

ST HILDA'S ASHFORD



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND CRIB SERVICE

10AM 21ST DECEMBER 2025

The Sunday service is livestreamed and can be viewed later our Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/StHildaAshford/live_videos
or see: <https://www.youtube.com/@sthildachurch8263>

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 toddlers' corner in the north aisle which young children are very welcome to use, and there activity sheets are available to occupy them.

Please indicate to the priest if you want a gluten free wafer during communion

We encourage parishioners to donate via PARISH GIVING:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/ashford-st-hilda-ashford/>



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THE GATHERING

Introit Hymn

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

They lookèd up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:

Refrain

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:

Refrain

[Traditional]

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 are said. We pray with Junior Church.

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Fourth Candle

Lord Jesus Light of the World
Blessed is Gabriel who brought good news;
Blessed is Mary, your Mother and ours.
Bless your church preparing for Christmas;
And bless us your children, who long for your coming .

All Amen

We light the first four candles

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

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
All for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
All for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
All for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
All for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
All for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
All for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
All for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake,
All for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

(Silent reflection)

In the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**All O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who in his great mercy
has promised forgiveness of sins
to all those who with heartfelt repentance and true faith
turn to him: have mercy on you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and bring you to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect -

The Collect for the Week is said after a moment of silence

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading -Isaiah ch 7 vv 10 - 16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading - Romans ch 1 vv 1 - 7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn

The choir sing **Betlehems stjärna** (Swedish)

*Shine over lake and land you star in the far
You who in Eastern land is lit by our God
The star from Bethlehem is not leading astray but home
Children and shepherds happily follow you
you shining star of Bethlehem*

*Night over land of Judah, night over Sion
Far in the west Orion (the star) is fading
The shepherd who sleeps tiredly and the child who sleeps
peacefully
Are awakened by glorious chorus of voices
Look at the beautiful star, the star in the east*

*They left both their sheep and their homes to look for Eden
The star of Bethlehem is leading them
The star from Bethlehem is not leading astray but home
Children and shepherds happily follow you
you shining star of Bethlehem*

Gospel Reading - Matthew ch 1 vv 18 - 25

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
Matthew

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

After the reading:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Taizé chant: **Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas Deus ibi est**

The Nativity as told by Junior Church

Blessing of the Crib

In the faith of Christ,
and in your name, O God most holy,
we hallow this crib of Christmas,
to set before the eyes of your children
the great love and humility
of Jesus Christ your only Son;
who for us, and for our salvation,
came down as at this time from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary his mother,
and was made man;
to whom with you and the same Spirit
be all honour, majesty, glory and worship,
now and to the ages of ages.

All Amen.

May the grace of Christ our Saviour be with us all.

All Amen.

The Creed

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.

The prayers end with the following:

Merciful Father,

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

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace – All stand

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way 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. You can use the QR code on page 2, and on the back of the chairs, for online donations.

**For Mary, Mother of the Lord,
God's holy name be praised;
Who first the Son of God adored
As on her child she gazed.**

**The Angel Gabriel brought the word
She should Christ's mother be;
Our Lady, handmaid of the Lord,
Made answer willingly.**

**The heavenly call she thus obeyed
And so God's will was done;
The second Eve love's answer made
Which our redemption won.**

**She gave her body for God's shrine,
Her heart to piercing pain;
And knew the cost of love divine
When Jesus Christ was slain.**

**Dear Mary, from your lowliness
And home in Galilee,
There comes a joy and holiness
To every family.**

**Hail Mary, you are full of grace,
Above all women blest,
Blest in your Son, whom your embrace
in birth and death confessed.**

[J. R. Peacey]

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

As this bread was scattered
and then gathered and made one,
so may your Church be gathered into your Kingdom.

All Glory to you, O God, for ever.

Wisdom has built her a house;
she has mixed her wine; she has set her table.

All Glory to you, O God, for ever. Amen.

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.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise,
Lord God of truth,
for by the breath of your mouth
you have spoken your word,
and all things have come into being.

You fashioned us in your image
and placed us in the garden of your delight.
Though we chose the path of rebellion
you would not abandon your own.

Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace.
You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets
to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace.

As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth,
we echo the song of the angels in heaven,
evermore praising you and singing:

**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.**

Lord God, you are the most holy one,
enthroned in splendour and light,
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ
you reveal the power of your love
made perfect in our human weakness.

Embracing our humanity,
Jesus showed us the way of salvation;
loving us to the end,
he gave himself to death for us;
dying for his own,
he set us free from the bonds of sin,
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

On the night he gave up himself for us all
he took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
*Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.*

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
*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.*

Therefore we proclaim the death
that he suffered on the cross,
we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb,
we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high
and we long for his coming in glory.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption,
Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation
be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
form us into the likeness of Christ
and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

Look with favour on your people
and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.
Bless the earth, heal the sick,
let the oppressed go free
and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth
to feast with Hilda and all your saints
at the table in your kingdom,
where the new creation is brought to perfection
in Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

(Silent reflection)

The Lord's Prayer

Awaiting his coming in glory, in the language of our hearts
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

We say the Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Agnus Dei

Jesus, Lamb of God
All have mercy upon us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy upon us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace

Giving of Communion

The president says the invitation to communion

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

**All Most merciful Lord,
your love compels us to come in.
Our hands were unclean, our hearts were unprepared;
we were not fit even
to eat the crumbs from under your table.
But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation,
and share your bread with sinners.**

**So cleanse and feed us
with the precious body and blood of your Son,
that he may live in us and we in him;
and that we, with the whole company of Christ,
may sit and eat in your kingdom. Amen.**

The president and people receive communion.

All confirmed Anglicans, as well as all baptized Christians who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are in a state of grace, are welcome to receive communion, provided they would normally do so in their own church. If you are not receiving communion today, you are warmly invited to come forward for a blessing; please indicate this by bringing your order of service with you.

Communion Hymns

Song: Mary, did you know

[Mark Lowry, Buddy Greene]

**Silent night! Holy night!
Heaven in near, earth is bright,
Angel songs are heard above
As the child of peace and love
Sleeps in Mary's arms (x2)**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Skies are clear, stars are bright,
Now the shepherds wend their way,
Homage to the child to pay:
He is Christ the Lord (x2)**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Christ is here, all is light,
Shadows of the past are gone
With the advent of the Son,
Born to save us all (x2)**

[G. B. Timms, based on Joseph Mohr]

Carol: Away in a manger

[Traditional Normandy tune]

**The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
And they said that His name was Jesus
 He come from the glory
 He come from the glorious kingdom
 He come from the glory
 He come from the glorious kingdom
 Oh yes believer oh yes believer
 He come from the glory
 He come from the glorious kingdom**

**The angels sang when the baby was born
The angels sang when the baby was born
The angels sang when the baby was born
And proclaimed Him the Saviour Jesus
 Chorus**

**The wise men saw where the baby was born
The wise men saw where the baby was born
The wise men saw where the baby was born
And they saw that His name was Jesus
 Chorus**

[West Indian Traditional]

Prayers after Communion

Silence is kept after which the post-Communion collect is said.

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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.

<i>Banns of Marriage and Notices - see pages 22-23</i>

THE DISMISSAL

St. Hilda's prayer

All May I be equal to your hope of me.
If I am weak, I ask that you send only what I can bear.
If I am strong, may I shrink from no testing
that shall yield increase of strength
or win security for my spirit.
I trust in thee, O Lord. I say, 'Thou art my God.'
My times are in thy hand. Amen

Blessing

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

All Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

All Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

All Amen.

