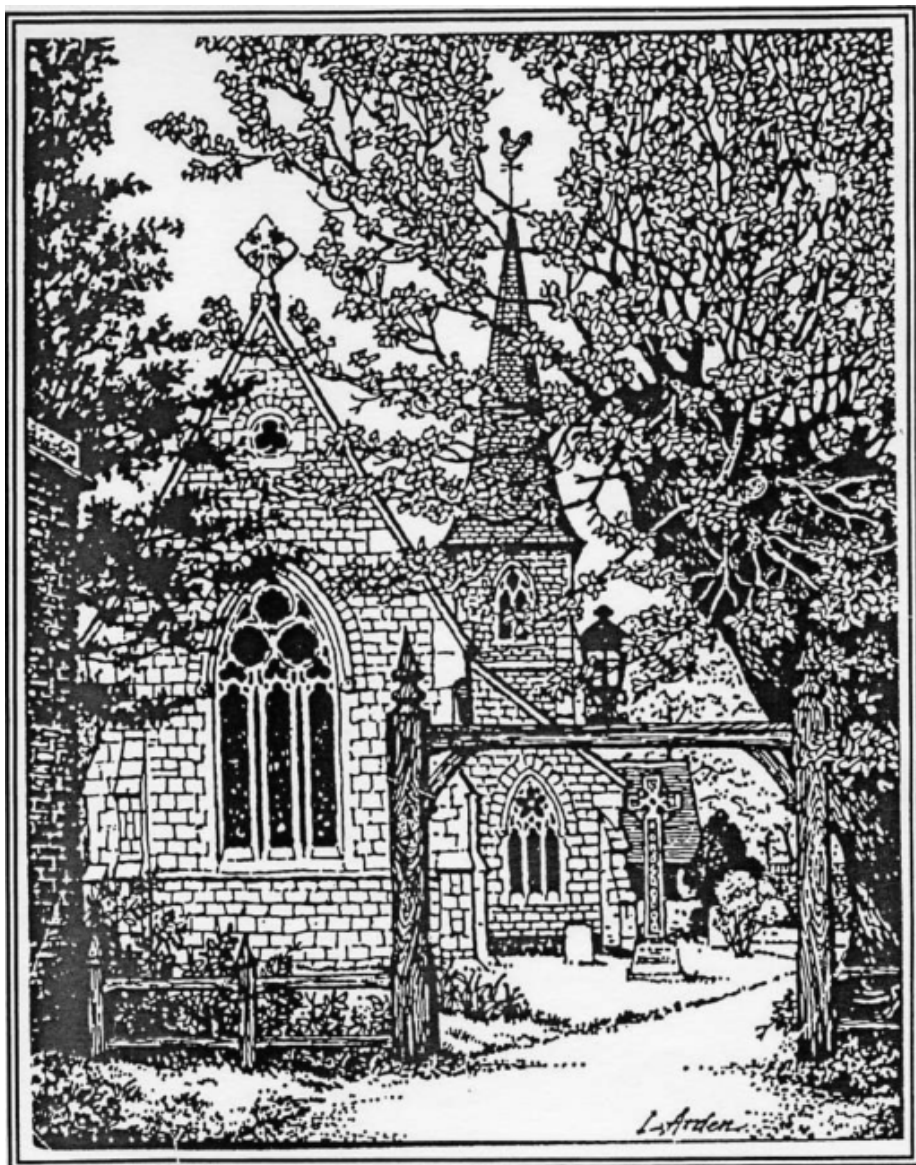


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

50p

January, 2020

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

Team Vicar: Reverend Ren Harding 01322 528923
The Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane,
Joydens Wood, DA5 2BB
renharding@hotmail.co.uk

Lay Reader: David Stevens 020 8300 0867

Church Wardens: Suzy Higgs 020 8302 5719
suzyjhiggs@gmail.com

Maxine Heath 020 8468 7895
maxinejheath@gmail.com

Treasurer: Andy Bye 0776 8980829
andy@byeology.com

PCC Secretary: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Sacristan: Stephen Hills 020 8302 7236

Bothy Bookings: Lynne Meads 07966 315518

Parish Safeguarding: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Magazine Editor: Steve Blake
sblake stjames@virginmedia.com

