



St Mark's Parish Magazine

January 2020

THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT MARK, REIGATE

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Your Views & Contributions

Next issue will be available from Sunday 2 February 2020
All contributions to the editor by Friday 17 January 2020

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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

It's January and the celebrations and festivities of Christmas are over..... or are they? While our televisions and supermarkets would have us believe that Christmas ends on 25 December, the Christmas season in the church really only begins then, and over the coming weeks the readings look at different aspects of the story.



The characters of the Nativity story are familiar, but the Magi (the wise men) are not remembered at Christmas but on a separate festival which falls 12 days after Christmas Day – the Feast of Epiphany. The season of Epiphany then continues until early February, so despite the tree being down and the tinsel being in the loft, January is a perfectly appropriate time to be thinking about these Nativity characters. Not much is known about them, but in Matthew's Gospel they are described as wise men from the East who came to Jerusalem and then Bethlehem bearing gifts for the king.

In the Bible, the three gifts of the Magi are named but nowhere does it actually say there were only three wise men! But over the years, tradition has it that there are three and commonly named as Melchior, Caspar, Balthazar. There have been various things written about them, and very famously T S Eliot wrote a poem called The Journey of the Magi, a reflection written from their perspective. The gifts they offered to Jesus weren't random gifts but were deeply symbolic and full of meaning. They offered gold which was associated with kings, showing that Jesus is the king of the world. They brought frankincense which was used in temples, a sign of Jesus' divinity. The last gift was myrrh which was used in burials and was a gift foreshadowing Jesus' death.

As we remember these gifts during the Epiphany season, it is a good opportunity for us to think generally about the idea of gifts. What makes a good gift? We often narrow our understanding of gifts to physical things – things we want or need, or things others want or need. We all have gifts: things which we are good at, talents, traits in our personalities, things that come naturally to us. This might be being a talented sports person; it might be being very good at art or music. It might be that we are someone who encourages others. It may be our kindness, our sense of humour, our organisational skills, our ability to empathise. These are gifts that we have to offer to those around us: our family, our friends, our neighbours. Gifts which can contribute to our communities and help build and strengthen relationships.

This season of Epiphany, I'd like to challenge us all to think about how we can offer our gifts to others, remembering always the greatest gift of love and hope found in the baby whom the Magi visited that very first Epiphany.

With every blessing.

Manton

A New Year's Resolution

Whilst writing the thank you cards for the wonderful gifts received at Christmas I started to ponder all of the other things I am thankful for: a loving family, supportive friends, the blue tits which frequent my garden and bring joy to my children.



I started to realise that, just like the lyrics of the school hymn *Autumn Days To say a great big, thank you, I mustn't forget*. I used to love that hymn at school, and still to this day it is a reminder of how important it is to take time and appreciate the smallest of things which bring joy to our lives.

Gratitude, defined as the "the quality of being thankful and the readiness to show appreciation" is not only a buzz word at the moment but the act of being grateful and expressing gratitude is actually good for you; research has shown it can improve sleep, reduce depression, improve blood pressure, reduce pain and if that wasn't enough, it can make you more likable!

So, it is my number 1 resolution to take the time to say thank you to God, for all the wonderful things he has created.

Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever;
His faithfulness continues through all generations.



News from the Church of England

Everyday Faith



The Church of England is launching an Everyday Faith campaign to celebrate and highlight the value of everyday work. The campaign launches on 12 January for 3 weeks.

It includes an app and daily prayers and reflections which show that all work, paid or unpaid, is important to God. The aim of the campaign is to help people live out their Christian life Monday to Saturday as well as on Sunday.

12 January is sometimes kept as Plough Sunday, the start of the agricultural calendar, when communities ask for a blessing for manual labour.

Find out more: <https://www.churchofengland.org/everydayfaith>

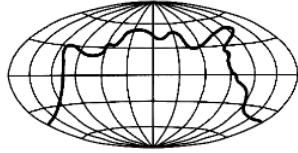
Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who donated to the various December collections. At the time of going to print, totals raised for each cause was still being finalised:

Carol Service – 22 December at 6.00pm: Renewed Hope Trust

Crib and Christingle Service – 24 December at 4.00pm: The Children's Society

Midnight Eucharist – 24 December at 11.30pm: Reigate Samaritans



S · M · O · A · T

ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

SMOAT CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This year we are supporting two exciting projects from organisations new to us. The first is a Women's Project supporting the education of young women and girls by EducAid in Sierra Leone. The second project is from Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services, delivering essential medical care to remote villages in the Simien Mountains in Ethiopia.

