



roundabout



The Parish Magazine of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane with St. Luke's Church, Bromley Common

50p

Issue 518 December 2020

HOPE

As we reflect on this past year, I think I can safely say that this was not the year we were expecting. All the plans we had made, all the celebrations we were anticipating, maybe the joys we were hoping to share with others unexpectedly came to a sudden halt. Some events we have been able to roll over to 2021/2022, but of course other specific things may have been lost forever. Our everyday lives have changed in ways that we would never have contemplated, from the way we grieve, the way we love, the way we work, to the way we care. For some it has been a time to learn of self-resilience we never knew we had, for others it has been a time of despondency and despair, yet I guess for most of us it has been a mixture of both, depending on the circumstances we face at the time.



However, throughout this year we have seen some amazing acts of selflessness from those on the front line of this pandemic, willing to do all they can in making people well again. Though sadly, this has not always been possible as many have died and continue to die from this disease. Our thoughts and prayers are continually with their families and friends. Others by their actions have show what can be achieved in the face of adversity, Sir Captain Tom Moore along with many others has been a prime example of that.

Hope as we have experienced this year, can sometimes feel in short supply, and although it may not seem like it, this is nothing new throughout the history of the world. So, where can we find hope and inspiration? Well, we can look to the scientists who have made great progress in finding a vaccine and we pray that their hard work comes to fruition.

However, as a Christian I would argue that as we enter this time of Advent and Christmas, we come face to face with the embodiment of hope in the presence of a baby born in a small hamlet called Bethlehem just a few miles from Jerusalem. This vulnerable baby born in a stable brings with him the fulfilment of God's promise to the world, that at its essence we see God becoming human, understanding our pain, our anguish and our joy; a God that is not distant, but a God of relationship, wanting to be part of our lives. His transforming presence affords to us his love and his peace so that ours lives maybe enriched through the generosity of his most precious gift his son Jesus Christ. So, let hope this Christmas not be lost, but born again as we gaze upon the baby born in a stable heralding God's love for humankind.

Finally, whatever bubble you may find yourself in, I wish you a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

God Bless

Revd Steve Spencer

Revd Steve Spencer - Vicar



The Roundabout team wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and New Year

**As members of St. Augustine's with St. Luke's, we seek to follow Jesus' command
— to share God's love with our community.**

We Will Not Forget Them



On Remembrance Day Vicar Steve and Curate Rachel read out the names of the over 200 parishioners who lost their lives in the two World Wars before the two minute silence was observed. It was not as we had hoped to commemorate the fallen , but we shall never forget them

An Advent Reflection



“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it”

(John chapter 1 verse 5)

During Advent, each morning when I wake up, one of the first things I do is turn on this little ceramic window star light. I am not someone who likes harsh light first thing in the morning! Over the years our children have been woken up in different ways with light. One likes a lamp switched on on the landing, and the bedroom door left ajar. Another used to prefer the curtains to be slightly opened. The third liked the bedroom to be flooded with the main light turned on and the last child preferred to be left well alone, (he would rather the daylight gradually filtered in until he became aware that the day had begun!).

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” and that if we follow him we will not walk in darkness. It is a wonderful thing to wake up to Christ’s light and have him shine into our dark situations. But God also understands that we are all unique and become aware of him in different ways and at different times. Some of us let a shaft of his light into our lives bit by bit, others prefer a sudden, bright revelation and others still may take much time - maybe even years - to wake up to how much God loves us. The key message is not *how* we wake up, nor *when* we wake up to God... but *THAT* we wake up to him, and allow his glorious light to filter (or flood) into our lives.

May Christ’s light bless you and your loved ones this Christmas.

Rachel Winn, Curate

Bromley Food Bank

On 19 December an army of volunteers will collect 150 Christmas hampers from St Augustine's church and deliver them to homes in our BR2 area. The contents have been assembled from donations by local supermarkets as well as individuals and groups who regularly support the food bank.

