



**St George
The Martyr
Shirley**

***Christ
in the
Community***



December 2024

50p

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The Book Reading Group offers a
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website and page 10.

**Slimming World
Shirley**

**St George's Church Hall:
Mondays at 7 p.m.**

Contact: Andrea
07956 157275

Climate Crisis

What can I do?

- Learn the facts YES
- Speak up for change YES
- Work with others YES
- Reduce my own carbon foot-
print YES
- Resign myself to the worst
NO

Services at St. George's Church

Sundays 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist. Most Wednesdays 11 30 a.m. Said Eucharist. The Sunday Eucharist will also be available via live-streaming. See website or newsletter for access to the on-line option. There are shared worship opportunities throughout the week. Please see centre pages. for details. We aim to avoid any changes, but illness, etc, may change things..

Priest in Charge: The Reverend Jennifer Walpole 2 The Grove, West Wickham BR4 9JS 07947 585 326 020 8654 8747
rev.jennywalpole@gmail.com (Her main day off is Friday.)

Hon. Curate: The Reverend Hilary Fife 19 Greenview Avenue, Shirley, Croydon CR0 7QW 07931 761320

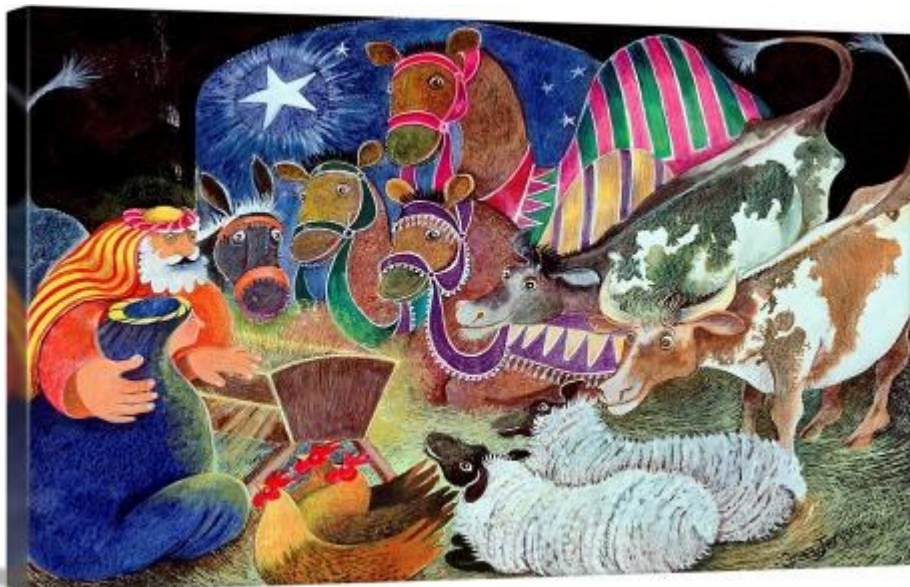
Reader: Mr Ray Wheeler 88 Palace View, Shirley, Croydon CR0 8QN
020 8777 5271

Reader: Mrs Liz Bebington 79 Shirley Way, Shirley, Croydon CR0 8PL
020 8777 4840

Website: www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk

Parish Office: parish.office@hotmail.co.uk

Humans also invited!



View from the Vicarage

At the time of writing this letter I have been in post less than 2 months. The Archbishop of Canterbury has just resigned, and we recently held our Winter Fayre. As I walked into Church on the morning of Saturday 16th November I was greeted by an array of colourful stalls, new people, and it was a wonderful example of our community in action. We came home with a belly-full of BBQ, tombola prizes, and amongst our purchases were a couple of jigsaw puzzles.

A jigsaw puzzle is the image that springs to mind as I reflect on my experience of St George's thus far. I don't yet have the full picture, but things are coming into view. I'm not yet sure how everything works and I'm still getting to know people. I'm pleased to say that I've found some corner pieces as well as some fringe pieces, and I'm starting to map things out. With the season of Advent well and truly on the horizon, I'm reminded to watch and wait. Parts of the puzzle are still missing, and I need to be patient as the full picture emerges.

Advent is a time to embrace the waiting, it's a time to be expectant, a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The picture on the outside of the jigsaw box may tell the story of a particular scene, however, in putting the pieces together new details and stories come to life and there is always the chance that the final image is not quite as anticipated.

St Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13: 12 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' The phrase 'through a glass darkly' is a metaphor for an imperfect vision of reality which reminds us that we may never see things clearly this side of eternity. We will always have a limited understanding despite our restless searching for truth and light. Advent gives us permission to sit with uncertainty, with a degree of patient waiting which could lead to something new. Advent gives us space to hope as we prepare to discover new things and expect the unexpected. This advent may your waiting be blessed with a deepening of faith, hope and love.

Rev Jenny Walpole
18th November 2024

After the bright beam of annunciation fused heaven with dark earth
 His searing sharply-focused light went out for a while
 eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
 His cool immensity of splendour His universal grace
 small-folded in a warm dim female space

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo. How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Three things must happen as an embryo develops. The first is cells take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. There is a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom. Peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship and help us to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, should fill us with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship. Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

(Thanks to Parish Pump for the slightly longer scientist/theologian article from which this is taken.)

