



From the Rector's study November and December are busy months in the church's calendar, but then having just worked our way through September and October, when isn't it busy?! From a new term of Tuesday club, Toasty Tuesdays, Cafe Play on Wednesdays, Pizzas at 8 on Fridays, Messy Church and assemblies in school, to Harvest - it is a busy time and place. People will invariably comment that 'it must be the busy season' in December - but like a puppy, church isn't just for Christmas! Busy-ness is not our business, however. **Being the church is our business and that is not a business!**

We are called to be the people of God: we are human beings, not human doings. That is not to say we are called to be inert, as, at our heart, is the breath of God. This animus (Latin) or psyche (Greek) is the energy which gives us a direction, a destiny, a yearning for our Creator and it is this which directs our hearts and minds towards God.

Our Worship, our work with our community, our school, all speak of who we are and what we do expresses this. In other words, Lex orandi, lex credendi - what we say reflects what we believe. How we treat one another, the extent of our gentleness, our humility and service are a reflection of how we relate to Almighty God. These are less 'do' things and more 'be' things - and to paraphrase one Religious when



asked if he was a Christian, responded, *'You'd better ask my neighbour'*. What a wonderful test of our faith - could others catch it by how we speak to others, how we show they are valued, how much we get stuck in, volunteer and get involved, and to what extent we are willing to play the role of John Baptist - to prepare the way, not be the star of the show which is always the Blessed Son of Mary. All things point to Him. Through good times and in bad, because all things come from Him and, as the liturgy reminds us, 'and of our own do we give him'. And that is the focus of Advent - what we bring to him. It is the season in which we truly exhibit and inhabit the question from that most beautiful Carol, 'what can I give him, poor as I am?'

Following the work of a group of PCC members, past and present, who have made some suggestions, we are now to work out how to live out these callings; how we become what God calls us to be and how we pay for it. And so, this Advent, we will be praying, asking and working on how we might answer the question, ***'what can I bring Him, poor as I am?'***

I am so grateful to David Greenwood for taking on this work of envisioning and expressing how we might look to our stewardship. I have asked others, to whom we are indebted, to write in this magazine about our inheritance, our duty and our responsibilities to ensure the future. This stewardship is not about squirrelling away, not about counting the money, not even counting the cost, but, rather, knowing the value of what we are offered and the precious investments we must make for our children and children's children.

The DGT or Dorothy Grover Trust has meant that St Nicolas is here. Without it, we could not make our way, in a real sense, because we rely upon it to keep the lights on. This is not what it is for. As I expressed in the 2022 APCM report, there is a **£22,000 shortfall each year** in what we pay to ensure we have a Rector and the church remains alive and well. We can meet this shortfall if we either choose not to invest in our activities, or cut from our diet the things which, frankly, define us. OR, we can do two very obviously different things: first, to ask those who already give to ensure that they do so using the Planned Giving Scheme (PGS) and to



Image M.Hassan, Pixabay

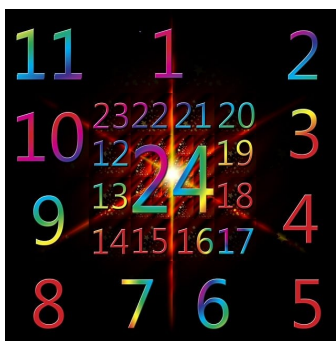
see how this compares to the other things we buy each month. If we are to continue as we are, this needs to be increased by some 25%. What would a quarter more of what you currently give, cost you. Is this what you can bring? Secondly, we can invite those who are not yet giving, to do so. Using the envelopes is not efficient, and it is inconsistent and this makes planning the budget very hard indeed. If we join the National Trust or similar, we expect to pay; if we join a wine club, we pay our subs. If we want the church to be open we need to pay our bills and we are now at the point where something must give - and that something is us. We must simply give. The historic reserves are now dwindling and we have been blessed with generous gifts to pay for the Organ but we must simply now balance the budget. This is not only a practical householder reality, it is a theological imperative. You are part of the Body of Christ and we are called to share things in common as the New Testament reminds us. *So, what can I give him, poor as I am?* Money, time, talents. What can you now do to BE the church here. If we want it to be here, we simply now must ask, how much?

What can I bring him? Please do speak with Phil our Deputy Warden and Planned Giving Officer and bring him your increased pledge.

What can I bring him? Please do speak with Fr Neil to sign up to the PGS (Planned Giving Scheme);

What can I bring him, poor as I am? Bring yourself - your time and talents.

What can I bring him? Bring him your heart. **Fr Neil**



Advent is my favourite season. Its themes of preparation, renewal, hope and reflection have always excited me.

I used to wonder why this season, counter-intuitively at the end of the terrestrial year, is considered the beginning of the Church's year: but then I realised that its message of renewal, casting away the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light, presents us with a fresh start, an opportunity to review and amend our lives in the hope of a better future, a New Year.

It falls at the darkest time, when the world is at its least active, when nature has withdrawn into itself and when hope seems in short supply. Coming as it does at the end of the year, when things are winding down, all passion is spent, when it is all too easy to give way to feelings of regret for what might have been and to despair at things around us and at our failure, it is precisely at this time, when the world seems tired and old, that God shows us that, whatever the past may have done to us, it doesn't matter, because the future is bright.

On Advent Sunday, we wake up to the first day of the rest of our lives and we embrace hope and choose life. And in the words of the Collect, repeated throughout the season, we do it NOW in the time of this mortal life, preparing for the birth of Jesus "in great humility" and for His second coming, reflecting on our lives and renewing ourselves. The words - "If not you, who? If not now, when?" - attributable to the Jewish scholar, Hillel, is very applicable to Advent.

Advent was once considered a time for putting one's affairs in order, to examine one's behaviour. People used to check their financial affairs and dust off their wills: because, as Paul reminds us: "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." In other words, it is later than we think. This tradition may be as valid now as it has ever been. At this time, we can sort ourselves out and ready ourselves for the future.

St.Nicolas' future can be bright. As someone who has worshipped here for twenty-three years, I have never known such energy and hope. Much thought, prayer and effort has been devoted during the year to the formulation of our Vision for Mission. On Dedication Sunday, we are invited to think about this and come up with our own suggestions and priorities. This is exciting.

But we are at a crossroads. A group has been tasked with considering matters of Stewardship and its

findings are clear. It is definitely later than we think. Our financial situation remains unsound, our income does not cover our day to day expenditure and we rely on the generosity of previous generations to bail us out. Our regular giving is considerably lower than the average across the diocese. This is unsustainable over time and hampers attempts to grow ourselves, to follow our Vision for Mission. Being a church costs and there is no better time than Advent to embrace the reality of this. On Advent Sunday, each of us will be asked to consider our affairs, how each one of us through more generous giving can underwrite our existence as a church with a glorious future and not just an illustrious past.

At Advent, we wake from sleep, put our house in order and embrace the future, fixing the roof, choosing life. If not us, who? If not now, when? **David Greenwood**



Hello, my name is Luke Price. I am 19 years old, and a potential ordinand in the diocese of Guildford. After becoming a Christian at 14 years old, I have been immensely privileged to feel God's call to ordained ministry and serve the church in many ways over the last five years.

My own church is St. Thomas-on-the-Bourne in Farnham, where I have just finished a year's internship and now serve as deputy churchwarden. The last two months were spent away from the home parish on placements to gain a greater understanding of the breadth of the Church of England and some experience for the approaching discernment process.

