

december 2020

Living in
hope



grapevine

50p

the magazine of st mary's church rushden
& st peter's newton bromswold

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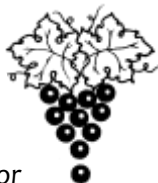
As promised this is only the first part of our deep winter grapevine offering - the January 2021 edition will be available before New Year.

The theme of 'Living in Hope' is lifted straight from Steve's circular email which keeps many of us in a comforting loop. He expands on it in his message on p4, and, as always seems to happen, the same message has burrowed into Bishop John's piece on p15. I couldn't resist jumping on the bandwagon at the last minute!

It's time to thank the many contributors to this magazine, the proofers and checkers, the wonderful printing team and the many distributors, and, not least, such a wonderfully receptive and responsive readership!

The grapevine team wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Jude Curtis, Editor



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*Items for the
January 2021 grapevine*

should be sent by

Sunday 13 December

Preferably by email to:
missjudecurtis@btinternet.com

From our Rector . . .

Recently, the good news was announced that medical researchers at a major pharmaceutical company have successfully tested a vaccine against Covid-19 that will begin to be rolled out to the most vulnerable beginning next month.



Another vaccine has been announced just today ¹. One medical researcher interviewed by the BBC put it that they *are confident that they have discovered a trail out of the woods – but we are still at the moment in the middle of the woods. We are nowhere near being out of the woods yet.*

I think that about sums things up. We are grateful to the many who have been working hard to develop this and other vaccines against this disease and yet, just over a week into the current lockdown, it feels that we have been here for a very long time.

For the follower of Jesus, this is not an unfamiliar dilemma! As God’s people, we are called to live between “the now and the not yet.” We are people of hope.

The Old Testament is full of stories of those struggling on in hope. All the way back to Genesis, we see Abraham, old and childless as he was, listening to God’s promise: “I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.” (Genesis 17.6) Abraham and his sons after him held on to this hope because of their trust in the faithfulness of the one who had made the promise.

David, the shepherd, poet and King, expressed his confidence in God’s protection and guidance:

“You are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.” (Psalm 25.5)

Even Job, facing calamity, tragedy and heartbreak — while he openly protests God’s treatment of him and pours out his grievances and complaints against God — acknowledges:

“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.” (Job 13.15)

We inhabit an often broken and dark world, but as followers of Jesus we have even more reason to continue to put our hope in God. We read at the beginning of John’s Gospel that “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Jesus is that light: misunderstood and rejected by the world. Despite everything, that light still shines out, clear and true. Even death could not extinguish its brilliance, as was proved on that first Easter morning. The promise of God in which we now hope is that all the earth will some day be flooded with the glorious brightness of Christ’s light and that all things will be made new. Until that time, although we live through storms and shadows, we are people of hope.

But we are not left only with histories and good examples. We also have Emmanuel—God with us. We have the presence of God in Christ, with us through his Holy Spirit. We know that he fills his church—his people—guiding and supporting us every step of the way.

The disaster of the coronavirus has badly affected many people, businesses and organisations; we live in a world that stands badly in need of hope. By living in the hope of Christ with us—Emmanuel—we can bring hope to others. And when they ask us why we are hopeful, we have the perfect opportunity to tell them.

People struggle with the idea of hope—because it is not a present reality. But that is the very nature of hope! “Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?” (Romans 8.24) When difficulties come, may we “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10.23) Live as people of hope; live hopefully in Christ Jesus, witnessing to the truth and power of Jesus in the world and in us.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15.13)

As we look behind on a hard year, and ahead to the New Year, let’s always remember to be people of hope.

Stephen

¹ As I write on 16 November.

Editorial



It was not an auspicious start today. Thirty pages of grapevine proofed and ready to go. These two pages : ominously, accusingly, blank.

I'm living in the hope that that will change soon - as it always does. And I'm living in the hope, as probably we all are, that I'll survive this episode of constraints and confusion we call 'lockdown'. I don't expect to emerge from it unchanged. Every life experience gets absorbed into who we become - whether we like it, deny it, fight it, or not. Nothing's wasted but it can't all be good. If we're living in hope then we *are* allowed to think ahead and beyond . . .

I might one day just see this as the time when my definition of security was having a spare tin of ground espresso coffee in the larder. I may have to accept that some of my 'normal' behaviours in lockdown were and are not entirely sane. For instance the production of smaller and smaller hand-knitted Christmas sweaters to hang as tree decorations. When I find myself attaching matching mittens less than 1/4" across I'll know it's time to stop.

And it's no good telling me I should get out more! I'm barely home long enough to craft the next batch of malted granary loaves!

I'm on a mission! A footpath mission - to find, plot, connect, explain, research, codify but, most importantly, to enjoy, the amazing network of paths that crisscross and lock together Rushden. Most of these I was unaware of as a child growing up here - but in those days my effort was stubbornly focused on escape.

It all started on a very small scale: just touching the entire boundary of Hall Park back in March. Then came the discovery of Tanglewood, then Wychwood [which meant re-reading Buchan's *Witch Wood*], then The Mallards Fishing Ponds and, finally, the idea of circumnavigating Rushden along the county and town boundaries.

The first try in October looked, on plan, more like a butterfly than a circle. And I cheated on the last bit when I took a skid on wet clay and jammed myself into the bottom section of the semi-stile in Reddings Close.