After the Christmas festivities are over, January is often the hardest month and the Food Bank will welcome donations of long life milk and fruit juices, custard, rice pudding, jam, squash, packets of mashed potato and cold meats and biscuits. Household and personal items include detergent, shampoo for women and men, men's deodorant and shower gel, and nappies sizes 5 and 6.

The foodbank box outside St Augustine's vicarage will be emptied every night and your donations taken to the distribution hub.



Bromley Brighter Beginnings

This amazing charity was set up almost 10 years ago by a small group of friends, who wished to pass on their preloved baby items. It was started with welfare concern and appreciation of the luxuries that these friends had to make life with a new baby easier. Initially the referrals were for baby items only, but the Trustees have set up the Bed for Every Child Campaign, School Uniforms for All, and more recently have supported the Marcus Rashford campaign for school meals.

The charity has grown phenomenally, completing over 300 referrals a year and this year has seen a 30% increase in referrals.

Volunteering is a way of giving back and being part of a charity that can provide goods to support the children. These families live in dire situations and are only just managing. It is heart wrenching seeing the homes these families live in and learning about what they have overcome but seeing the emotional joy is unique.

For more information on how to donate or volunteer visit www.bromleybrighterbeginnings.org.uk

Helen Scothern

Henry is 7 years old and one year into treatment for Leukaemia

Last year I met Jo, who is a Manager at Lewisham NHS. She has set up a staff running club. Following the success of the Lewisham Choir, the Trust realised that it needed to improve staff welfare, hence the lunchtime run club. But Jo focused on those who don't run and started doing beginners' groups. This, along with the choir, became the London Marathon's focus for creating support for those slower runners/walkers. I foolishly volunteered to be a back marker with them. No running required, just walking. I signed up in March, had plantar fasciitis, but hey I could walk 26 miles the following month, couldn't I? Then Coronavirus came No Marathon, phew (?) but no, there was to be a virtual one. Lewisham planned to walk a local route; would I still like to join? I am never ever likely to run a Marathon, the Petts Wood 10k is my limit. My bicycle is my favourite form of exercise. I would rather cycle 100 miles than run anywhere. I was tempted by the thought that if I completed this I would have a genuinely nice London Marathon Medal. It was not a difficult choice, having watched Henry and his family struggle this last year. He has been so sick, but he has always smiled and been a superhero.

All I needed to do was walk 26 miles. That, it turns out, is an exceptionally long way. Seven hours of walking around Lewisham, into London, along to Greenwich and back. It was beyond wet, but we talked, ate chocolate and behind the scenes my friends donated £800 to the Chartwell Children's Cancer Trust.



Helen Scothern



**'It came upon a
midnight clear...'**

**Betty Dawson remembers an
unusual Christmas.**

In 1979 my mother died – the last of that generation of grandparents who spent Christmases with us. So this year would be different.

Richard was 21, Madeleine just 20 and Peter 16, so they had opinions! Madeleine had spent the last two summer vacations helping out at a little drama festival at Shilstone, a manor on the edge of Dartmoor, and had received a warm invitation to spend Christmas in one of the cottages. Suddenly this seemed possible. We still find it hard to believe that my husband Dickie agreed. Home, for him, was obviously always the best place to be and driving to Dartmoor in December was not a good idea; but two days before Christmas, we went. Our experiences were mixed. The cottage was very simple and very chilly and lighting the fire produced clouds of smoke. But in the morning, the sun shone, and we walked down the Teign Valley on the Hunter's Path across the contours below Castle Drogo, looking across at the shadowed woodlands opposite with the birches all smoky purple. The café at Fingle Bridge was unsurprisingly closed, but we walked home on the Fisherman's Path beside the river, feeling triumphant. We had an invitation to Christmas dinner at Shilstone; but before that, we were going to the Midnight service at Drewsteignton, about three miles away.

