



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 151

January 2023

A Post Christmas

Thank you

For unto us a child is born *Isaiah 9.6*
We owe tremendous gratitude to everyone who contributed in any way to our Christmas celebrations in December 2022. Our Carol Service on 11th December was wonderfully led for us by Geoff Chew and Guy Bunce, together with our own St Jude's Choir, augmented by Allegra. It was a joyful introduction to Christmas and good to welcome people from our wider community to retell the story of the first Christmas with traditional Bible readings.

The following Saturday saw our "Blue Christmas" service — an opportunity for those of us who find Christmas difficult, for whatever reason, to gather in remembrance and in hope. The theme of the service was "The Promise of Light" and we lit candles to reflect the needs of some of those for whom Christmas 2022 must have been especially hard.

Most exciting, Christmas 2022 marked the very welcome return of our Christmas Eve Crib Service, led by Claudia Tubb. We were thrilled to see so many children back in church and participating in a nativity scene which unfolded through the service. Thank you so much to Claudia and to all who supported her in providing such a memorable occasion once again.

None of these events would have been possible without tireless support behind the scenes. Thank you to those who decorated St Jude's so magnificently once again and to our cleaning team for ensuring additional glitter and sparkle. Thank you to all who served mince pies (and a great variety of other goodies) and drinks after every service, prepared orders of service, chose readings and carols, and came along to worship with us.

Above all, we thank God for Jesus, his gift beyond words.

Open Church

In addition to service times, St Jude's Church will be open between 2.00pm and 4.00pm on Saturday 14th January and again on 11th February. Do come along for a cup of tea and a chat and have a look round. This is also an opportunity to discuss Baptisms, Weddings and perhaps Confirmation.

Uncertain Times

Has 2023 begun in the way you expected? The eagle-eyed among you will have noticed that this newsletter is slightly later than usual. This is largely due to the fact that my own 2023 got off to a rather surprising start with a dose of COVID — so please blame a rather ugly little virus for a delay in reaching you with this month's news!

But an unexpected and sometimes unwelcome turn of events can assail any one of us at New Year, just as at any other time. Already I know of a family suddenly and sadly bereaved and of someone now facing a terminal illness after undergoing a gruelling but apparently successful regime of treatment during the last weeks of 2022. Our hearts go out to them. My mini-bout of COVID 19 pales into insignificance.

Perhaps the turn of the year makes us more than ever aware of life's change and unpredictability. And, after a turbulent 2022, perhaps 2023 can seem even more fragile in its uncertainties. We find ourselves marking the passing of some of the world's luminaries. Our prayers and condolences are very much with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters following the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. The world of football mourns the loss of Pelé, the Brazilian legend who has been credited with bringing a beauty all of his own to the beautiful game.

It is of course not only New Year but Epiphany. In our Advent Course last year some of us tracked the journey of the wise men to Bethlehem. I am grateful to our resident archivist for finding this extract from the January 2003 edition of this Newsletter: *"The story of the wise men is very familiar to us, dramatised in nativity plays everywhere at Christmas time, and celebrated at Epiphany, the sixth of January. The story of the star guiding the wise men to Bethlehem has a timeless message of wisdom. The wise men were clearly wise in more than one sense of the word. They had studied the constellations of the stars, and they knew the Jewish interpretation of the Scriptures. They were learned men, prepared to act on their knowledge and follow a strange star's movements, sure of finding something important, someone important, in the end"*.

Perhaps one of the most famous portrayals of that first Epiphany journey is to be found in T. S. Eliot's poem "The Journey of the Magi". The poem captures some of what must have been the journey's many twists and turns. These were indeed wise and learned men but their wisdom and ability did not future-proof them against what they would discover along the way. No planning or imagination could have prepared them for a meeting with a contemporary monarch, deeply uneasy and insecure in his own power, or with the King of Kings: a barely weaned child living with his parents in a borrowed home.

