



St Mark's Parish Magazine
January 2023



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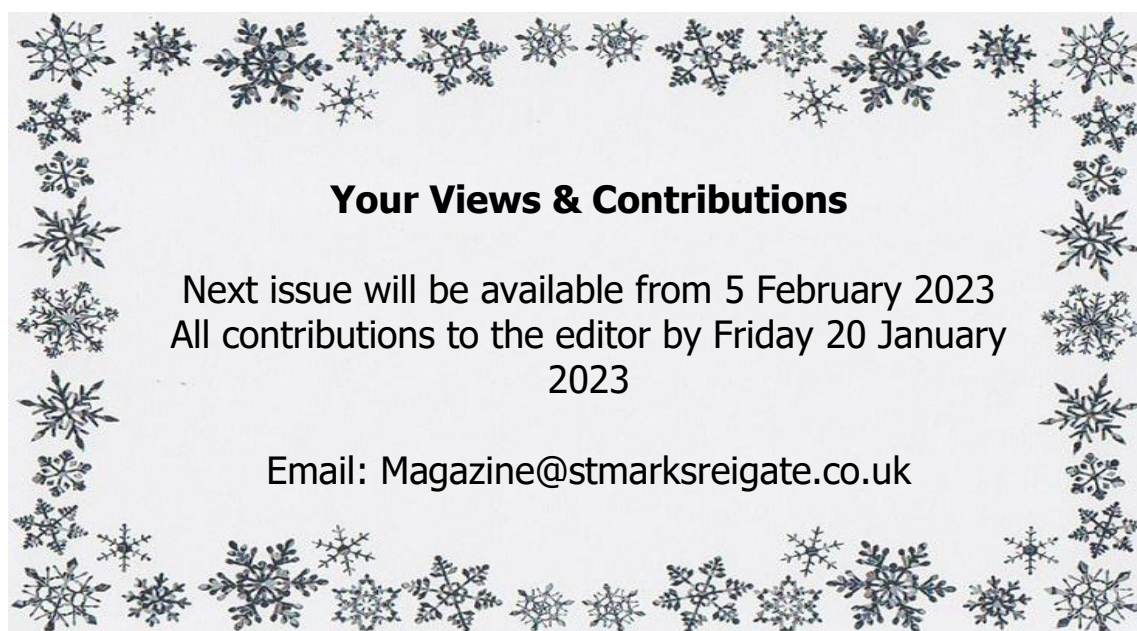
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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

Ring out the old ring in the new. The changing of the year is a time to dream. This is the moment when eternity starts, the moment we enter God's good future. We will quite rightly reflect briefly on the year past. But more than anything else this is the moment to look forward. It will all be new from now on.

It is in newness we discover God: God is always absolutely new. He is never exhausted, certainly never in the kingdom he establishes among us. There is always openness. We have to leave God his freedom in being new with regard to us – just as he has to respect our freedom in what we may realize in the way of salvation in this world.

Edward Schillebeeckx has written: "I prefer to see God not as an unchangeable and unchanging God, but rather as eternal youth... God is new each day. He is a constant source of new possibilities. This is true not only with regard to our history, but also with regard to the end of our history – the *escaton*. He is always surprising us. Even I think when we die." (Edward Schillebeeckx, *God is new each moment* p.29)

Jesus proclaims a gospel of newness – the kingdom is happening, a taste of God's future, a reordering and regime change, which can change how people live, how people experience their world. Living in newness is a challenge we as Christians face constantly, not least as we attempt to live our faith in the midst of a constantly changing modern world. We maybe grasp for what we think is unchanging only to find that it is transient or provisional. The only thing we can be certain of is that things will be different. Living in newness means we have found a way of dealing with the past, that God has offered us the possibility of a future that is transformed and transforming.

Living in Christ's newness offers us a foundation that will sustain us as we seek to ground ourselves through prayer and worship, through reading the Bible, through opening ourselves to live as salt and light in our willingness to accept the challenges God offers us. Those challenges may come through scriptures or in worship.

So in this New Year, let us all discover the eternal 'newness' of God through his unchanging and constant nature.



Sliding Doors

You may have seen a film of this name in which we see two different versions of a girl's life depending on whether she was able to join a tube train before the doors closed or whether she was not able to do so. I expect we all have such experiences when a very small incident could change the whole of our lives.

If Jenny's brother had not married my cousin and invited Jenny and me to dinner the lives of each of us might inevitably have been very different, as that was when our romance began.

But, if we had not fallen in love, not only the lives of Jenny and me, but also of our children, grandchildren, and now great grandchildren would not have existed as they do now. That we chose to enter or not enter that "Sliding Door" was such an important decision at that critical time.

We can be led to regret small decisions we have taken in the past or we hopefully thank God, as I do, that even those we thought to be bad, sometimes turned out as well as they did. Sometimes we can't make those critical decisions as at times in our lives, others make us turn in a different direction than we might have wished – for instance, if the one we love does not love us. Even then, as time goes by, we might find that that unwelcome change in our earlier plan, turns out for the best.

After all, St Paul, as an orthodox Jew, had a hatred for all Christians but on the way to Damascus he was forced by a time of blindness, the words of Jesus and the kindness shown to him by those who had been his former enemies, his course was so altered from what he had planned for himself, that not only his life, but those of so many others through the ages, are better for that "unwanted" change.