EducAid - The Women's Project

The Women's Project encourages and supports young women and girls to return to education. It is offered at a critical time as the President of Sierra Leone has recently committed to free education for 1.5 million primary and secondary school children. However, gender inequality is deeply engrained in tradition and cultural practices: Sierra Leone has one of the highest prevalence rates for female genital mutilation in West Africa and 18% of girls are married by the age of 15, and 44% by the age of 18. This means that women and girls are much less likely to be able to benefit from the new opportunity.

This programme allows women and girls who might struggle to capitalise on the mainstream education to get the support they need to cope effectively and reintegrate into mainstream schools. It is specifically aimed at girls and young women who, for various reasons, have never been to school or have left school. The programme is self-paced and supports the students to work at the appropriate level for themselves, with constant attention being paid to improving their self-esteem. This is critical for their continued development and resilience enabling them to re-enter mainstream classrooms and beyond. To this end, the amount of support each woman receives varies from between three months and 18 months, according to how much time they need to re-enter mainstream education.

We will be supporting refurbishment projects to facilitate classroom and boarding provision. The initial priority is Lumley School in Freetown. The space is both a boarding facility and a classroom. Amongst other young women, this school will be taking women from the Freedom from Fistula programme (which we supported last year through the Jazz evening), helping them back into mainstream education. The plan for 2019/20 is to take twenty young women into the school (ten from the Freedom from Fistula programme), with the long-term plan being to support some 150 women back into mainstream education over the next three years, and many more into the future.

EducAid, who run this programme, is a UK-registered charity, established in 1995 to restore and strengthen education during and in the aftermath of Sierra Leone's devastating civil war.



Lumley School, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Simeon Mountains Project – Blood Testing for antenatal care and patient diagnosis

The aim of the Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services (SMMMS) is to deliver essential medical care at no cost to remote villages in the Simien Mountains. Although there are two roads to the west and south of this area, the interior is still only accessible by foot or trusty mule. This means that it can be a two day round trip to a clinic, a journey which many people cannot undertake. Consequently, many treatable conditions can become life-threatening.

Currently, there is virtually no laboratory capability at local health facilities to test blood for haemoglobin, do a white blood cell count or record blood sugar levels for antenatal patients and the diagnosis of infections and disease. We have been asked to support the purchase of at least one HemoCue 201+. Essentially, this is a hand-held device for testing blood samples. The goal of SMMMS is to provide one device for their clinic, seven devices for each of the seven government health centres they support with midwives, as well as their five mobile nurses. The midwives and nurses will sign for their devices and be accountable for them. The people served by these devices will total nearly 350,000 in an area larger than Yorkshire, which gives you an indication of the area covered by just five nurses and seven midwives. By operating a mobile medical service directly into the remote villages, it is hoped to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of the people of the Simien Mountains.



The only way to reach the remote villages

Our projects this year are quite different but each one is essential for marginalised and remote groups of people, giving them the chance of an education or to receive essential medical care, both things that we take for granted. These projects will give these people the chance to make something of their lives. Education empowers and good healthcare is essential to enable people to work and provide for their families.

If you would like any further information on SMOAT or would like to donate to our Appeal, please contact Barbara@barbaraperkins.co.uk.

Are you looking to hold a party in 2020? St Mark's Church Hall - Children's Party Package!

Hire includes exclusive use of:

Large main hall – with tables and chairs

Use of new kitchen, well equipped with serving hatch - ideal dining area next to kitchen

Outside garden area

Available Saturdays and some Sundays
3 hours (includes ½ hour set up & ½ hour clearing)
Only £90 (additional hours charged at £25ph)

This offer applies to bookings for under 11's parties only



Further details on hiring the hall available from our website:

www.stmarksreigate.co.uk

For bookings please contact: office@stmarksreigate.co.uk

Environmental News

Food for thought – Food waste in Surrey

Having just over indulged on Christmas dinner and as always cooked far too much that we have been eating leftovers ever since, food waste is currently front of mind.