Monday through Friday, I work as a teaching assistant at a CofE junior school in Tilford. Now in the discernment process in the Church of England, I am exploring options for theological college. In the coming weeks I will have an interview at Mirfield's College of the Resurrection as a possible seminarian for the academic year of 2025.

I have been at St. Nicolas' since the beginning of October and have thoroughly enjoyed it so far. It has been a great privilege to be welcomed into your deeply generous church community. Although officially my placement ends at the end of October, it has been agreed that I will remain with you for one Sunday a month during the coming year.

While here, please do speak with me; I would love to get to know you. I hope to meet as many of you as possible across my time here. It has been a great joy to be involved within your Anglo-Catholic worship setting through service and to get to know you at events in the week.

I look forward to spending more time with you. Please do pray for me as I progress through the discernment process while getting to know you all better. **Blessings, Luke**

More from the Rector...

2026 is a significant year..... 2026 is a significant year in the life of the church. We are looking to mark this anniversary with a parish pilgrimage, a lecture series, some art and music. Keep your eyes peeled!

Following the ordination of Fr Alistair to the sacred priesthood, we are now privileged to be able to offer the Mass on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays as well as our Sunday celebrations. God is Good!

- **Mondays' offering is at 12 noon** following the Angelus (Common Worship)
- **Wednesdays' celebration is offered at 5.45pm** (Book of Common Prayer) after **Evening Prayer at 5.15pm on Wednesdays.**
- **Fridays' offering is as ever at 11am** preceded by coffee and with the lure of a lunch on the final Friday of the month.

Do keep an eye on the back page of Pews News for what's on this week as these times may be subject to change as and when the Church is in use or Fr Alistair is away.

We will be endeavouring to **live-stream** these Weekday Mass services on **Facebook** for those who can't make it in person.

There will be a **Pet service** on **Sunday 26th January** and you are all encouraged to bring your pets to be blessed. It will be a joint service with GURC at St Nicolas'.



Our **Patronal Festival** is on **Sunday 8th December**. On this important day we shall focus upon dedicating our two Ukrainian icons, formally Induct Donald as our new Head Server and enjoy a glass of fizz after Mass. **Fr Neil**

Details from the Curate... I have been working on our website. Along with most aspects of curacy, it's been a steep learning curve but I am happy with the recent progress on the site. At time of writing, much of the layout and style has been freshened up and I am now working on some of the technical issues that have arisen from this, as well as updating the content. **Fr Alistair**



Advent Book Review

Seven Bells to Bethlehem: The O Antiphons by Oliver Treanor

Like many Christians, over the years I have read an Advent devotional book to guide my thinking, praying, and preparation for the celebration of Christmas. Oliver Treanor's book is different somewhat, in that its focus is on the 'O Antiphons'. They are the ancient prayers that frame the Magnificat at Vespers on the 17th to the 23rd of December, the week that leads up to Christmas. The O Antiphons are the source of the lyrics for the Advent carol 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' so should sound familiar. They originate from the sixth century, drawing from Old Testament and Apocrypha texts.

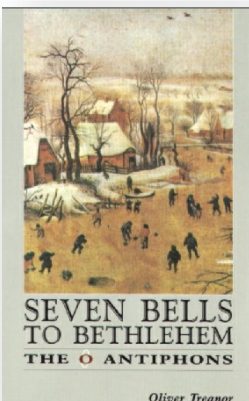
They are some of the most beautiful prayers ever composed and come at the point in Advent when it's time to move on from considering the Four Last things: Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell. Looking back at ourselves in the light of those things is necessary so that we can look forward to the reality of Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, breaking into human history. From December 17th, Advent takes a turn to face the future, echoed by these beautiful words before and after the Magnificat, Our Lady's song of joy:

'O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence'.

And come to a crescendo on the evening of the 23rd:

'O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God'.

The author invites us to explore the rich biblical background to each Antiphon, drawing on our spiritual heritage through Scripture, the Church Fathers, and our Catholic Tradition. I found the author's deep yet well-grounded thoughts very refreshing and I'll be reading it again this Advent. I heartily recommend the book, but not trying to cram it into the final seven days of Advent: there is much spiritual food in it for the entire season and beyond. It encouraged me to look beyond myself as well: with the world being torn apart by war and suffering, I believe that spending Advent contemplating the yearning prayers of the O Antiphons can teach us to pray with a fresh sense of hope until He comes again.



Not a dry book, for Oliver writes in engaging prose. To give you a flavour, he draws the book to a close:

'The beauty of Advent is in the synthesis of these different ways of praying the Mystery: The Eucharist, the Scriptures, the O Antiphons..... through the four Sundays, and especially through the seven days before the Nativity, one is caught up in the wonder of the gyrations of love. God and His Church dancing together in spirit, pirouetting in perfect synchrony down through the centuries and across the universe... and come together in the Church's prayer as an expectant Church, celebrating what has been revealed to it and through it, and confident therefore of what is yet to come'.

Amen! Come Lord Jesus! **Craig Nobbs** (ISBN 0 85244 329 3 Publ. Gracewing, 1995)

The Good Grief Club

Helen Trussler



We meet at The Cosy Club at Tunsgate on the last Wednesday of every month from 2pm. Please speak to **Helen Trussler** or **Jean Taylor** for more details.

The Longest Yarn

is being exhibited at the **Royal Garrison Church of All Saints, Aldershot** between **1-18 November**

It is an 80 metre 3D depiction of D-Day, **6 June 1944**, in wool art. With 80 displays, each measuring 1 metre in length, The Longest Yarn depicts scenes of the world's largest amphibious invasion by Allied Forces. The scenes include: the build up to D-Day in England, the horrors on the landing beaches and the bloody inland battles.

This display is the only occasion in the South of England, apart from London and is something quite unique and not to be missed.

Pebbles on a Beach

Pebbles on a beach
glistening in the sun,
waves are washing over them,
one by one.

The sun is looking down,
from high up in the sky,
it's strong rays of heat are drying them,
until the next waves come.

The beach is strewn with debris,
bits of this and that –
lost bayonet, mess tins, seaweed,
and even a tin hat.

The Officers give the order,
for the troops to attack,
the enemy positions have been spotted –
let's take the territory back!

The sand is becoming soggy,
as the troops try to move across,
it leaves behind many imprints,
which quickly disappear, without fuss.

The sun - its reigning beams,
are burning hot and strong.
These tired and aching bodies
have been toiling all the day long.

The beach, it now lies empty –
the troops, they have all gone.
The air, now hauntingly silent;
the battle has been won.

The pebbles, they can be seen –
amidst the squelching sand,
peace has now been restored
to this indomitable land.

Eighty years have passed,
since that historic day.
We raise a glass and celebrate –
the enemy was slain.

The heroes, there were many –
these men, they were the best.
We respect and honour their sacrifice,
as their souls are laid to rest.

Debbie Nobbs - Aldershot Garrison Churches Administrator



The exhibition includes a poem by our own **Debbie Nobbs**, who works as the Aldershot Garrison Churches Administrator.

The Longest Yarn

ON TOUR

COME AND SEE

THE LONGEST YARN

IN THE ONLY LOCATION

IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND.

A THREAD THROUGH HISTORY AT REMEMBRANCE

IN THE HOME OF THE BRITISH ARMY

1-18 November 24, Royal Garrison Church, Aldershot

Opening Hours: 0900 - 1600hrs **Monday - Friday**
0900 - 1700hrs **Saturday - Sunday**

Closed all day 6th November.
Closed morning of Remembrance service 10th November, Re-opens 1230hrs.