We might always be tempted to think that the decisions we take are our business and others should ignore them. But we all have so much influence on each person we meet, and those we love and who love us, are affected at each stage of our journey. May we all be guided in all great decisions by whom I see as the Holy Spirit and choose the best of those "Sliding Doors" to go through.

Ian Archer



Think happy thoughts to help your immune system

A stressed mind can put your body at risk. If you constantly think about negative things, and dwell on stressful events in your life, you could weaken your immune system and make yourself more susceptible to illness.

A recent study has found that simply thinking about negative events, even if they are only imagined, can increase the levels of inflammation in your body. This inflammation, associated with the body's response to trauma and infection, can weaken the immune system and has been linked to a number of conditions such as heart disease, cancer and dementia.

St Paul urged a better way of coping with the threats in our lives: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* (Philippians 4.6)



Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany – the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings – by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three – to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing – and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.



Church News

Christmas collections

Thanks to all who have donated during the Christmas services this year, donations will support Renewed Hope (supporting the homeless), Reigate Samaritans and the Children's Society.

Green Sundays

Following the success of the Green Sunday trial last year, Green Sundays are back for Sunday 1 January, Sunday 5 February and Sunday 5 March.

The Sustainability committee has reviewed the impact on gas usage in the church from 2019 (pre-Covid) with 2022 (estimating the last three months of the year and there has been a significant reduction of around 50,000 kwh between the two years. This is both from the implementation of Green Sundays and also a more mindful usage of the heating.

This along with the reduction of electricity used thanks to the solar panels and LED lighting means that the church has saved around 16 tonnes of CO₂ this year compared to 2019.



News from the Church of England

Carbon emissions reduce as Church of England makes progress towards 2030 target

The Church of England has seen a gradual but steady reduction in carbon in 2021, according to the latest data from its national Energy Footprint Tool (EFT). Meanwhile, more than 400 churches across England are now reporting 'net zero' carbon emissions, an increase of 157 on the previous year, as part of the most comprehensive data collection to date.

The EFT was launched in 2019 to measure and record carbon emissions across the Church of England and is reporting data for the third time. For 2021, the data is now consolidated across all settings, including Church of England schools.

It estimates that overall carbon emissions were down by 5,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2021 to 410,000 tonnes overall, compared with 415,000 in 2020, despite buildings being open for more of the year than in 2020. The data also included travel-related emissions for the first time.

The 2021 report includes data from church schools, clergy housing, cathedrals, offices, theological education institutions, and work-related travel, in addition to the actual church buildings which were also recorded in 2020.

It also notes that Covid-19 mitigations including lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 were likely to have had an impact on the figures, with churches closed for public worship and gatherings for some parts of both years.

Data was gathered from 39% of churches and 68% of Church of England schools. The number of churches using the tool has increased since 2020.

Church of England schools emitted around 196,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2021, a small increase on the equivalent figure of 195,000 tonnes of CO₂e in 2020.

The report also details an increase in churches which have taken up renewable energy tariffs (31% to 33%).

The Bishop of Selby, John Thomson, who is the Church of England's lead bishop for Net Zero Carbon, said: "While there is more work to do, there are some positive indicators that the Church of England is making progress towards our target, and every effort, small or great, is important and welcome.

"Despite the welcome return to public worship and to schools in 2021, the carbon decrease on the previous year is cause for encouragement.

"With the publication of the Church of England's route map for Net Zero earlier in the year, I am excited about the potential for the rate of change to increase as more resources become available to help churches, schools, chaplaincies, and buildings to take steps to reduce carbon.

"At a time when fuel poverty is affecting millions, as Christians we have a duty to respond. Across the church estate this means ensuring that the buildings are as energy efficient as possible and that we are moving away from expensive fossil fuels by changing technology and using energy from green, sustainable sources. These are the solutions needed everywhere to halt global warming and to abate energy poverty."

Full article available on the Church of England website.



Attendance Survey shows Covid effect

The devastating effect of the pandemic on church attendance is apparent in new figures for 2021, released by the Church of England's data analysis team. Although weekly in-person attendance at services were up more than one third from 2020 levels, they remained almost one third lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The figures, in *Statistics for Mission 2021*, are based on a questionnaire about attendance in October 2021, sent to all the 15,622 churches in England, 76 per cent of whom responded. In 2021, almost all churches offered in-person services, it says. The average all-age weekly attendance, which includes Sunday and midweek services, was 605,000 people, compared with 345,000 people in 2020 and 854,000 people in 2019.

Most weekly worshippers attended a Sunday service: 509,000 people in 2021 (298,000 people in 2020 and 707,000 people in 2019). Average weekly attendance for adults only (18-plus) was 28 per cent lower in 2021 than in 2019; the average weekly attendance of children was 38 per cent lower in 2021 than in 2019.