St James Sunday Service

9.30am Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER JANUARY 2020



If you feel the need for a little bit of light relief in these gloomy post-Christmas days, when the huge credit card bills come home to roost, and the joys of spring seems far away, can I commend you to watch the BBC programme called “The Repair Shop”. The trailers describe it as “an antidote to the throw-away culture”. It is filmed mostly at the Weald and Downland Museum in Singleton, West Sussex. Expert craftsmen and artists work together and pool their skills to repair and restore heirlooms and treasured family antiques such as music boxes, vases and clocks. They are repaired and restored, not necessarily to a pristine condition, but in a way that shows their history and reflects the passage of time. It is an inspiring programme, and sometimes quite moving, as people share the way in which the treasured family possession links them with times that are past, and loved ones who are no longer with them. There is a story behind every item.

So it is with us. God is the ultimate expert craftsman. He repairs and restores what is broken in us – but always uses our past experiences to shape the person we become. The broken and grieving places are not hidden, but repaired and made strong.

If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that someone who pretends to a slick and over-confident capacity for achievement is not a particularly attractive person. Think, for example of another TV programme. Think of the contestants on Lord Sugar’s series “The Apprentice”. The boastful hardness of those competing against each other feels brittle and false. The gloss and glamour of a worldly success is an illusion. And sometimes as they are confronted with their own failures, we glimpse what seems to be a far more attractive human being beneath the mask.

Perhaps we need to recognise our own vulnerability as part of the common, shared human condition, recognising within that the frailty

that is shared by us all.

As this New Year begins, you may be making resolutions to change yourself – eat better, exercise more, watch less television (!). Perhaps a better resolution would be to give up the endless requirement to appear to be ‘perfect’ and concentrate on being fully human instead. And leave it to the expert, divine craftsman to repair your sad and broken places. Be very sure – he never throws anyone away!

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

contact me at Joydens Wood Vicarage,

6 Tile Kiln Lane, Joydens Wood, Bexley, DA5 2BB

01322-528923

renharding@hotmail.co.uk

God's hands

Our times are firmly in His hands,
The hands that fashioned all that's made,
Giving life and breath and purpose,
Touching all He came to save.

The hands that gave themselves to nails,
Has gathered sheep that went astray
And raised them up to heavenly places
Waiting for the Coming Day.

As life and years roll on together,
Our times are set, on this we stand,
Secure and safe in God's own keeping
As none can pluck us from His hand.

By Megan Carter

Winners of the St James Grand Christmas Draw

Held Sunday 9th December 2019 at 10.30am.

- 1st Prize - Dennis of Bexley Free Range Turkey - Brown - 02595
- 2nd Prize - Luxury Food Hamper- Brewer - 01888
- 3rd Prize - Wine Hamper - Bullock - 01384
- 4th Prize - Chocolate/Sweet Hamper - Martin - 00125
- 5th Prize - Biscuit Hamper - Rawat - 02064
- 6th Prize - Canteen of Cutlery - Breed - 00398
- 7th Prize - Champagne & Glasses - Arthur - 00744
- 8th Prize - Whiskey Gift Set - Clifford - 00642
- 9th Prize - Food Mixer - Key - 01710
- 10th Prize - Bottle of Wine and Wine Glasses – Bennie - 02515
- 11th Prize - Bottle of Wine and Wine Cooler - Pete - 02146
- 12th Prize - Small Suitcase - Maxine - 01137
- 13th Prize - Clinique Perfume - Morris - 02964
- 14th Prize - Bedspread – Butcher - 01132
- 15th Prize - Luxury Christmas Crackers – Cook - 02380
- 16th Prize - Large Tin of Quality Street - Haillday - 00836
- 17th Prize - Large Box of Ferrero Rocher Chocolates – Harrington - 00951

All winners have been notified.

Thank you everyone who donated prizes and bought and sold raffle tickets.

A Special Thanks to Dennis of Bexley, quality meat supplier and caterer for their continued support.

Caring for God's World

By The Rev Paul Hardingham

The National Trust was founded in January 1895, 125 years ago, to *'promote the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest and as regards lands for their natural aspect features, animal and plant life.'* This concern for our world raises an important question at the start of this New Year: *Why should we care for our planet?*

The first reason is that God told us to care for His creation, as good stewards, not abusing it for selfish ends: *'Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'* (Genesis 1.28).