All Welcome at the Aldershot Garrison Remembrance Service which commences at 1000hrs.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

D-DAY
80th ANNIVERSARY

Tasking @what3words in parks.second.ramp

Su 3	All Saints	8:30 Mass 10:00 Mass 15:00 All Souls Commemoration for the Faithful departed
Mon 4		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel 17:45 Evening Mass, St George's Chapel
Tu 5		08:00 Mass
We 6		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire 12:00 Mass, St George's Chapel 17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 7		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 8		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 10	Remembrance	8:30 Mass 10:00 Mass & Act of Remembrance
Tu 12		08:00 Mass
We 13		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire 17:15 Evening Prayer, St George's Chapel
Th 14		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 19:30 Walsingham Cell Mass, St George's Chapel
Fr 15		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 17	Trinity XXV	8:30 Mass 10:00 Mass with the Ministry of Healing 11:15 Choral Mattins
Tue 19		08:00 Mass
We 13		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire 17:15 Evening Prayer, St George's Chapel
Th 14		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 20:00 Walsingham Cell Mass, St George's Chapel
Fr 15		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 24	Christ the King	8:30 Mass 10:00 School-led Mass
Tue 26		08:00 Mass
We 27		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire 17:15 Evening Prayer, St George's Chapel
Th 28		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 19:30 Walsingham Cell Mass, St George's Chapel
Fr 29		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 11:00 Memorial Mass for Fred Hutley



Su 1	Advent	8:30 Mass
		10:00 Mass
		17:00 Advent Carols
Mo 2		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		17:45 Evening Mass, St George's Chapel
Tu 3		8:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
We 4		12:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 5		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 6		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
		20:00 Fizz & Friends Ladies group
Sa 7		16:00 Messy Church at the URC
Su 8	Advent II & Patronal Festival	8:30 Mass
		10:00 Patronal Mass & Baptism
Mo 9		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		17:45 Evening Mass, St George's Chapel
Tu 10		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire
We 11		12:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 12		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 13		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 15	Advent III	8:30 Mass
		10:00 Mass with Ministry of Healing
Mo 16		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		17:45 Evening Mass, St George's Chapel
Tu 17		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Quire
We 18		12:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 19		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 20		10:00 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		11:00 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 22	Advent IV	8:30 Mass
		11:00 Christmas Carols & Procession
Mon 23		17:15 Evening Prayer, The Lady Chapel
		17:45 Evening Mass, St George's Chapel
Tu 24	Christmas Eve	15:00 Christingle, 17:00 Christingle
		21:30 Midnight Mass
We 25	Christmas Day	10:00 Mass
Sun 29		8:30 Mass
		10:00 Sung Mass



The last couple of months has seen the return of regular activities after the summer break and we have been delighted to welcome new families to all of these. Messy Church has been doing particularly well, with over 100 guests at the last 2 events. The **Messy Light Party** on 2nd November at St Nics was great fun as we enjoyed sparklers, face painting, light related crafts, toasted marshmallows, hot dogs and brownies. A massive thank you to the Messy Church team who do an amazing job helping to make it all work.



In October we had a lovely first **Fizz and Friends** evening for ladies. We made jewellery and painted leaf-print dishes and had plenty of prosecco and nibbles to accompany the evening! Fizz and Friends is for women in the church of all ages over 18. It's a chance to relax and enjoy each other's company, welcome new women into our church and build on our already amazing community. **The next Fizz and Friends is on Friday 6th December** (see flyer).

On Sunday 24th November we have our next **School Sunday**. This is an opportunity for the children in the church and school to take over running the service! If your child would like a role during the service, please contact Cath (parishoffice@saintnics.com) to let us know. For full information, see flyer.

It's rather scary to think we are now in the run up to Christmas! We have lots of exciting Christmas events for families coming up;

7th December, Messy Christmas Party at GURC

14th December St Nicolas Infant School Fair at St Nics church

17th December Toastie Tuesday Christmas Party at St Nics

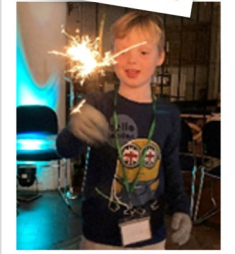
22nd December 'The Road to Christmas' nativity, starting at GURC and finishing at St Nics

24th December Christingle – at 3pm and 5pm *Please book via our website or email the parish office*

For details of these events, please take a look at our flyers. I would like to highlight **The Road to Christmas** as something new. The event will follow the Nativity story, starting at Guildford URC, with actors and a real donkey. We will sing carols as we follow the story and head down the hill, ending in St Nicolas Church for mulled wine and mince pies. We are very excited about this event and would love to include as many people as possible, so if you'd like to be involved please speak to myself, Cath or Fr Neil. We are looking for actors, (we have a Mary!) readers and a choir!

To find out more about our children and families' activities, please get in touch by email: missionenabler@saintnics.com I'd love to hear from you.

Nicky Geraghty, Mission Enabler.




THE ROAD TO CHRISTMAS
Sunday
22nd December

Follow Mary, Joseph and the donkey as they travel to Bethlehem with carols along the way.

Our journey will start in Guildford URC at 4pm and end with mulled wine and mince pies at St Nicolas Church.

No booking required.
This event is free of charge, donations welcome.

www.guildfordurc.org.uk
www.saintnics.com

St Nicolas' Infant School

"Living life in all its fullness" John 10:10



The school now has a permanent Headteacher, Christina Witkowski, who writes;

The first full half-term has whizzed by in a flash! Our newest pupils have settled in wonderfully well and year 1 and 2 have adapted beautifully into their new classrooms. 8 weeks is a long time in the world of an infant but the energy and positivity the children bring in each day has been fantastic.

This term we have really focused on embedding our phonics reading scheme and created a love of reading focus through our reading raffle. The children have worked on handwriting, spelling and punctuation more and teachers have introduced lots of opportunities to practice oracy in lessons. From creating talk story models to vocabulary lists with picture prompts.

School events coming up at St Nicolas church

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Sat 14th Dec | Christmas Fair at St Nics' Church 11:00 to 14:00 |
| Thu 19th Dec | Christmas Jumper day and I lunch |
| Fri 20th Dec | Christmas Service and Nativity at St Nic's Church 09:45
14:00 Children break up for Christmas |




Junior Church
Sundays
10am
Children's provision alongside the service
at Saint Nics




Messy Church
Christmas Party
at Guildford United Reformed Church,
83 Portsmouth Road, GU2 4BS
All are welcome to join us for faith-based fun, Christmas games, crafts, stories, singing, face painting and more.
Followed by a meal for everyone.
*Children must be accompanied by a parent/carer for the duration of this event
Saturday 7th December 4-6pm
Guildford United Reformed Church in partnership with **St Nicolas Guildford**
For more information contact Nicky on families.worker@guildfordurc.org.uk
www.guildfordurc.org.uk | www.saintnics.com



FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER 8-10PM
FIZZ & Friends
AT ST NICOLAS CHURCH, BURY STREET, GU2 4AW
LADIES GROUP
A CHANCE TO RELAX AMONGST FRIENDS
ENJOY SOME FESTIVE CRAFT ACTIVITIES,
SOAK UP THE ATMOSPHERE IN OUR BEAUTIFUL CHURCH AND, OF COURSE, ENJOY SOME FIZZ!
(NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS ALSO AVAILABLE!)

