



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 128

February 2021

Services for February

Our services during February will be held only online. They will be available on our St Jude's United Church, Englefield Green YouTube Channel from 9.30am each Sunday morning. Our Bishops have given us their permission to suspend services in church throughout the month of February due to the ongoing pandemic and the risk of spreading infection. Although the signs at the time of publication show some improvement in the course of the virus there is still a long way to go – a responsibility upon us all to keep each other as safe as we can.

We also hope to hold an online service at the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday 17th February at 8pm. Details of how to access this service will be made available on our website: www.stjudeschurch.info and our St Jude's United Church Englefield Green Facebook page. Please do continue to check these pages for more up to date information week by week.

This is a hard decision and not one that we take lightly in any way. We are especially mindful of those who continue to be denied the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. We pray that we may all travel safely through Lent and be reunited in worship in church by Easter if not some weeks before.

In the meantime, we continue to thank Guy Bunce for providing us with an alternative way to worship together. Although we cannot physically be together at this present time, Guy has given us the means still to worship alongside each other. Please join us if you can. Please also let us know if you would like to receive paper copies of our Sunday services week by week. We would be happy to provide these for you.

From the Registers

Funerals: (12th January) Geoffrey Trevor Smith; (18th) Lesley Iris Davis.

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.

The Light in the Darkness

I am writing this in the last week of January. The snow has disappeared, although more is promised next week, and the sun is at present shining. But this week has seen at least two poignant milestones.

The first has been the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, marked on January 27th each year. On that day we remember the six million Jewish people who died during the Holocaust. The date was chosen because it marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. At the same time we remember people who have died in more recent acts of genocide, including in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

This same week we have also marked another terrible milestone - that of 100,000 deaths in this country from the effects of COVID 19. Even as I write, the total continues to rise. As that grim total was reached, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York penned an open letter to our nation. Their letter highlights the inequalities within our own nation that the pandemic has further underlined: "We know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and we cry out for the healing of these inequalities"

The theme of Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 was "Be the Light in the Darkness". It is a theme which serves us equally well whether we are focussing on the injustices and wrongs that human beings inflict upon each other, or upon the cruel scourge of this pandemic. Our Archbishops call us to care for one another: "During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines and constraints given by government following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. We show our commitment, care and love for one another by ensuring we do everything we can to stop the virus spreading".

The Archbishops do not flinch from expressing the reality of these present times: "Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. The necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died or even at their graveside".

I am very aware of the distress that continues to be caused by the presence of the virus within our own community. Because of our desire to play our own part, however small that may be, in its suppression, our Church Council has agreed that, at least until the end of February, Sunday worship will still not be held in St Jude's. Our Bishops have given their permission to us to make a resolution to this effect. This is such a difficult decision and one that we have had to weigh very carefully and prayerfully. But our services of online worship remain available and our programme for February is set out in this edition of the Ship.

In the meantime you all remain in our prayers and thoughts. Please do make contact with us if there is any help we may be able to offer you. We think especially at this time of our local teachers and school staff, parents juggling work and supporting children learning at home, health and social care workers, funeral arrangers, retailers and so many more.

The Archbishops' letter concludes with an expression of hope: We are grateful for the hope we have because of the service of our NHS and social care staff. We are grateful for the service given in local communities... We are grateful for the hope of the vaccine.

Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in His resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.

This is a hope we both echo and share. Jesus came to be the light in the darkness of our world. We are called to bear witness to that light. That hope never burned brighter than on the day of Jesus' resurrection. We hope and pray that by Easter 2021 we shall be celebrating that day together within St Jude's Church. God be with you all.

Judith Allford

A Call to Prayer from our Archbishops

One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether or not you're someone of faith, we invite you to call on God in prayer. From 1st February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love.