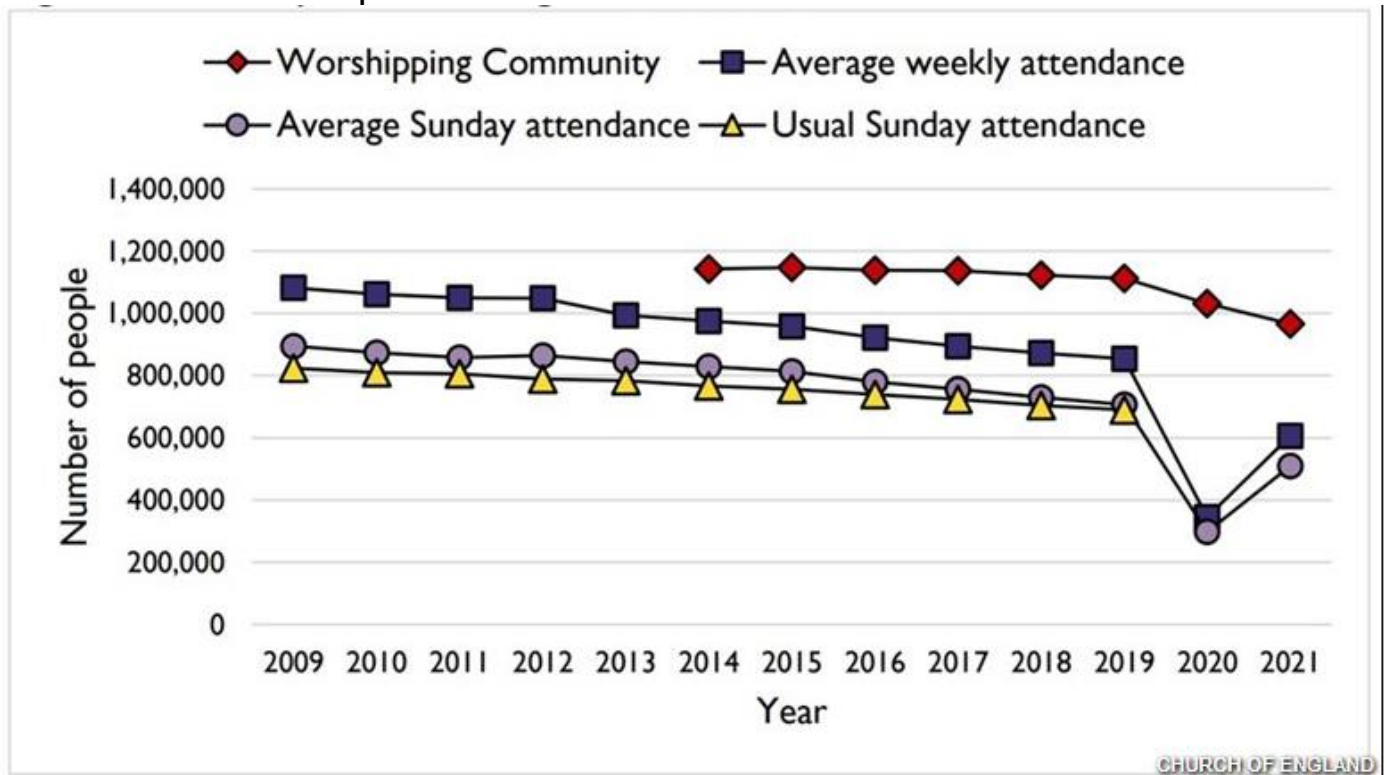
All-age average weekly attendance for school services in churches declined more dramatically, more than halving from 182,000 people in 2019 to 89,000 in 2021.

Another category in the statistics proved more immune to the effects of the pandemic. The "Worshipping Community" recorded occasional in-person attendance (once a month or more) as well as online worship. Even here, however, there was a 13-per-cent decline from pre-pandemic levels: 936,000 in 2021, down from 1.113 million in 2019. Ten per cent worshipped wholly or predominantly at home.

The figure for the worshipping community represents approximately 1.7 per cent of the total population of England. A greater proportion of people over the age of 70 made up the worshipping community in 2021 (351,000 people; 36.4 per cent of the total) compared with 2019 (373,000; 33.5 per cent). This compares with 13.6 per cent of people aged 70 and over in the general population.

The statistics record changes in the style of worship now offered by churches. In 2020, a year in which all – and then most of – C of E churches were closed during national lockdowns, many began live-streaming or pre-recording services for the first time (or else offering worship resources by post or telephone). The proportion of the

10,362 churches which reported offering these alternatives declined from 71 per cent in October 2020 to 58 per cent in October 2021.



None the less, the report describes the adaptability of clergy, lay leaders, and congregations as “impressive and encouraging” amid challenging decisions about what to re-start and when, and what to discontinue, while “juggling the demands of people’s time and energy”.

The total number of marriages, and services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage (5.4 per cent of the total) was 26,500 in 2021, down from 31,400 in 2019. In 2020, when an estimated 20,000 weddings were postponed, this figure was 9,200.

Similarly, the total number of people baptised, or for whom a birth or adoption thanksgiving service was held (3.2 per cent of the total), was 55,200 in 2021; 17,100 in 2020; and 89,100 in 2019. Owing to the postponing of baptisms in 2020, the age of children being baptised in 2021 was slightly older than in 2019 (predominantly one to four years, as opposed to infants under one).

Christmas services remained the most popular, but numbers were significantly lower than before the pandemic: middle-sized (median) churches recorded 58 people in 2021 compared with 80 people in 2019. This is compared with churches or cathedrals in 95th percentile for size (226 people in 2021; 567 in 2019). The average-sized church welcomed 65 people at Christmas in 2021, compared with 157 in 2019.

Communicants at Christmas and Easter were only slightly higher in 2021 than 2020, and remained much lower than numbers recorded in 2019.

The effects of the pandemic were “far from over” in 2021, the author of the report, Dr Ken Eames, writes. “It would be very surprising, therefore, if Church of England attendance and participation in 2021 returned to their pre-pandemic levels.

“This report should be treated as a summary of another anomalous year,” he advises, “indicating the extent to which things have ‘bounced back’ but noting that further bouncing back is expected.”