It would be helpful to know if you are coming, so please drop Nicky an email to let her know so we don't run out of fizz!

St Nicolas Guildford
MISSIONENABLER@SAINTNICS.COM
WWW.SAINTNICS.COM

Hugh Dawes

**15th November 1948
- 7th February 2024**



Recently, we interred Hugh's ashes in the remembrance garden of St Faith's Church, North Dulwich, where he was vicar for 10 years, and where Hugh and I met and were married. Hugh and I joined the congregation of St Nicolas in Lent 2023 and received warm welcome and care. His funeral was beautifully conducted here by Fr Neil, and St Nic's has continued to be my home since Hugh's death in February. You, the congregation will only have known him with very advanced dementia, when he had almost no awareness of time, space or people. But he always seemed to know that he was in church, and the liturgy was so deeply embedded that he could join in; the Eucharist was without doubt his grounding and point of connection. One of you once said to me that his priesthood shone through his eyes. Here is a little about his life.

Hugh was ordained priest in 1975, having read History at University College, Oxford. Following his curacy, he was appointed Chaplain of Gonville and Caius, and then Emmanuel College, Cambridge, when Don Cupitt was Dean, and during his filming of the Sea of Faith TV series. Don became a major influence and a lifetime friend.

In 1987 Hugh was appointed Incumbent of St James's, Cambridge and Director of the Focus Christian Institute. Expanding the work of Focus, he believed strongly in giving opportunities for a wider theological education among the laity. He abhorred the tendency of clergy to talk down to their congregations.

In 1992 Hugh published *Freeing the Faith: A Credible Christianity for Today*; 'An essay in liberal understanding, advocating change to set faith free from tyrannical tradition and be relevant to today's world'. He was savagely attacked in the Press by traditionalists, who called on him publicly to resign his orders. Hugh braved the storm and proclaimed himself a catholic modernist priest in the C of E with no intention of resigning. He was a prophetic voice, often crying in the wilderness.

Hugh and I met in 2000 when he arrived as my Vicar at St Faith's, and after early denial and resistance on both our parts, we were married in 2004. Together, we worked with others in setting up youth groups, parish weekends at home, community festivals, and decluttering and reordering the church for rich eucharistic worship. Always open about his own faith and beliefs, Hugh gave permission to express doubts and ask questions; he read scripture in a way which encompassed context and found truth in stories whether or not they actually happened that way.

His priesthood enabled and built church which nurtured one another and faced outwards to the community. He was a pastor, meeting people where they were, listening and learning. He never gave people easy answers, instead allowing them to discover faith for themselves. He encouraged children and young people to talk theology and take their full part in the worshipping community.

The Eucharist was fundamental to Hugh's worship; he had a gift for adapting words, actions and movement in liturgy to make worship contextual, inspiring and integral to the world outside the church door.

Hugh was co-opted onto the committee for The Center for Progressive Christianity in the US following the publication of *Freeing the Faith*, and spoke regularly at conferences across the States. TCPC inspired him to set up a similar ecumenical organisation in the UK, Progressive Christianity Network Britain. An explosion of local discussion groups demonstrated the quest for honest theological talk between laity and clergy without being judged as heretical.

After retirement, Hugh continued his liturgical ministry, preaching and presiding at St Nicholas, Compton. A former rector commented that he taught her so much about the possible breadths of theology that Christians can embrace; another friend said Hugh had enriched her life with his wicked sense of humour, his deep love of liturgy and fearless criticism of all that was crass and banal in the current C of E.

My two younger children were teenagers when Hugh and I married, which posed a challenge not just for Hugh, but also for them. We muddled through the ups and downs of finding a new way of being family,

sometimes getting it wrong. He was generous and loving to my three sons, welcomed their partners and rejoiced in the arrival of three grandsons. I remember the tears in Hugh's eyes when he held the first, in wonderment of this creation who didn't even understand that his hands were part of him. He would sing and read to them endlessly; he listened to them learning to read, with the patience he also showed to the children he heard read at their school. Then two years before his death along came Lyra. When much of Hugh's world had by then diminished, they so evidently adored each other, and found ways of communicating that were closed to the rest of us.



I asked Hugh in a lucid moment not so long before he died how he would like to be remembered – he said, 'I did my best to be faithful, and usually succeeded. People mattered – I loved people. I sometimes got it wrong.' I hope the words on the plaque which will soon sit on the wall of the Remembrance garden of St Faith's do him justice: "Quietly brave and a faithful seeker for truth." **Jill Sandham**

In the blink of an eye from **Jean Taylor**

This feature from The Voice, Merrow Methodist Church Magazine, from an African couple resounded with me, as did the T-shirt below which I saw recently.

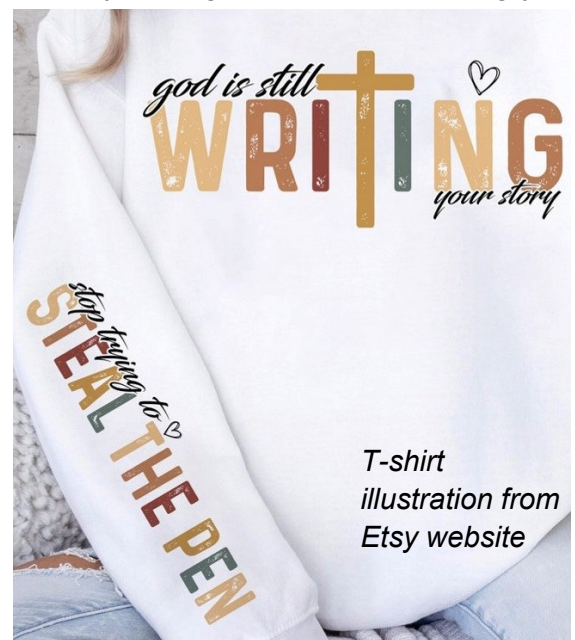
David and I were married for 52 years and we did try some of those encouraging words but I love this story because it applies to any friendship; man, woman, wife or husband.

'In the blink of an eye, another day is gone.
In the blink of an eye, another week is gone.
In the blink of an eye, another month is gone.
In the blink of an eye, another year is gone.
And in the blink of an eye, I'll be gone too,
And not just me but also you.
So maybe we should be 'wishing and hoping'
That we could just keep our eyes open.
And see and appreciate all that we can see,
And learn how we can be, the best that we can be,
Before it's too late, Time flies, so let's not wait.
Whether we have just one life or many, one thing is true,
We should try to enjoy every moment we can; it's the wisest thing to do, This gift of life came from God.

I interviewed a couple a few weeks ago that had their 60th wedding anniversary and I asked them one question. 'How does a beautiful couple like yourself keep such a healthy marriage for over 60 years'. She brought out an old battered Bible and said how it completely changed their lives and it taught them numerous things that should be a staple in all relationships in this day and age, no matter how long you have been together. She said;

We learned to forgive each other.
We rebuilt trust when it was broken.
We always listened to one another.
We apologised for things when we were wrong.
We always made time for each other.
We learned how to communicate.
We always put one another first no matter the circumstance.
We never stopped dating each other.
We always told each other 'I love you' before we went to bed.
We always prayed for each other daily.
We never made permanent decisions based on our temporary emotions.