Eliot concludes his poem with a question: *Were we led all that way for Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death, but had thought they were different; this Birth was Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.* With remarkable insight Eliot uncovers the shadow of the cross even over the glory of the nativity. Whether that shadow was indeed apparent to the wise men on that historic journey we can never know, but it is Eliot's interpretation that matters. The wise men had indeed in the end found something important, someone important, but in so many ways, nothing was as they might have expected it to be.

Significantly, it is thought that Eliot wrote that major piece of work whilst experiencing great change and growth in his own spiritual journey. For Eliot himself, perhaps nothing was as he had expected it to be. That was how it must have been for the wise men. Unsurprisingly, it is little different for us.

If there is one thing that is predictable about 2023 it will be its unpredictability. Please pray especially for those already facing tough times that they may find strength and hope. God, in Jesus, invites us to join him and to discover that, however hard, in the end even the shadow of the cross proved to be the gateway to life. God be with you all.

Judith Allford

St Jude's Church AV Project

Many of you will have been aware of the delay in completing our Audio Visual Project after the initial successful upgrade of our sound system. The delay was inevitable in many ways, due still to the impact of COVID and various supply issues, but we also wanted to ensure that we were able to find the most suitable and appropriate equipment for St Jude's. Thank you for your patience and thank you again to those who have already given so generously to the project.

We are thrilled to be able to announce that the installation of our new system by Distributed Sound and Video Limited should take place before the end of this month. We are grateful to Claudia Tubb and to Guy Bunce for their significant lead on this project.

We are also very grateful to Guy for continuing to provide us with regular online worship whilst generously using his own equipment. We shall be looking to Guy for his continuing skill and wisdom as we begin to get used to operating the new equipment!

Thank you so very much also to Guy for establishing our regular platform on YouTube. We are so thrilled that so many continue to worship with us in this way week by week and we hope we can build on this in the future by offering online access to some of our occasional services. This is a very real opportunity for outreach. We do pray God's blessing upon it.

Inevitably, perhaps, we do now have a shortfall of just over £2000 on meeting the cost of this project. Many of you have already given very generously but if others would now like to help us meet our target please contact our treasurer, Brian Hooker (brian.hooker@stjudeschurch.info). Thank you!

Readings at Communion

| | |
|--|---|
| 1st January (Epiphany) | Isaiah 60. 1-6 Psalm 72. 10-17 Ephesians 3. 1-12 Matthew 2. 1-12 |
| 8th January (Baptism of Christ) | Isaiah 42. 1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10. 34-43 Matthew 3. 13-17 |
| 15th January (2nd Sunday of Epiphany) | Isaiah 49. 1-7 Psalm 40. 1-12 1 Corinthians 1. 1-9 John 1. 29-42 |
| 22nd January (3rd Sunday of Epiphany) | Isaiah 9. 1-4 Psalm 27. 1-12 1 Corinthians 1. 10-18 Matthew 4. 12-23 |
| 29th January (Candlemas) | Malachi 3. 1-5 Psalm 24 |

Diary for January

- 1 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30am Informal Family Holy Communion
- 4 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 8 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Holy Communion
- 11 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 14 Saturday 2.00-4.00pm Church open
- 15 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Holy Communion
- 18 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion 7.30pm Church Council meets
- 22 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Sung Eucharist 4.00pm Fourth Sunday at Four service
- 25 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 29 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Informal service (NO Holy Communion)

Please note that there will always be either a live-streamed service or a pre-recorded reflection on our YouTube Channel each Sunday from 9.30am. If you are unable to join us in church we warmly invite you to tune in.

The Village Centre

www.villagecentre.org.uk 01784 471110

All our regular activities resume this week – please do refer to our website for news of what's on from day to day.

Staff and Volunteers from the Village Centre enjoyed a Christmas get-together just before Christmas. What made the occasion so special was the opportunity it provided especially to bring together volunteers from every aspect of the Centre's Work; the first opportunity for some to meet each other.