Shrooms



The picture is of Fly Agaric Mushrooms. This is the species that features on the cover of one of the best little guide books on fungi: "Mushrooms and Toadstools of Britain & Europe: Edmund Gardweidner: Collins Nature Guides". The same species dominates the Shrooms article in the November 2024 edition of the Royal Horticultural Society "The Garden". If you want to highlight a really visually attractive fungus

that you might see in real life ...maybe in the church garden... this is it. But there is also no better illustration of the confusion of names: toadstool, mushroom, fungus, shroom. While edible fungi are more likely to be called mushrooms, *the mushroom/toadstool distinction is not a scientific distinction; and being called a mushroom does not mean you can safely eat it. Fly Agaric Mushrooms will do your stomach no good at all.*

Fungi get off to a bad start because they grow "where they are not supposed to be" and are associated with "decay". In human terms, they are thought of a bit like teenage spots, or other skin "blemishes" later in life. Not to be tolerated, let alone nurtured, but to be removed if possible. Fungi on a tree: disfigure and damage the tree, so break them off to protect the tree. Fungi in the grass or in the flower bed: get in the way, so pull them out. In any case, the things are going to self-destruct in due course. This attitude makes the RHS article with its new word "Shrooms" all the more interesting. The RHS in its gardens is signposting its fungi, not so that you can help remove them, but so that you can notice and appreciate them!

Fungi break down dead material, releasing nutrients and enriching the soil. The good fungi enhance protection against the genuinely bad stuff such as honey fungus. Their underground networks encourage a healthy eco system. Shrooms are 90% water, so of course they thrive in damp weather. It is difficult to generalise about fungi on trees; but very often they are "nature's way", and best left. Fungi on log piles are very much part of the value of log piles: part of the fundamental process of breaking down to build up.



Mam'Getty Dlamini spends her days tending to the community garden under the warm Zululand sun, surrounded by rows of flourishing vegetables. At 72, she finds joy and purpose in the rhythmic work of her hands in the soil—an act of love and survival. Before joining the "Harvesting Hope in Zululand" project, Mam'Getty made her living by selling snacks to local schoolchildren. Now, she farms her own food, providing not only for herself but for her community.

She learned farming techniques through training provided by the program, understanding when and what to plant each season to ensure her family are provided for all year around. This transformation has brought security to her family, turning the harsh month of January into a time of abundance. As Mam'Getty puts it, the garden is her fountain of youth, keeping her active, engaged, and full of life.

In a footnote to the USPG report, there is a thank you from a **widower** who was welcomed into this predominantly female project, and also acquired skills, purpose, and life-saving resources.

Churches Together in Shirley

St John's
St George's
All Saints
West Wickham
and Shirley
Baptist
Shirley Methodist



Our Lady's
Church of God
Apostolic
Shrublands Chris-
tian Fellowship

**Monthly Prayer Meetings (Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday)
Tuesday December 3rd 7 30 p.m. St John's (May be Zoom link)**

Churches Together in Shirley

Advent Quiet Day Saturday December 7th: 9 45 a.m.—4 p.m.

St John's, Shirley : Leader: Gillian Fenner

Poetry, music, art, and reflective prayer, to look at Scripture and Sacred Texts, helping to prepare ourselves for Christmas.

No Charge. Refreshments. Please bring your own lunch.

Book with Brian McGinnis: 020 8654 6190 or dunaigh2@btinternet.com

Do you have the DRIVE to volunteer for Shirley Neighbourhood Care?

Do you enjoy being part of your community? Do you enjoy helping those in need? Do you want to support the local elderly continue to live independently? Do you enjoy driving?



If **YES** then you are in luck because Shirley Neighbourhood Care need to recruit more volunteers drivers. Our drivers are incredibly valuable and provide a much needed service to our clients by driving them to

their local medical appointments. Drivers collect the client from their home, take them to their appointment, wait and then return the client back home. Whether you can accommodate one drive a month or one a week, this is so helpful to our clients and allows them to safely get to their vital appointments. If you are interested in becoming a driver or know anyone who would like to volunteer for SNC, please do contact us on 0208 662 9599 or email sncs@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Poetry Page

*"Hearken" - from "The Keelie Hawk: Poems in Scots" by Kathleen Jamie
(Scots Makar - National Poet - 2021-24)*

See how much you can understand without reading the author's English version. "Scots" is to some extent a made-up language. Kathleen was born in the West of Scotland, and lives in the East of Scotland: East and West don't sound the same. My (brother and sister) cousins both lived in Glasgow. One worked in an office. The other in the shipyards. They did not sound at all the same. They would both have had to look up some of the words used by Kathleen.

Syne something waukens ye, gars ye across the chaumer and open the windae wider but thur's naethin ootbye, just muinlicht skailin ower slates, a faurawa dug's ae bark. Ye're still hauf-happit in the dream ye left, but ye bide though ye cannae sey hou, seein nicht's cauld, and ye've got yer warck the morn, but ye lean thur lissenin, till - yonner it's again, the same call cast frae somewhaur ayont the makkit warld o the fitbaw pitch and B&Q, the warld that deylicht pentsand ilka nicht dichts awa. Then thur's nocht but nicht hush, a dunt o wind. A lorry grinds throu the toun afore - aye - he cries fir a thurd time. And nou, ye ken whit ye're hearkenin on, hingin at the windae here. It's the sherp repone sneckit frae the claiith o nicht, the she-howlet's "whit?" tae his "who, who?" that'll balance the warld again and lat ye faw back intae yer dream.

Then something wakens you, makes you cross the room and open the window wider but there's nothing outside, just moonlight spilling over the slates, the lone bark of a distant dog. You're still half wrapped in the dream you left, but you remain though you can't say why considering the night's cold and you've got work in the morning. But you lean there, listening until— there it is again, the same call thrown from somewhere beyond the made world of the football pitch and B&Q, the world which daylight paints and every night wipes away. Then there's nothing but night-hush, a knock of wind. A lorry grinds through the town before - yes— he cries for a third time and now you know what you're listening for, lingering here at the window, It's the sharp reply snipped from the cloth of night, the she-owl's "What?" to his "Who, Who?" that will balance the world again and allow you to fall back into your dream.