She was then asked, 'After 60 years, are you worried what tomorrow brings?' She said, 'I trust the next chapter of our love story because I know the author. Which is God.'
Shared by kind permission of Rev. George Quarm.



*T-shirt
illustration from
Etsy website*

Cathedral travels

David Greenwood's
latest Welsh Cathedral,
Eglwys Gadeiriol, Bangor.

The site of the present building of Bangor Cathedral has been in use as a place of Christian worship since

the 6th century. It is dedicated to St. Deiniol. He founded a monastery c.530 and is said to have been consecrated Bishop of Bangor in 534 by St. David. The cathedral was sacked and destroyed several times. The earliest part of the present building dates from the 12th century and there was extensive building in the 14th and 16th centuries. The building as seen today is the result of extensive work carried out under the supervision of George Gilbert Scott, starting in 1868.



View from the south-west.



The choir stalls

The Mostyn Christ, a 15th century figure, is of national significance. One of the most iconic religious representations surviving from 15th century Wales and now on loan in the cathedral, the Mostyn Christ is an item shrouded in mystery. The wooden carving of the bound Christ seeks to reflect the meaning of the Passion through the intense depiction of human suffering and the symbolic inclusion of a skull at the feet of Christ. Certainly by the early 19th century the



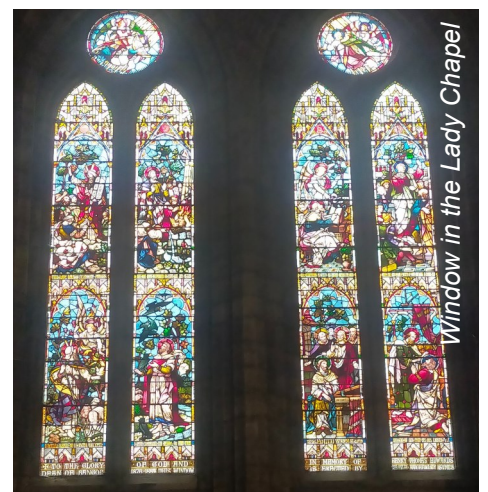
The Mostyn Christ

item was in the possession of the Mostyn family at Gloddaith Hall but its story before then is unclear. It is, however, a marvellous work of medieval art.



There is some interesting artwork, particularly, a wonderful painting showing a modern take on the Doubting Thomas story.

In the South Aisle, the painting depicting the story of Doubting Thomas, is the work of John Granville Gregory.



Window in the Lady Chapel



Looking east towards the High Altar showing details of the Rood Screen designed by John Oldrid Scott, dating from 1908.

The nave, looking east. The rood cross was designed by W.D. Caroe and dates from 1950.



Bangor Cathedral is a modest building, it is not St.David's or Llandaff; but there is no such thing as a boring cathedral. Bangor has its own charm and interest .

Churches are wonderful and beautiful

and they are vehicles for religion, but no Church can have more than a very little of the truth. It must be odd to believe, as some people do, that one's Church has all the truth and no errors, for how could this possibly be? Nothing in the world, for instance, could be as true as the Roman Catholic Church thinks it is, and as some Anglicans and Calvinists and Moslems think their Churches are, having the faith once for all delivered to the saints. I suppose this must be comfortable and reassuring. But most of us know that nothing is as true as all that, and that no faith can be delivered once for all without change, for new things are being discovered all the time, and old things dropped, like the whole Bible being true, and we have to grope our way through a mist that keeps being lit by shafts of light, so that exploration tends to be patchy, and we can never sit back and say, we have the Truth, this is it, for discovering the truth, if it ever is discovered, means a long journey through a difficult jungle, with clearings every now and then, and paths that have to be hacked out as one walks, and dark lanterns swinging from the trees, and these lanterns are the light that has lighted every man, which can only come through the dark lanterns of our minds. Ficino and the Florentine Academy used to light lamps before the bust of Plato, and were called heretics because they wanted the light of Greek learning let into the Church, and Erasmus and Colet and More were called heretics because they too wanted that light of Greek learning, and to correct the mistakes in the Vulgate by it, and the Cambridge Platonists were called Latitude men, for wanting the same kind of thing, and all these people knew that if we stop trying to get fresh light into the Church, the Church will become dark and shut up. Yet human beings are so strange and mixed that though More was for humanism and fresh light in the Church, he was also for burning people for heresy, and said of one who had been burnt for erroneous opinions about the date of the Judgment, "Never was a knave better worth burning," and, looking at it all round, churchmen and the Church have greatly advanced in humanity since then.

The Towers of Trebizond (extract), Rose Macaulay, 1881-1958
Sally Lowe



The Holy Ground of Lebanon

by **May Azar**

Lebanon is a Holy land, mentioned in the Old Testament 71 times. The Cedars of Lebanon were the most precious and costly wood desired by rulers of the surrounding countries. Jesus Christ, the Son of God visited the Phoenician cities along Lebanon's coast, preached to the people there and healed the sick. *Matthew 15:21-28 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."*

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. This occurred in Tyre and Sidon, currently a site of raging battles.

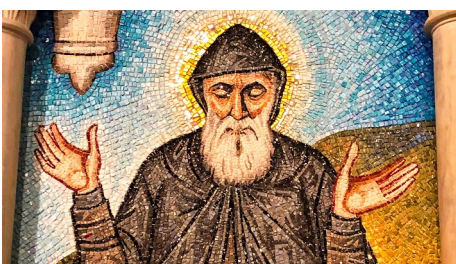
The first miracle of Jesus, transforming water into wine took place at Cana in Galilee, now southern Lebanon, and manifested His glory. *John 2:11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

Pope John Paul II said much about Lebanon; during the Lebanese Civil War he called the country "a message of fraternity between East and West, "an example of pluralism", "a historical mission" and a place with "a special role for peace." Now, this land is suffering because of the current Middle East conflict. The Lebanese government doesn't want war but Hezbollah, drawn from various Islamic countries, wish to fight Israel.



*Illustration from
Britannica website*

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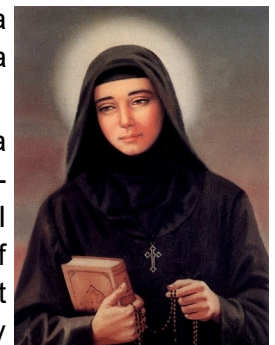
St Charbel. Image from The Catholic Church Bishops Conference of England and Wales'

A Lebanese Christian saint unites Christians and Muslims: St Charbel. He was a 19th century Maronite priest, monk, and hermit, known both as a healer and for his ability to unite Christians, Muslims and Druze.

Another Lebanese saint, St Rafqa, also a 19th century member of the Catholic Maronite church, was a nun and a compassionate teacher and healer. She is now a patron of the sick and those with lost parents.

I come from Bchamoun, south of Beirut and a Druze area. The Druze are historically anti-Christian but allowed us Christians to leave when I was 3 years old, so we moved to Zalqa, north of

Beirut. The Hezbollah came between 1980-82. Being Christian, we accepted them but now they want to fight. Before their arrival, everyone lived together in peace. My parents and sister have remained in Zalqa, with aunts and uncles nearby. I visited my mother in September, arriving the day before the mobile phones and pagers exploded causing gruesome injuries, which was followed by bombardment of South Beirut to capture Hezbollah leaders. My father and I sang in the church choir and we all regularly read the Bible and prayed for protection amidst the war. I keep a Rosary with me at all times and prayed incessantly when travelling through the bombing to Beirut airport to return to the UK.



