



St George The Martyr Shirley

**Christ
in the
Community**

New every morning is the love.....



A Member of Churches Together in Shirley

January 2025

50p

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Exploring your faith

The Book Reading Group offers a monthly opportunity to look at faith-based writing and swap your thoughts with others. See Book Reading Group section of church website and page 10.

Contact: Regina 07825 428465

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 footprint 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

Several older members of our church family were invited to a special Christmas lunch at Orchard Park High School. They all commented on the wonderful food but, in particular, mentioned how welcoming, considerate and caring the boys who looked after them were. All felt it was an experience they would very much like to repeat and were full of praise for how well they were looked after!



PAGE 3

A View from the Green...

One of the Christmas cards I received this year reminded me of a poem which has always spoken to me – 'The Work of Christmas' by Howard Thurman.

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.



Christmas doesn't end until the Feast of Candlemas on 2nd February (my cards stay up until then!) We have still to celebrate Epiphany and the arrival of the Wise Men on 5th January, but for the world outside Christmas has long gone and the January Sales are in full swing. By Twelfth Night for most of us too, the decorations will be packed away ready for next year and normal life will have resumed. But should it have? If we have really reflected on the meaning of the Holy Season we have just celebrated, we should be aware that now, for us, the work of Christmas begins. Before us we have 12 months of opportunity to reach out to the lost, the broken, the hungry and the prisoner; to see what we can do to make a difference in our wounded world; to live out the faith we profess. Towards the end of the month our PCC will meet to think and pray about our Parish Mission Action Plan for 2025. They will draw up the plan, but mission and ministry is the responsibility of us all. Will 2025 be a year when we help, heal, nurture and liberate; when we seek to rebuild, to bring peace? Will it be the start of you and I making music in the heart?



PAGE 4



Janus: The Roman God Looking both ways

Here is the origin of January; and the best visual representation of a very old tradition of looking back and looking forward at the turn of the year: maybe as a basis for (short-lived or long-lived) New Year resolutions. I don't see a great deal of difference between the looking back and the looking forward face in terms of mood?

There is quite a contrast between the regrets/amends approach, which implies some measure of control, and the can't undo the past

and can't control the future approach. Religious and non-religious people tend to be, perhaps rather weirdly, in both camps: it's all down to God, it's all down to fate or whatever.

Try looking at it this way. At any point in time, you have a choice about what you do or don't do, say or don't say. The choice is there even if the consequences of the choice are not under your control. The word "sorry" seldom goes amiss, even if it doesn't go very far to make amends. Say it with feeling! The resolution to do things better seldom goes amiss—more particularly if you immediately get on with doing some good small things there and then.

Wendy was very severely disabled and had no words. I can't conceive that she did either much looking back or much forward planning. But she had a smile like dawn breaking over the mountains, and, I think, realised that people who did everything for her got enormous pleasure from that smile. She did what she could do better than anyone I have ever known—probably sometimes when a smile was in the face of pain, and a bit of an effort.

This year, I am really going to have a Bible Reading routine.....maybe

Wanting to start daily Bible reading but unsure of where to start? Look at the Bible Reading Fellowship options

Looking for a change to your current notes but not quite certain of what you're looking for?

Our handy summaries and grid below should give you an overview of each of our Bible reading notes, who they are written for and what you can find inside!

New Daylight: our most popular series, *New Daylight* is for everyone on their daily journey with God

New Daylight Deluxe: all the content of *New Daylight*, but with bigger text

Guidelines: our Bible reading notes aimed at church leaders, students and those who seek to interpret and apply the biblical text with confidence in today's world.

The Upper Room: written by its readers all over the world, *The Upper Room* focuses on finding God in daily experience

Day by Day with God: this series is written for women, by women who have themselves found the Bible a source of strength and inspiration for life

Bible Reflections for Older People: these Bible reflections aimed at older people will bring hope, assurance and sustenance to the reader

[Bible Reading Notes resources pack](#)

St George's itself provides resources. The point of the readings sheet is that you can read it before, during and after the service....and maybe satisfy your curiosity by looking at the Bible context of one or more of the readings for the day. The readings were chosen for good reasons, but they are seldom the whole story that you get if you look up the before and after. Monday evenings, the Bible Reading Group holds its Zoom meetings from 7 30p.m. to 8 10 p.m. We are a richly mixed group in terms of geography, ages and ethnic origins, and learn from each other. All are welcome.

What is mission in the 2020's?