Last week's version is still not a true circle but definitely getting there and is nearly ten miles long.

Without leaving Rushden I've logged up over 870 miles since 23 March. I've spent hours searching and researching, backtracking, investigating and conferring with maps dating back to early modern history; talked at my front door - socially distanced of course - about 'Pig Lane', discovered 'The Black Path' and its [probable] connection to the slate quarry across the fields towards Chelveston. Losing a couple of stones in weight in the process and feeling the healthiest ever is just a bonus!

"Ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk it, and you will find rest for your souls". Jeremiah 6.16

I've absorbed the completely different character of the land on the Bedfordshire side of the circle bordering Wymington: exclusively arable, with its lack of substantial hedges, massive joined up fields and flat foreground to a distant horizon, compared to the Northamptonshire side with mixed arable/pastoral use, smaller, lusher and more irregular fields, better drainage, narrow lanes and many double hedges.

In the heart of Rushden I've found back doubles, re-entrant angles, hidden connections. I've blithely intruded into private Closes in search of a new cut-through: sometimes been terminally disappointed that there is no connection between, for instance, Balmoral Avenue and the newest development at the top of John Clark Way - which takes a huge bite out of my perfect circle.

None of the town maps do justice to any of this so I'm drawing a new one. Who would have thought you can walk through a perfect little wood at the back of the Saunders Lodge Industrial Estate or brave the By Pass Bridge to find The Black Path [complete with massive mushrooms] : all inside a double hedge of such astounding beauty it brought prickles to my eyes.

I'm mapping a joined-up-path Network that keeps you away from traffic, roads, fumes and 'civilisation'. It's definitely there: just needs unearthing. Very positively there is encouraging evidence of the county authorities paying proper respect to its infrastructure, with beautifully crafted mini-bridges, timber hand rails, stiles, gates and signage. Watch this space!

Jude Curtis, Editor

St Mary's News

A Note about December's services in Church [see p28]

As we go to press the UK is still in lockdown, and although that is due to end on December 2 what replaces it is not yet clear.

The Services planned for the Christmas/New Year period are therefore provisional - if we are able to meet in church a programme rather different from our action-planned 'normal' Christmas celebrations will go ahead. The services which have traditionally drawn large crowds at Christmas have been cancelled - specifically Christingle, the evening service of Lessons and Carols, the Live Nativity and Christmas Eve all age service. The Christmas Eve 'midnight' service is currently scheduled for 9.00pm [prior to the closing of the pubs!] The Christmas Day services will go ahead as normal as past attendances appear to indicate that we will be able to manage the number of people involved.

If there *are* changes you will be able to find details **online at stmaryschurchrushden.org**. Our thanks to everyone who has been working so hard to adjust to the new patterns and cope with the restrictions and continuing uncertainty.

Flower Rota

December 2020

We cannot predict if the church will be accessible in December so the arrangements below are provisional

Behind the Communion Table

- 6 Marion Bates
- 13 Cynthia Brown
- 20 Christmas. The Church will be decorated on 18 & 19
- 27 Christmas

Memorial Chapel

If we reopen in December the Memorial Chapel will be decorated for Christmas.

Decorating the church for Christmas

IF it is possible to decorate the Church for Christmas on **Friday 18 December** any help would be greatly appreciated! Please contact Ellen Inwood (312874) or the Church Office (412235) if you are able to help or need to know more.

St Mary's Church Office

While the Church Office is currently closed, messages may be left via email - stmaryschurchoffice@btinternet.com, or on the office phone [01933 412235] as these are checked every few days. Notices will be put on the

St Mary's News

church website and requests for posters will be fulfilled and put up in the porch and Church Hall.

For prayer requests, please phone or email Steve at the Rectory [312554 / sprior@toucansurf.com].

Sue Prior

Thank you ...

Brian and Val Hodgkin have written to thank everyone at St Mary's for their generous annual gift. They much appreciate the support which we give them. So far, all the family are keeping well even though Deb and Esther are working on the front line.

Congratulations!

... to **Anne Barfoot** who has recently celebrated her **Eightieth Birthday** and from **Colin Plunkett**, "I would like to thank all at St Marys for my lovely Eightieth birthday card and book which Anne Riley kindly delivered on Friday 6 November."

A Big Thank You

As Treasurers we would like to thank everyone who has continued to support St Mary's financially during this unusual year. Standing Orders and Direct Debits have been received automatically but we have been very pleased to receive lots of cheques and envelopes containing cash through the post and delivered by hand. We have also received

From the Registers

Wedding

**Zoë Jade McMahon &
James Bird**

Monday 2 November

Funeral

Eric Antony Lowe [73]

Tuesday 10 November

phone calls with requests to collect donations from those who are unable to get out. Without all this support the deficit this year would be much greater. So, thank you once again. *Bob & Marion*

Craft and Coffee (or Tea)

Well, we finally got to meet again. The first time since March and the last time this year! On Tuesday 3 November we enjoyed a demonstration of making a special Christmas card, given by Brenda Dixon. We then had the opportunity to make our own. We were all socially distanced, wore masks and had a stringent hygiene protocol in place to make the event Covid-safe. Everyone was pleased with their results and although the event was very different from what we usually experience it was good fun.

Subject to government guidelines, and the Church of England allowing it, our next meeting will be on

Cont. overleaf ...

St Mary's News cont . . .

Cont. from previous page ...