The Village Centre activities are served by an amazing number of dedicated volunteers who, between them, keep our variety of projects up and running. Without our volunteers it would be impossible to keep our cafe open and provide delicious meals not only in the cafe but for people in the community too. Without our volunteers we could not stock and staff our Community Fridge, Baby Basics Project, Child Contact Centre, Computer Drop-In, Food Bank collection Point, run our Film Club and so, so much more. All those projects will be up and running again as 2023 gets under way and it is with the greatest gratitude that we wish all our volunteers health, blessing and peace in the year ahead.

And please join us too in thanking Ali Watts and her wonderful staff team for all their outstanding hard work, support and care during 2022. We look forward to another exciting year for the Village Centre in 2023.

Thank you for all your support for the Village Centre in so many ways. As always, if you have any queries, suggestions, requests for bookings, or if you would like to offer your help to the Centre please contact Ali Watts, our Centre Manager, manager@villagecentre.org.uk Thank you!

We wish you all peace and blessing in 2023.

Food Bank

In the last four months of 2022 the contributions made to our local Food Bank from St Jude's Church averaged about 20kg per week. This was made possible only because of the continuing generosity of members of St Jude's, not only in the direct giving of non-perishable goods, but also by financial donations. Geoff Chew has kindly continued to pass on your gifts week by week and the Food Bank Team is consistent in their gratitude for your loyal support.

We are enormously grateful for all your generosity in 2022. In these difficult economic times the need is ever greater and this a significant practical way in which we might continue to respond to the needs of those around us. Thank you all.

Readings at Communion (contd)

Hebrew 2. 14-end
Luke 2. 22-40

The New Year

And I said to the one who stood at the gate of the year "Give me a light that I may walk safely into the unknown." And the reply came back: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That will be better for you than a light and safer than a known way."

The Epiphany



The Epiphany is an ancient Christian feast day and is significant in a number of ways. In the East, where it originated, the Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. It also celebrates Jesus' birth.

The Western Church began celebrating the Epiphany in the 4th century where it was, and still is, associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus. According to Matthew 2:11 they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from 6th January until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter. Other traditions, observe Epiphany as a single day, with the Sundays following Epiphany counted as Ordinary Time.

From the Registers

Funerals:

(1st December) Ernest Bradford

(8th December) Christine Anne Gordon-Dean "Anne"

(13th December) Jane Alderson Nadin

St Jude's Schools

*"Excellence in Education, Kindness in Community,
Courage through Faith"*

Term starts again on the 5th January. Please pray for all our school staff, children and parents as they settle back into the term time routine. This term should see the Federation of our two church schools – so that they effectively become one school on two sites. Our grateful thanks to all who contributed to the consultation process and we look forward to fresh opportunities for our infants and juniors to work together.

At one time there was a car sticker which became very popular. Its slogan: "If you can read this, thank a teacher". All of us enjoy skills and opportunities today which would not have been possible but for our teachers – some of whom taught us many years ago! At a time when the teaching profession, like so many others, is under immense pressure, we are very thankful for all the hard work which goes on in our local schools, ensuring that at the dawn of 2023 our own children are being provided with the very best tools for life.

If you want to know more, please contact:

Miss Michelle McNamee head@stjudesinfant.surrey.sch.uk
01784 435586

Mrs Vicki Chiverton head@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk
01784 432180

Easyfundraising.org.uk

Please do remember that if you register with easyfundraising.org.uk and select St Jude's Church, Englefield Green as your chosen charity, you can then shop online with many organisations (including Amazon, John Lewis, etc) and make money for St Jude's at the same time without costing you a penny. So far we have raised over £1200 by this scheme.

Community Concert

of words and music
Saturday 4th February
4.00pm

St Jude's Church

Please do volunteer to play or sing,
or read poetry (5 minutes or less),
and let Geoff Chew know the details;
no audition is required!

Admission free

Refreshments provided

Donations welcome