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'

All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

May the Lord, when he comes,

All find us watching and waiting. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Recessional Hymn

See him lying on a bed of straw:
A draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore -
The Prince of Glory is his name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem
To see the Lord appear to men -
Just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of Glory when he came.*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
Show where Jesus in the manger lies;
Shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
To see the Saviour of the world!

chorus

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
Bring God's glory to the heart of man;
Sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
Be salvation to the soul.

chorus

**Mine are riches, from your poverty;
From your innocence, eternity;
Mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
Child of sorrow for my joy.**

***O now carry me to Bethlehem
To see the Lord appear to men -
Just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of Glory when he came.***

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Please join us for tea or coffee after the service

Please remember in your prayers this week:

THOSE FOR WHOM OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ASKED:

Ben Bishop, Stan Bishop, AnneMarie Bough, Wendy Butt, Tony Diggins, Sheila Freeman, Gemma Hart, John Hunt, Pat Kyle, Ray Nation, John Parish, Massimo Pellizzari, Dorothy Reid, Elsie Stone, Claire West, Jeremy Weston, Delia Woodley, Abby, Ben, Darren, Fiona, Peter, Ramin, Scarlett, Stuart

THE RECENTLY DEPARTED:

The Revd. Balwant Singh. June Hands, Julie Carr

THOSE IN OUR MEMORIAL BOOK THIS WEEK:

Phyllis Martin, Betty May Purvis, Joseph W Lovell, Doreen Ann Beaver, Eric Leonard Hine, Phoebe Eleanor Spence, Alexander Milton, Louie Maud Batchelor, Edward George Clayton, Herbert Salter, Isobel Johnson, Alfred George Barnes, Elsie Goodbarne

**Pray for our ALMA twin Parish, Holy Cross Murrupula,
and for Fr. Domingos and his family**

also for Christians facing persecution in countries such as North Korea,
Somalia, Libya, Eritrea, Yemen, Iran and Nigeria.

for more details see <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

Pray for the areas of the world where there is conflict, including:
the Middle East including Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and Iran;
India and Pakistan; Ukraine and Russia; Sudan; Myanmar.

Advent and Christmas Services in December

Sunday 21 st	18:00	Traditional Carol Service
Wednesday 24 th	23:00	Midnight Mass
Thursday 25 th	10:00	Christmas Day service

NOTICES

The deadline for items for the Service Sheet is noon on Thursday.

Send to **communication@sthilda.org**

***** Banns of Marriage *****

Esther Sopuluchi Oloko and Onyekachi Julius Anozie
3rd January 2026 - Third time of asking

Bible Study Group - Monday 22nd December at 7.30pm

We continue our Advent study in the Hawley Room in the church hall.
All are welcome to join us.

**There is no Wednesday morning Eucharist or Community Lunch
on 24th or 31st December.**

Young Adults Group Christmas Party – TODAY

Sunday 21st December at 7.30pm

In the church hall.

A Party for the wedding of Esther and Julius

Saturday 3rd January: 10.45am arrival

for live streaming of the service from Nigeria at 11am GMT
followed by a finger buffet and cake.

Wedding clothes and fabulous hats and fascinators essential!

RSVP to **warden@sthilda.org** or sign the sheet at the back of church
by 25th December 2025

Confirmation Service – Sunday 17th May 2026

Season 1

Classes for the **Youth Group** (in person) will be held on Wednesdays
28th January, 11th February, 4th March, 18th March.

Classes for the **Senior Group** (on-line) will be held on Wednesdays
4th February, 25th February, 11th March. 25th March.

AMBLING THROUGH ACTS

You are welcome to join our journey through the Acts of the Apostles. We read the text closely and, with the aid of notes, try to understand it in its original context as well as discuss anything that resonates today. We meet on the first Thursday of the month (unless otherwise notified) in church at 7:30pm, finishing with Compline (Night Prayer) and sharing coffee/tea and biscuits. We are away by 9pm. Please bring a bible NRSV preferred but any modern translation will be fine.

The dates for 2026:

8th January (not 1st), 5th February, 5th March, No meeting in April,
7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 6th August. 3rd September, 1st October,
5th November, 3rd December

SFB

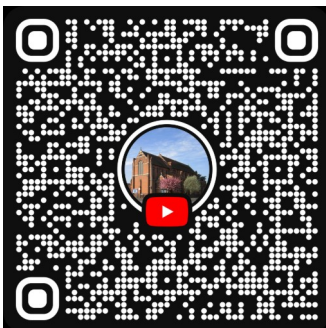
The Parish Office : Office hours are

Mon: by appointment only,

Tue: 9am-6pm, Wed: 12 noon-4:00pm, Thur: 9am-6pm

Subscribe to our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sthildachurch8263>



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