Tuesday 5 January at 10.15 am.

Numbers will still be restricted so pre-booking with Lynne is essential on 353655 or email lynne@lateralflow.co.uk. Lynne

Recent PCC Summaries:

October

- Children and Families Worker: Helen Smedley was appointed part time Children and Families worker.
- Church Car Park: work on re-gravelling the church car park was undertaken and completed with 4 tonnes of gravel raked into place. Thanks were expressed to the gardeners and other volunteers for this good work.
- Church Boiler: quotes have been received from several providers but further investigation necessary before we proceed.
- Live-streaming equipment: A Decision to install equipment to allow live-streaming of church services to take place was taken by the PCC.
- The Tithe for 2020 to be sent to our Mission Partners will be £12,300.
- COVID: It was noted that Remembrance and Christmas services will look very different this year due to Covid restrictions.

November

- Finance: The treasurer reported that initial work on the 2021 budget indicates that we will have significantly less income next year. The Finance Committee will try to meet via Zoom or Email to create a budget.
- Children and Youth Work: Helen reported that, sadly, because of the second lockdown a number of activities need to be cancelled, including a Family Craft Table day, Children's Nature Trail, and children's Sunday Club. Helen is continuing Bumps & Babes online and is looking to start an online Sunday Club delivered separately from the main service. She is planning a live-streaming event for children each day during Advent and will deliver Christmas cards to children on the fringes of the church.
- **Safeguarding:** Brenda Dixon confirmed that the role of Safeguarding Officer will be split between herself and Lynne Prior, who will do DBS forms. Clergy, Readers, Wardens and Children's Workers will need to complete further safeguarding training by July 2021.

Newton News



Altar Flowers for December - if church reopens

6 Joyce Dangerfield
20 Rosemary Coulson

More News & ...

On behalf of **The Children's Society**, the Rushden Fundraising Committee would like to thank everyone who has made donations during these times when events have had to be curtailed.



The work of Society continues during this time of Covid, giving help and support to many more children, young people, and families at this difficult time.

The committee wish you Season's Greetings this Christmas time

Mary Hadley

Ride & Stride: November 2020

A day of warm sunshine greeted us as our participants strode off around 10.00am. Edna and I were able to sit in the Church Car Park to see off our participants and remained there outside until late afternoon. We had only a few visitors but we were well supported by St Mary's: specifically by Lynne and Mick Prior and Louise Skinner who all visited 26 Churches. Tony and Sonia Stock

with their children Kaylee and Daniel and Dan Smedley also took part. The sponsorship for St Mary's has so far raised £105 but we expect another £40 shortly. Thank you very much for your efforts of support. Very well done.

Mick and Edna Wadsworth

Midshires Covert

Those aware of Andrew Presland's special little patch of countryside will be pleased to know that following the end of lockdown [whenever that is!], a forest church will be meeting there fortnightly on Sunday afternoons, being led by the Curate of the nearby Naseby benefice, and open to all. Details will follow. Watch this space . . .

Local interest



Neighbourhood Watch sends Greetings for the Festive Season

Why not join us in 2021? To find your local scheme go to www.northantsnhw.co.uk and create a greater community spirit whilst reducing crime and the fear of it. No scheme? Then why not start one? Contact: christine.mackenzie@northants.pnn.police.uk

Food for thought and prayer ...



**Holy Jesus,
by being born one of us,
and lying humbly in a
manger,
you show us how much
God loves the world.
Let the light of your love
always shine in our hearts,
until we reach
our home in heaven,
and see you
on your throne of glory.
Amen.**

**... Steve received the latest
Christmas coronavirus
regulations from the diocesan
office**

Christmas

At the centre of it is someone who is joy and love, whatever situation you're in, which is Jesus. When we meet Jesus Christ we find love and healing and hope and certainty and an underpinning of our lives that gives us a sense of where we're going and what we're called to be.
Archbishop Justin Welby, 2018

... and a little wry humour



Daily Bible Readings for December 2020

We are now into Advent! This month we are going to read through some of the prophecies—particularly in Isaiah—telling and foretelling God's plan for his people, Israel, and through them the whole world. We see this plan coming to fulfilment through Jesus, whose coming we celebrate, of course, at Christmas!

Sunday	29 November	Mark 13.24-end - <i>Keep watch!</i>
Monday	30 November	Luke 12.22-34
Tuesday	1 December	Isaiah 11.1-10
Wednesday	2 December	Isaiah 25.6-9
Thursday	3 December	Isaiah 26.1-9
Friday	4 December	Isaiah 29.13-24
Saturday	5 December	Isaiah 30.15-26



Sunday	6 December	Mark 1.1-8 - <i>John the Baptist prepares the way</i>
Monday	7 December	Isaiah 35.1-10
Tuesday	8 December	Isaiah 40.1-11
Wednesday	9 December	Isaiah 40.21-31
Thursday	10 December	Isaiah 41.8-20
Friday	11 December	Isaiah 42.1-9
Saturday	12 December	Malachi 3.1-4; 4.5-6

'Comfort my people,
says your God.'
Isaiah 40.1

Sunday	13 December	John 1.6-8,19-28 - <i>John bears witness to the Light</i>	
	Monday	14 December	Isaiah 43.1-13
	Tuesday	15 December	Zephaniah 3.9-17
	Wednesday	16 December	Isaiah 44.1-5
	Thursday	17 December	Genesis 49.2,8-10
	Friday	18 December	Jeremiah 23.1-8
	Saturday	19 December	2 Samuel 7.1-17