It is thought that around a quarter of the food we buy ends up as waste¹, some estimate that number to be nearer 30%², which equates to 6.7 million tonnes, that doesn't even include the food wasted in production, on farms and in the hospitality industry.

This is a big problem when we consider the greenhouse gases which are released from food waste, the cost of disposal and the moral issue that one in five children suffer from 'food insecurity' or hunger in the UK³.

We all have our part to play in reducing food waste and helping redistribute food, the websites lovefoodhatewaste.com and www.trusselltrust.org are great places to start, but Surrey County Council is also trying to do its bit to reduce the impact of food waste. Having introduced the food caddy, the small green bin used for disposal of food waste, the council now saves £310,000 per year in recycling food waste, which is cheaper than disposing of it⁴.



Food which goes into the food caddy, once it is collected, is taken to an anaerobic digestion (AD) facility and turned into electricity. Through AD, micro-organisms break down the food waste producing biogas, which is collected and used to generate electricity, heat and transport fuel. The leftover material also creates bio-fertiliser that can be used in farming and land regeneration⁵. Our food becomes a renewable energy source and helps reduce reliance of chemical fertilisers. It is the greenest way of dealing with unavoidable food waste⁶. Not all councils offer this service.

¹ <https://wrap.org.uk/>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_waste_in_the_United_Kingdom

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/hunger-food-poverty-insecurity-uk-significant-growing-ministers-mps-dwp-environmental-audit-a8719176.html>

⁴ <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-matters/recycling/june-food-waste>

⁵ <https://www.surreyep.org.uk/reduce-reuse-recycle/what-happens-to-your-recycling/food/>

⁶ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmenvfru/429/42908.htm>

REGULAR SERVICES AND EVENTS AT ST MARK'S

SUNDAYS

8.00am	Each Sunday	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am	1 st Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Story Telling)
	2 nd Sunday	Parish Eucharist (with Story Telling)
	3 rd Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Story Telling)
	4 th Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Story Telling)
	5 th Sunday	Sung Eucharist (with Story Telling)
1.00pm	2 nd Sunday	Community Lunch
4.00pm	1 st Sunday	Family Service
	3 rd Sunday	Messy Church
6.00pm	1 st Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)
	2 nd Sunday	Taizé Prayer
	3 rd Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)
	4 th Sunday	Evening Prayer (said)

MONDAY TO WEDNESDAY

8.30am Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel (20 minutes)

MONDAY

9.30am St Mark's Toddler Group in the hall (term-time only)

TUESDAY

10.00am 3rd Tuesday St Mark's Buffers (in the church)

WEDNESDAY

3.25pm 'T' Time Tales (term time only)

THURSDAY

8.30am Informal Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) followed by tea or coffee

2.00pm 1st Thursday SMART

SATURDAY

8.00pm 4th Saturday St Mark's Social Dance

CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2020

Thursday 2 nd January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) 2.00pm SMART
Sunday 5th January	Epiphany of our Lord 4.00pm Family Service 6.00pm Evening Prayer
Monday 6 th January	9.30am Parent and Toddler Group (resumes)
Thursday 9 th January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)
Sunday 12th January	Baptism of Christ 1.00pm Community Lunch 6.00pm Taizé Prayer
Wednesday 15 th January	3.25pm T Time Tales (resumes)
Thursday 16 th January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)
Sunday 19th January	2nd Sunday of Epiphany 3.00pm First Communion Class 4.00pm Messy Church 6.00pm Evening Prayer
Tuesday 21 st January	10.00am St Mark's Buffers
Thursday 23 rd January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) 5.00pm Choral Evensong
Saturday 25th January	Conversion of St Paul 8.00pm St Mark's Social Dance
Sunday 26th January	3rd Sunday of Epiphany 5.00pm ROOTS Youth Club (Lower Kingswood Hall) 6.00pm Evening Prayer
Thursday 30 th January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2020

Sunday 2nd February Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

3.00pm First Communion Class
4.00pm Family Service
5.00pm Children's and Families' Party
6.00pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 6th February 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 9th February 3rd Sunday Before Lent