A Prayer for those who mourn:

Gracious God, as we remember before you the thousands who have died, surround us and all who mourn with your strong compassion. Be gentle with us in our grief, protect us from despair, give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope in Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

And Prayers for us all:

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels and saints charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones, and all for your love's sake. Amen. *(Attributed to St Augustine)*

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Giving to St Jude's

At our Council Meeting we expressed gratitude to all those who continue to give to the work of St Jude's. We are looking to do some much needed external work on the church and we shall once again be very glad of your support if possible. We are mindful of the challenging financial circumstances faced now by so many. Churches are no exception to this and your generosity means so much to us. Please do access our website for details of ways in which you can give. www.stjudeschurch.info

Stronger Together

For more than 10 years St John's Church has offered a Christmas Lunch on Christmas Day to local people and this year we were disappointed we couldn't safely do so again. However, our community relationships had been strengthened by the pandemic and many more people were keen to be involved. With a small team of 'inside' volunteers we prepared and served a full Christmas meal in 'take away' containers. These were then speedily delivered to recipients in their own homes by a wonderful team of volunteers. Some had helped in previous years, but for many this was a first. We were joined by members of the Egham, Egham Hythe and Englefield Green Mutual Aid Group which had formed in response to the pandemic, local companies, other churches and a couple of students at Royal Holloway College.

Each recipient received not only their meal, but cards made or sent by the children at Bishopsgate School and Strode's College and small gifts made or donated by church members and a local nursery.

Due to the generosity shown by the donors and volunteers we extended the offer of a meal to people who had found their plans cancelled due to the changed Christmas 'permissions'. Meals were taken to people in 10 different 'sheltered' accommodations as well as people in their own homes. Some of the wardens wrote specifically to say that the service had taken a worry from them for their vulnerable clients and I spoke to several grateful relatives. Personally I enjoyed using old skills in new ways and meeting (usually virtually) inspiring people both receiving and enabling the meals. →

The Village Centre

www.villagecentre.org.uk
01784 471110

A report from our Village Centre was included as usual at our Ecumenical Church Council Meeting on 27th January. The Centre has had to remain closed throughout the early weeks of the New Year with the exception of our Child Contact Centre which is still authorised to provide much needed contact for separated families. Our Baby Basics project has also been busy with referrals continuing to be received during Lockdown.

We are excited to report that we are now affiliated to the Community Fridge network and have been supported in applying for a grant from our local Council to enable us to purchase a Fridge, Freezer and some of the other things we shall also need to set up our own Community Fridge Project. Once this project gets under way it will enable all of us in our local community both to donate and access food items which would otherwise have gone to waste.

At the same time we are continuing to strengthen our links with the local Runnymede Food Bank and looking forward to being able to provide food parcels and hot meal vouchers as time goes on. As with our Community fridge Project this remains dependent on the progress of COVID and its attendant restrictions.

Our other big news is that we have taken some big steps forward with our plans to refurbish our café! Members of St Jude's Church Council have expressed their support for us and the Staines and Feltham Circuit Meeting will likewise be reviewing our plans early in February. Please do get in touch even at this early stage if you feel you can support us in some way with this exciting initiative. We shall need to raise a substantial sum of money in order to complete the project but we are thrilled that it will deliver facilities which are far more fit for purpose. We'll keep you posted!

Please remember, in the continued wake of COVID 19, that if you, or someone you know, has particular needs, you can still access help from the Village Centre/Mutual Aid by contacting 07526 360704 or the Runnymede Borough Council triage line, 01932 838383. If you would like to contribute to the work of the Village Centre please contact Ali:

manager@villagecentre.org.uk

Readings at Communion

7th February (2nd Sunday before Lent) (Sexagesima)	Proverbs 8.1, 22-31 Psalm 104 26-end Colossians 1. 15-20 John 1. 1-14
14th February (Sunday next before Lent) (Quinquagesima)	2 Kings 2. 1-12 Psalm 50 1-6 2 Corinthians 4. 3-6 Mark 9. 2-9
21st February (1st Sunday of Lent)	Genesis 9. 8-17 Psalm 25 1-9 1 Peter 3. 18-end Mark 1. 9-15
28th February (2nd Sunday of Lent)	Genesis 17. 1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22 23-end Romans 4. 13-end Mark 8. 31-end

Why not enrich your life too by involvement with volunteers? Giving and receiving can each enhance our wellbeing.

from Veronica Priestley

Diary for February 2021

All Sunday services will be on our YouTube channel from 9.30am
There will be an additional service at 8.00pm on Ash Wednesday (17th February))

Email: enquiries@stjudeschurch.info

Web: www.stjudeschurch.info