Sunday	20 December	Luke 1.26-38 - <i>Gabriel's announcement</i>
Monday	21 December	Jeremiah 31.31-34
Tuesday	22 December	Hebrews 1.1-12
Wednesday	23 December	Isaiah 9.2-7
Thursday	24 December	Isaiah 61.1-11
Friday	25 December	Luke 2.1-14
Saturday	26 December	John 1.1-14



Sunday	27 December	Luke 2.15-21 — <i>the shepherds' visit</i>
Monday	28 December	Isaiah 62.6-end
Tuesday	29 December	Isaiah 52.7-10
Wednesday	30 December	Titus 2.11-14
Thursday	31 December	Titus 3.3-8

An Alternative Christmas Present



Rosemary's Festive Gift

Stumped by the challenge of finding suitable Christmas presents for your family this time round? Missing the smiley faces of family members and friends you would normally spend quality time with at this time of the year? Our Organist and Choir Leader, Rosemary Nayyar, has come up with a cunning plan which might go some way towards resolving both dilemmas.

Her gift is to offer you, and your friends and family, a personal and private Christmas concert of your very own, lasting 20 minutes and variously themed around 'Animal Magic', 'Gardeners' Delight' or 'An English Medley' or more "Christmassy" material. This will be scheduled on Zoom as a live performance. All you have to do is choose who you'd like to invite to share the experience.

Rosemary has promised faithfully to dress to impress and the venue – and her grand piano - will be likewise 'dressed' for the occasion.

Candelabras are back in fashion! Programmes will also be emailed to all participants before the performance. How **you** dress is up to you, but there's a challenge there.

This is not just Rosemary being her usual generous and imaginative self.

She also wants to raise awareness of a local charity, EMICS [East Midlands Immediate Care Support] which you may not have heard of.

It is a registered charity which receives no government or NHS funding. They are often first on the scene at serious incidents. Their doctors and staff are all volunteers, and their help is free of charge to the NHS. All donations to the charity are used to purchase the medical equipment carried by each doctor, without which they would be unable to treat casualties, nor undertake life-saving examinations and report ahead to the receiving hospital.

They survive through charitable donations. You may need their help some day. They certainly need yours now. Please go to their website EMICS.org.uk and donate through JustGiving to help them keep on doing their brilliant work.

Contact her to enquire about availability on:
rnayyar@aol.com - 01933 418539 - 07958 537435



Not just waiting

I love the 'not-yet' seasons of the year, Advent and Lent, when we look forward (sometimes patiently) to the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Many of us can sympathise with the child who prayed "Lord, please give me patience and give it to me right now!"

Waiting is unpopular. We desperately try to guess which checkout queue is moving fastest. We begrudge the extra time spent waiting for late buses, trains or people. We loathe being told to "just hold" on the telephone.

Yet God's people are frequently encouraged to wait upon God, to look for the signs of his work in the world, to hope and pray and strive for this world to be more like his Kingdom. Indeed, Jesus himself was acclaimed as the Christ, "the one we've been waiting for", the fulfilment of centuries of longing.

In Lent and Advent, I always try to read at least one more reflective book, sometimes as part of a group. This year, please let me commend two in particular – *The Glorious Journey* by Liam Kelly, based upon the film *The Two Popes*, and *Frequencies of God*, written by one of our own clergy, Carys Walsh, based on the poems of R S Thomas.

Carys is Assistant Priest at Saints Peter and Paul, St Michael's and All

Saints' Churches in Kettering, and our Curate Training Officer. The *Church Times* has said her book "should become a classic" while Mark Oakley (Dean of St John's College, Cambridge) has commended it for being "infectious, poignant and inspiring". I agree with them both – it's a mind-enlarging and soul-refreshing read.

The book offers five weeks of daily poem-based reflections focused on waiting, accepting, journeying, birthing and seeing, which lead us through the anticipation of Advent to the celebration of Christmas.

In one helpful passage, Carys reflects that in waiting upon God "we may find ourselves discovering that there is a tightrope of desire and longing to be walked, which calls out from us a depth of yearning for God, and demands focus and surrender as we teeter between longing for God to speak and knowing that as we wait, we know God more".

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus first coming into our world, and meet him in our daily lives, may we all come to know God more this Advent..

With my prayers and best wishes for a holy and inspiring Advent.

+John
Bishop of Brixworth



Diocese of Peterborough – *Magazine Resource* – December 2020

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Tel: 01733 887000 Email: communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk

**Cathedral choir recordings available for
online Advent and Christmas services**



Peterborough Cathedral Choir has made a series of live recordings for parishes to use for their online Advent and Christmas services.

The recordings are all in video format (except one), and the Cathedral Choir would be thrilled to be able to 'virtually' sing in churches dotted around our diocese!

