



Roundabout



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

Issue 545 December 2023

Celebration

In a few short weeks many of us will find ourselves seated around a table with family and friends sharing turkey and all the trimmings. There may well be the odd glass of wine, even a party hat from a Christmas cracker on our heads. Depending on your tradition there might be empty boxes littering the lounge or presents still wrapped under the tree, waiting for hands to rip off the highly decorated wrapping paper. All in all, our Christmas celebration will be one that has become by and large the accepted face of Christmas in 21st century Britain. This is a far cry from the Christmas experience of only a few generations ago. Our grandparents' and especially our great grandparents' expectations of Christmas would have been far less lavish, where maybe an orange and a piece of coal was not far from the truth. So, the question I ask of myself and of our society is, is it wrong to expect Christmas to be framed by the TV adverts of our big supermarkets or should the austerity of Christmas past be more in keeping with what many perceive as a special time of year?



First and foremost, Christmas is a time for celebrating the birth of a child, that special moment when life breath is taken for the first time. Some two thousand years ago, as this child breathed its first breath, it was the moment when God became visible to the world. Yet there was no great fanfare, no balloons with 'Baby Boy' written on them, no flowers delivered to the mother. Instead this birth was in a stable surrounded by animals in a small backwater hamlet called Bethlehem. Not many people noticed, just the odd shepherd, yet this child would change our understanding of God forever.

So should we celebrate? Yes, we should, for something as momentous as God's expression of love for the world, that he gave us his only son, must never be forgotten. Therefore, it's about how we celebrate Christmas, reminding ourselves and the world that if love through his son Jesus Christ is the greatest gift God can give, then it must be the greatest gift we can give also. We need to reflect in this generation a love that changes the world; a love that brings peace, a love that brings reconciliation, a love that changes lives. Then, truly, we celebrate Christmas.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas and New Year from all at St Augustine's with St Luke's.

Yours in Christ

Revd Steve Spencer

Revd Steve Spencer - Vicar

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



December Diary 2023

Sunday Services

Sunday 3rd December 10am Café Church	St Augustine's Church (1 Cor. 1: 3-9, Mark 13: 24-37)
Sunday 10 December 10am Holy Communion 5.30pm Advent Reflection Worship with Taizé chants	St Augustine's Church (2 Peter 3: 8-15a, Mark 1: 1-8) St Luke's Church
Sunday 17 December 10am Morning Worship 5pm Carol Service	St Augustine's Church (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Matt. 11: 2-19) St Augustine's Church
Sunday 24 December 10am Holy Communion 4pm Christingle 8pm Christmas Mass	St Augustine's Church (Romans 16, 25-27, Luke 1: 26-38) St Augustine's Church St Luke's Church
Monday 25 December 10am Christmas Worship (optional Holy Communion)	St Augustine's Church (Titus 2: 11-14, Luke 2: 1-14)
Sunday 31 December 10am Holy Communion	St Augustine's Church (Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2: 15-21)

Mid Week Advent Services

COMPLINE with Reflection: Tuesday 5th December, St Augustine's Chapel, at 7.30pm
Tuesday 12th December, St Augustine's Chapel, at 7.30pm
Tuesday 19th December, St Augustine's Chapel, at 7.30pm

Mid Week Holy Communion Service

Wednesday 13th December (final Midweek HC of 2023), St Augustine's Chapel, at Midday

Special Events for Christmas at 7.30pm

'Hot Chocolate on the Green:' Wednesday 13th December, from 3.00pm, on St Augustine's Green

'Christmas at Chatterton' with CTiBC (Churches Together in Bromley Common): From 3.00pm, outside the Co-Op... Festive family fun, Carols, mulled wine and mince pies

'Carols on St Augustine's Green' From 3.00pm. Come and sing favourite Carols and enjoy mulled wine and mince pies on St Augustine's Church green

CAMEO Christmas Party: Thursday 21st December 2.00pm. Enjoy Christmas activities and food with friends (...more mince pies!) in St Augustine's Garden Room.

The 10.00 am service will also be live streamed on our You Tube channel, www.st-augustine's.org.uk
To book a room at St. Augustine's, contact Liz Carter on 020 8467 8155.
To book St. Luke's Hall, contact the Church Office on 020 8295 1550.
Contact details for all church groups are on our website www.st-augustine's.org.uk
Our vicar Steve Spencer can also be contacted at revsteve.spencer@btinternet.com

Well done.....

to our Top of the Pew quartet, who won this year's competition. It was an interesting – if nail biting – evening as they played against St Barnabas, Beckenham.

Twelve rounds covered a wide variety of subjects. The food

and drink round revealed that both teams knew more about chocolate and sweets than fruit!



Thank you to Liz Carter, Andrew Gurney, Lucy Adcock and Richard Jones for their brainpower and continued dedication to the quiz. £743 was raised for this year's charity, Every Breath, which supports those with lung cancer and their families.