St Rafqa. Image from Wikipedia

This is taken from an European address “**Today’s Evening Prayer**” in 2005 by the Czech Catholic priest **Tomáš Halík**, before prayers by Christians, Jews and Muslims for the future of Europe.

‘I would like to relate a Hassidic story to you:

Rabbi Pinchas asked his students how one recognises the moment when night ends and day begins.

“Is it the moment that it is light enough to tell a dog from a sheep?” one of the pupils asked. “No,” the rabbi answered. “Is it the moment when we can tell a date-palm from a fig tree?” the second asked. “No, that’s not it, either,” the rabbi replied. “So when does morning come, then?” the pupils asked. “It’s the moment when we look into the face of any person and recognise them as our brother or sister,” rabbi Pinchas said. “Until we’re able to do that, it’s still night.” **Jana Phillips**



Image Sally Lowe



Image bess.hamiti@gmail.com, Pixabay

The Chosen People

The Jewish American **Dr Naomi Wolf** explains the concept of a chosen people.

‘Okay, so I was challenged below: “Read the Bible! God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people.” So...I may get crucified for this but I have started to say it — most recently to warm welcome in a synagogue in LA: Actually, if you read Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy in Hebrew —as I do — you see that God did not “give” Israel to the Jews/Israelites. We, as Jews, are raised with the creed that “God gave us the land of Israel” in Genesis— and that ethnically “we are the chosen people.” But actually — and I could not believe

my eyes when I saw this, I checked my reading with major scholars and they confirmed it — actually, God’s “covenant” in Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy with the Jewish people is NOT about ethnicity and not about a contract. It is about a way of behaving.

Again and again in the “covenant” language He never says: “I will give you, ethnic Israelites, the land of Israel.” Rather, He says something far more radical, far more subversive, far more Godlike in my view. He says: IF you visit those imprisoned...act mercifully to the widow and the orphan...welcome the stranger in your midst...tend the sick...do justice and love mercy...and perform various other tasks...THEN YOU WILL BE MY PEOPLE AND THIS LAND WILL BE YOUR LAND. So “my people” is not ethnic, it is transactional. We are God’s people not by birth but by a way of behaving that is ethical, kind and just. And we STOP being “God’s people” when we are not ethical, kind and just. And ANYONE who is ethical, kind and just is, according to God in Genesis, “God’s people.” And the “contract” to “give” us Israel is conditional—we can live in God’s land IF we are “God’s people” in this way— just, merciful compassionate. AND — it never says, it is ONLY your land. Even when passages spell out geographical “boundaries” as if God does such a thing, it never says this is exclusively your land. It never says I will give this land JUST to you. Remember these were homeless nomads who had left slavery in Egypt and were wondering around in the desert; at most these passages say, settle here, but they do not say, settle here exclusively. Indeed again and again it talks about welcoming “zarim”, translated as “strangers but can also be translated as “people/tribes who are not you” — in your midst. Blew my mind, hope it blows yours.’ Dr. Naomi Wolf.

Sally Lowe

“World peace could be a possibility...if it weren’t for all those damned foreigners!” **Spike Milligan**

A Military Chaplain's experience of the First World War

by **Jonathan Neil-Smith**



My grandfather, the Revd Neil Campbell Smith, served as a Military Chaplain on the Western Front during the First World War. The experience was to shape his future ministry. He was one of many MCs who returned to parish ministry determined to make the Church's ministry more pastorally effective, and served – alongside his ministry in Paddington (at St Saviour's Warwick Avenue) – as Travelling Secretary to the Life and Liberty Movement: a pressure group that fought for Church Reform.

I recently came across my grandfather's manuscript notebooks which include many of his sermons and addresses. In speaking on the text 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty' (2 Corinthians. 3.7), in March 1923, he spoke very movingly thus,

"Some of you soldiers may remember the trenches in Loos village on the Western Front in 1916 – surrounded and overlooked on three sides by the Germans, insufficient cover, wrecked houses, slag heaps, with the continual risk of snipers and bursting shells. When I was chaplain there, I remember my men (one at a time to avoid observation) asking to meet in pitch dark cells in the support line 200 yards from the enemy with candles stuck on the sooty walls. We said our prayers and thanksgivings, softly sang the hymns we all knew, & received the sacrament. And in spite of everything, we came away as light hearted as children, finding joy and happiness in our active service..." (NCS Life and Liberty Sermon, Taunton Parish Church, 18 March 1923)

The Revd Neil Smith spoke of 'the spirit of cheerful comradeship to the great demands of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness that the emergency required' and challenged his hearers to mobilise that energy for 'rebuilding the Kingdom of God.'

In a sermon on 11 November 1923, just prior to the 2 minutes silence, the Revd Neil Smith spoke of the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by the armed forces in WW1, but appealed for his hearers



"...to win the peace...in every walk of life, at whatever cost, we must be peacemakers, unless the men...fought in vain...Some of us vividly picturing our comrades on the battlefields passing on; some perhaps bereaved, but proud to have been worthy to share that offering. All with a conviction that God left us here with something worth doing and the determination to do it..." (NCS Sermon at Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, 11 November 1923)

An update on the Ambulance vehicle bought with the proceeds of the Ukrainian Icons exhibited at St Nicolas: Its working appearance has changed from the original shown on the left with Alexander Reshetnik the Ukrainian Army Chaplain, to that on the right.



The Autumn Term con the usual varied programme; some old favourites, such as quizzes (of two different types), being interspersed with topics fresh to the Group.

Our exchange of suggestions on "A good place to visit locally" yielded plenty of ideas for enjoyable visits within easy travelling distance, either on foot or by public transport. Venues included Petersfield Physic Garden, Broadwater Park in Farncombe and Guildford Castle Grounds - sometimes it's good to be reminded of the many interesting places almost on the doorstep. A discussion of culinary herbs provided some mouthwatering recipe ideas, gardening tips and a free herbal tea-bag. "My Favourite Film" produced interesting choices with some people preferring serious, insightful films, and others enjoying comedies and feeling cheerful when they left the cinema.

The Craft session allowed creativity in making up decorative squares on the theme of Autumn, with different aspects of the season inspiring each. The resulting hanging decorations are on display in the entrance to the Parish Hall. David Greenwood was the Group's guest speaker delivering Part II of a series of well-crafted talks entitled "The Story of the Symphony".

A holiday break during the last week of October gave a chance to recharge batteries and look forward to the second half of the term. Why not join Tuesday Group for the latest in our programme of activities? Good company and interesting conversations await you! **Cathy Goodwin**

Programme for November: 5th - Round the Campfire: marshmallows and music
12th - In-house speaker: The Story of a Canal Journey **19th** - Down Memory Lane: the Outdoor Lavatory, **26th** - Craft for Christmas: making tree decorations

December: 3rd - Guest Speaker: Princess Mary's Box, **10th** - Seasonally-themed Bingo, **17th** - Pre-Christmas Party, **24th** and **31st** - no meetings

Meetings for the **Spring Term start on 7th January 2025** with a New Year Carpet Bowls Match. *photos* **Chris Goodwin**



The night sky in November & December **Rory Fenner**



This composite of photographs by Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2021 entrant György Soponyai shows the changing arcs of the Sun throughout the year. The smallest arc marks the winter solstice, the largest one at the top the summer solstice. The band in the middle is the 'equinox', with roughly equal hours of day and night. From the website of Royal Museums Greenwich.