The recordings (and the versions) available are:

Advent

'E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come' (Paul Manz)
Advent choir piece
Cathedral girl and boy choristers / Full choir

'Hills of the North, Rejoice'
Advent Carol
Cathedral boy choristers / Full choir

'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'
Advent Carol
Girls and boys / Full choir

Christmas

'A Maiden Most Gentle'
(Andrew Carter)
Christmas (Marian choir piece)
Boys / Full choir

'Away in a Manger'
Christmas Carol
Cathedral girl choristers only

'Ding Dong Merrily on High'
(Mack Wilberg)
Christmas choir piece
Girls and boys / Full choir

'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'
Christmas Carol
Boys / Full choir

'In Dulci Jubilo' (JS Bach)
Christmas organ piece
Audio only

'In the Bleak Midwinter'
(Harold Darke)
Christmas choir piece
Boys / Full choir

'O Come, All Ye Faithful'
Christmas Carol
Girls and boys / Full choir

'O Little Town of Bethlehem'
Christmas Carol
Girls / Choral scholars

'Once in Royal David's City'
Christmas Carol
Boys / Full choir

'Silent Night'
Christmas Carol
Cathedral boy choristers only

'What sweeter music' (John Rutter)
Christmas choir piece
Girls and boys / Full choir

'While Shepherds Watched Their
Flocks'
Christmas Carol
Cathedral choristers only

Anyone who wishes to use the live choir recordings should email music@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk. You will then be sent a link to the OneDrive folder from which the recordings can be downloaded. Any parish using the recordings will need to make sure they have the necessary CCLI live streaming licence, and include these pieces in their usual report to CCLI.

We ask that parishes use this credit in their Orders of Services or on-screen at the end of online services:

*Peterborough Cathedral Choir
Recorded live at Peterborough
Cathedral, Autumn 2020
Director of Music: Tansy Castledine
Organist: Chris Strange
Recording technicians: Chris Pallister
(of Service-AV) and Eugene Chan*



Hollowell Parish Church features in Royal Mail Christmas stamp collection

The Church of St James in the Northamptonshire village of Hollowell will be part of Christmas for millions of people this year, as one of their stained-glass windows is featuring as part of Royal Mail's Christmas stamp collection for 2020.

Six stained-glass Nativity scenes from churches around England have been chosen for the special collection, covering a range of eras, styles and techniques, and showcasing the extraordinary detail and craftsmanship of this highly-specialised decorative art.

Reverend Allison Twigg, Associate Priest for The Uplands Group of Parishes (including St James') said: "I am thrilled that the Nativity window from our little church here in Hollowell has been selected to be a part of Royal Mail's Christmas stamp collection. It is indeed an honour and will bring much-needed joy to our village community in 2020. I look forward to seeing the window from Hollowell, which is featured on the stamp that costs £1.45". The Church

of St James was built in 1841 in the gothic style, and is known for its beautiful stained-glass windows in the eastern apse of the chancel, and its rose window above the west door.



Hollowell's stamp

As well as St James, stained-glass windows from the following churches are also included in the set:

- All Saints', Otley, West Yorkshire
- Christ Church, Coalville, Leicestershire
- St Andrew's, East Lexham, Norfolk
- St Andrew's, Coln Rogers, Gloucestershire
- St Columba's, Topcliffe, North Yorkshire

The stamps went on sale on Tuesday 3rd November. They are available at www.royalmail.com/christmas2020, by phone on 03457 641 641 and in 7,000 Post Offices across the UK. In addition, around 1,000 retailers are stocking Christmas stamp booklets this year (lockdown permitting).



Royal Mail's stamp collection for Christmas 2020

A host of useful information and resources to help you during this time can be found via www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus.

What else do we know . . . ?

MY CHRISTMAS WISH 2020

TOY GIVE AWAY EVENT for *deserving families*
in the RUSHDEN AREA

Donations can be dropped off at:

Simpson and Weekley Estate Agent

High Street, Rushden during office hours, just knock on the door

Gifts will be distributed on 5th December

Any deserving families you would like to nominate,
please email: jmmaddams@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP
A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS WISH COME TRUE!

Organised by Independent Methodist Church (UK) No. 11 0231
in association with Simpson and Weekley Estate Agent
and Church Northants (UK) Diocese Services Ltd.



Testament ... But the second reason, aside from theology, is the infrastructure that faith communities provide.”

<https://premierchristian.news/en/news/>

BBC RADIO
Northampton

Carols on the Doorstep

A bright idea from **BBC Radio**

Northampton as it looks less and

less likely that communal Carol

Singing will be part of Christmas

this year. They have put together a

package of **CAROLS ON THE**

DOORSTEP for **Wednesday 16**

December from 6.00 - 7.00pm.

They provide downloadable PDFs

of a Carol Sheet and a poster and

the idea is to invite your close,

street, way, drive or road to gather

[socially distanced] on their

doorsteps with Radio Northampton

as your background music at the

chosen hour. More from bbc.co.uk/radionorthampton

Faithful volunteering

A recent study suggests that those who practice a religion are **more likely to volunteer** their time to help others before and after lockdown, than those of no faith.

According to the research ... 72% of religious adults helped the vulnerable with shopping during lockdown, compared with 46% of the general population ... But the gap closed during the pandemic, showing that **the UK population as a whole stepped up their volunteering efforts.** "Helping people in need lies at the heart of all our religions. . . That message is very central to the New

Mission Quiz

This year's Mission quiz is mainly being distributed by email.

Hopefully you have received a copy

and can download the form and

instructions. If not please contact

Peter Chamberlain at

cephasxwords@gmail.com or ring

him on 01933 386826.