Secondly, the material world matters to God, for He made it *'very good'* (Genesis 1:31) and sustains it all the time: *'in Him all things hold together'* (Colossians 1:17). To neglect or spoil the environment is damaging what is precious to God.

Thirdly, at the end of time the cosmos will be re-created as the *'new heavens and new earth'* (Revelation 21:1). This will establish the fullness of life that God intended for His whole creation; when He will dwell with His people and all creation will worship Him.

There are lots of simple ways in which we set about caring for our world this year eg. walking to church, switching the TV off stand-by, insulating our homes, driving a smaller car or cutting down on eating meat. The hope of a renewed Creation doesn't mean abandoning such simple actions today. *'If I knew Jesus would return tomorrow, I would plant a tree today.'* (Martin Luther).

MIDWEEK COMMUNIONS for the TEAM

Starting from 4 December 2019
the churches of the Bexley Team
will be having a JOINT Midweek Communion
at 10am every Wednesday.

Please note our new pattern!

at St John's Bexley
on the *first* and *third* Wednesday of each month
at St Mary's Bexley
on the *second* and *fourth* Wednesday of each month.

In the months when there is a *fifth* Wednesday
we will be having our midweek communion
at St James North Cray (North Cray Road)

Please let a member of the Clergy Team
know if you need a lift.

There is also an informal 'House Communion'
at 53 Woodlands Park, Joydens Wood
at 10am on the third Thursday of the month.

TEAM RECTOR
Reverend Ren Harding
01322 528923

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News and Issues



Homeless people at risk of modern slavery

Staff and volunteers at night shelters are being urged to be on the lookout for signs of exploitation among guests in a campaign recently launched by the Church of England's anti-slavery initiative.

More than 1,000 posters and other materials aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of modern slavery amongst homeless people have been distributed to night shelters across the country by The Clewer Initiative, the Church of England's response to modern slavery.

The *Let's Talk* initiative is encouraging night shelters and other outreach services such as soup kitchens to share concerns with the Modern Slavery Helpline or local support services.

The signs of modern slavery amongst homeless people could include:

- Unusual anxiety about people in positions of authority and extreme fear of being watched
- Working for no or little pay
- Working in the most common sectors for modern slavery such as construction and hand car washes
- Not being allowed to leave their place of work
- Having no control of their ID
- Being approached on the street, outside a shelter or at drop-in by someone offering work
- Signs of physical abuse or untreated injuries

The *Let's Talk* initiative includes a poster illustrating the typical journey of a homeless person trafficked into exploitation.

There are also guidance notes for project managers and volunteers in night shelters on the steps they can take to safeguard their guests from this danger. These include warning guests of the dangers of modern slavery.

The Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Chair of The Clewer Initiative,

said: “With rising numbers of homeless people on our streets, it is even more important that we are able to recognise the signs. With the *Let’s Talk* resources we will equip the Church to understand what modern slavery looks like, and how they can respond to protect the vulnerable.”

Results of Methodist Youth President election announced

Following the elections at 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, it has been announced that the next Youth President will be Phoebe Parkin, aged 17, from the Telford circuit in the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District. Phoebe will become the new Youth President at a service to be held in September 2020.



Phoebe campaigned on the theme of ‘God’s World - Our Home’ and promises to highlight environmental issues during her year in office.

The Methodist Youth President is a salaried position working full-time for one year to serve the children and young people of the Methodist Church in Britain. The role involves travelling across the UK and overseas meeting and representing the young Methodist people to ensure that their voices are heard and to help them be involved in every aspect of Church life.

Record numbers of visitors and worshippers flock to England's cathedrals

In 2018 England’s cathedrals witnessed their highest Easter congregation numbers in recent years, while visitor numbers increased by a million on the previous year, according to recently published statistics.

Cathedrals reported nearly ten million visitors in 2018, an increase of over 10 per cent on the previous year. There were additionally over a million visitors to Westminster Abbey.

The major Christian festivals remain at the heart of congregational growth, with 58,000 people attending a cathedral at Easter and 95,000 during Holy Week – the highest numbers recorded for a decade, with Easter attendance up nearly 10,000 since 2008.

Blotting my copy book

By Tony Horsfall of Charis Training.

More details at: www.charistraining.co.uk.