Tawny Owl



Some notes for you to note

- ♥ **Deadline for the January magazine, Sunday December 22nd.**
- ♥ **The Bible Reading Group** We are continuing to read the Book Ecclesiastics until the beginning of February. Then the New Testament Letters of James, John, Peter and Jude.) Your Bible may not include Ecclesiastics. The book is a rich source of discussion material about behaviour and relationships. If you want the relevant paperwork and/or the link to join us on Zoom on Monday evenings for 40 minutes, contact Brian McGinnis. Why not give it a go?
- **The Book Reading Group: Christmas Choices.** If you had to spend Christmas alone rather than in company, and could have just one book to read or re-read, what would it be? Justifying choices is not everybody's idea of fun, but if you felt like explaining your choice.....
- **Why December 25th:** 1750 years ago, on 25 Dec 274, the Roman Emperor Aurelian founded the cult of Sol Invites as an official religion. He erected a temple and declared 25th December a national holiday, to be known as the Feast of the Unconquered Sun. In 336, after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, 25th December began to be celebrated by the church in Rome as the birthday of God's Son. So the festival established to re-assure folk that the sun which seemed to be fading out would be coming back in its full splendour was handed over to Jesus. The Jesus 25th December re-assures us that the Lord of the Universe is in a real sense one of us....and will never be going away.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, Whom cherubim, worship night and day,
A breastfed of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, Whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

(Christina Rossetti: "In the bleak midwinter")



"Does anyone have a light, please?"

Depending on the basics

OK, there is something odd about the outside of the church apparently being in daylight, and the inside of the church being in the advertised darkness...but it would be tricky to portray total darkness and give you anything to look at. Now with more regard to health and safety considerations than was the case some years ago, churches do tend to do the light in the darkness thing in December. This is partly because dark months lend themselves to that sort of thing; and mainly because the Christmas narrative is about light coming into the world—

specifically the Light of the World.

I acknowledge that we are more sensitive than we used to be to the down-side of the traditional light = good and darkness = bad way of looking at things. If you are blind, your world is in many ways dark; but that doesn't mean that you are signed up with badness. There are no easy "faith answers" to the inevitable questions about sight absence and sight loss, with God as the giver of light and sight, but God does not love people with sight problems any less than God loves people with perfect vision. The darkness that is evil is voluntary darkness.

But the cartoon message is really about something else. It is about the importance of basics, and the importance of people who get the basics right. Thanks be for whoever has prepared the candle-light sermon. Thanks be, at least as much, for the person who has made sure that the matches are where they need to be. Thanks be, for the person who has made sure any doors that should be unlocked have been unlocked. Thanks be, for the person who has planned for the lights being switched on again. Thanks be, for the person who has replaced the toilet rolls. Thanks be, for the quick thinker when a power cut threatened to end before it started a service not planned to be by candle-light.

Thanks be, for the practical genius who produced knife and a Mars bar when four

Maybe a smile

What do you get Dad?

December is the month when the family begins to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas. Some argue for a shirt; others hold out for a pair of socks. But the argument usually ends in a tie.

Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his grand-daughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange." The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

Christmas carols

One night as Christmas approached, some friends decided to go carol singing. A man answered the door of one house, and gasped as they launched into the opening lines of the first carol. Within half a minute, he looked stricken. Soon tears were welling up in his eyes. The carollers sang and sang, and the man looked very moved by what he heard. One caroller ventured: "I understand - our singing reminds you of your happy childhood Christmases."

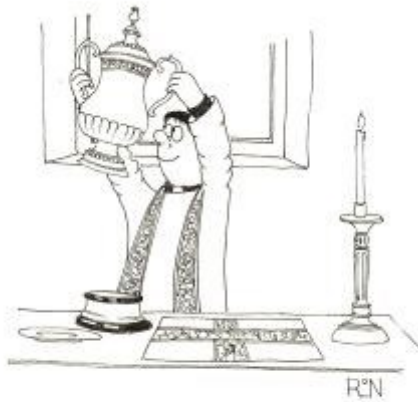
The man looked at her with misery in his eyes. "No," he whispered back. "It's just that I am a musician!"

Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."

Nativity scene: "Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. "Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later. Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"

Fragile Nativity: A couple visited their son and his family for Christmas, and admired their beautiful nativity set in the hallway. The grandfather asked his young granddaughter if she knew what it was. "Oh yes," she said immediately. "Of course I do. It's breakable."



The special silverware only came out
once a year

What is special about special?

Many churches do have some special stuff: in the sense of things that are very old, or very expensive, or have special associations. Many people have special stuff: maybe something a burglar would be delighted to get his hands on, but often something a burglar would ignore. I have a wood and metal crucifix, the metal part of which came from a car blown up in Belfast in the Troubles. It is a good piece of work, but nobody could tell its specialness by looking at it; and I doubt that, with or

without its history, it has much commercial value. I would guess that when it comes to keeping Christmas cards after Christmas many grandparents opt for the grandchild's relatively scruffy effort as opposed to the high-priced card from someone else.

In Christian thinking, the consecrated wafer, with a commercial value of zilch, is far more special than the maybe silver ciborium (cup) that holds it or the maybe silver aumbry (container) that holds the ciborium. If the relatives of the people in whose memory the silver-ware was given to the church are still alive, the specialness of the silver-ware lies in the personal memories rather than in the price on the receipt for the gifts.