We still get tracts through the door from enthusiastic evangelists who have seen the light and are determined to share it. You don't need to look very far in the New Testament to find texts that back up this simple straightforward whole-hearted approach. Away from religion, if you have just seen or heard or done, or even tasted, something that for you was life-changing, you want to share it, you want others to join in the "Wow!!!" The dog or cat brings you something they have found that thrills them, and they want you to share their enthusiasm. (You might find the stick or the dead mouse a little less absorbing.)

The world has a very long history of decent people doing good things, of people suffering, of people triumphing over suffering, of people doing what was right despite every encouragement to do what is wrong—in order to make just a little bit of the world just a little bit better if only for a little time. They deserve to be celebrated. If you are convinced that one of these good guys was actually the Lord of an infinite universe, you are going to want to shout it from the roof tops—both because of the TRUTH itself, and because of the enormous implications for all the futures of all who have ever lived.

But modern mission, while no less enthusiastic, is more....respectful. The modern missionary sees her or himself as learner and not just teacher. (Come to think of it, the good modern teacher will also always be learning...or their teaching will be second rate. Good teacher = one who learns as much as one who knows.) The modern missionary does not write off the other's beliefs, experiences, history as irrelevant; and indeed recognises that God is already there long before the missionary.

USPG is the Anglican mission agency that partners with churches and communities worldwide in God's mission to enliven faith, strengthen relationships, unlock potential and champion justice. Note "partnership" and "relationship" - with the implication of receiving as well as giving. And "unlocking potential" is very different from giving people you don't really know what, in your ignorance, you think they lack.

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) Churches Together in Shirley

Tuesday January 7th 2025 7 30 p.m. at West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church and on Zoom

Prayer Meeting followed by CTIS AGM
Tuesday 4th February 7 30 p.m.
at St George's Church
in the Lady Chapel:
Elstan Way, Shirley CR0 7PR
(367 bus route. Local parking.)

We come before You with hearts full of gratitude for the diverse and vibrant body of believers that make up our church. We recognize that unity does not mean uniformity, but rather, it is a beautiful tapestry woven from our unique gifts, backgrounds, and experiences. We ask that You help us to embrace our diversity as a strength and to celebrate the richness it brings to our community. Lord, we pray that You would knit our hearts together with Your love, transcending any differences that might divide us. Help us to see one another through Your eyes, with compassion and understanding. Teach us to listen to each other's perspectives and to work together in harmony, despite our differences. May our love for one another be a powerful testimony to Your grace and a witness to the world of the transformative power of Your love.

Poetry Page**T S Eliot****The Journey of The Magi**

*A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year*

For a journey, and such a long journey:

*Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
and running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:*

A hard time we had of it.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,

Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;

With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,

And three trees on the low sky,

And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,

Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,

And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.

But there was no information, and so we continued

And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon

Finding the place; it was (you might say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,

And I would do it again, but set down

This set down

This: were we led all that way for

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly

We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

But had thought they were different; this Birth was

Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,

But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,

With an alien people clutching their gods.

I should be glad of another death.

(Abbreviated)

Some notes for you to note

- ♥ **Deadline for the February magazine, Sunday January 19th.**
- ♥ **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:** Numbers and participation levels have fallen, as can easily happen with book reading groups, church-based or not. Subject to others coming forward to take things onwards and upwards, I am floating the option of just four books worth reading for 2025, and leaving would-be participants to access those books and choose their comment timetable. The four are:-
 - (1) The Lord and His Prayer: Tom Wright: SPCK Classics £9 99
 - (2) The Everyday God: Jonathan Arnold. Bible Reading Fellowship. £9 99
 - (3) Finding Flourishing: Naomi Aidoo. Bible Reading Fellowship. £8 99
 - (4) Embracing Humanity: Isabelle Hamley: Bible Reading Fellowship. £9 99

You can google each of the books and see their content, and the pictures in e.g. Embracing Humanity, which are very much part of the attraction of that particular book Enjoy....and please share.

- **Church Bird Table:** The main supplier of seed, fat balls, squares, peanuts, coconuts and meal worms is out of action. Others have been contributing supplies; but this is now very much a collective project in which anyone and everyone can play a part. Please put our church birds on your to-do list. They are relying on you.



With immediate effect, and with huge regret, Andy & Liz can no longer take plastic milk-bottle tops for recycling. Please recycle any you have via the kerbside "plastics, tins & bottles" bin leaving the lids screwed on the bottles they came with.