The Archbishop of York said: “2021 was a really challenging year with some Covid restrictions still in place but also many people reluctant to join public gatherings even by the end of the year. It is really heartening to see that in spite of this there was a sharp rise in the number of people attending church services.”

Article from the Church Times 9 December 2022



New Area Bishop of Kingston

The next Area Bishop of Kingston in the diocese of Southwark is to be Canon Martin Gainsborough. He succeeds Dr Richard Cheetham, who retired in October.

Dr Gainsborough is currently chaplain to the Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, and a Residentiary Canon of Bristol Cathedral. He has particular responsibility for social-justice issues and “ensuring common mission” between the cathedral and diocese. He is also the Bishop’s staff environment lead and a member of the General Synod. In 2020, he tabled the amendment which brought forward the Church’s target to become net zero from 2050 to 2030.

Dr Gainsborough, who is 56, grew up in Kidbrooke, in south-east London. He lodged in Richmond while studying at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he completed his MA and M.Sc. in the early ‘90s, and later a Ph.D. in 2001.

He came late to ordination, training at the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme in 2010 (which later merged with Sarum College). He was ordained priest in 2011, and since then has served in Bristol diocese, as a non-stipendiary minister in Barton Hill, where he became Priest-in-Charge from 2013. In 2016, he



became a canon theologian at Bristol Cathedral, then diocesan social-justice and environment adviser, then Bishop's chaplain in 2019.

Dr Gainsborough, on his appointment, said: "My passion is the local church in all its diverse expressions. I can't wait to get out and about on the ground in the Kingston area to connect with the parishes, clergy, and with our communities, and discern with others where God is leading.

"I aspire to a Church which is confident in the transformative power of the gospel, embedded in the communities we serve — vocal and active in the public square. As Bishop of Kingston, I will do all I can to encourage and support this and to make Jesus known in this generation."

Welcoming him, the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, praised his wide-ranging experience. "He will bring his undoubted pastoral gifts, wisdom, and intellectual rigour to his episcopal ministry with imagination, and a spirit of encouragement."

We welcome Dr Gainsborough to the diocese as he joins Bishop Rosemarie and our other bishops in leading this diocese.



Winter Night Shelter

Because of an increase in homelessness in the borough, Renewed Hope has been asked by the Council to run the Night Shelter again this winter (originally this was not the case). Hopefully the Shelter will be up and running by the middle of January and will continue to the end of March every night of the week. At St Mark's we hope to host the Shelter every Friday night but we will need volunteers, either those who have been involved in the past or new volunteers. Please speak either to Nigel Perkins or Fr Martin if you are able to help or to find out more. If you cannot manage Fridays, then you can volunteer at one of the other venues in the borough on a different night. Thank you for any help you can give.



Parental Worries

For those of us who are parents, how much do we worry about our children, and for how long do we go on worrying?

Our worries start before they are born. Are we behaving in a way that might help for the welcome of the new arrival? Have we all we need for him or her? How and where should the birth be planned?

But many more worries come when our child has been born. In the baby's early years the mother, and hopefully the father, mean everything to him or her. Food, drink, clothing, sleep, nappies and of course love, are what we adults need to provide. As parents we then long for the child to smile, laugh, walk and talk, but before that time we have to guess or worry as to what it is they want or need. But as they progress we will start to worry when they grow up, walking and grabbing things where they should not, and not stopping speaking when we want to get a word in edgeways.

If any of our children is sick or hurt in any way our worry grows with the situation that has arisen, and we do all we can to help and at least be physically or mentally alongside them at that time.

As they grow older we worry about the schools they might go to, and how we will get them there and back. What friends and hobbies have they got? Are they happy in that environment and how can we guide them if they appear to have difficulty in making friends or are even being bullied? We are glad if they want to share their worries and joys with us, but sometimes they want to keep their troubles to themselves and perhaps tell us about them some time afterwards.

As they approach adolescence we have other problems. Are they giving enough time to their studies and their sport? Do we think they have chosen good friends and ultimately good partners for their lives thereafter? Have we been helpful to them in choosing jobs, or too helpful in trying to get them into the work we think they should be in? Some of these worries we can have are often better kept to ourselves, however important we might think they are.

I found I worried more about my children when they were living at home, with me knowing all about their movements, than when they had left home. Then they often did not tell me of troubles until after they had been resolved.

We are lucky in having three children and we found that any one of the three was our greatest worry at any one time and we were always able to keep all of them in our prayers.

Our worries don't stop once our children are living elsewhere but those worries are more remote. We then don't know what time they get back and how they then are. The more we can keep in touch with those children who have grown up, the easier it is.

When I was young, although much of my time was away from my parents, I always strove to seek their approbation. My aim then was to do all I could for them to be proud of me.

Of course we don't just worry about our children, but also our grandchildren and great grandchildren, if we are blessed to have them.

All this seems very negative, but this is not so one sided as it may seem. Our children and other members of our family worry about us, too.

Those without children might be glad not to have such worries, although they can be concerned about the children of their close friends and relatives.

So our worrying never ceases but can just be more acute at some times than others.

Having said all this I think we must thank God for our worries, as worrying is a necessary feature of the love we all must have for each other.

Ian Archer



Holocaust Memorial Day

27 January marks Holocaust Memorial Day. It is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

At 4:00pm on 27 January people across the nation will light candles and put them safely in their windows to:

- remember those who were murdered for who they were
- stand against prejudice and hatred today

Iconic buildings and landmarks will light up in purple during this powerful national moment of commemoration and solidarity.