Do you remember the start of term at school, when you were given new exercise books to write in? I loved the feel of those books that were still unworn and unspoilt. I would try to write my name and the subject on the front page with my very best handwriting.

This wasn't easy, as we used to write with pen and ink and the nibs were very temperamental. It was easy to put too much ink on the nib, then when you started writing it would make a big blotch on the clean page. Another book spoilt on the first page! Needless to say, it got worse as the term progressed and the once pristine book became messier and more dog-eared.

I have a similar feeling every time we come to the start of a new year. January seems to be filled with promise of change and doing better. It's a lot like the clean slate of a new exercise book. Surely, we won't make the same mistakes as we did last year? Full of good intentions we start again, but guess what? It isn't long before we have made the same mistakes again and blotted our copy book once more.

Although 20/20 vision describes perfect eyesight, not many of us have it. And although the year 2020 will begin with the hope of doing better than we did in 2019 the reality is that before the month is out, we will have failed again. We are imperfect people and we make mistakes

Two things give me hope, however. First that God is able and willing to for forgive us, so that our sins can be washed away, and we can be clean again. Second, that He is also able and willing to help us change, to give us the power we need to overcome our besetting sins. We cannot change ourselves, but God can. And no matter how often we fail, He is infinitely patient with us.

When we found Antarctica

By Tim Lenton

It was 200 years ago, on the 27th and 30th of January 1820, that Antarctica was discovered. A Russian expedition sighted the Fimbul Ice Shelf, but not land. Three days later a captain in the British Royal Navy sighted the Trinity Peninsula.

Neither of these achievements is totally beyond dispute, mainly because of the difficulty of distinguishing between snow-covered land, islands, icebergs and ice shelves.

Russian Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, using English books and charts stemming from his hero James Cook, who first circumnavigated the continent, led a Russian expedition which had considerable success but was largely ignored on his return. He definitely came within 20 miles of the Antarctic mainland and should have been able to see it.

Three days later Briton Edward Bransfield, searching waters south of the South Shetlands with William Smith, had the first confirmed sighting of the Antarctic land mass – snow-topped mountains – and in November the same year American Nathaniel Palmer, part of a sealing fleet, also claimed a sighting. Another sealer, John Davis, from Connecticut but born in Surrey, was probably the first to land on the Antarctic, in 1821.

The same year, von Bellingshausen came south again and became the second sailor after Cook to circumnavigate the continent. Russia remained unimpressed.

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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

'Unusual kindness' is the unusual name for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th to 25th January). The materials for the week have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta).

'Unusual kindness' is found in the book of Acts. The phrase refers to the warm welcome that the people of Malta gave to Paul and his companions when they were shipwrecked on the island. In return, Paul shared the gospel with them, and thus founded the church in Malta. Something that the Christians in Malta thank God for!

More details at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2020/>

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Facing both ways

By Tony Horsfall of Charis Training

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, of gates and doorways. Traditionally Janus had two faces, one looking to the past and one to the future. It reminds us that as we start a new year we can look back to the past with gratitude and to the future with expectation.

In his hymn, '*How good is the God we adore*', Joseph Hart (1712-1768) speaks about God as our faithful, unchangeable friend and finishes with this beautiful thought: 'We'll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.' This seems to be a good pasture to take as we enter 2020.

First, we can look back on the year that is gone and give thanks for all the blessings that we have experienced. Thankfulness is really a choice. None of us will have had a perfect year, and many of us will have had some dark days indeed, but if we look carefully enough, we will see that there were also many wonderful days and golden moments. Let's choose to focus on those and to acknowledge the work of God in our lives. *For what are you grateful as you look back to 2019?*

Second, we can put our faith in God for all that is to come. None of us know the future. We will have our hopes and our dreams, and have made our plans for the year ahead, but no-one can guarantee they will come to pass. There will be surprises for sure, both good (we never expected that!) and bad (I didn't see that coming!). How wonderful then to have a God who knows the future and in whose hands we are safe, no matter what comes to pass. Let's choose to place our trust in Him as 2020 unfolds. *What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?*