I have always loved the story, from even more violent times, of the priest who was told by would-be robbers to bring out his church's treasures, and led out his small elderly congregation. (The would-be robbers had the decency to take the message, and leave empty-handed.) I respect the choices that lie behind church interiors with a lot of expensive stuff on show: Why shouldn't God's House look special, when I want my own house to look special? But God specialness is much more about Love in Action than it is about Cheque Book in Action. It is about people rather than about things.

That odd business of praying: Number 159 The Lord and His Prayer (Tom Wright)

At Churches Together in Shirley prayer meetings (given guidance on "traditional" or "modern" version) it is a fairly safe bet that everyone will be able to join in the Lord's Prayer. It used to be the case that at weddings, baptisms and funerals, the Lord's Prayer was fairly safe common ground for church-goers and non-church goers, because people were taught it at school even if they didn't go to Sunday School—which many more did in times past. The danger with the very familiar was that frequent use was inclined to stifle fresh thought. The frequent user of the Lord's Prayer gave it infrequent thought.

The Tom Wright SPCK Classic, and Rowan Williams and Sister Wendy Beckett "Living the Lord's Prayer" (which is similar in some ways but with beautiful pictures) can be bought. If you ask the editor, they can also be borrowed. The key message in both books is INVOLVEMENT. Imagine a hospital surgical team (of whatever faith(s) praying together, all scrubbed up and tooled up; and then shaking hands, changing back into civies, and leaving it to God. Will the patient get better?

"Father in heaven...your will be done...for the kingdom, power and glory are yours.." can lull as into thinking that this is all about leaving it to God. It is precisely the opposite to that approach. The disciples asked for guidance on how Jesus Himself prayed, so that they could go and do likewise. This was the Jesus who mixed with dubious people because they were needy people, forgave people for the "unforgivable", died on the cross..... So Jesus in this prayer signs us up as children/disciples of an inclusive God; makes OUR job in this in-between time the bringing in of the KINGDOM; joins intimacy and revolution, familiarity and hope; acknowledges injustice, hunger, malice and evil, and makes us responsible for justice, bread, forgiveness and deliverance.

The forgive to be forgiven message is too blunt to be entirely missed. However, we do need the occasional prompt such as the priest saying she found it quite demanding to forgive the person who had killed her nearest and dearest...to remind us that a lot is being asked of us. (Not sure the disciples got round to forgiving Judas.) SAY IT, MEAN IT, DO IT.

Merry Christmas from Shirley Neighbourhood Care

Excitement, merriment and festivities are abundant for SNC this year. We have been invited by Shirley Oaks to attend on 3rd December 2024 for 25 of our Clients to enjoy a fabulous free Christmas dinner. SNC are also participating in the Shirley Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival from 6th-8th December. Our Clients are creating the decorations for the tree so please do come along and see all the wonderful trees as a special event for the family.

We are hosting Christmas dinner lunch clubs on 12th and 16th December, when there will be a three course Christmas lunch along with presents, crackers and Christmas songs so please do call to get booked in, as spaces are limited. The SNC Christmas Gift bags are back and are being delivered to our Clients on Saturday 14th December. This is a huge operation that is being generously funded by SPRA and the Ros Harding Trust so we like to say a big thank you to both for making this possible. If you are one of our Clients and would like to receive a Christmas gift bag on this date, please do call us to confirm on 0208 662 9599.

Lastly, but certainly not least, we have said goodbye to our long standing Chair, Jonathan Baxter. Jonathan has been Chair for SNC for 12 years and led the charity to flourish and excel within the community. He has been dedicated, hard-working, loyal, kind and giving and SNC could not be more grateful to him for all he has done. We wish him the best of luck and some well earned rest in his retirement and we shall continue to honour his work under the new Chair, Barbara Donegan. If you are interested in registering as a Client so you can participate in our events and utilise our services, please do call on 0208 662 9599 or email info@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk
 Emily Davies, SNC Manager

See page 8 for how you can share in the Shirley Neighbourhood Care good works. Church is very much about community. As well as St George's hosting the SNC office, a number of St George's members are already involved with SNC.

CHURCH DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2024

Key

▼ Morning Prayer:

Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri 9.00am Zoom only

Sun 1 Dec ADVENT SUNDAY	▼ Mon 2 Dec	▼ Tue 3 Dec	
10.00 Sung Eucharist	9.30-11.30 am Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am Chapel
Sun 8 Dec ADVENT 2	▼ Mon 9 Dec	▼ Tue 10 Dec	
10.00 All-Age Live Sung Eucharist	9.30-11.30 am Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group	1.30pm -3.00pm OWPS Rehearsal	OWPS 11.30am Chapel OWPS 7.30pm
Sun 15 Dec ADVENT 3	▼ Mon 16 Dec	▼ Tue 17 Dec	
10.00 Sung Eucharist 7.00pm Nine Lessons & Carols	9.30-11.30 am Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Pop In + Christmas Lunch 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am Chapel 7.00pm Service
Sun 22 Dec ADVENT 4	▼ Mon 23 Dec	▼ Tue 24 Dec CHRISTMAS EVE	
10.00 Sung Eucharist 3.00pm Christingle Service	10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group	3.00pm Crib Service 11.00pm Midnight Mass	11.30am Chapel
Sun 29 Dec CHRISTMAS 1	▼ Mon 30 Dec	▼ Tue 31 Dec	
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		