1.00pm Community Lunch
5.00pm ROOTS Church (Wisdom of God Church)
6.00pm Taizé Prayer

Thursday 13th February 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)

Sunday 16th February 2nd Sunday Before Lent

3.00pm First Communion Class
4.00pm Messy Church
6.00pm Evening Prayer

Monday 17th February No Parent and Toddler (half term)

Tuesday 18th February 10.00am St Mark's Buffers

Wednesday 19th February No T-Time Tales (half term)

Thursday 20th February 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)

Saturday 22nd February 8.00pm St Mark's Social Dance

Sunday 23rd February Sunday Before Lent

5.00pm ROOTS Youth Club (Lower Kingswood Hall)
6.00pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday 26th February Ash Wednesday

11.00am Holy Communion with Ashing
8.00pm Sung Eucharist with Ashing

Thursday 27th February 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona)
5.00pm Choral Evensong

PARISH ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, GROUPS & CONTACTS

CHURCH FLOWER ROTA
Contact: Mrs Valerie Jones

CHOIR PRACTICE
Each Thursday in church - all parts at 7.00pm - other practices as notified

DATA REQUESTS
Contact: Parish Office – 01737 210785

HOME GROUP
Contact: Mrs Susannah Dyde

IONA COMMUNION – LUNCHTIME SERVICE
Every Thursday 12.45pm to 1.15pm followed by Coffee/Tea

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP
Contact: Mrs Louise Wallis

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER
Mrs Rosemary Absalom

SMART - St Mark's Afternoon Retirement Team
Meetings on the first Thursday of the month
Contacts: Mrs Sarah Cousins

ST MARK'S BUFFERS
Meeting in church on the third Tuesday of the month from 10am - 12noon

ST MARK'S COMMUNITY LUNCH
Contacts: Paul Selvedurai & Mrs Alison Stagg

ST MARK'S CHURCH HALL
Regular Lettings Secretary: Mrs Jean Hatton
Party Bookings & Church Bookings via Parish Office 01737 210785

ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST - SMOAT
Chairman: Mrs Barbara Perkins

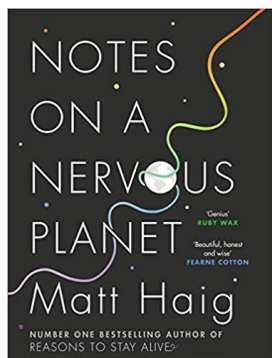
ST MARK'S SINGERS
Rehearsals Monday 7.30pm in the church – all welcome
Contact: Toby Garrod

WEBSITE & FACEBOOK
Contact: Ben Read

YOUTH WORK
Junior Church: Mrs Leonora Corden

Book Review

This month we review *Notes from a Nervous Planet*



The book has been written by Matt Haig who has written many children's books as well as a couple of other non-fiction books. The book deals with the increasing number of mental health issues caused by social media and the 'always-on' culture which has been created.

The author uses his own experience of his struggles with mental health to talk about the things which personally trigger his anxiety and mental health decline and why new habits such as excessive mobile phone usage and social media addiction are causing a big problem for the mental health of our generation.

Initially, I struggled with the format of the book, which is set out in very short chapters, one or two pages long, but the sentiment of the book and the concerns raised certainly hit home. At one point in the book he writes a role play script, set in the future between his son, who has grown-up, and an AI therapist. It is designed to be tongue-in-cheek but deals with the real issue of children feeling second fiddle to their parent's devices, as they get ignored in favour of Candy Crush and Facebook. The role play details the demise of the father (the author), as he was run over whilst looking at his phone, an issue which may become more frequent as electric cars become more popular!

The book also covers how the media are making us more anxious by sensationalising the very worst of human nature and marketing is making us feel inferior in order to drive up sales.

Throughout the book the author offers ways of helping to navigate the worry and to be a happier human, by unplugging regularly and thinking hard about the news that you read.

The book really captures the current zeitgeist of modern day living and offers an antidote to following the crowd, in a very humble and human way.

If you would like to write a review or recommend a book, please email magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.

Letter to the editor

Innovation

Some years ago, whilst being treated for a torn leg tendon in a Canadian hospital, I was asked, at the door for \$400 before I could be seen.