MEETINGS and Events 2020

*Watch this space for
future events*

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PAST CASES REVIEW

We are committed to making our church a safe space for all. Churches across the Diocese of Rochester are currently undertaking a comprehensive safeguarding review to establish that all known past cases of concern relating to church abuse have been considered and dealt with appropriately. If you are concerned about something you have experienced in a church, now or in the past, or you are worried about another person - perhaps a vulnerable adult or a child – there are people you can talk to and you will be taken seriously. Anyone who needs to come forward with information or make any disclosures regarding church related abuse are encouraged to make direct contact with the Diocese of Rochester's Safeguarding team on: 01634 560000 or visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/ Recognising that this may not feel safe for those with a lived experience of abuse from within the church, a dedicated telephone helpline, operated independently from the church, by the NSPCC, is available. Calls can be made free on 0800 80 20 20



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SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2020

PLEASE NOTE that on Wednesday 29th January at 10.00am we will be hosting the Midweek Communion for the Bexley Team Ministry at St James North Cray. This will happen whenever there is a fifth Wednesday in the month. Do support us if you can. I will be looking for people to read the bible passage, and the intercessions. *Ren*

SUNDAY 29th December

9.30am Holy Communion at St James

Wednesday 1st January

10.00am Midweek Communion at St John's Bexley

Thursday 2nd January

10.00am Daytime Housegroup at St Barnabas Vicarage

Saturday 4th January

9.30am Prayers at St Barnabas, Joydens Wood

SUNDAY 5th January

9.30am Holy Communion

EPIPHANY

Wednesday 8th January

10.00am Midweek Communion at St Mary's Bexley

Saturday 11th January

8.30am Men's Breakfast at St Barnabas, Joydens Wood

SUNDAY 12th January

9.30am All Age Worship

Wednesday 15th January

10.00am Midweek Communion at St John's Bexley

Thursday 16th January

10.00am Midweek House Communion
at 53 Woodlands Park, Joydens Wood

SUNDAY 19th January

9.30am Holy Communion
12 for 12.30pm Team Lunch at Kings Head Bexley
3.00pm Churches Together in Old Bexley Service
at St James BLENDON, Bladindon Drive DA5 3EL
For the week of prayer for Christian Unity

Wednesday 22nd January

10.00am Midweek Communion at St Mary's Bexley
8.00pm St James PCC Meeting

SUNDAY 26th January

9.30am Holy Communion
1.30pm Baptism
4pm Sunday @ 4 All-Age Service at St Barnabas

Wednesday 29th January

10.00am Midweek Communion at St James North Cray

* * * * *

Bexley Team Gentleman's Lunch on the first Wednesday of the month at 12.30pm at The Anchor, Bridgen Road, Bexley
Further details, Julia Wickham, St John's Bexley, 01322 556686

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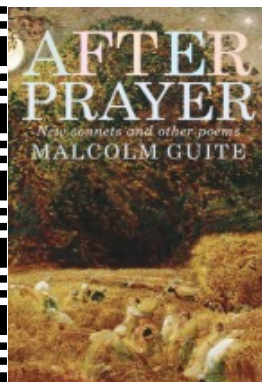
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Book Mark



After Prayer – New Sonnets and other poems poems. By Malcolm Guite, Canterbury Press, £10.99

This major new poetry collection from bestselling poet and priest Malcolm Guite features more than 70 new and previously unpublished works. At the heart of this collection is a sequence of 27 sonnets written in response to George Herbert's exquisite sonnet 'Prayer', each one describing prayer in an arresting metaphor such as 'the church's banquet', 'reversed thunder', 'the Milky Way', 'the bird of paradise' and 'something understood'.



Joseph's Dreamcoat and other stories. By Juliet David and Elina Ellis, Lion Children, £4.99

Perfect for young children, here are read and share stories about Joseph and other favourite people from the Bible. From the popular 99 Stories from the Bible, each lively narrative is simply told across a double page spread with bold, engaging illustrations that bring the story to life. Along with Joseph's amazing story, your youngster will meet Moses, the baby in the bulrushes; the young boy Samuel; David as he defeats the giant Goliath; Daniel in the lions' den; and Jonah in the whale.

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ALL IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY

200 years ago, on 27th and 30th Jan 1820 Antarctica was discovered. A Russian expedition sighted the Fimbul Ice Shelf, but not land. Three days later a captain in the British Royal Navy sighted the Trinity Peninsula.

125 years ago, on 12th Jan 1895 the National Trust was founded (as the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty).

80 years ago, on 8th Jan 1940 food rationing began in Britain (bacon, butter and sugar).