<p>Dates for your Diary: Churches Together Advent Quiet Day: Saturday 7th December - St. John's Tamberlin Room</p>			
<p>▼ Wed 4 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Thurs 5 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Fri 6 Dec</p>	<p>Sat 7 Dec</p>
<p>am Eucharist - Lady</p>			<p>10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement 10.00 Debbie Simpson's Wreath making (Hall) - booking essential</p>
<p>▼ Wed 11 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Thurs 12 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Fri 13 Dec</p>	<p>Sat 14 Dec</p>
<p>5 9.30-11.45 am Eucharist - Lady l s Concert 5.30- m</p>			<p>10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement</p>
<p>▼ Wed 18 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Thurs 19 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Fri 20 Dec</p>	<p>Sat 21 Dec</p>
<p>am Eucharist - Lady l m Blue Christmas ce</p>			<p>10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement</p>
<p>▼ Wed 25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY</p>	<p>▼ Thurs 26 Dec</p>	<p>▼ Fri 27 Dec</p>	<p>Sat 28 Dec</p>
<p>am Eucharist - Lady l</p>			<p>10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement</p>

1		2		3			4	5		6		7		8
9							10							
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24							25				26			
27											28			
29											30			

Solon 179

Across

- 1 Odds on bandage used to mend a broken bone (6)
- 4 Find that the record is finished (8)
- 9 Jack's city? (6)
- 10 Voted to exclude leader when divided (8)
- 11 Eldest is a bit confused with dangly bits (9)
- 13 State of painful joint right away (5)
- 14 Maybe cook carpet (5)
- 16 End of Crockett found in an Uppsala monastery (5)
- 20 Go to bed without second redhead and get knotted again (5)
- 21 Live debate's beginning indeed! (5)

- 24 Near a playing area (5)
- 25 Trinitities may contribute to eye problem (9)
- 27 Area bishop perhaps is out of this world (8)
- 28 Fruit king - the musical! (6)
- 29 Not offside when swimming in Red Sea (8)
- 30 Introduction to a nice kind lass employing socks to cover them (6)

Down

- 1 Thus brighten a railway - you could be in prison (8)
- 2 England's manager includes non-nautical type (8)
- 3 One so mad to make a loop (5)
- 5 First person had light and loafed (5)

- 6 Angry expression created here (9)
- 7 Tie vat haphazardly to get tubes (6)
- 8 On your bike in old Yorkshire (6)
- 12 Thin tenor listed (5)
- 15 Endangers her as tent is repitched (9)
- 17 Time to get religious works that are representative (5)
- 18 Large feast around four at Christmas perhaps (8)
- 19 A variety of liquorice sweets (3,5)
- 22 Soft crime for a man of the cloth (6)
- 23 Disastrously invade a state after I depart (6)
- 25 Norwegian lake in the way (5)
- 26 Material found in any lonely store (5)

Thanks to Solon for puzzles
For questions or help, contact Solon at
Solon1across@gmail.com

Answers to November Puzzles:-

Across: 1 Satay, 4 Interview,
9 Healthy, 10 General, 11 Oculi,
13 Latte, 15 Ely, 16 Bee, 17 Infer,
19 Crisp, 21 Young, 23 Fibre,
24 Air, 25 RAF, 26 Kayak,
28 Locum, 29 Brocade, 31 England,
33 Lithesome, 34 Topic. **Down:**

- 1 Schoolboy,
- 2 Traduce, 3 Yet,
- 4 Idyll, 5 Tag,
- 6 Range,
- 7 Israeli, 8 Welly,
- 12 Icing,
- 14 Throb,
- 18 Fifty,
- 19 Creel,
- 20 Paramedic,
- 22 Upfront,
- 24 Arc lamp,
- 25 Rebel,
- 26 Knave,
- 27 Keele,
- 30 Ego, 32 Got.

Sudoku: 642
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Wisdom lies not in dreaming but in knowing what to do with your dreams: forget or fulfil.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries it had invaded taxes, based on the number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave orders that all people in the Empire were to be registered so they could be taxed.



This census was before Quirinius became Governor of Syria * (whose own census started riots - Acts 5:37)



When the order came, Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth.

But Joseph was descended from King David, who had been born in Bethlehem...



so Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.

Come and meet everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



While they were staying there, Mary's baby was born.



There was no space in the guest room to put a new baby!

So they made a snug bed for Jesus in one of the mangers.



Not quite as you know it?

I'm guessing that, church-goer or not, you were quite strongly tempted to skip a picture story which you expected to tell you absolutely nothing you did not know already. Pregnant Mary and (probably very worried) Joseph travel about 101 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and the pressure on accommodation means that the birth has to be in a stable attached to an inn. (The journey, **in peacetime conditions**, at the present time might take a car a little under 2 hours. At the time, we would have been talking days, not hours.) Neither Luke nor any of the other Gospel writers mention staying with relatives.

However, the cartoon version has common sense on its side. The very odd business of expecting people to go back to the (male) ancestral home to be counted was based on cultural norms as well as government stupidity. The travellers would expect relatives to make room for them. The relatives would expect to offer hospitality. The homes of the time were flexible in the way indicated. Commercial accommodation was likely to have been very limited. In particular, birthing was very much a female members of the family thing; and it would have been extraordinary had Joseph's family left Mary to get on with it.

Perhaps, given our own current conventions, we tend to see the 2024 Middle East displacement horror story in terms of nuclear families, camps in public places and public facilities, and abandoned people of various ages. But the bigger reality is family sharing on a huge scale. (Think of the significance of the much later story of the 12 year old Jesus being assumed by his parents to be part of the bigger Nazareth group when he wasn't with them.) That's why the bomb (irrespective of who it was intended for) doesn't just take out Mum, Dad and 2.5 Children.)