November The **Sun** moves from Libra into Scorpio on 22 November. **Mercury** is not well seen this month, **Venus** will be more visible in the evenings by the end of the month. **Mars** rises mid evening and can be observed from midnight or so not far from M44 the Beehive Cluster in Cancer. **Jupiter** is a brilliant object in Taurus shining for most of the night, at magnitude -2.8. **Saturn**, an early evening object in Aquarius, is visible for most of the night. **Uranus** comes to Opposition on November 17 in Taurus, also visible all night. **Neptune**, an early evening object in Pisces can be seen through Binoculars or

Telescope. **December** The **Sun** moves from Scorpio into Ophiuchus on the 17 December and into Sagittarius on December 22 for the Winter Solstice. **Mercury** passes through Inferior Conjunction on 6 December for a reasonable morning apparition by the end of the year. **Venus** is improving in the evening sky and will be visible at nightfall by the end of the year. **Mars** is now a month away from Opposition shining at magnitude -0.8 and can be seen from late evening onwards. **Jupiter** is really ruling the night, coming to Opposition on 7 December in Taurus and visible all night, at the bright magnitude of -2.8. **Saturn** is an evening object in Aquarius, culminating at nightfall and can be observed for a few hours or so. **Uranus** is an evening object in the Taurus/ Aries region, visible most of the night. **Neptune** is a evening object in Pisces and is visible through Binoculars or a Telescope.



It can't have escaped your notice that we two have been an item in the church for more than a year now. We met in funny circumstances. At a Guildford Opera event this lady said hello to me and I was confused as to who she was. We then met in the interval and it became clear that we practiced Pilates together at The Spectrum. During conversation we discovered a mutual love of classical music and concert going and the fact we went to concerts as singles. It sort of developed from there.

We became closer over months and eventually became an item. In February of this year I laughingly mentioned to Monica that the 29th of February is, by custom, the only day when a woman in England can propose to a man and if he refuses to accept the proposal of marriage, he has to present her with pair of kid gloves. She was incredulous that this custom even existed and it passed over as an interesting little factoid. Imagine, then my surprise when she actually did propose on the 29th!



It took some discussion but we both agreed that we would have a very simple wedding, just the two of us, our priest and the two witnesses required by law. No date was set.

Every year Monica goes to Colombia to spend time with her Mum, a retired professor, and this year spent 3 weeks there with her daughter Emilia who I nearly 14 years old. When she returned and a couple of days had passed, she announced that we were to get married on 21 September this year as the date is special to her. This was at the start of August and complete surprise (but a lovely one) to me. Unknown to me she had actually shopped for her bridal clothes in Bogota and even this as kept as a secret until a couple of weeks before the wedding! A nice little touch was her suggestion that we melt down some personal gold and have our wedding rings made from that melt, so we went to a jeweller in Tunsgate who managed this feat. From the excess gold left over we had a cross made for me to wear which was blessed at the ceremony.



The big day was the 21st. We drove up to the South door, parked and were surprised and delighted to discover that we had TWO priests to perform the ceremony as Fr. Ali also participated.

It was, as we wanted. A quiet, simple and dignified ceremony with a Nuptial Mass. We kind of started at 5:30ish and it was all over by 6:15. Then the funny bit. There was a Life Drawing class in the hall so we couldn't exit that way, the South door needed to be locked, so we all exited via the Tower door and the confetti and pictures bit happened by the dustbins outside the Tower door. Fortunately, our photographers (our friends and witnesses) managed to take the photos omitting the dustbins!

We had our "Wedding Breakfast" in The Mandolay Hotel up near G-Live. Fr. Neil and Helen joined us and our witnesses for that event.

Honeymoon? Still to have that. **Phillip Thomas**

Baptism of Samuel

Catherine and Iain Ferguson

On Saturday 5 October we celebrated the baptism of our grandson, Sam. His full name is Samuel Robin Benares Colville and he lives with his family in the small village of West Lexham in Norfolk where the baptism was held in the parish church. This thousand-year-old building, built before the Norman Conquest when Vikings were raiding, is dedicated to St Nicholas. It also has a rare round tower and is tiny. The congregation of 66 just managed to squeeze in.

Being part of a benefice of 16 parishes, services are rarely held there. It was a struggle to find a priest to conduct the baptism but fortunately Father Jack, the chaplain at Gresham's school, stepped forward, whilst a neighbour brought his keyboard and played as organist.

The usual baptismal items which we take for granted at St Nicolas' Guildford had all to be imported for St Nicolas' West Lexham. At this point we must offer our thanks to Father Neil. We used the Guildford St Nic's Paschal Candle from 2019, and Father Neil provided the holy oils, the baptism candle and card. The baptism water was local, brought up from the River Nar next to the church and mixed with water from the shrine at nearby Walsingham, then poured over the baby's head with the help of my scallop shell, a survivor of three pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. We needed candles for light in the church and had to provide brass candlesticks for the altar. The ancient church had probably last experienced incense in 1537, but it happily breathed the incense from Jerusalem last Saturday.

Sam's half-sister, Cosima, read a poem called 'The Orange' by Wendy Cope, and his uncle read a passage from C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, on the creation of Narnia, when Aslan sings and the beautiful world springs into being.

After the church service we all processed down to the River Nar in brilliant sunshine, via a statue of the Hindu god Ganesh, adorned with marigolds. Sam's parents, Lucy and Edmund, are interested in Indian spirituality (hence Benares in his name) and wished to have a 'pooja' of small floating wax candles lit by each one of us in honour of Edmund's father who drowned in the river 10 years ago.



Samuel Robin Benares Colville, exploring below the altar of St Nicholas, West Lexham



Thus the cycle of life was honoured, almost in an Anglican way.....

The family and Hindu Lord Ganesh



Fred Hutley

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Fred Hutley on 15 October. Fred was a long standing and much-loved member of the St Nicolas' community and will be fondly remembered by all.

His funeral was held on 11 November, but there will be a Memorial Service at St Nicolas on Friday 29 November, at 11am.



Eco News

The first Bible

The first act of divine revelation is creation itself. The first Bible is the Bible of nature. It was written at least 13.8 billion years ago, at the moment that we call the Big Bang, long before the Bible of words. "Ever since God created the world, God's everlasting power and divinity—however invisible—are there for the mind to see in the things that God has made" (Romans 1:20). One really wonders how we missed that. Words gave us something to argue about, I guess, while nature can only be experienced, and hopefully enjoyed and respected with admiration and awe. Don't dare put the second Bible in the hands of people who have not sat lovingly at the feet of the first Bible. They will invariably manipulate, mangle, and murder the written text.



Richard Rohr – American Franciscan priest & spiritual teacher, b. 1943

"I know of no better of which is called serving God than that of being good to his creatures."

Thomas Bewick, English wood graver, 1753-1828

"God being its Creator, can there exist an inch of unconsecrated ground? Defiled ground, certainly, but who is to blame for that?" **Ronald Blythe, "Next to Nature"**

Saint
Columba's
House



Maybury Hill,
Woking, Surrey,
GU22 8AB
01483 766498

Divine Nature A day to discover how to encounter and engage with the Divine in and through the natural world. Taking examples and teachings from scripture and from Christians throughout the ages, as well as the 4 seasons as they change around us in the same place.