Nazi persecution of Jews began in 1933 with oppressive laws and propaganda, enabling the systematic and planned attempt to annihilate European Jewry. From 1941, the 'Final Solution' was developed. The Nazis and their collaborators murdered six million Jewish people in ghettos, mass shootings, concentration camps and extermination camps. This became known as the Holocaust.

Jews had come to Poland from all over Europe, where they found freedom to worship and trade. By the beginning of the 20th century, there were 3.5 million Jews in Poland, or a little over 10 per cent of the population. In the Polish town of Oswiecim, that figure was 58 per cent. Jews were welcome there.

But when the Nazis moved in, Oswiecim became the Polish town where the Auschwitz death and concentration camps were located. Auschwitz 1 was primarily a concentration camp of around 15,000 prisoners. They worked in the arms factories in harsh conditions, with poor hygiene and nutrition.

Birkenau, or Auschwitz 2, was the main death camp, built in 1941 on the site of the village of Brzezinka, 3km from Oswiecim. In 1944 this area held more than 90,000 prisoners and was the main extermination site, housing the gas chambers and the crematoria.

Auschwitz III developed from one of the sub-camps, Buna, near Auschwitz-Birkenau, and used prisoners as slave labour. It was primarily a labour camp. Auschwitz-Birkenau is now a state museum, receiving millions of visitors a year. German and Polish pupils have to visit a concentration camp as part of their education.

If you are interested in finding out more the website www.hmd.org.uk has lots of resources including real life stories from survivors and a podcast called Learning from Genocide.

CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2023

Sunday 1st January	Naming of Jesus (<i>Green Sunday</i>) 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online
Thursday 5 th January Friday 6th January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church The Epiphany 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 8th January	The Baptism of Christ 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church
Wednesday 11 th January Thursday 12 th January Friday 13 th January	3.25pm T-Time Tales 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 15th January	2nd Sunday of Epiphany 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online 4.00pm Messy Church
Wednesday 18 th January Thursday 19 th January Friday 20 th January	3.25pm T-Time Tales 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 22nd January	3rd Sunday of Epiphany 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church 6.00pm Taizé Prayer
Wednesday 25th Jan	Conversion of St Paul 3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 26 th January Friday 27 th January	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 29th January	Candlemas 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2023

Wednesday 1 st February	3.25pm	T-Time Tales
Thursday 2 nd February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 3 rd February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 5th February	3rd Sunday before Lent (<i>Green Sunday</i>)
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online
	4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall

Wednesday 8 th February	3.25pm	T-Time Tales
Thursday 9 th February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 10 th February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 12th February	2nd Sunday before Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church

Wednesday 15 th February	3.25pm	T-Time Tales
Thursday 16 th February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 17 th February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 18 th February	8.00pm	Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall

Sunday 19th February	Sunday before Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
	4.00pm Messy Church

Wednesday 22nd Feb	Ash Wednesday
	11.00am Holy Communion with Ashing
	8.00pm Sung Eucharist with Ashing
Thursday 23 rd February	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 24 th February	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 26th February	1st Sunday of Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church

Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.



St Mark's Church Centre, Alma Road, RH2 0DA

Fridays 10.00am – 12.00pm

(except 30 December) until the end of March 2023

Tea and
Coffee and a
warm space
to meet
others

**All are
welcome**





History, Hope and Action 2022

COP27 ended in a whisper. Its small achievement was “to establish and operationalize a fund to compensate vulnerable nations for ‘loss and damage’ from climate induced disasters.” This makes clear that the increasing pollution is not accidental but arises from policies by nations to expand fossil fuel production. This idea of the fund (still to be proved), for poor nations who have polluted little and suffered most, is certainly justified. However, it does nothing to address the core problem of fossil fuels. This result is comparable to the conclusion of COP26 where the idea of doing something effective about coal pollution was countered simply by changing the wording; a form of “Green Washing?”

Next year it's Saudi Arabia. Any bets on phasing out oil and gas? Perhaps the fossil lobby chose the location.

We would do well to treat all discussion on green issues with great deal of inspection, if not suspicion. I have previously mentioned the fossil fuel industries' eye is on producing gas from Africa. Recent promotions (sub rosa by the fossil fuel industry) points to hydrogen as a green fuel for transport and making iron. Hydrogen will solve this problem which electricity apparently cannot. That is true. But unfortunately currently most hydrogen is categorised a “grey hydrogen.” This uses fossil fuels to produce it and gives off large amounts of methane, sixty times as polluting as CO₂! Grey hydrogen is no good. “Blue Hydrogen” is better but still prohibitively dirty. That's no good. Finally, there is “Green hydrogen” and that is fine, but is still very expensive and difficult to produce, so it remains uncertain in its future. So you see the fossil fuel lobby is going to great lengths to defend their interests, reassure and divert to allow them to continue in their own way.

The head of the UN said at COP27: “using bogus ‘net zero’ pledges to cover up more fossil fuel expansion is reprehensible.” He concluded “we can and must win this **battle** for our lives.” Who is the **battle** with? Is it climate, which is passive till interfered with, or the producers and users of fossil fuel products? This is not a problem of an uncooperative climate, but a “**battle**,” between those who want to act, and those powerful producers, consumers and mining countries which sustain fossil fuels for their own profit.

There are similarities (as well as differences) between world conditions between the two world wars and what we face today.