With sunset, the frost closed down and every road was icy. Dickie announced that he was staying home with a whiskey, but after a splendid family 'discussion', he agreed to trust his 21-year-old son with the car and the four of us set off. There were, of course, long hills and as we edged our way down one, we looked to our left where the lights of cars negotiating a parallel route suddenly checked. Headlights swept in a great arc across the sky. We slithered to a stop, but soon saw other cars gathering to help. Plenty of other people had braved the cold and the church was an island of light and music. Afterwards, we stepped out and paused to feel the stillness as voices faded, cars departed, and lights disappeared. In Bromley, of course, we never experienced that silent darkness. The night was clear. Every star pulsed and throbbed with life and just for a few minutes time stopped, and I was one of the shepherds, out on the hills, watching. We drove home safely to a relieved Dickie, hot drinks and bed; but every Christmas I go back in memory to Drewsteignton – to silence and darkness and the star world reaching out to draw us in.



Betty Dawson



**We miss you on the Christmas
Journey...**

At this time of year we would usually be welcoming to St Augustine's the Second Years from local Primary schools to our Christmas Journey, where we introduce them to the characters in the Nativity. For some children, this is the first experience of a church and of the true meaning behind Christmas.

Let's take a moment to remember them in our prayers.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the children and teachers in our local schools. Open their eyes and ears that they might experience the excitement of the first Christmas, the songs of the angels and the joy of the shepherds. Let your Holy Spirit rest on these schools that they may be places of love and truth, where the weak are made strong, and the poor become rich. For your greater glory. Amen.

Alan Mitchell

Eric and Rhena Clouston are our Church Mission Society partners in Bangalore, India and they have had a year of change. They write:



The government has chosen this time to tighten its controls on the voluntary sector and Amnesty International have had to abandon operations here. We were therefore relieved when an application for our church, Wellspring, to be registered as a trust was approved. In September our new pastoral leader Nick, who has multiple Indian languages, began preparing our socially distanced outreach for Christmas. Eric is leading a course of 25 students on New Testament Greek, focusing on John's gospel. Mental health has become more of an issue here and Rhena is working on a CMS project putting together a 'self-care toolkit' which can be accessed via Instagram and Facebook.

Two CMS gap-year students, Emilia and Lucy, have been staying with us for six months, and after several delays, managed to fly back to the UK in August. Rhena, Kitty and Sam were already there as Kitty is now living with her godmother in preparation for starting a Masters at Cambridge after Christmas. Sam began his first year reading computer science at York, but after only two weeks, two of his housemates went down with Covid-19.

We pray that through these uncertainties and challenges, God will provide us with the true hope that comes in Christ.

All Creatures Great and Small

During the past few months I have spent a lot of time watching animals. No I haven't bought a puppy or a kitten, not even a hamster. Wildlife large and small has caught my attention. It started with the wonderful Blue Planet series, all now safely recorded to be watched again and again. It is very soothing listening to David Attenborough.

Some programmes follow particular families of animals for years. A group of ladies have been following a herd of elephants for over 30 years. One of their most poignant scenes was of a giant elephant gently using her foot to stroke the body of her dead sister.

Sadly a lot of programmes feature animals that are being killed for their body parts. Hunting for ivory and rhino horn is well known. Now many oriental medicines contain the body parts of other animals which are being hunted to extinction. Fortunately there are organisations raising funds to rescue animals and raise them in sanctuaries and zoos, so their species can be saved.

At the end of these programmes I am left in awe of all the people involved in making these films. So much time and patience is spent miles away from creature comforts. They are also so ingenious in how they hide cameras in all kinds of mock animals and hard to reach places. It must be hard to watch their cameras get broken by over-friendly animals investigating the 'newcomers'.

Watching any kind of nature programme serves as a reminder that 'the Lord God made them all'.

Ann Hanrahan



Covid 19 Christmas 2020!



In a few short weeks we will be celebrating Christmas again. It seems to have come round fast again this year and I am far from ready. Only a few presents have been bought, cards are as yet unwritten and as for anything else, well as you can imagine, there is still so much to do.

Thirteen years ago, things were so different as we awaited the arrival of our own special Christmas present; A Little Girl I Know. I was organised. Cards were bought, written and posted early, presents bought and wrapped and, in most cases, delivered. My hospital bag packed and placed close to the front door ready to run at a moment's notice.

This year with another lockdown due to Covid-19, my plans to shop for presents seem to have been put into disarray. All I can do is to write the cards, make lists of ideas and wait for the shops to reopen.