After a lengthy wait, a young surgeon inspected my leg, advised they don't normally operate on this problem but put the leg in a boot and he'd need an x-ray to make sure. Conscious of the cost, I declined the x-ray and he wrote a prescription for the boot which I was told to wear for a month. The cost was \$400; for a process which was over in 15 minutes. The hospital didn't take card payment so I had to trek to an ATM to get the cash. At the pharmacy I was given a boot and the cost. I had no advice on what to do or if a follow up was required. The boot was so uncomfortable that I took it off in the evenings.

Three weeks later, when I returned home and went to the Physiotherapist, I was told wearing a boot full time was the worst thing I could have done. The tendon needed to repair under pressure. I had a limp for six months. I contrast this experience to that of the NHS.

A few years ago, I had a short stay in ICU and a longer one in HD at East Surrey. What do these initials mean? Older readers will be familiar with them but possibly younger ones not so. ICU stands for Intensive Care Unit; HD, High Dependency.

ICU does what it says on the tin. Normally there is one nurse (at a time) per patient and there are all the mod-cons such as life support machines, breathing apparatus and so on. Only those who really need such intensive care are there. High Dependency is a halfway stage between ICU and going off to a ward. There is more staff than in a general ward and they watch you closely to try to ensure a speedy recovery, or sometimes the need to ship you back to ICU.

I have since met a good number of patients who have experienced these two types of care. None of them would have volunteered to go there. Some have pretty gruesome stories to tell. All have been full of appreciation for the high quality of care they received.

In hospitals there was a time when ICU simply performed its medical purpose and then shipped the patient off to a general ward till discharge. Today they try to follow up even beyond hospital to ensure the best chance for the patients of an all-round recovery.

It occurred to me that you, my readers, might be interested in some aspects of the NHS which I had no knowledge of till well after I was discharged.

You can imagine the kind of cases who benefit from ICU. Road accidents may leave a patient without legs. Other illnesses inevitably have long term physical and psychological consequences. Patients also may have to cope with the loss of jobs, earning capacity, changes in family life and other fundamental changes in life-style. But the common condition is the need to recover from the long term mental side effects of quite strong drug treatment in ICU.

A few years ago, at the initiative of the sister in charge, "ICU Steps" was introduced. It is a kind of group therapy to address the aftermath of ICU in particular. It does this by getting ex-patients to express their own story and gain some sense of proportion and a sense of common experience, by listening to others. Expert advice is given to explain past treatment. The group is comprised of volunteering patients, staff and helpers. You might call the latter veterans! The therapy aims at enabling ex-patients to come to terms with their experience and where they find themselves now.

Another initiative at East Surrey for training of ICU nurses is to hear from past patients to give them a patient's perspective. For a patient in a coma for example, as well as dreams and nightmares there are lucid moments between sliding in and out of consciousness. Awareness is often followed by a questioning state. Then there is the recovery from that and the gradual interest and contribution to recovery. Giving an account of such personal experiences advances the understanding by the nurse and improves communication between nurse and patient. It also enables the students to realise that, against the evidence when they leave ICU, patients do actually recover to good health. The nurses rarely see that in their work. Some patients are semi-conscious for most of their time in ICU but some are normal and able to move.

When I moved to HD, I was still very weak but now keen to get going. Sitting out and extending those first faltering steps was a daily objective including starting all over again when illness intervened. But it is a truism that there is no better path to recovery than to see your own physical progress. It helps physically, mentally and emotionally. Recovery is best when it is a joint venture between medics and the patient.

Recently a sister in ICU has installed a small gym beside the unit so that patients can begin physical recovery at the earliest moment. The plan is that their physical regimes will then follow them to the wards. This is another local innovation.

Such innovations as these are shared with other hospitals and adapted to varied circumstances. Inputs from psychologists are sought. Local initiatives spread like wild fire.

The point I want to make, which astounds me still, is that these innovations are not conceived in some research establishment or introduced by some research consultant, or by edict or advice from the top. They are not imposed by an all-knowing distant

senior establishment. They begin as a local initiative, and are devised to meet current circumstances. Change is introduced and developed solely by the initiative of middle management such as here, the sisters running ICU.

These innovations derive from the philosophy that the patient comes first, second and third. There is no other dimension. If there is a better way of doing the job, then it is introduced.