Ann Hanrahan

Friends of Jubilee Country Park – Dates for your Diary



Thursday 28 December– Winter Walk in Jubilee Country Park at 10.30am.

Join John Bruce for a post-Christmas walk to see the flora of the park in winter.

Meet at **Blackbrook Lane car park, BR1 2TW** (next to the entrance to Bromley High School). The walk should last about an hour. Please wear footwear suitable for rough or muddy terrain. Well behaved dogs are welcome!

Saturday 13 January 2024 – Walk to see the birds of Jubilee Country Park at 8.30am.

Please meet in **Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood**

BR5 1BY for a walk led by Peter Smart of Bromley RSPB. Peter is an expert in the birds of Jubilee Park, so it will be both very interesting and informative. Amongst the birds we could see are great tits, long-tailed tits, chaffinches and maybe winter visitors such as redwings.

The walk should last about two hours. Please leave dogs at home.

Saturday 20 January – Meet the Friends - Social Event from 2pm to 4pm

Join us in the **Garden Room of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley**

BR2 8AT. A special social event to thank you all for your support. Come along to meet some of our wonderful volunteers and find out all about our work and the future plans for the park, including the new orchard. Enjoy complimentary refreshments and fun activities for children. Free entry, everyone is welcome!

Made Visible Exhibition transfers to the RSA!



Thank you to everyone who supported 2makeit's recent exhibition of art, photographs and poetry at Friends House. The very good news is that the show is to transfer to quite a prestigious venue early in 2024. The Made Visible Exhibition will run at the Royal Society of Arts, just off The Strand, from 4th to 17th January!

As before, the exhibition features artists who suffer from labels that often hold them back ('homeless' 'offender' 'unemployed'). Each piece will be exhibited without labels, bringing out hidden talent to be.....'Made Visible'.

The RSA (or to give it its full name: The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) was founded in 1754 by a group of Enlightenment thinkers led by William Shipley for members to pool their subscription funds to be spent on initiatives for the public good. Since then the RSA has had a notable history, being behind the Royal Designers for Industry, the Great Exhibition and, more recently, the driving force for many innovative projects for significant social impact. RSA House continues to be the focal point for the RSA's work and it is a great opportunity for 2makeit to be invited to be part of this tradition via the Made Visible Exhibition.



I hope that some of you will be able to see the show!

Philip Emery

Director, 2makeit

Our Knitted Blankets



At the end of November I had the enjoyable task of delivering our knitted blankets to the church in Lee that welcomes our beautiful handiwork. I have been storing them since last Christmas and was able to deliver 28 single blankets, 11 cot blankets, 7 pram blankets and 40 knitted hats. The Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter, Lee runs a food bank as a joint project with AFRIL - a small local charity that helps refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in the community. They are currently supporting 35 families. They were absolutely thrilled with our gifts.

Thank you so much to all our knitters and crocheters who continue to produce squares for us to make into blankets. Thanks also to Tanya who sews all the squares together and crochets around each blanket. She has also knitted the children's hats and many of the blankets this year. It is lovely to be able to help others in this way, especially at Christmas and as the weather turns colder. Keep knitting.

Sue Goodger

Christmas Message

Christmas is coming – again. Will your Christmas be the same as last year? Is there an extra person or a new baby in your family? Or have you lost someone close to you, or your job, or your home? Our physical circumstances play a major role in how we view life and Christmas can be the hardest time of year.

Some time ago I remember visiting a gallery, looking at early Renaissance paintings, which included ‘The Annunciation’ by Botticelli. It draws you in. The

Archangel Gabriel greets Mary; the colours and perspective are very beautiful. It is not surprising that it is a go-to choice for Christmas cards.



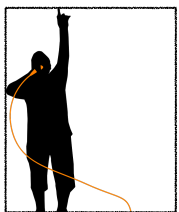
A few rooms away in the same gallery was another image evoking the opposite response; it was hard to look at. The composition was hundreds of cut up photos of people identified in the Forbes List of the richest people in the world. The message of God’s love coming to earth in the first picture challenges us, as Christians, to share that love;

otherwise it remains just a beautiful image.

Some of my friends are very organised about Christmas and buy their cards in the January sales. This may be a good idea, but I am not ready on dark January days to join them in this pursuit. Sifting through charity brochures and visiting quirky art shops and other churches to buy cards, are part of my Christmas preparation. Every year the choice gets more bewildering; the images may change but God’s love never does.

Mary Plummer

The Roundabout team of Sue, Ann, Adrian, Lorna, Mary, Karen, Jacky and Tanya wish all our readers a Happy Christmas.



New traditions

Last Christmas, thanks to Covid, my grandson (who is a big rap fan) could only join us for lunch on Zoom. In his honour I composed the following rap ‘Grace’. This has to be performed with attitude: try it on the 25th!