There was a slow recovery from World War I, quickly followed by Spanish 'Flu which killed 50-100million people, even more than the human loses in the war. Far more destructive than Covid-19. Then came the Great Recession; worldwide stagnation with some roots in the American stock exchange system. Deep unemployment with only rudimentary social security meant that even in leading civilised countries people were dying of starvation. There was a reluctance by those in power to accept the teaching of Maynard Keynes but fortunately Roosevelt understood and with such projects as the Blue Ridge Parkway used public money to stimulate demand from the unemployed bottom of society. Finally, Hitler seized power in Germany. Prospects were gloomy and no one wanted a repeat of the horrors of WWI, but after a bit we had to respond, not as some kind of deal with evil, but on the basis of what was right. A **battle** we had to win, and not much time to ready for it; and with a divided Westminster.

After WWII, lend lease and other infusions of capital into Europe and Japan brought about peace which eluded us after WWI. Today we widely pass such stimulants through the banks, call it quantitative easing and hope for the best; only to find that much of it ends up with banks and hedge funds, making income distribution even more unequal, instead of growing the underlying economy.

Yes, the similarities of conflict and vested interests were there but today is different in many ways and so it should be. Social provision in many countries is still lacking but far better than between the wars. Recently we had a global economy which in many ways was flourishing. Then came the pandemic which continues to shake many countries and makes for an uncertain future. We have our war, a small one certainly but it also affects the US, most of Europe and further into the world with high fuel costs and food shortages. We now also have widespread stagflation which has resulted in, and is likely to result in, further inflation and also a return to nationalism. The broad parallel between our country's position before and after WWII and now is striking. Then the world was fragile, but with determination we came through it.

The history of nineteenth-century Britain is similarly a fusion of progress, vested interests and human values. On production, progress was centred on the new factory system, vested interests in agriculture and the slow protection of inhuman values in most spheres supported by a lively Christianity. It took hard won legislation in the form of the factory acts to stop the practice of using women crawling on all fours dragging coal trucks and four-year-old children spending their days in the dark to open and close fire doors to allow the coal trucks through.

On the political front similarly, the 1832 Great Reform Act was only the beginning in the extension of the franchise to men without property (can you believe it) and create democracy only completed by votes for women and a reluctant recognition of their equality in political and other matters. None of this, often in the face of an unsympathetic government, was achieve without sustained effort by individuals and movements often supported by an underlying lively and practical commitment to Christianity.

What does all this tell us about climate change? Well, the problem has been formally recognised by scientists for about fifty years and nations for at least 27 years, though there have been strong elements whose interest lay in denial. But as we have heard, the COPs have only achieved promises from nations which they never intended to keep. Pollution is still rising existentially by a fossil fuel industry which seems to be in the ascendancy. As with the vested interests of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so today to benefit from the status quo of fossil fuels, both companies and countries continue to produce and use them, even though they know it will lead to massive change in climate with horrendous consequences. Instead of this, as with facing Hitler, we need to avoid temporising and once more chose what is right and engage in the **battle** and work our way to a better future as our forebears did in the nineteenth century, only much, much quicker.

Bill Gates, who puts his money where his mouth is, believes that it is quite possible to counter climate change using traditional methods led by business, though he has caveats about needing pressure from populations on governments. Mark Carney, currently an advisor to the government on Green issues, believes that by directing finance only to areas supportive of Green action can affect the necessary change and put this into some effect with agreements by other Central Banks. But the banks, including our own, continued to finance fossil fuels. Certainly such actions would greatly help if effective but only as an adjunct to more radical change.

Some think that world government is so inept in Climate matters that we should have as decision makers, some world government by climate scientists and those skilled in climate issues. That sounds sensible and might be begun by empowering the United Nations. Instead of requiring unanimous decisions at COP a majority would help and might work by isolating those who do not co-operate and make it difficult for countries to accept something and then not respond. At present there is a slow realisation that climate problems can only be solved by a cooperative approach from nations. But there would have to be enforceable action by the UN and ideally a method of inspection, as has been done with nuclear weapons. Then gathering scientists and others skilled in Climate Change matters under the auspices of the UN should be no problem. But the enforcement of decisions would still be very difficult. That is a huge step.

However, the reality is that for most, if not all, countries, sovereignty is far, far more important than the welfare of their populations. This has been illustrated in recent times by the wide shift to right extremism. Going it alone is more important than trading success. It will be evidenced by some African Governments agreeing to the exploitation of gas reserves there. Indeed one might even say that populations themselves would put sovereignty above long term self-interest especially if short term change disadvantaged them as individuals. So, without some upswell of opinion within populations, the idea of empowering, say, the United Nations to act for us all simply will not happen. We are stuck with our antecedents which remain nation states.

History tells us that problems in society cannot be changed without considerable effort and even friction, but that if that effort comes, and is backed up by the populations, then change can be achieved and, as with the Industrial Revolution, with side benefits as well.

There is, of course, also the current argument that since other countries are not changing fast enough it is only a futile gesture for the UK to drive for change. That sounds not unreasonable. But the reality is that change never happens if someone does not act first and furthermore acting first gives an entry into those essential replacement, green industries which change requires. It is an opportunity to grow the economy in a new direction which, as with the Industrial Revolution, others will not only envy, but be forced to follow.