75 years ago, on 26th – 27th Jan 1945 the Soviet Red Army liberated Auschwitz concentration camp in southern Poland. It was the largest Nazi concentration camp, and at least 1.1 million prisoners died there.

70 years ago, on 23rd Jan 1950 the Israeli Knesset declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel.

Also 70 years ago, on 26th Jan 1950 India became an independent republic. President Rajendra Prasad replaced King George VI as head of state. This day is now marked as Republic Day in India.

65 years ago, on 25th Jan 1955 the world's first atomic clock was unveiled by scientists at the National Physical Laboratory in the UK. It measured time by counting the vibrations of cesium-133 atoms. It was accurate to one second every 300 years.

25 years ago, on 3rd Jan 1995 the World Health Organisation reported that the cumulative total of reported AIDS cases had passed the one million mark, with cases reported in 192 countries. With unreported cases included, the total was estimated to be approximately 4.5 million.

10 years ago, on 4th Jan 2010 the Burj Khalifa in Dubai opened. It is the world's tallest structure, at 2,722 feet (829.8 metres)

Holocaust Memorial Day

By The Rev Paul Hardingham

Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. One of the disturbing questions that arises from the horrors of the Holocaust is *'where was God when the six million died?'*

In his moving memoir, *'Night,'* Eli Wiesel tells the story of an execution that the prisoners were forced to witness. Two men and a boy were made to stand on chairs with nooses around their necks. At the guards' signal, the chairs were kicked from beneath their feet. The men died instantly as the fall broke their necks, but the boy, flailed about, gasping for breath. Wiesel heard someone cry out, *'For God's sake, where is God?'* In that moment, he heard a voice inside: *'Where is He? This is where: hanging here from this gallows'.*

As we think of this boy dying on the gallows, we are reminded of another Jew, who suffered and died on a cross. As the crowd gathered around the cross, it was Jesus who posed the same question: *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* (Matt 27:46).

Jesus became a human being, because God wanted to identify with His lost and suffering world. He willingly took upon Himself God's judgment for the sin of the world, as God turned away from the Son he loved: *'God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God'* (2 Cor. 5:21).

So where was God when the six million died? The truth is that God is present in our suffering, to identify and suffer with us and to provide help, hope and meaning to those who suffer. Whatever we go through this New Year, let's not forget this truth!

WORDSEARCH



King	magi	Epiphany	Balthasar	Isaiah
Jews	wise	Arabia	Gold	nations
star	men	Felix	Frankincense	Herod
east	baby	Gaspar	myrrh	kill
worship	Jesus	Melchior	kingship	Bethlehem

(Solutions on page 27)

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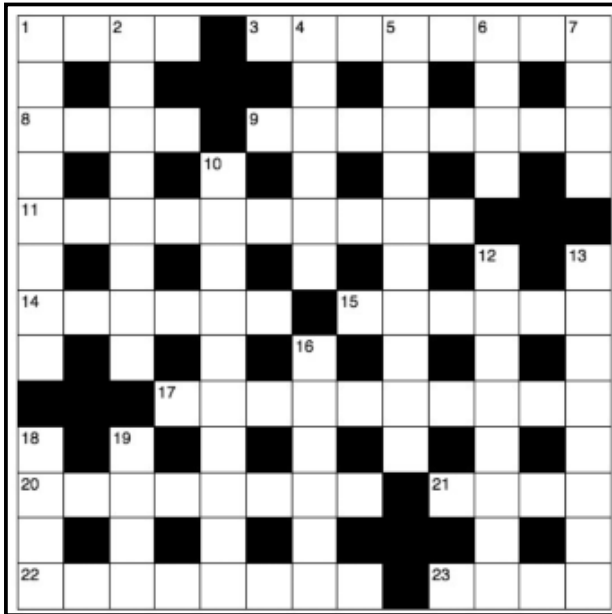
JANUARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- 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)

(Solutions on page 28)



The Vision clear

Child's eyes to see, child's ears to hear –
 God grant to me that vision clear.
 Grant me the sight of heaven and earth –
 Quiet rest at night, day's glorious mirth.
 Help me to hear those little things,
 Faint, far and clear, rememberings.
 So I may learn fully to praise
 Thee for my life of happy days.