But don't think of these managers as sitting behind a desk pondering what they can change next. These are people in hard pressed jobs with staff under stress and patients often on the verge of death. There is always plenty pressing to be done. Such changes are often developed and implemented in their spare time.

What we can take from this is a desire not to sit still but to continuously approve the care and service they give, certainly an example we can learn from in our everyday life.

Harry Ingram

The 10 worst excuses for missing church

As we welcome in the New Year and make our resolutions and set our goals for the year ahead, why not set the goal to make it to church a little more often? If you can feel the excuses coming already, we look at 10 of the worst.

1. I overslept – if you've stayed up late on a Saturday night watching your favourite TV show or have been dancing the night away, it is easy to sleep through the alarm, especially in winter. But if you are doing it every week, then perhaps an early night is in order.



2. Your favourite team are playing – you might be the biggest Fulham/ Crystal Place/ `insert team name here' fan ever and you never miss a game but surely as God's biggest fans we don't want to miss our regular check-in with Him.

3. I lost track of time – it is easily done, if you're up early enough and get stuck into something else. Try setting an alarm for 15 minutes before you have to leave the house to refocus you on getting out the door.

4. It is my only day to sleep in – if this is the case; just know that getting up at a consistent time is better for you and why not have an afternoon nap on Sunday instead.

5. I connect better with God on a nature trail/ at the beach etc. – It is possibly true but sometime church can give you a fresh perspective and a new way to connect, which can help deepen the relationship.



6. I have to take my kids to their sports game – this one is easy to cover come bring your kids to the afternoon family service or Messy Church instead, or if you want to make time for yourself to connect with God, there is always the 8am or mid-week services.

7. I'll catch a sermon on a podcast – you can always find a sermon on a podcast to teach you the lessons of God but that won't give you a sense of community and connection. It won't give you the same support.

8. It is too hard to get there – perhaps it is too far to walk or you don't drive, perhaps you struggle with mobility. If you want to worship, this should not be a barrier. Speak to the Parish Office to see if a lift share is available to you.
9. I don't feel like going – there are many times in life when we don't feel like doing something. Often when we push through and make it happen we feel better for it.
10. I am doing fine, I don't need to go – spiritual health is like physical health, we need to look after it regularly and not let it decline through neglect. You eat healthily, keep active. Why wouldn't you look after your spiritual health the same way.

Article repurposed from crosswalk.com.

https://www.crosswalk.com/slideshows/10-worst-excuses-for-missing-church.html?utm_source=Jeeng



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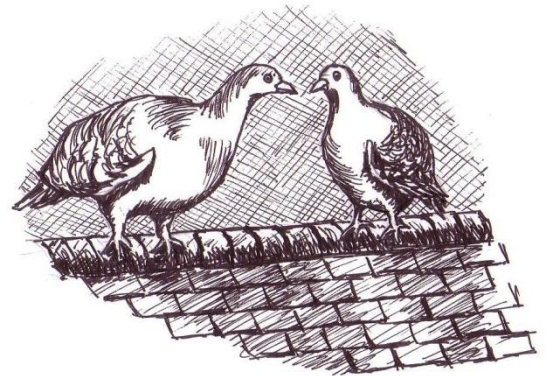


Candlemouse Returns

*Another Tale about a Church Mouse for younger readers
Written by Sarah Cousins and illustrated by Roger Lloyd*

"The Adventures of Granddad"

Hello, my name is Candlemouse and I live in St. Mark's Church near the railway station in Reigate. I'm as small and as quiet as a mouse can be, so most people don't notice me, which gives me plenty of time to see them and the things that they do!



When I was a very small mouse my granddad often used to look after me, when mum and dad were out looking for food to feed me and my eight brothers and sisters. Granddad liked to show me all the corners of the church. One of his favourite places to hide during a service was in the pulpit. If the vicar took far too long over his sermon my granddad would start to nibble at his socks which was ticklish for the vicar and made him finish quickly so that he could scratch his ankle.

