



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 138

December 2021

Christmas at St Jude's

Our Christmas Services are set out in our December Diary. They are looking a little bit different this year as we still try to ensure we keep everyone COVID secure. Early in December we are delighted to welcome both our Church of England Schools as they hold their Christmas celebration services within St Jude's.

Our Christmas Carol Service will take place on Sunday 19th December at 4pm. It will be conducted for us this year by Dr Guy Bunce who will bring members of his "Allegra" Choir to join our own St Jude's Choir for this special occasion. Our congregational carols will be fewer than usual but the Choir will make up for that by singing some familiar carols for us. We are still encouraging members of the congregation to wear face coverings and to observe some degree of social distancing so please come in good time in order to secure a seat!

We regret that we have taken the decision not to hold our usual Christmas Crib Service this year. This is down to COVID – and we hope and pray that things will be better next year. We apologise unreservedly to all those who we know will be disappointed.

However, we shall be holding a Family Communion Service at 4pm on Christmas Eve. The service will be led by the Revd Dr Orion Edgar, Anglican Chaplain to RHUL and a foundation governor at our St Jude's Infant School. We welcome families to join us for this service. Holy Communion forms a part of the service but you are warmly invited to join us whether or not you wish to receive communion.

Coffee Morning

outside St Jude's Church

Saturday 4th

December

10.00–11.30am

Please do come along for coffee and a (suitably distanced) chat

The Dawn of Hope

One of the core values adopted by our two Church of England Schools in Englefield Green is "hope". The choice of "hope" was inspired by the tradition of St Jude. As we celebrate a new chapter in the history of education in Englefield Green our schools are places of hope and opportunity, even when set against the unique challenges of this present time. St Jude may have become known to many as the Patron Saint of lost causes but that makes him also the herald of new beginnings. And we can celebrate and cherish the new beginnings evolving around us even now and the hope which new beginnings inspire in us all.

Hope is one of the central themes of Advent and Christmas. I have been gifted with an Advent Calendar which enables me to mark off each of the 24 days of December until the dawn of Christmas morning. And even in adulthood I have not lost touch with that sense of anticipation and hope which grows as the days pass. .

But two thousand years ago the days that led up to the first Christmas were hardly bright with hope. A young teenage woman was reaching the end of her first pregnancy. Her somewhat older husband was courageously and compassionately standing by her although the child was not his. At a time when they surely needed both peace and privacy the government required them to make an arduous journey to register their citizenship. And they found no immediate welcome in the town of Joseph's ancestral past. Rather they became refugees, utterly dependent on the kindness of strangers in this occupied territory.

Over time we have tried to take the darkness out of the Christmas story. We have added tinsel and glitter and fairy lights. We have added to our repertoire of happy Christmas songs and beamed them across Garden Centres from the end of August. We have spent too much and eaten too much – and enjoyed ourselves greatly along the way! But in so doing perhaps we have forgotten the real hope at the heart of Christmas.

That first Christmas hope came when hope was gone. God came into a world that was in a mess, crippled by conflict, wearied by poverty, broken by suffering. Into a stable, warmed only by the breath of the animals sheltering from the night cold, the Son of God was born.

I'm writing this on the day when Year 3 of St Jude's Junior School have given me the privilege of inviting me to visit their classrooms to look at the beautiful stained glass windows they have created with such care from paper and pens. The theme of those windows is "God's Rescue Plan". They tell the story of hope. They show how God never lets go of the world he has made. They show how even when God's people had forgotten Him, he did not forget them. The star of Bethlehem is depicted in many of those windows: the star which shone in the darkness and guided the world to the place where Jesus Christ was born.

The prophet Isaiah was proclaiming God's rescue plan centuries before the Christ child was born. His words sum up for me the hope which lies at the very heart of Christmas: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2) This Christmas of all Christmases, when life over these past two years has been so tough for so many, let's pray that we can let the light in. So many are living with loss; so many have been battling with ill health; so many still wrestle with the darkness of an uncertain future. Our world, so advanced in a myriad of ways, is in other respects very little different from the world of first century Palestine. And yet to our world God still comes. He comes in the Lord Jesus Christ and invites us to come to him.

And that is our hope. It was the hope embraced by St Jude himself. Our church and our schools stand as living monuments to that hope. Our schools will be worshipping with us in St Jude's as we approach Christmas. Please come and worship with us too. Please come and celebrate the new beginning that Christmas promises. Please come and share the hope that is ours in Jesus.