So, today the drive for change has to be led by the governments of individual countries where it must take first priority. And then change has to be directed by dealing with those which release most greenhouse gasses: China, USA, Europe, India and Russia, and a similar list of those who make the demands for fossil fuels and their products. Such producing countries as Australia, the Middle East, Brazil and so on must also stop mining coal, oil and gas. This time the enemy is not a rogue country but our fellow human beings, and perhaps ourselves.

We have used our long period of fifty years for adaptation poorly compared with our forefathers. We have not done enough even to stop the increased use of fossil fuels. They were slow overcoming contrary interests in modernising. Today change has been so very slow, not through lack of knowledge but by intent. So now we need to see this more like the crisis with Hitler: it's a **battlefield**.

It has been known for decades that nuclear fusion can produce clean power in volume and scientists have been working quietly away to try to understand how to produce it commercially. Recently there has been an advance where two hydrogen atoms were fused (instead of being split) and power was produced. But its practical use is still decades away say the scientists. Is this the heaven-sent solution? Can we just sit back and wait for salvation? After all, if it is sufficiently cheap it will drive fossil fuels off the market. Not quite. Further scientific advance is uncertain and likely to take much time which we do not have, and it may not solve the problem of for power for movement; cars, ships and aeroplanes.

So, there is no time for further obfuscation. We have to change to, as it were, a wartime footing. Just as those in Ukraine had suddenly to realise that Putin meant war, so we must know that further delay in taking on the prime polluters means defeat. Instead of allowing vested interest to lead governments towards inertia, we have to make good use of our scientists and others who have understanding and have vision. As the UN leader said, it's a battle. Who will lead on a basis of truth and urgency to make change happen now?

Harry Ingram



Science and Miracles

We live in a world where we can expect the sun to rise tomorrow and the milk to pour out of the bottle when we tilt it over our cereal. But for God, the properties of matter and the biological processes that we know and read about in textbooks are simply the usual ways He works. If He chooses to do something unexpected to demonstrate something about His character, His relationship with us, and His purposes, then He will.

A group of 14 UK-based science professors wrote to *The Times* in 1984, saying that, "We gladly accept the Virgin Birth, the gospel miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ as historical events. We know that we are representative of many other scientists who are also Christians standing in the historical tradition of the churches." For the non-believer, I would suggest a thought experiment: if God exists, why should He be bound by the same laws of physics as us?

Professor Christine Done is an Astrophysicist at the University of Durham. In the book *True Scientists, True Faith* (Monarch, 2014) she writes: "Even when I was an atheist I used to get cross at discussions...on how all Jesus's miracles could be physically explained. To me, once you have believed in a God, a supernatural being, then it's obvious that supernatural stuff could happen, since any God who can make the physical universe and its laws can presumably suspend those laws in any time and way He chooses."

There are also miracles which appear to be a case of wonderful timing. The wind blew all night, and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, for example. The biblical writers don't seem especially interested in distinguishing between wonders that seem to break the usual rules of how things happen and those that don't.

Many in Jesus' audiences were not won over by His wonders. Most of the people in the crowds who ate the food He produced out of nowhere were quite happy to turn on Him when the religious authorities decided He was dangerous. We can only make sense of something unexpected, such as an answer to prayer for healing, in the context of a growing relationship with God.

The exciting task for a Christian is to explain what this interaction looks like, and to demonstrate what 'your kingdom come' looks like in our communities. God works through us in words, works *and* wonders.



Book Review

This month we review: Small things like these



Set in an Irish town in 1985, this short book covers the everyday life of a man named Bill Furlong in the run up to Christmas.

The book gives a clear detailed description of life at this time and the difficulties facing many. The book's main character is a self-made man with a happy practising Catholic family of four girls and his wife Eileen.

Throughout the book, the main character reverts back to his own experience of being bought up by his mother only and not knowing who his father was. This experience is what leads him to take an interest in the goings on at the local convent where many young women are living. His brief encounters cause him to question the conditions which the women are living in.

He faces a moral dilemma whether to look the other way, as many of the folk in his town or to stand up to the institution which roots run deep.

This book gives an insight to the shocking occurrences in Ireland and the horrendous treatment of young women at the hands of the Catholic Church within our lifetime.

As a woman conceived out of wedlock in 1983, I find it painful to think of the closed mindedness and cruelty inflicted in the name of God.

However, the book could have gone deeper into the topic, the main action within the book happens only in the last chapter and left me wanting to know the outcome of Furlong's decisions and actions.

I had no expectations when reading this book which is award winning. The quality of the writing is high but it just left me feeling, is that it?

Have you recently read a good book? Tell us about it. Email magazinstnarkreigate@gmail.com with your book review.



Reader recipes

With Christmas over but the leftovers still lingering, here is a slow cooked Turkey curry recipe to help you waste not, want not.

Slow cooked turkey curry

Ingredients:-

- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed or finely grated
- thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 350g sweet potatoes peeled and roughly chopped (you can also use carrots, parsnips or other root veg)
- 700g turkey, cut into large pieces (or use the same amount of leftover roasted turkey)
- 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp curry paste (we used balti)
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 400g can coconut milk
- small bunch of coriander, leaves picked and stalks reserved, both finely chopped
- 120g spinach (optional)
- cooked rice, to serve



Method:-

1. Tip the onion, garlic, ginger, red pepper, sweet potatoes, turkey and chickpeas into a slow cooker. Stir in the curry paste and tomato purée, ensuring everything is well-coated. Pour in the chopped tomatoes and coconut milk, and scatter in the chopped coriander stalks, 1 tsp salt and some ground black pepper. Mix everything to combine. Cook on high for 3 hrs 30 mins, or low for 8 hrs. If you want to add spinach, tip it in 15 mins before the end of the cooking time. Stir well after 5 mins, once it has started to wilt.
2. Serve the turkey curry with rice, scattered with the chopped coriander leaves, if you like.