Of course, the Incarnation is a much bigger thing than a debate about Bethlehem/ Nazareth geography, and about how animals and humans fitted in together, and about Winter or Spring. But all this incidental stuff is a healthy reminder that the most important theological claim the world has ever known or ever will know is rooted and grounded in the messiness of ordinary every day human life. Keep a firm eye on the chamber pot as you float off into reflection on the Meaning of Life!

The Little Things and The Big Things



The morning that it became clear Mr Trump rather than Miss Harris was likely to be President of the USA in 2025 was dustbin day at my house. Specifically, it was plastics, glass, cans and cartons day. Whatever your nationality, whatever your politics, the Trump news was big news that had the potential to affect you in some way in due course. You would have had to be very isolated not to be aware of this news and (however helplessly) interested in it. The fate of my plastics etc dustbin was not going to make it into the local paper, or indeed interest the next-door neighbours. The folk of Gaza and the Ukraine had other things on their minds.

The previous week, my card and paper bin had not been emptied, because person or persons unknown had dumped a large sack of cans and plastic bottles on top of the cards and paper. The dustman was understandably not going to go hunting for possibly correct rubbish under the visibly incorrect rubbish. I had moved the dumped sack to my plastics bin, but I had forgotten to put out the plastics bin....let alone remove the sack and liberate the contents. I thought I had left it too late, but the (miscellaneous collection of neighbours' !) bins seemed not to have been touched, so I wheeled the right bin into place. Reward number one was an enthusiastic greeting from the small white dog that tends to pause its walk when it sees me. Reward number two was that the dustman, in due course, ignored the wrong bins and emptied my plastics bin—undeterred by the sack.

In the great scheme of things, so what?? But I felt good. Nothing I could do about the American Election...except for the not-unimportant joining in prayer with millions of other rather anxious people around the world. The tardy dustbin initiative had been undertaken and had paid off, thanks to a co-operative dustman (who was not to know that I never have plastic milk bottles). If you can do big worthwhile things, do them. The small positive things are also worthwhile!

Younger Readers Page: Angels from the Realms of Glory



If you google angels, you will see that the one certain thing is that “angel” means a “messenger from God”. You can track down “photos of angels”, which suggests that once the camera was invented some people not only saw angels but took photos of them. But many of us would describe these photos as make-believe; and the very pretty angel picture on this page can not be justified from Bible descriptions or the experience of most Christians. In case you wondered, the Church of England's 39 Articles of Faith say not a word about angels.

The less picture-imaginative Bible books tend to focus on human beings as God's messengers. They underline the potential of other people to teach us about God, and our duty to teach others about God—maybe by words, certainly by how we behave. Other Bible books tell of heavenly created beings who serve God. Some of them have descriptions (well part-descriptions), a few have names—commonly a name with God's name included in it. (Such as Gabriel.) Interestingly, in general the angelic servants of God rank below the human servants of God. This is a point that Paul makes.

Angels come into the Christmas story in a big way. You won't get through the Christmas celebrations without hearing about and singing about angels. But the heart of Christmas, the meaning of Christmas, is God becoming a human being - not God becoming an angel. Yes, Gabriel is recorded as God's messenger to Mary; but the key figure at that stage is Mary, not Gabriel. Mary made the choice that mattered. Mary lived out the long and infinitely challenging role of Mother of Our Lord. Gabriel isn't in the cast list for most of the 33 crucial years. So, fine to

What is the point of the Nativity Play?



"I'm sorry Michael – even if you HAVE changed your ring-tone to 'Away In-A-Manger', it's still ALL mobiles OFF!"

It is always interesting to stand back from traditions, and ask “Why?” At its simplest (no plot, just dressing up), those children who like dressing up - and not all do - wear something that reminds them and us of Mary of Nazareth, or Joseph of Nazareth, or a Shepherd, or a Wise Person/ King (crowns are very obvious, whereas it isn't obvious what a “wise person” looks like), or an Angel, or an Inn Keeper, or an Inn Keeper's Wife, or one of the Animals traditionally associ-

ated with the Nativity Story.

Although this pre-Christmas activity plays fast and loose with any realistic interpretation of the actual Nativity time-scale, it is very unusual to find a child playing the part of the key Nativity figure, Jesus.

So, why all this dressing up.... other than simply following tradition? (Especially, given that the costumes on the whole represent more imagination than a capture of reality.) I think there are a number of quite powerful justifications. First, the dressing up reminds us God in action required then, and requires now, the involvement of a lot of other people. We are invited as participants, not spectators. Second, while Christians don't need to wear fancy dress to be Christians: it is NOT “By their clothes, you shall know them!” We need consciously to take on a role, other than just being ourselves in away that suits us and helps us “fit in”. Third, with a little effort, you can pick out positive characteristics in each of the characters that are worth copying. Fourth, and by way of example, Janet playing Mary is “Janet Plus” and Robert playing Joseph is “Robert Plus”.

Sunday Readings for December (Message Version):

Please note that readings may change

Sunday 1 December: Advent 1

Jeremiah 33: 14-16: The time is coming

Psalm 25: 1-9: He gives the rejects his hand

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-end: asking for the bonus of seeing your faces again

Luke 21:25-36: my words won't wear out

Sunday 8 December: Advent 2

Baruch 5: Put on the beauty of the glory of God (Jerusalem Bible)

Canticle Benedictus:

Philippians 1: 3-11: This is my prayer: that your love will flourish

Luke 3: 1-6: preaching a baptism of life change leading to forgiveness

Sunday 15 December: Advent 3

Zephaniah 3: 14-end: be happy! celebrate!