Meet the Congregation – Brenda Dixon

Brenda was born on 14 May 1943 in the village of Rolvenden in Kent. Her father, George Catt, was away in the war and did not see his baby girl until she was two. George was trained as a gardener and worked as one all his life. Mother, Mary, went into service at Great Maytham House when she was fourteen - the garden there was the inspiration for the book *The Secret Garden* and the author, Frances Hodgson Burnett, lived there from 1898-1907.

Brenda was the middle of three children and mother still did some cleaning and occasional hop-picking while she was young: her earliest memory is of sitting on a pile of hop vines and eating bacon and egg pie with beetroot!

The family moved to Sussex when she was five and she went to school in Maynard Green and Sunday school in Waldron. They moved again when her father became Head Gardener of a small estate on the edge of Ashdown Forest, and there they went to church in Maresfield [the first of three CPAS Churches Brenda has attended].

Passing her 11+ she went to Lewes County Grammar School - a good distance away by bus. Favourite subjects were Maths, Science and Geography. At Maresfield she met Captain John Martin and through his encouragement she became a Christian, later a Sunday School Leader and learned to ring the church bells - which, as well as being a hobby - has been a very important part of her life and witness.

Leaving school and going to work in Coventry, seemed like a scary move for a country girl! She thought she would try several churches but God had other plans. Unbeknownst to her, her old Vicar had been in touch with Christchurch in Coventry and on her first day working at GEC a message came over the Tannoy to meet a man named Alan... He invited her for a meal and she soon moved into a Christian home with a young widow called Margaret.

On her first visit to Christchurch Brenda met John Dixon. They became friends and started going out seriously together during the Festival to celebrate the opening of Coventry Cathedral - their first date was to a performance of Britten's 'War Requiem'!!

They were married in Maresfield in July 1963 - the honeymoon was spent exploring the area around Kyle of Lochalsh and doing a lot of hitchhiking.



They moved straight to a house in Haddon Close, Rushden and started to attend St Mary's. Simon was born in 1965 and Helen in 1967: their

children have been a real joy to them.

Brenda trained as a maths teacher at the Mature College in Corby in 1972 and taught at the Henry Gotch School in Kettering for twenty eight years. After retirement she also did supply teaching at Bishop Stopford, where she met several people from our church, including Lesley Rowland, Alistair and Cameron Adams, James Woodfield and the Gaul brothers.

Bell ringing has always been a very important part of Brenda's life. She is Tower Captain at St Mary's and was the Diocesan Guild President for ten years until looking after John became her first priority. She and John loved holidays especially those spent walking in Austria and the Swiss Alps. They also enjoyed their African safaris.

Sadly Brenda recently lost John. He had been a special member of St Mary's for so many years and was also a Lay Reader.

Brenda says she has felt God's guidance throughout her life, especially remembering Vicar Robin. Without his intervention her life would have been very different!

Roving Reporter

Those questions

Person with Most Influence?
Captain John Martin and my mother - who was a quiet Christian

Hobbies?

Walking, bird watching, bellringing and crafting - particularly cards. I especially like watching sport: golf, cycling and tennis.

Guests to dinner?

Chris Frome, Amy Murray, Charley Hull

What would you serve?

Gammon joint, Dauphinoise potatoes, runner beans & carrots followed by Raspberry & Redcurrant Summer Pudding

Favourite Place?

Wengen in Switzerland and The Lake District

Special Treat?

One more African safari . . .

Proudest Moments?

When our children were born

Favourite Bible verse ?

"Be still and know that I am God" *Psalm 46.10*

Daffynitions

- Wind Air in a hurry
Woe The opposite of giddy-up
Yellow What you do when you stub your toe
Zinc Where you wash the saucepans
Ah! ... *the end of the alphabet - many thanks to Anna Kingsmill-Vellacott for her contribution. Ed*



Did you spot the hidden Corvid in the November edition?

It was right under your nose in the field on the front cover. This month's might be harder ... *Ed*



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Since the early days of lockdown, with help from our volunteers, we have been supporting the community - those shielding, isolated and the most vulnerable during the coronavirus outbreak. The services we have provided are shopping, collecting prescriptions, delivering hearing aid batteries and more.

We are so grateful to all of the volunteers that came forward and made it possible to help so many others in the community. Unfortunately, with the return of restrictions the need to support those that are self isolating or vulnerable is still there. Can you help?

Do you have a full UK driving license and access to a vehicle?

Do you have just a couple of hours per week that you could volunteer to shop for people or collect their prescriptions?

If you have time and can offer your support please get in touch with Gemma@serve.org.uk or call on 07747 245631



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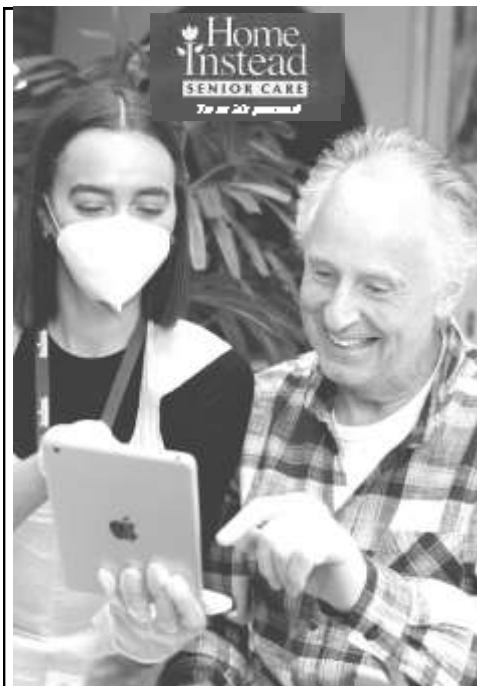
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Looking Back at St Mary's Magazines

50 years ago

December 1970

Preliminary Notice

Following the success of this year's Diocesan Ball it has been decided to arrange a Whitsun Ball next year. It will be held at Overstone School for Girls on Friday 28 May 1971.