By J M Westrup

ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



Letter from St James the Least of All –

On New Year's resolutions for 2020

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your New Year resolution of getting up at 4am and devoting the first four hours every day to private prayer and meditation does you credit – although I am not entirely certain you will get past the first week. I, too, make an annual resolution; this year it is to become more tolerant of my parishioners.

I intend to become more tolerant of our deputy organist Mrs Ffrench. If we have a four verse hymn, the dear lady is almost guaranteed either to play three or five verses. If the former, I always have to be prepared to start singing the final verse myself, while the congregation tags along several words behind and our organist gamely, and entirely unsuccessfully, tries to find out where we are up to; if the latter, then we all meekly sing the final verse a second time.

I intend to become more tolerant of our team who assemble the parish magazine. Copies are generally put together with the pages in a random order, generally with one sheet upside down. One month, we will have 50 copies too few and those who fail to receive one behave as though their lives will be forever after entirely ruined, and the next month, we will have 50 copies too many, whereupon people complain about the wanton destruction of the Amazonian rainforest.

I will be more tolerant of Lady Trotter who always arrives for our Sunday 8am Service 10 minutes late. While we are piously at prayer, she slams the north door, shakes her umbrella over the floor, ensuring that the first person to leave will slide and break a leg, wishes the sidesman a cheery “good morning”, collects – and drops – her Service books, clumps up the aisle in her steel tipped brogues, tells some unfortunate worshipper that they must move as they are sitting in her

pew and then, after dropping her books a second time, removing her mackintosh, fumbling for a kneeler and volubly asking the entire congregation where we are up to in the Service, gives me a nod to tell me that I may proceed with divine worship.

I intend to be more tolerant of our neighbour and aggressive atheist who invariably decides that Mattins is the ideal time to use his chainsaw in the garden, that the annual garden fete is just the right day for having a bonfire and who sends me a monthly letter of several pages, including footnotes, proving that my magazine editorial is entirely wrong.

I intend to ... on reflection, perhaps I may decide on an alternative resolution for the New Year.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



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The Rev Michael Burgess begins a series on animals and birds as seen in art and scripture

GOD AND THE ARTS

By the Rev Michael Burgess

‘He gave us eyes to see them’: ‘The Peaceable Kingdom’ by Edward Hicks

St Francis’ Canticle of the Sun invites all creatures to praise God the Creator. But we live in a world of climate change and global warming. A thousand species are at risk of extinction in the United Kingdom alone. The richness of creation St Francis knew in his day is no longer. We need to heed the urgent call to care for the biodiversity of our planet and its richness in plant and animal life. This year we shall be looking at animals and birds - their grace and strength, their beauty and wonder - as reflected in art and scripture, and so learn to value the glory of Creation all around us.



Isaiah in chapter 11 had a vision of a special child who would bring paradise to the earth once more. He spoke of a world where the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid. It is the theme of ‘The Peaceable Kingdom’ by the American Quaker artist, Edward Hicks. This subject occupied all his artistic talent for he painted almost a hundred versions. Sixty

still exist and this one is from 1834.

The foreground is occupied by not just one child, but several. They are innocent and free, playing with the animals around - lion, tiger, leopard, bear, wolf, cow and lamb. There is no sign of ‘nature red in tooth and claw’ here. All is peace and tranquillity. The bear and cow nudge each other in the bottom corner with no fear. That peaceful co-existence is echoed in the distance with William Penn and other Quakers working on a treaty with the Indians. The animals in the

foreground symbolise the human traits we see at work in the background: leadership and power, sensitivity and gentleness.

Edward Hicks as he worked on later versions knew that this peace was not a straightforward achievement. Selfishness, pride and greed got in the way. But the vision remained. Follow the inner light of God's grace, he is saying in his art, and that harmony can be achieved. Cherish the world around and give thanks for its rich variety and colour. Then we can follow Edward Hicks and St Francis in caring for 'all creatures great and small.'

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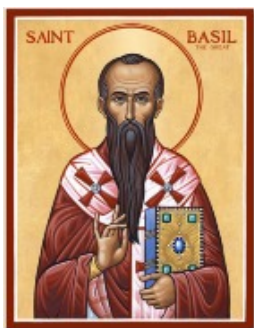

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2 January St Basil the Great: champion of the Church



Basil was most people's idea of the perfect diocesan bishop. He was a theologian of distinction, who as a monk devoted himself to much prayer and teaching. He leapt to the defence of the Church from the persecution of the Arian emperor Valens, but also appreciated great secular literature of the time, gave away his inheritance to the poor, knew how to run a soup kitchen, and counted thieves and prostitutes among his converts. Not your everyday bishop!