Isaiah 12: 2-end: I trust, I won't be afraid

Philippians 4: 4-7: Celebrate God, all day, every day

Luke 3: 7-18: It's your life that must change

Sunday 22 December: Advent 4

Micah 5: 2-5a: From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule Israel

Psalm 80: 1-8: God, come back!

Hebrews 10: 5-10: I'm here to do it your way, O God

Luke 1: 39-55: Mary didn't waste a minute

Tuesday 24 December (Christmas Eve)

Isaiah 52: 7-10: Your God reigns

Hebrews 1: 1-12: You'll never fade, you'll never wear out

John 1:1-14: The Word was first

Wednesday 25 December (Christmas Day)

Isaiah 9: 2-7: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light

Titus 2: 11-14: God's readiness to give and forgive

Luke 2: 1-20: Mary kept all these things to herself

Sunday 29 December: Christmas 1

1 Samuel 2: 18-20. 26: the boy Samuel was very much alive

Psalm 148: He spoke the word, and they were

Colossians 3: 12-17: chosen by God for this new life of love

Luke 2: 41-end: He lived obediently with them

Please remember by name in your prayers the following people for whom prayers have been requested...

Dan Pretty	David Lawn	Bishop Christopher
Sonia Jean	Sue Moore	Pam Purkiss
Chris Reynolds	Julie	Ian Cordery
Margaret Ziolek	Brian	Alison Stiff
Andy Hamilton	Christine Lutman	Mark Hare
Ann Hobbs	Pauline Russell	Jean Wells
Dave & Shirley Ashdown	Verity Johnson	Joyce & Edgar Arthur
Yvonne Sussex	Viv Baracliffe	Jill Hollamby
Mike Wilkins	Livingston Dallas	Shirley Ashdown
Yvonne Harris	Lindsay Morgan	Maureen Fenner
Ellen Maden	Paul Oates	Brian Jacobs
Bill Gibson	Heather Orton	Doreen Offergelt
Garth Smith	Elizabeth Lovell	Baby Leon Kennedy
Helen McMullan	Helen Aylward	Sheila Dennis
Louise Maurer	Stuart Knight	Tony Bynoe

We also give thanks for those who have experienced healing, or felt strengthened to cope with ill health or disability. Knowing that others care goes with knowing that God cares.

Please let the Staff Team know of any additions or deletions via vicarstgeorge@gmail.com or 020 8776 0185

If the person is able to consent, please get their consent before adding their name.

November London Pictures: Cleopatra's Needle on The Embankment, Oliver Cromwell's Statue outside Parliament, Eros in Piccadilly Circus, The Royal Exchange, Hammersmith Bridge.

A Christmas Carol Quiz:

1. And with true love and ***** each other now embrace
2. Then let us all rejoice *****
3. This poor *****_**** for whom we do sing
4. Then why should men on earth be so ***
5. Then let us all with one *****
6. Thus spake the ***** and forthwith appeared a shining throng
7. Now the holly bears a berry as white as the ****
8. Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to ***** us all
9. There is a flower ***** , from tender roots it grows
10. Our delight and pleasure lies in *****
11. Sleep in ***** slumber deep
12. Cradled in a stall was he, with ***** cows and asses
13. Sages leave your *****; brighter visions beam afar
14. Mark my ***** , good my page
15. Where charity stands watching, and faith holds wide the ****
16. O ***** were the world; but here is all aright
17. What I can I give him. Give my *****
18. Wherefore have ye left your sheep on the lonely ***** steep
19. Three kings from ***** lands afar
20. Bearing gifts, we ***** afar



Organisations

St George's Table Tennis Club (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 8—10 p.m. Doubles Table Tennis. £3 per evening, including refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Ron 020 8656 9176, Ken 020 8654 3233.

Whist Drive (in the Church Hall)

Wednesdays 7 45p.m. *Inquire in Hall Wednesday 7 - 7 45 p.m.*

Medau (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 1.30-3.00p.m Mrs Gammon 01689 815646

Shirley Neighbourhood Care Scheme 020 8662 9599 info@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Your Local Councillors and Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams The dividing line between Shirley North and South Wards is roughly the Wickham Road, but some roads at the Croydon end on the south side of Wickham Road (St John's parish) are in Shirley North Ward

Shirley South Ward - Councillors: Jason Cummings (020 8651 2575) and Scott Roche (07783 152370) **Police Contact:** Phone 0208 721 2469 Email SNMailbox.ShirleySouthSNT@met.police.

Shirley North Ward - Councillors: Sue Bennett (0208 768 0561), Richard Chatterjee (07710 183564) and Mark Johnson (07716 092484). **Police Contact:** Email SNMailbox.ShirleyNorthSNT@met.police.uk Phone: 0208 721 2474.

URGENT 999 (Other crime reports 101)

Preparation

There are four steps to accomplishment: plan purposefully, prepare prayerfully, proceed positively, pursue persistently.

Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement.

Prepare and prevent instead of repair and repent.

Organisations

St George's Church Hall Bookings -

Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185

Overseas Missions Committee

Mr Brian McGinnis, Ms Pauline Russell 020 8654 6190

Georgettes

Contact Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185

Beavers (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 6 to 8 approx.

Wednesdays 5-6.15p.m Rachel Dominguez 07956 155909

Cubs (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 8 to 10.5 approx.