2020 has taken so much away from us. Some friends have lost loved ones, many shops have shut, some for ever, all victims of Corona. For me personally it has been strange not to set foot inside our church since March. Even as a child when on our family holiday we still had to attend the Sunday morning service wherever we were staying. I recall many mornings at Sunday School, in Coventry Cathedral whilst visiting my Great Aunt and Uncle and at other times in old country churches, where, when our family of four turned up, we almost doubled the congregation!

This year I have enjoyed watching the Sunday morning Zoom services from our church whilst enjoying a good cup of black coffee and some toast. No more that rush that we often experienced to get to church for 10am.

A Little Girl told me recently that they had been talking at school about saying thank you to each and to God. She got me thinking as is often the case. Later that day I saw this quotation and felt it a very apt way to finish. A reminder to us all to be grateful as Christmas is so much more than presents and turkey. A reminder that another baby entered the world at this time of year. Jesus was, and continues to be, our light in this sometimes difficult world.

'Maybe this year is not the year to get everything you want, but the year to appreciate what you have.'

A happy and blessed Christmas and New Year to you all.



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A Lovely Little Church

Just before the second lockdown we went on holiday to a small village outside Salisbury. I have never been to Salisbury before, but I knew that my grandmother had been born there. Having time on our hands lately, my daughter has been researching into my family history on my grandmother's side, using the website ancestry.co.uk. Imagine my surprise when she found that my great grandmother came from a nearby village to where we were staying. It's a small village called Barford St Martin with a lovely little church. We decided to visit it, as it was so near, but waited for the weather to be better. On further research we found that three generations of my family were married in the little church.

When we eventually visited the village we were delighted to find that the church was open. It is usually closed, but just for those few minutes the churchwarden had popped in to collect something. How lucky was that! I can't describe the feeling as I stood in that church, thinking of all of my ancestors who had stood there before me. My granddaughter couldn't understand why I was so excited about 'dead people' but for me it was the highlight of my holiday.



Sue Goodger

News from Mwaikisabe in Kondoa in Tanzania

Nigel Pope

A new Catechiste (assistant minister), Amani, has finished his studies at the Bible College in Kondoa and has gone to work in our link parish in Mwaikisabe. He is married to Ester and they have seven children.

Pastor John Sinde and family are happily installed in the new pastor's house and Amani and family are living in the original house .

It is Amani's first post and we wish him well.

Pastor John is clearly enjoying delivering his message at a recent wedding!



We were sent pictures of a wedding at Mwaikisabe parish – the couple are called Neema and Augustine.



An Advent Trail to find the real meaning of Christmas

This is an opportunity for all people of all ages to walk around the roads between St Luke's and St Augustine's and spot one of the twenty-four numbered Advent Trail boards in the front gardens of some of our parishioners. Each board has a numbered text, relating to the Christmas story, to record on your Advent Trail leaflet, which is available to download on our website.

This is a community outreach event so do involve your friends and neighbours.



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Services for Christmas 2020

Sunday 20 th December 6pm - Music and Words	-	Zoom Service
Christmas Eve 2pm – Christingle	-	Zoom Service
Christmas Eve 8pm – Christmas Mass	-	St Augustine’s & Zoom
Christmas Day 10.30am - Zoom Service	-	Zoom Service
Sunday 27 th December 9am said Communion	-	St Augustine’s
10am Zoom Service	-	Zoom Service

**Find all the words in the list below.
They can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal**

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| ADVENT | GIFT |
| ANGEL | JESUS |
| BETHLEHEM | JOSEPH |
| CANDLE | MARY |
| CHRISTINGLE | NATIVITY |
| CHRISTMAS | PREPARING |
| CRIB | STABLE |
| GABRIEL | WREATH |

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ROUNDAABOUT

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 The **February 2021** issue will be published on the St. Augustine’s and St Luke’s website.
 Editor: **Mary Plummer** (maryaplummer@hotmail.com), Layout: **Karen Palmer** kajpal@live.com
Please send all articles in plain unformatted text and all photos separate from the text.

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