Basil (c330-79) came from a distinguished and pious family, and he had the best education available at Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens. He decided to become a monk with Gregory of Nazianzus, and settled as a hermit near Neo-Caesarea. He became bishop of Caesarea in 370, with 50 suffragan bishops to look after. It was the time of the great Arian heresy, and Basil would come to be seen as one of the great champions of the Church, defending it from secular encroachments.

Basil loved his people – and was known for his generosity and care for the poor – both through food and medical care. He was a great preacher – preaching both morning and evening to vast congregations, and organising services of psalms before daybreak.

He was interested in monastic legislation, and to this day, nearly all monks and nuns of the Greek Church follow his rule. His emphasis was on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual work, rather than on solitary asceticism. His rule allowed for almsgiving, hospitals and guest-houses. Basil wrote some important works on the Holy Spirit.

He died at 49, worn out by austerities, hard work and disease. He was so loved that even strangers mourned his death, and in the centuries that followed, many artists painted pictures of him. His cult spread rapidly in the West, through Greek monks in Italy and through St Benedict admitting that his rule had been inspired by “our holy father Basil.”

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS: 1, Cock. 3, Shackles. 8, Play. 9, Paradise. 11, Faithfully. 14, Enmesh. 15, Unseen. 17, Armageddon. 20, Benjamin. 21, Beri. 22, Capitals. 23, USPG.

DOWN: 1, Cup of tea. 2, Charisma. 4, Heap up. 5, Challenged. 6, Lois. 7, Slew. 10, The Servant. 12, Lewdness. 13, Unending. 16, Daniel. 18, BBFC. 19, Snap



LIKE SHEEP

There are quite a few sheep in the Bible, in fact they are mentioned over 500 times! They were kept for their meat and wool, their skins were made into clothing and tents, and even their horns were used as musical instruments.

Sheep were an important part of everyday life and Jesus used everyday things in his stories to help people understand. One time, Jesus explained just how important children are and he said

'If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one is lost, doesn't he leave the 99 and go and look for the lost sheep?' And you can bet that all the people listening to Jesus were nodding their heads and saying, 'Yes, that's what we would do!' You can read this story, or parable, in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 18, verses 10 to 14.



A WHOLE LOT OF?

A group of sheep are called a flock: do you know what to call a whole lot of...

1. lions?
2. gulls?
3. stairs?
4. bees?
5. grapes?
6. asteroids?
7. actors?
8. fish?
9. lorries?
10. kangaroos?



(Answers at the bottom of the page)



Where do sheep go on holiday?

The Baahaamas!

What keeps sheep warm in winter?

Central bleating!



1. a pride 2. a colony 3. a flight 4. a swarm 5. a bunch 6. a belt 7. a cast 8. a school 9. a convoy 10. a mob

Answers:

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

-

Weddings

-

Burials

-

Interment of ashes

-

Year's mind for January 2019

THE BOTHY

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THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY - POINTS OF CONTACT

Team Rector for the Bexley Team:

Reverend Ren Harding

renharding@hotmail.co.uk

01322 528923

07836644782

Associate Priest:

Reverend Sue Twynam (from 19 January)

susantwynam@btconnect.com

07952 468127

For enquiries concerning St John the Evangelist, Bexley

website www.stjohnsbexley.org

Churchwardens:

Julia Wickham

julia.wickham1@ntlworld.com

01322 556696

Janine Wooster

janinewooster@aol.com

07885700334

For enquiries concerning St Mary the Virgin, Bexley website

www.stmarysbexley.co.uk

CONTACT the Team Vicar: Reverend Clive Wood (from 19 January)

revclivewood@gmail.com

07982 392809

For enquiries concerning St Barnabas, Joydens Wood website

www.joydenswoodchurch.co.uk

email - joydenswoodchurch@virginmedia.com

CONTACT the Team Rector

For enquiries concerning St James, North Cray

website www.stjamesnorthcray.org.uk/

CONTACT the Team Rector

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