

ST HILDA'S ASHFORD



THE HOLY INNOCENTS SERVICE OF THE WORD

10AM 28TH 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.

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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Opening Hymn

Unto us a boy is born!
King of all creation,
Came he to a world forlorn,
The Lord of every nation,
The Lord of every nation.

Cradled in a stall was he
With sleepy cows and asses;
But the very beasts could see
That he all men surpasses,
That he all men surpasses

Herod then with fear was filled:
'A prince', he said, 'in Jewry!'
All the little boys he killed
At Bethlem in his fury,
At Bethlem in his fury.

Now may Mary's son, who came
So long ago to love us
Lead us all with hearts aflame
Unto the joys above us,
Unto the joys above us.

Omega and Alpha he!
Let the organ thunder,
While the choir with peals of glee
Doth rend the air asunder,
Doth rend the air asunder.

[Percy Dearmer]

The Greeting

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.

Confession

On this day when we recall the murder of innocent lives,
let us stand before our just and holy God,
and remembering the violence and injustice of our world,
confess our sins in penitence and faith.

We say together:

**All Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us,
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Merciful God,
grant to your faithful people pardon and peace,
that we may be cleansed from all our sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Collect

Heavenly Father,
whose children suffered at the hands of Herod,
though they had done no wrong:
by the suffering of your Son
and by the innocence of our lives
frustrate all evil designs
and establish your reign of justice and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

Hymn:

**Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.**

**O magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt his name;
When in distress to him I called,
He to my rescue came.**

**The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance he affords to all
Who on his succour trust.**

**O make but trial of his love,
Experience will decide
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in his truth confide.**

**Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you his service your delight,
Your wants shall be his care.**

**To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The God whom we adore,
Be glory, as it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.**

[Tate and Brady]

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading – Jeremiah ch 31 vv 15-17

Thus says the Lord:

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

Thus says the Lord:

Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears;
for there is a reward for your work,
says the Lord:
they shall come back from the land of the enemy;
there is hope for your future,
says the Lord:
your children shall come back to their own country.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading - 1 Corinthians ch 1 vv 26-29

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn

**Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.**

**The Lord, who left the heavens
Our life and peace to bring,
To dwell in lowliness with men,
Their pattern and their king;**

**Still to the lowly soul
He doth himself impart,
And for his dwelling and his throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.**

**Lord, we thy presence seek;
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart,
A temple meet for thee.**

[John Keeble and others]

Gospel Reading – Matthew ch 2 vv 13-18

Alleluia, alleluia.

Never despise these little ones;
their guardian angels in heaven look continuously
on the face of my heavenly Father.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

'A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no
more.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Anthem: What can I give him?

[© 1993, ECS Publishing]

Reflection

Hymn:

**Thy kingdom come! on bended knee
The passing ages pray;
And faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that kingdom's day.**

**But the slow watches of the night
Not less to God belong;
And for the everlasting right
The silent stars are strong.**

**And lo, already on the hills
The flags of dawn appear;
Gird up your loins, ye prophet souls,
Proclaim the day is near:**

**The day in whose clear-shining light
All wrong shall stand revealed,
When justice shall be throned in might,
And every hurt be healed;**

**When knowledge, hand in hand with peace,
Shall walk the earth abroad:
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God.**

[Fredrick Hosmer]

The Creed

Let us affirm our faith in the words of the Creed

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.

The Peace

‘I will comfort you,’ says the Lord,
‘as a mother comforts her child,
and you shall be comforted.’

Isaiah 66.13

The peace of the Lord be always with you
All and also with you.

Let us offer one another 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.

What Child is this, who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds worship and angels sing:
Haste, haste, to bring him praise,
The Babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Come, have no, fear, God's son is here,
His love all loves exceeding:
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail, hail the Saviour comes,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
All tongues and peoples own him,;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let every heart enthrone him:
Raise, raise your song on high,
While Mary sings a lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

[W. Chatterton Dix]

We say together:

**All Yours, Lord, is the greatness,
the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.**

Prayers of Intercession

In peace let us pray to the God of love.

Righteous God,
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ dwelt among us
and shared our grief and our pain.

We pray for the children of our world,
that they may grow up knowing love and security.

Silence is kept.

We pray for all children who suffer physical or mental
abuse.

Silence is kept.

We pray for all communities in our world
who live with the memories of massacre and gross cruelty.

Silence is kept.

We pray for all who are corrupted by power
and who regard human life as cheap.

Silence is kept.

We pray for parents who have suffered the death of a child.

Silence is kept.

We pray for parents and guardians,
that they may be given grace to care for the children
entrusted to them.

Silence is kept.

As we celebrate the coming of the Christ-child,
we rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Innocents
and commit the children of this community,
our nation and our world to you,
our righteous God.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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

We say the Lord's Prayer in our preferred language

<i>Notices</i> - see pages 22-23

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

The Blessing

God, who gives life to the dead and comfort to the desolate,
sustain us, keep us and console us,
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

All Amen.

Closing Hymn

Immortal love for ever full,
For ever flowing free,
For ever shared, for ever whole,
A never ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name,
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came
And comprehendeth love.

We may not climb the heavenly steep
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame;
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with his name.

Alone, O Love ineffable,
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from thee is hell,
To walk with thee is heaven.

[John Greenleaf Whittier]

Please join us for tea or coffee after the service

SERVICE TIMES next week

Sunday 4th January 10am – Epiphany

Please remember in your prayers this week:

THOSE FOR WHOM OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ASKED:

Ben Bishop, Stan Bishop, AnneMarie Bough, Wendy Butt, Brenda Charlton, Tony Charlton Tony Diggins, Sheila Freeman, Gemma Hart, John Hunt, Pat Kyle, Ray Nation, John Parish, Massimo Pellizzari, Dorothy Reid, Annette Scott, 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,

THOSE IN OUR MEMORIAL BOOK THIS WEEK:

Verna Rose Bembridge, Dorothy Madeline Smith , Leonard Lambert, Eva Frances Voysey, Brenda Eaglestone, William Arthur Hearn, Richard Scholar, James William Jelf, Charles Vere Gray, Clifford Johnson, Pam Eva Gadd, Samuel Winston 'Jim' Sloan, Joan Mary Holliday, Stanley Hardy

**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.

NOTICES

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

Send to **communication@sthilda.org**

Bible Study Group - Monday 29th December at 7.30pm

We continue our Advent/Christmas 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 31st December.

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!

If you cannot join us in church, the link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/jPhUawsUBKI?si=Lb5lZxzKEYRSzSt>

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

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Sundays 18th - 25th January

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.

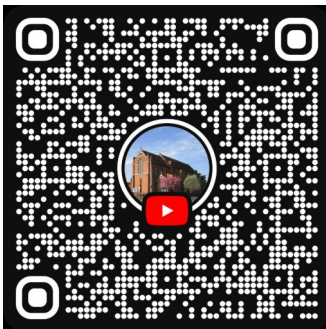
The Parish Office : Office hours are

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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