Parochial Church Council Notes

Thirty six new chairs have been provided for the Infant Sunday School held in the Vestry Hall
Two bedrooms at the Rectory are to be redecorated and a fence replaced and sink unit supplied at 42 Portland Rd
Money raised at the Harvest Supper [£32] is to be sent to Christian Aid as it will be every year in the future
A new water heater is to be fitted at the Institute following the demise of the previous one.

DBC, PCC Secretary

25 years ago

November 1995

The Alpha Course

I am attending the 3rd Alpha Course and enjoying every minute of it. Courses are held on Sunday evenings at the Rectory at 7.30pm. There are sixteen on the course, all ages and all levels of faith and the evening starts off with a light supper. At 8pm the Rector talks about the various aspects of our faith. At 8.30pm we split into 2 groups, led by church members, and we discuss the talk and share our feelings and experiences. At 9.30pm we come together again to close the evening with hymns and prayer.

I feel very privileged to share in the faith of others and to know that five of the group will be confirmed this year.

Please don't hesitate to put your name down for the next course starting February. Joy Cartwright

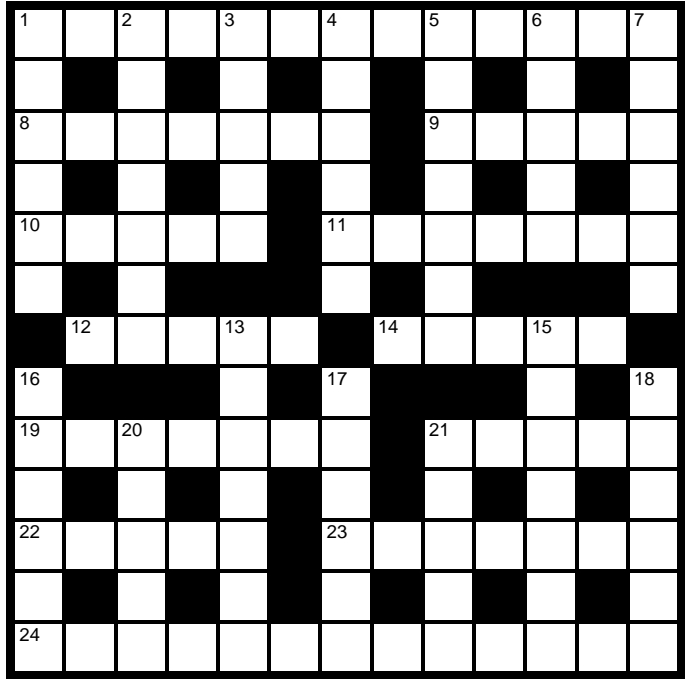
Crossword No 373

ACROSS

- 1 '--- men rejoice' (carol) (4,9)
 8 Having a winning streak (2,1,4)
 9 'Born for us on earth -', (carol) (5)
 10 '--- Thee, Lord Jesus', (carol) (1,4)
 11 Maritime bird (7)
 12 'Earth -- hard as iron', (carol) (5)
 14 'And the -- world send back the song' (carol) (5)
 19 Ill-mannered (7)
 21 Lava (5)
 22 French hens were given on this day of Christmas (5)
 23 'And the -- of the deer', (carol) (7)
 24 'It came upon the --', (carol) (8,5)

DOWN

- 1 '---, Hosanna in excelsis' (carol) (6)
 2 Vague (2,1,4)
 3 '--- by me for ever' (carol) (5)
 4 Savour (6)
 5 Rest-day (7)
 6 Ice house (5)
 7 'The first --', (carol) (6)
 13 Oedipus (anag.), liturgical worship (4,3)
 15 Brown coal (7)
 16 Practice (6)
 17 Body of Christians (6)
 18 'In a -- for His bed' (carol) (6)
 20 'O holy -- of Bethlehem', (carol) (5)
 21 Crazy (5)



Solution to Crossword No 372





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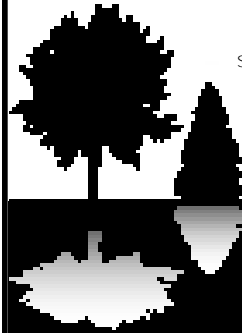
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Services for December 2020

Please see note on page 8

St Mary's
Rushden

St Peter's
Newton Bromswold

Sunday 6 December - Second Sunday of Advent

9.30am All Age Holy Communion 11.00am Family Service
11.15am Morning Prayer

Sunday 13 December - Third Sunday of Advent

9.30am All Age Service
11.15am Holy Communion 11.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 20 December - Fourth Sunday of Advent

9.30am All Age Nativity Service
11.15am Lessons & Christmas Music 11.00am Lessons & Christmas Music

24 December - Christmas Eve

10.30am Holy Communion
9.00pm Holy Communion

Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion 9.00am Holy Communion

Thursday 31 December

10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 3 January 2021 - Epiphany

