smith, Timothy]

The table is prepared, and bread and wine are placed upon it.

Blessed be God,
by whose grace creation is renewed,
by whose love heaven is opened,
by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.

All Blessed be God for ever.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,
was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit,
and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh
you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
In him we see our God made visible
and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.
Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
All God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna in the Highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;

and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
*Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.*

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
*Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith

**All Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Mary, Joseph and all the saints

to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
And as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

**All God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God,
All you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Giving of Communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

All Lord, give us this bread always.

The president and people receive communion.

Communion Hymns

Come down, O love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

[Bianco de Siena

tr. R. F. Littledale]

Child of the stable's secret birth,
The Lord by right of the lords of earth,
Let angels sing of a King new-born -
The world is weaving a crown of thorn:
A crown of thorn for that infant head
Cradled soft in the manger bed.

Eyes that shine in the lantern's ray;
A face so small in its nest of hay,
Face of a child who is born to scan
The world of men through the eyes of man:
And from that face in the final day
Earth and heaven shall flee away.

Voice that rang through the courts on high
Contracted now to a wordless cry,
A voice to master the wind and wave,
The human heart and the hungry grave:
The voice of God through the cedar trees
Rolling forth as the sound of seas.

Infant hands in a mother's hand,
For none but Mary can understand
Whose are the hands and the fingers curled
But his who fashioned and made our world;
And through these hands in the hour of death
Nails shall strike to the wood beneath.

Child of the stable's secret birth,
The Father's gift to a wayward earth,
To drain the cup in a few short years
Of all our sorrows, our sins and tears -
Ours the prize for the road he trod:
Risen with Christ; at peace with God.

[© 1969 Dudley-Smith, Timothy]

A great and mighty wonder,
A full and holy cure!
The Virgin bears the infant
With virgin honour pure
Repeat the hymn again!
To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men!

The Word becomes incarnate
And yet remains on high!
And cherubim sing anthems
To shepherds from the sky
Refrain

While thus they sing your Monarch,
Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice ye vales and mountains,
Ye oceans clap your hands.
Refrain

Since all he comes to ransom,
By all be he adored,
The Infant born in Beth'lem,
The Saviour and the Lord.

Refrain

And idol forms shall perish,
And error shall decay,
And Christ shall wield his sceptre,
Our Lord and God for ay.
Repeat the hymn again!
To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men!

[St. Germanus tr. J. M. Neale and others]

May the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above.

Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord,
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.

To the God whose wisdom made us,
To the Son who set us free,
To the sanctifying Spirit,
Glory, endless glory, be!

[John Newton]

Prayers after Communion

Silence is kept after which the Post-Communion prayer is said.

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth
the life of an earthly home:
help your Church to live as one family,
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

**All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.
Amen.**

THE DISMISSAL

Blessing

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with peace and goodwill
and make you partakers of the divine nature;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen

Recessional Hymn

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
Speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
Teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
Spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;
For young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world; when we disown and doubt him,
Loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain;
Hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us,
Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
Past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

*[©Words: 1976 Dudley-Smith, Timothy;
Music: 1976 Michael Baughen - The Jubilate Group]*

SERVICE TIMES

Wednesday 3rd January 11am

with Mothers' Union

Sunday 7th January 10am

The Sunday morning service is livestreamed and can be viewed later our Facebook page Following the teaching of 'Loving thy Neighbour' - If you feel unwell, we ask that you do not attend church in person so that we can maintain the health and safety of all who attend the services: the Sunday morning service is livestreamed and can also be viewed later our Facebook page.

Please remember in your prayers this week:

THE SICK:

Michael Brown

Melvyn Jansen

David

Lizio Cassar

Pat Kyle

Elaine

Ros Clifton

Finley Makriel

Rachel

Saffi Cobham

Ray Nation

Solange

Joan Davies

Lena Richardson

If you would like a name added to or removed from the prayer list, please contact the Parish Office. If you know of someone ill or in hospital in need of prayer and support please tell our LLM Rosalyn Young (contact details on back cover).

THE RECENTLY DEPARTED

Peter Garner

THOSE IN OUR MEMORIAL BOOK THIS WEEK

William Arthur Hearn

Pam Eva Gadd

Frances Mary Blood

Richard Scholar

Samuel Winston 'Jim' Sloan

Helga Minna Helene Morris

James William Jelf

Joan Mary Holliday

Rhoda Allport

Charles Vere Gray

Stanley Hardy

Dennis Charles Gadd

Clifford Johnson

Vera Davies

Please pray for our ALMA twin Parish, Holy Cross Murrupula

NOTICES

Community Lunch - Wednesday at 12 noon

Join us in church for the Community Lunch at midday

If you are able to come forward and help, even once a month, please do liaise with Bobbie.

Bible Study Group – Wednesday at 7.30pm

We meet in Church on most Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm.

You are very welcome to come and join us.

We are continuing our Advent to Epiphany discussions.

Ambling through Acts course –Thursday 4th January

(7:30pm on the first Thursday of each month)

Everyone is very welcome to attend. There will be refreshments at the end. We finish by saying Compline (Night Prayer) together round about 9pm. I hope to see you there. Please bring a bible – ideally the NRSV, but any version will do.

Mothers' Union Lunch - Tuesday 9th January at 12.15pm

SAVE THE DATE....

St Hilda's Annual Burns Night Ceilidh: traditional Haggis, Tatties and Neeps followed by dancing, **Saturday 27th January.**

Details to follow in the new year.

St Hilda's Newsletter

The latest issue of the Newsletter is available via the St. Hilda's web site (under "About Us"). We put a few printed copies at the back of church: please leave these for people without internet access and for visitors.

Contributions have been so few that we will be producing this every two months instead of monthly, and unless more people provide material the Newsletter will end.

This is your magazine -if you want it to continue, start writing!

The deadline for items for the **February/March** issue is **Sunday 7th January 2024**. Please send your contributions to: editor@sthilda.org

Help Wanted

The team serving refreshments after Sunday services would appreciate more help. If you can volunteer please speak to Valerie Scott or Paula.

The cleaning team would also appreciate more help: they usually work on Thursday mornings at 10.30am. If you can spare about an hour every week or two, or occasionally, please speak to Rosemary Greenwood or Chris Holliday.

The Parish Office is available by phone or email.

Any appointments in person must be booked.

Our parish administrator is Laura Goodman. Her office hours are:

Monday:	3.30-5pm
Wednesday:	3.30-6.30pm
Thursday	6.30-9.30pm
Saturday:	9.45-11.15am

Contact Information

Vicar

Vacant

Licenced Lay Minister

Rosalyn Young rosalyn@sthilda.org

Churchwarden

Paula Gething

PCC Secretary

Liz Brian

Email: secretary@sthilda.org

PCC Treasurer

Vicky Palmer

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Church Hall Bookings

Chris Davenport

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