Another favourite place of Granddad's was up at the **high altar** in the farthest corner of the church. We were there once when people started to get ready for an evening service. They put out a tall metal stand with a strange container dangling from a long chain. What amazed me was that there was a small fire burning inside the container and clouds of sweet smelling smoke or **incense** were coming out. "Granddad, "I asked, "Whatever is that strange container for?" Granddad explained, "It is called a **thurible** or **censer** Candlemouse and incense is burnt inside it. I think that it is used to make a special cloud in which people can talk to God and wonder how mysterious he can be and maybe tell him what they feel and think about this mystery."

While I was pondering on this, the service began. A lady in white followed by a boy led the procession to the front of the church swinging the thurible

by the long chain so that the clouds of incense spread throughout the church making it smell quite wonderful.

We stayed hidden under a chair until the procession finally finished up at the high altar. As we tried to dash away the lady with the thurible making all the incense swung it right at Granddad. I don't think that she saw him with all the smoke swirling around. Poor Granddad missed by a whisker being knocked over so we stayed there for the rest of the service.

He was breathing quite heavily because he had come so close to being knocked for six. After a while he started to relax and smiled at me. Although he was out of breath, breathing in the incense had helped him to calm down and he was quite happy again. Next day when we returned to the church there were no clouds of incense but there was a mysterious and lovely smell.

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Let's pray

Sometimes God you are hidden from us.
Dark clouds not always silver lined.
Thunder, rain and lightning.
Unapproachable , mysterious
But exciting, holiness.
Fearful to fall into your hands
Living Powerful Being.

Puzzles

January Sudoku Challenge

3		9		8			2	
	2	6		7	4		9	
7			6				8	
			7	2		5		
	8			3			4	
		7		1	5			
	3				7			1
	7		1	4		8	6	
	1			5		4		9

December Sudoku Solution

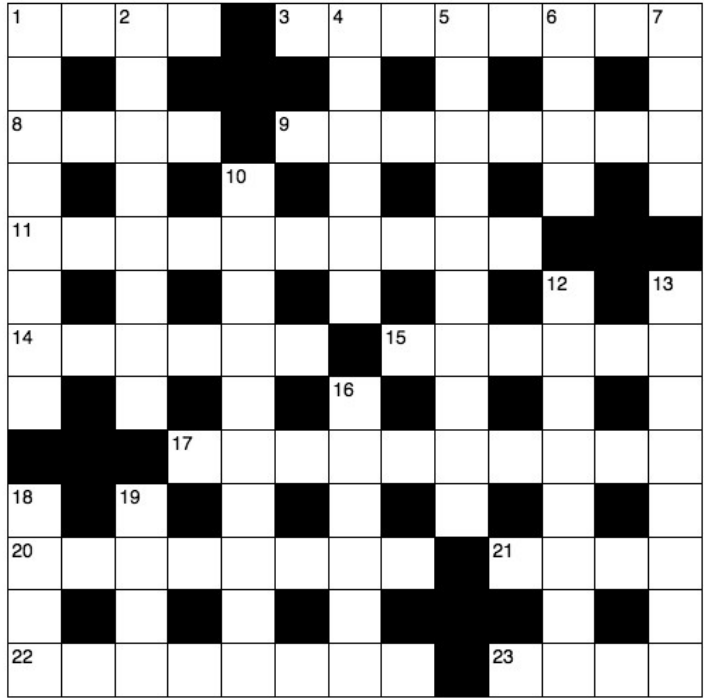
6	9	8	7	2	4	5	1	3
7	4	3	5	1	9	6	2	8
2	5	1	6	8	3	7	4	9
1	6	2	9	7	5	3	8	4
9	7	5	3	4	8	1	6	2
3	8	4	1	6	2	9	5	7
4	1	6	8	9	7	2	3	5
8	3	7	2	5	1	4	9	6
5	2	9	4	3	6	8	7	1

January Crossword Challenge

Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2–4) (8)
 11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)
 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)



Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
 19 Pans (anag.) (4)

December Solution

ACROSS: 1 Lame 3 Obtained 8 Omit 9 Merchant 11 Burdensome 14 Crafty
 15 Please 17 Blacksmith 20 Splendid 21 Tier 22 Singeing 23 Hand

DOWN: 1 Look back 2 Main road 4 Breast 5 Accomplish 6 Near 7 Date
 10 Pestilence 12 Basilica 13 Tethered 16 Action 18 Asa's 19 Clan

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