Judith Allford

Christmas Services at St Jude's

Sunday 19th December
4.00pm Carol Service

Friday 24th December (Christmas Eve)
4.00pm Christmas Eve Family Communion
11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

Saturday 25th December (Christmas Day)
8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Family Holy Communion

Sunday 26th December (St Stephen)
9.30am Holy Communion

Readings at Communion

5th December (2nd Sunday of Advent)	Malachi 3. 1-4 Benedictus Philippians 1. 3-11 Luke 3. 1-6
12th December (3rd Sunday of Advent)	Zephaniah 3. 14 Canticle Isaiah 12. 2-end Philippians 4. 4-7 Luke 3. 7-18
19th December (4th Sunday of Advent)	Micah 5. 2-5a Magnificat Hebrews 10. 5-10 Luke 1. 39-45
26th December (First Sunday of Christmas) (St Stephen)	Acts 7.51-end Psalm 96 Galatians 2. 16b-20 Matthew 10. 17-22

From the Registers

Baptism: (28th November) Willow Amelia Talbot.
Funerals: (1st November) John Gerard Hollingsworth; (17th) Maureen Ann Edgington.

The Village Centre

www.villagecentre.org.uk
01784 471110

We are rejoicing at the news that our Village Centre has been awarded a Local Authority grant which will cover the whole cost of our Café refurbishment! This is a really exciting opportunity for us to complete the makeover of the café – something that we have wanted to do for a number of years. It looks as though the work will go ahead in March 2022 and the café will probably need to be closed for about three weeks. Just in time to have a grand re-opening ready for Easter!

But in the meantime it's business as usual! Our monthly Film Club has now restarted and is proving as popular as ever. Our outreach projects, regular lettings and one-off hirings continue week by week. Not found our Community Fridge and Kitchen yet? Please pop in on a Monday or Friday morning to see it in action under the expert supervision of Huda, our new Project manager.

We are immensely grateful for all the support we receive in so many ways. Last month we held a special evening to say "thank you" to all our staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts on behalf of us all. But we are grateful also for the constant support we receive in donations and gifts in kind, including the regular giving from the Friends of the Village Centre, and the generosity of a number of our local retailers. Like so many organisations we have found ourselves under financial pressure as a result of the pandemic and your ongoing support is invaluable. Thank you so much.

As Christmas approaches our café will be busy with celebrations of various kinds. Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page or contact Ali for further details. Happy Christmas!

Looking Back in Remembrance

At the beginning of the month Father Chris Spain of the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Harvest Road and Judith, our Vicar, joined members of both our churches and other residents from the village to bless some of the cemetery graves which mark our loved ones' final earthly resting place. On the evening of 9th November the 2nd Englefield Guides did a litter pick around the Cemetery with special attention to the church, chapel and war memorials.

On Armistice Day itself several pupils from our local schools shared in the traditional ceremony of remembrance and two minutes silence at the war memorials. The children of the Montessori Nursery School in Victoria Street deserve a special mention because each one of them was wearing something in bright poppy red colours!

On Remembrance Sunday it was a joy to gather at the Cemetery War Memorials once again with members of our uniformed organisations, veterans, local dignitaries and a warm gathering of local residents to keep the traditional act of remembrance once again. Special thanks to everyone who took part including the Revd Will Bissett, our piper, and to James Begg, our trumpeter from the Egham Band, for adding further to the dignity and solemnity of these significant moments. We are indebted most of all to Mr John Scott MBE, Chairman of the Englefield Green Memorial Trust, for his outstanding organisation and leadership of the occasion.

Elsewhere others were able to gather at the Air Forces Memorial at Coopers Hill to make our Englefield Green Remembrance complete.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.

Diary for December 2021

- 1 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 4 Saturday 10.00-11.30am Coffee Morning outside Church
- 5 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30am Family Holy Communion in Church
- 8 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 12 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion
- 15 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
- 19 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion 4.00pm Carol Service
- 22 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion
for Christmas services please see above
- 26 Sunday St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr NO 8.00am Holy Communion 9.30am Holy Communion

Please do check the St Jude's United Church Englefield Green YouTube Channel each Sunday. You will find that our services are either being live-streamed from 9.30am or that a pre-recorded Sunday reflection is provided for those who prefer to worship with us online.