9.30am Holy Communion 11.00am Family Service
11.15am Morning Prayer

**Please note: no Services in church on Sunday 27 December
Generally - Midweek Service in St Mary's Church
Thursdays 10.30am Holy Communion [BCP]**

REGULAR ON-LINE SERVICES

Sunday Service 10.00am on Facebook & YouTube. Access these services via our website: stmaryschurchrushden.org or facebook.com/stmaryschurchrushden/ or youtube.com/user/stmarysrushden

Bumps & Babes: Facebook on **Monday mornings at 10.00am.**

Thought for Thursday: Thursdays 10.30am on Facebook

CHRISTMAS SERVICES ONLINE

Christmas Eve - Thought for Thursday

Christmas Day - 10.00am

Sunday 27 December - 10.00am

Sunday 3 January 2021 - 10.00am



Belfry Gossip

Once again we are in a situation where Sunday services can no longer be held in church and we are therefore not able to ring the bells. Hopefully, this situation will not last for too long and we will be able to restart with Sunday service ringing again soon, albeit on a limited number of bells.

It was particularly disappointing that the Remembrance celebrations throughout the country were either curtailed or severely reduced and we were unable to show our support for all those lost during conflicts with half-muffled ringing as we have done previously.

Thank you again for the positive comments about hearing the bells ringing again, we intend to ring for services when the situation allows us to do so, especially with Christmas approaching.

Contact between ringers is still being maintained and a virtual practice held when possible while not able to meet in the tower on a Friday evening, although still the internet tries to disrupt our 'ringing' with the Ringing Room program.

Tintinnabulum

Book Review

Russ Parker, *Pilgrim Wild* (Amazon, 2020)

I suggest that this book of prayers and poems by Russ Parker could be a real blessing to anyone who is looking for help as they listen for the sound of God's voice amidst the challenges we will encounter in 2021. For over 40 years Russ has been known for his leading role in various aspects of the healing ministry of the Church, in teaching disciplined listening, in facilitating the reconciliation that can heal deep and persistent relational wounds in individuals, within churches and within local and national communities. He was the Director of the Acorn Christian Healing Foundation for 19 years. He is a founder member of the Lindisfarne Community of Aiden and Hilda, the Fellowship of Christ the Healer (US) and Christian Healing (UK). He has written a number of best-selling books including, *Forgiveness is Healing*, *Free to Fail*, *Healing Dreams*, *Requiem Healing*, *Healing Wounded History* and *Rediscovering the Ministry of Blessing*.

Having had the privilege of sharing ministry with Russ for over thirty years I found the style and content of his latest book to be in keeping with his spiritual foundations, ranging from the charismatic to the contemplative. There are poems for

Advent, Christmas and Easter. There are Blessings for various occasions and prayers related to various moods. There are daily prayers for Morning, Noon and Night. The final section of the book provides material for a 7 day pilgrimage. As Russ says, "this material will give you an opportunity to set your heart on pilgrimage whether you can go on an actual journey or not. Pilgrimage is an inner journey before we even get our walking boots on."

If you have not encountered Russ before you may well be surprised by his mixture of profundity and earthy reality. You may find yourself being led down paths that you feel are taking you off the familiar track you have followed faithfully for many years, only to find that, in fact, you are firmly on the Biblical highway to glory, blessed by new insights into the radical nature of the Gospel message.



Need more recommendations?

***Don't miss the Book Choices for
Advent from Bishop John on p15. Ed***

Mission Matters

We are blessed! Our church is linked with mission partners who truly love, trust and obey the Lord. They go wherever he sends them and work for his kingdom in the Holy Spirit's power. Thank you Lord! Thanks too for everyone who has been praying for mission and giving financial support through what has been a challenging year for us all.

It was good to hear news of **Brian and Val Hodgkin** recently. Brian has a couple of health issues but has still been researching background information relevant to current prayer needs. Some of his work can be accessed on line at eurasia.sil.org under 'View Latest Articles'. Val is still doing some Maths tutoring, via What's App. All the family are well, but please pray specially for Deb [doing nurse training] and Esther [working in a care home]. Both have 'front-line' jobs.

Wycliffe
Bible
Translators

It was disappointing that **Derek and Jane Waller's** planned visit was prevented by lockdown. Hopefully you will have heard Derek's piece in our **On Line Service at 10.00am on Sunday 22 November**. Do keep praying for the church in Madagascar - that it may grow, not only in numbers but in spiritual maturity.

During the first lockdown **James Hawksworth** was furloughed from his ministry at the **Church Army's** Centre for Evangelism in King's Lynn. Sadly, his father - who was in hospital for tests - contracted coronavirus and died. The young people among whom he had been working, also suffered bereavement; losing parents, grandparents and siblings. He wrote, "Most of the day is taken up with absorbing some of [their] pain and sheer bewilderment."

CHURCH
ARMY

Please pray too for **Yvonne Desroches** who suffered a stroke in June. Recently she walked eighteen unaided steps in a fundraising challenge for the **Church Army**. And she has been ordained - in a street ordination! We thank God for Yvonne, and for her vibrant faith and witness and we pray for her continuing recovery.

Look out for more updates in the January grapevine. Meanwhile, thank you for your prayers. The Mission Committee wishes everyone a very joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Sue Eagles, for The Mission Committee

— The Back Page —



Royal Mail's stamp collection for Christmas 2020

18