23 November. Led by Brother Cassian (David Cole) £30. Please call 01483 766498 to book.



CARDS
FOR GOOD CAUSES

Open @ St Nic's on:

Mondays to Saturdays
10am - 4pm

& after 10am Mass on

Sunday 17 Nov
Sunday 24 Nov
Sunday 1 Dec



Sunflower Cafe at Guildford URC with Right at Home



Every Wednesday from 10.30am-12.00pm we run a friendly Sunflower Cafe session. Support for those living with dementia and their carers. A varied programme of activities including creative sessions with Open Access Arts, Singing/ music, puzzles, talks, coffee and chat. Each session will be different in content but will always have the same friendly feel!

communityworker@gurc.org.uk 07419 332074
83 Portsmouth Road, Guildford, GU2 4BS



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- Changing catheter & stoma bags
 - Administering medication
 - Domestic tasks & cleaning
 - Driving to appointments & outings

**Guardian Angel
carers**

We provide visiting
care, overnight care
and live in care.



Christmas is such a magical time of the year. A time when we enjoy the glow of Christmas lights that adorn trees and houses, the warmth of cosy log fires and the joy of catching up with family and friends at those many social gatherings. However, there is another important tradition, as well as attending midnight services of course, and that is the singing of carols. It just doesn't feel like Christmas without having had a good old sing of Hark the Herald or O Come all ye Faithful. So, why not join the Surrey Hills choirs for your Christmas carol fix this year.

Our annual Christmas concert will be held on Sunday 8th December, 7pm, at St Nicolas Church, Bury Street, Guildford and will feature two excellent choirs, the Surrey Hills Chamber Choir and the Surrey Hills Singers. These choirs are renowned for their enjoyable concerts as they sing all styles of music, but most importantly sing from memory, and often unconducted, to tell the story of each song directly to you, the audience. The beautiful church is lit by candlelight to create a very seasonal setting and the concert is followed by wine and nibbles, all of which is included in the ticket price.

As well as the traditional carols 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen', 'Away in a Manger', 'Blessed be that Maid Marie', 'Mary walked through a wood of thorns', and 'We Three Kings', the Chamber Choir will also sing some very well-known atmospheric songs, including 'O Radiant Dawn' by James MacMillan, 'Northern Lights' by Ola Gjeilo, 'Morning Star' by Arvo Part and 'Alleluia' by Randall Thompson.



*Alleluia
It's Christmas!*

An evening of seasonal songs with Surrey Hills choirs

7pm, Sunday 8th December
St. Nicolas' Church, Bury St., Guildford. GU2 4AW

Tickets: Adults £14, Children £5
from www.singsurreyhills.com
Booking opens Friday 22nd November

The lovely ladies of the Surrey Hills Singers will sing the much-loved Ukrainian 'Carol of the Bells', the hauntingly beautiful 'A Nativity' by John Tavener and a new setting of 'O Magnum Mysterium' (O great mystery) by Thomas Juneau. To contrast, they will perform the upbeat spiritual 'Mary sat a rockin' which is certain to get all toes tapping. Earlier in the concert they will sing the close harmony song 'Run to you' by Pentatonix as well as joining forces with the ladies from the Chamber Choir in a magnificent rendition of the stirring 'Tundra' by Ola Gjeilo, which depicts the frozen landscape.

There will be, of course, the opportunity for the audience to join in some Christmas carols too.

Tickets are £14 for Adults and £5 for under 16s and will be available to book online from Friday 22nd November at www.singsurreyhills.com. This annual concert is very popular and frequently sells out. Book early to avoid disappointment. We look forward to welcoming you.



Although I make lots of Christmas Cakes, I don't actually like to eat them that much. I much prefer Stollen - I think it's the marzipan and the yeasted dough. But it is quite an effort at a busy time of year so I now make Stollen Cookies. They are lovely large cookies with all the flavours of Stollen but are much quicker to make. I have given them as gifts for the last couple of years and they have gone down well.

If you would like to have a go at making them yourselves, the recipe is below. Alternatively, *I'm offering them for sale in gift boxes of 5, 10 or 15 for £6, £12 & £18 respectively, with all profits going to the church.* Email me at the Parish Office if you'd like to order with the date you'd like them.

Stollen Cookies (makes 15 large cookies)

40g dried cranberries, 40g raisins, 40g chopped mixed peel
 3 Tbsp dark rum
 60g golden marzipan
 75g blanched almonds
 125g soft unsalted butter
 100g caster sugar
 75g light brown sugar
 1 large egg
 225g self-raising flour
 2 tsp ground mixed spice
 a generous grating of whole nutmeg
 0.5 tsp fine sea salt
 0.5tsp concentrated almond extract
 Icing sugar to dust



Put the dried fruits and rum in a small pan, bring to a simmer, cover and set aside to soak.
 Cut the marzipan into 15 chunks then put on a lined plate and freeze while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.
 Preheat the oven to 200C, fan 180C, gas 6. Toast the almonds on a baking tray for 5 minutes until golden. Remove, cool, then roughly chop. Switch off the oven for now.
 Whisk the butter and sugar together until pale and creamy, then beat in the egg. Sift in the flour, spices and salt, and fold in with the almond extract.
 Next add the soaked fruit and the chopped almonds and knead lightly into the dough.
 Divide into 15 pieces and roll into balls; press a chunk of marzipan into each one while keeping the ball shape - it should poke out of the top. Transfer to a lined baking tray and chill for at least 1 hour, or ideally for up to 24 hours before baking to let the flavours develop.
 Preheat the oven to 180C, fan 160C, gas 4. Space out the dough balls on lined baking trays to allow for spreading. Bake for 10-12 minutes until pale golden and beginning to crack on top. Cool on the trays for 10 minutes then transfer to a wire rack. Dust with icing sugar before serving.

Beer, Banter & Jazz at



**GROWLERS
& CANS**



This small venue in Guildford's Chertsey Street specialises in Craft Beer, friendly atmosphere and, if you pick the right night, live music. Owners Charlie and Martine nursed it into existence before the Covid lockdowns, and the fact that they are still in business shows its excellence. My visiting Czech family who are beer connoisseurs were most impressed. Wine, cocktails, low- and non-alcoholic drinks are also plentiful and the atmosphere is fabulous. Highly recommended and very safe, Maxine is a trained nurse! **Jana** Also an Arts venue & enthusiastic promoter of St Nic's exhibitions. Nathalie Scott's 'Faces of Guildford' portraits are here 15-22 January.

Daniel Lowe Gardening and Tree Services

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Non-drop Christmas Trees

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Daniel gives St Nicolas a free tree every year. He will be selling Christmas trees at his High Street Market stall from the end of November or you can order by telephone, no. above. Either way, the trees can be delivered FOC within Guildford. Discount will be available if any stock is left close to Christmas Day.



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Office or give to Fr Neil or Jana at church. **Next copy deadline is Sunday 15**

December, for January &

February 2025 issue.



ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

NOT JUST SUNDAYS

Tuesdays

Tuesday Group @ 9:30

Social Group for the Retired

Toastie Tuesdays @ 5

for School Years 3 - 6 (monthly)

Beer & Banter @ 7:30

Men's Group (monthly)

Curry & Questions @7:30

Exploring Faith over Food
(quarterly)

Wednesdays

Cafe Play @ 10

Pre School Toddler Group

Fridays

Coffee Shop @10:30

Monthly Lunch &

Bible Study @11:30

Fizz & Friends @8

Women's Group (twice a term))

Saturdays

Messy Church @4

(monthly)

www.saintnics.com

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GUILDFORD