Recipe taken from Good Food magazine. If you have a recipe you'd like to share email us at magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.



Make your New Year's resolution to sing. Come and join us as Brockham Choral starts this New Year preparing the *Mass in D* composed by Ethel Smyth. This was performed at the Proms last year to great acclaim. No audition is required and the choir would welcome you warmly. Many fun activities are organised for this year including a 4-day tour to Northern France.

Our knowledgeable Music Director, Cole Bendall, along with our wonderful accompanist, Marion Lee, make every rehearsal an unfolding musical journey.

Rehearsals begin on 9 January at 7.30 pm, in St, John's school, Dorking RH4 2LR

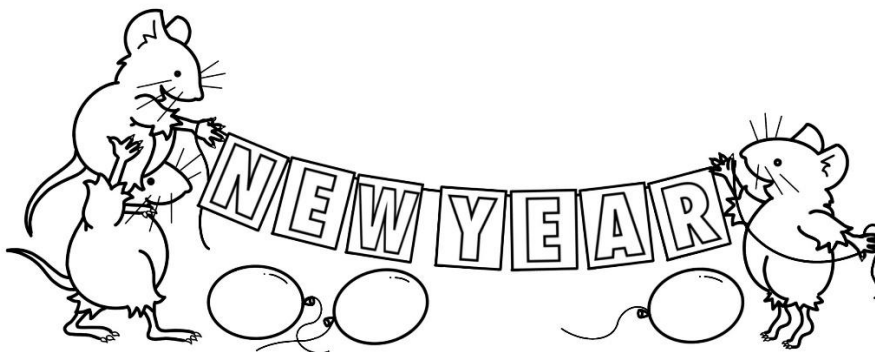
For more information visit www.brockhamchoral.org



A Prayer for Wisdom to redeem the time

O Lord God of time and eternity, who makes us creatures of time, that when time is over, we may attain Your blessed eternity. With time, Your gift, give us also wisdom to redeem the time, so our day of grace is not lost, for our Lord Jesus' sake.

By Christina Rossetti





Empowering women in Pakistan with the Word of God

The Bible Society is helping women in Pakistan learn to read by holding regular Bible-based literacy classes in the Khyber region.

"Before the Bible Society came, there was not a single school for girls in this region. Education for girls was considered immoral," says Beena, a former hospital cleaner and mother of eight children. "Now we have started a Bible study group in the family and every day we read two or three chapters. We started with the New Testament."

The literacy rate in Pakistan is 58 per cent, but among Christian women it is estimated to be just 34 per cent. Bible Society hopes to educate 3,500 women in the region by teaching them to read the Bible. If you can help, please visit:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/donate/>

Puzzles

January Sudoku Puzzle

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 Solution

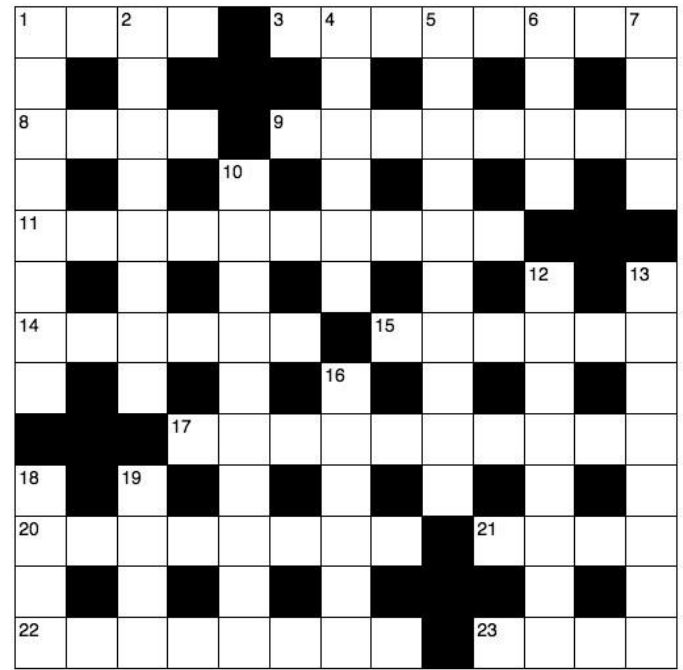
3	7	9	6	5	4	2	1	8
8	4	6	3	1	2	7	9	5
1	2	5	7	9	8	4	3	6
7	6	1	4	2	9	8	5	3
4	8	2	5	6	3	9	7	1
9	5	3	1	8	7	6	2	4
5	1	4	9	7	6	3	8	2
2	3	7	8	4	5	1	6	9
6	9	8	2	3	1	5	4	7

January Crossword

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 Answers

ACROSS: 1 Hide 3 Disgrace 9 Sonship 10 Oaths 11 Tutti 12 Ignore 14 Foreknowledge 17 Ashram
19 Men or 22 Aroma 23 Nineveh 24 Amethyst 25 Trod

DOWN: 1 His staff 2 Do not 4 Imprisonments 5 Groan 6 Altered 7 Easy 8 Shrink 13 Searched
15 Restore 16 Lament 18 Reach 20 Never 21 Jada



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