Wednesdays 6.30-8.00p.m Mr Trevor Thairs 07843 752895

Scouts (Scout Hut) Boys and Girls age 10.5 to 14.5 approx.

Thursdays 6 30 - 8 p.m. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185

Rainbows (Church Hall) Girls age 5 to 7

Tuesdays 5 - 6p.m Mrs Ruth Clery 020 8651 4116
07702 870030

Brownies (Church Hall) Girls age 7 to 10

Tuesdays 6.15-7.30p.m Miss Sheila Fenner 020 8655 0023
fenner240@btinternet.com

Guides (in the Church Hall) Girls age 10 to 16

Fridays 6.00 -7 30p.m Mrs Ruth Clery 020 651 4116
07702 870030

Pop In (in the Church Hall)

Mondays 10.30-12noon Mr Ron Bright 07972 607823

Little Dragons (in the Church) Toddlers 0-4

Mondays 9 30a.m. -11 30a.m. Regina 07825 428465

Preparation

A lot of people who are worrying about the future ought to be preparing for it.

When you're thirsty, it's too late to think about digging a well.

If it is Monday, you can be pretty sure tomorrow will be Tuesday.

St. George's Church Directory

Churchwardens: Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185
Mrs Heather Barker 020 8777 9280

Members of the PCC

Mr Stephen Barker, Mr Evan Russell, Mrs Marjorie Russell, Mr Alexander Baldwin-Smith, Mrs Jan Turner, Mrs Susan Wheeler, Mrs Katie Francis, Dr Toyin Magbagbeola, Mr Steve Westray, Mrs Liz Bebington

Hon. Secretary PCC.

Mr Eric Baldwin-Smith

Treasurer

Mr Alan Chitty

Deanery Synod Representatives (also on PCC): Mr Ray Wheeler Mrs Helen Aylward, Mrs Fay Westray

Electoral Roll Officer

Mr. Owen Whalley 020 8655 1349

Organist and Choir Mistress

Miss Sophie Clayton 07703554159

Safeguarding Representatives

Mrs. Susan Wheeler. 020 8777 5271

Dr Toyin Magbagbeola

Church Flowers

Mrs. Marion Sheehan 020 8777 7308

Environment (ECO) Group

Mrs Jan Turner 020 8654 6552

Magazine Editor:

Mr. Brian McGinnis 31 Woodmere Avenue, Shirley CR0 7PG 020 8654 6190

Accounts

Mrs. Janet Fitt 020 8777 7823

Adverts

Janet Fitt or Brian McGinnis

ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

Making friends with your Bible

The Monday Evening Bible Reading Group offers you Zoom joining in, or notes to support your own personal Bible reading. See Bible Reading Group section of church website and page 10.

Shirley Neighbourhood Care
St George's Church
 Elstan Way
 The Glade
 CR0 7PR
 020 8662 9599
 info@dhirleyneighbourhood-care.co.uk

Weekday mornings 10 a.m.—12 30

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 241 Long Lane,
 Croydon, CR0 7TF
 Telephone: 020 8654 0021/8048

Gifts to share?

if you feel that St George's is not doing something it should be doing, or that you have a gift to offer/ share that is not being used by St George's, please do not keep your mouth shut!

Prayers on weekdays

Tuning into God doesn't require a minimum number of people: one to One is fine.! But if you want prayer Company, there are Zoom prayers at 9 a.m. Monday to Friday. All are welcome.

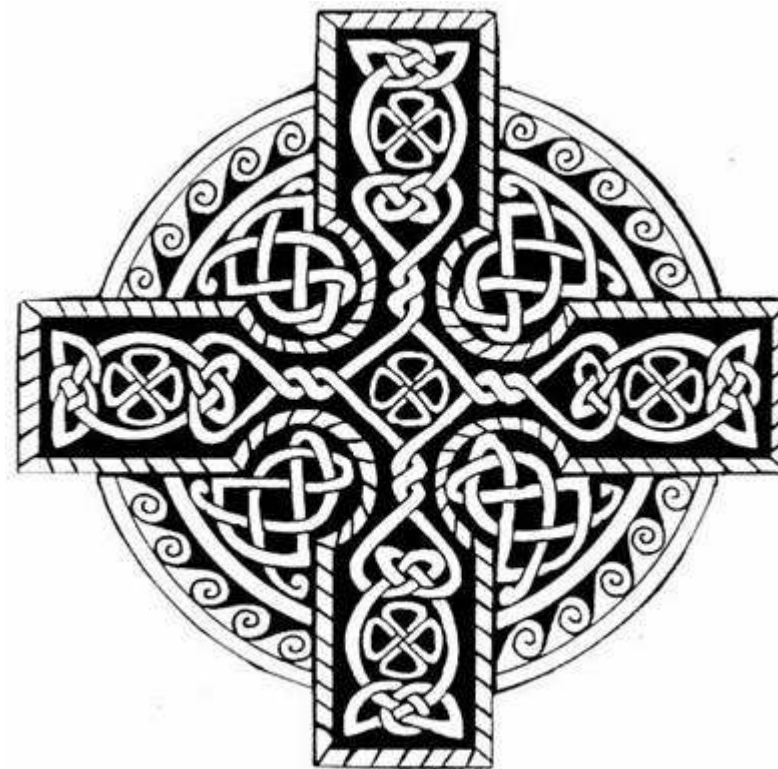
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Look

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St.

George the Martyr

Elstan Way, Shirley, Croydon. (off the Glade)
 parish.office@hotmail.co.uk
 www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk
 (Charity Number: 1134140)