GRACE

*God sent his son, born in a stable
And gave us food to put on our table.
He gave us turkey, spuds and a Yorkie,
Pigs-in-blankets, pink and porkie.
We thank you Lord, that we can say,
“Merry Christmas and a Happy Birthday.”*

Sheila Griffin

I love it when a plan comes together!



During the weeks leading up to the birth of A Little Girl I Know my lovely midwife Frances became a frequent visitor. It was always a joy to see her, to hear stories of other local arrivals, and to just sit down for a bit knowing that things would be very different once the baby arrived.

One afternoon she phoned me. "Are you at home?" she asked. I resisted the temptation to say, "I've just answered the house phone so I guess I am". Before long the kettle was boiling, her regular cuppa ready, and our seats beside the computer taken. The purpose of her visit on that occasion was for her to help me to write my Birth Plan, something I had not come across before. I had been putting off doing it, but as my due date was fast approaching and we were both premature babies the need was now urgent.

As the due dates came and went it was becoming clear that our baby was quite happy to stay inside me for a bit longer. My hospital bag was packed and ready by the front door to grab day or night when things started to happen. When I visited the hospital for another scan the decision was made to admit me and get things moving. Where was my bag? Yes, you are right - at home by the front door!

Once booked into the hospital the midwife took my Birth Plan away. I read it again as I packed my bag ready to leave two days after the arrival of 'A Little Girl I Know', just in time for Christmas. In it I had asked that as we had chosen names for the baby, I had wanted her father to tell me who we had by their name. Even that didn't work. I did however manage to reduce the staff in the Operating Theatre into fits of giggles as I said in a slightly exasperated tone, "There's only one place to look!" Once the midwife had stopped laughing, she told me that we had a perfect little girl using her name for the very first time.

As we look forward to the greatest birth in history of God's own Son, may we remember to give thanks for all the children we know and love, praying that following our example they may grow up to love and follow Jesus every day.


A happy and blessed Christmas to you all.



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Year long celebrations of an 80th birthday

Being 80: 2nd Bromley Brownies celebrate through 2023

- January – Gang show with Scouts and birthday cake
- February – Family Race Night
- March – Challenges around the number 80
- April – Twit Twoo challenge badge
- May – Imaginary cruise for Brownie holiday
- June – Teddy Bears’ picnic
- July – Family fun with Birds of Prey demonstration
- August – Summer holidays task: to eat 80 ice creams/lollies
- September – Decorated T shirts
- October – Talent show and fact finding about 1943
- November – Unit fun day (In it to Win it)
- December – Pizza Express: making pizzas and eating them!

We have had a great year celebrating our special birthday and look forward to a few more years!!

Ruth Higginbottom (Leader)

FORGET ME NOT CAFE



Memory cafe for anyone with dementia, their families, carers and friends.

Where: The Garden Room
St. Augustine's Church
Southborough Lane
Bromley BR2 8AT

When: Third Tuesday in the month
between 1.30 – 3.30pm

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Common Currency

Long ago in the land of Pounds, Shillings and Pence, we had affectionate nick names for our smaller silver coins. Do you remember the 'Bob', the 'Tanner' and the 'Joey'? Such amusing names and I really miss them.



Pounds and Pence are such dull words. But, Lo, is there a ray of sunshine amidst the gloom? Is there a new, friendlier dawn awaiting us? Might we, perhaps, look forward to the new 50p coin being being dubbed a 'Snowman'?



Then, in view of the impeccable royal associations of a well known Peruvian Ursine, couldn't we use the name 'Paddington' for our much devalued Pound, as a sort of a 'Quid pro quo', while at the same time celebrating an important London landmark and a bear of considerable brain?

If the idea really catches on, we might see measurements given in Marmalade Sandwiches instead of London buses?

Whatever next? Are we going to carry on, Nero-like, fiddling with trivialities while the Earth goes up in flames, or will the so-called world leaders lay aside their egos and other dangerous toys, put their heads together and save it for all of us? Christmas would be a good time to start.

Adrian King

Follow the Advent Trails to find the real meaning of Christmas.

The Advent Trail
A trail to find the real Christmas...

1 Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth

Advent Trail 2023
Starting on December 3rd...

For the last three years our Advent Trails have appeared at the beginning of Advent on boards in gardens and shop windows between St Luke's Church, Bromley Common and St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane. This year we are setting up two trails! The **GOLD** and **GREEN** Trails are both the same but are in different locations around the Parish. Those who complete the trail will find a gift at the end!

To get a trail leaflet with questions and locations for the Advent Trail go to: www.st-augustines.org.uk or phone 0208 2951550

ROUNDABOUT December issue: Editor Ann Hanrahan
Layout Adrian King

The **February 2024** sue will be printed and published on the St. Augustine's and St Luke's website.
Editor: **Sue Goodger** - sue_goodger@ntlworld.com Layout: **Tanya Wardley** - tanya@wardleyuk.com
Please send all articles in absolutely plain, unformatted text and all photos separate from the text by January 23

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