...Joshua says he's very sorry - but it's something to do with the recent weapons procurement review...

And the walls came tumbling down

Just to remind you...though I'm sure the story of the Jewish army trumpet march round Jericho that brought down the walls is fresh in everybody's mind. (Seems unlikely, and some say the walls had already gone.) They didn't tend to stick names on walls in those days.

Question for readers: What music has really made a difference for you, even if no physical walls came tumbling down?

My list is a varied one:-

- 1) "Les Miserables", seen with Romanian visitors in London including a well-regarded social worker who was used to handling real life stress situations that would challenge anyone, and a young woman with learning disability. The three of us were crying—the ladies without trying to hide it. As we glanced round, we saw we were in good company.
- 2) The Last Night of the Proms, shared with friends who don't do the up-front patriotism that looms large, but got caught up in the sheer togetherness of the music that dwarfed the sometimes suspect wording. We were united in where the orchestra took us, including folk who were probably not British—let alone patriotic British.
- 3) A Highland Games with the kilted pipe band marching in through a gap in the hills, and the sense that everything was where and how it ought to be....and all the daftness of caber-tossing and the pseudo-history of tartan and kilts neither here nor there.
- 4) The moment an adult hand touches a choirboy shoulder and the selected soloist begins "Silent Night", and it is really Christmas.
- 5) My first hearing of "O Holy Night"

Maybe a smile

Moses revisited

Young Joseph was asked what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mum, God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When Moses got to the Red Sea, his engineers built a pontoon bridge, and all the people walked across it safely. Then Moses radioed headquarters to send bombers to blow up the bridge, and so all the Israelites were saved." "Did your teacher really say that?!" asked his mother, somewhat alarmed. "Well, no, Mum. But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

In place of cabbage

On Sunday after the church service, a woman told the minister that when she had sent her husband to buy a cabbage for lunch, he had fallen and broken his leg. "That's terrible!" said the minister. "What did you do?" "I opened a can of peas," she replied.

Old love

During a wedding the mother of the bride managed to keep from crying until she glanced at the grandparents. As the bride and groom took their vows, the grandmother had reached over to the grandfather's wheelchair and was gently touching his hand. That was all it took to start the mother's tears flowing. After the wedding, she went over to the grandmother and told her how that tender gesture triggered her outburst. "Well, I'm sorry to ruin your moment," the grandmother replied, "but I was just checking to see if he was still awake."

Home Schooling

Our mothers taught us TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE: "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning." Our fathers taught us RELIGION: "You better pray that that will come out of the carpet." Our mothers taught us LOGIC: "If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the shops with me." Our fathers taught us MORE LOGIC: "Because I said so, that's why." Our mothers taught us about CONTORTIONISM: "Just you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!" Our fathers taught us about the science of OSMOSIS: "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

Quite a lot of what is going on at the moment really doesn't encourage smiling, so you are getting a double page of potential chuckles for the new year

Problem solving

There was a bishop, an archdeacon and a curate driving down a steep mountain road. The brakes failed and the car careened down the road out of control, nearly going over the cliff. They all got out, shaken by their narrow escape from death.

The bishop said: "To fix this problem we need to organize a committee, have meetings, and through the process of exchanging ideas, develop a solution."

The archdeacon said, "No that would take too long. I will simply open the bonnet, isolate the problem and firmly correct it."

The curate said, "Why don't we push the car back up the hill and see if it happens again?"

The week after the month before

After a hectic December full of Christmas events at the church, the vicar went wearily into the chemist's shop. He asked: "Have you got anything for laryngitis?"

The chemist replied: "Good morning, sir. What can I do for you?"

Visit

A parishioner called the vicar during a power-cut caused by a blizzard and said she urgently needed a pastoral home visit. "I'm sorry, but I can't get out because of the heavy snow," the vicar explained.

Unsatisfied, she barked, "But I can't watch TV because the power is off! So what else am I supposed to do?"

Understand church language

PROCESSION: The ceremonial formation at the beginning of the Service, consisting of altar servers, the celebrant, and late parishioners looking for seats.

RECESSIONAL: The ceremonial procession at the end of the Service, led by parishioners trying to beat the crowd to the carpark.

RELICS: People who have been going to church for so long that they actually know when to sit, kneel, and stand.

TEN COMMANDMENTS: The most important Top Ten list.

USHERS: The only people who don't know a pew's seating capacity.

**That odd business of praying: Number 160
The Lord's Prayer in two perspectives**

We think of the Lord's Prayer as a sacred text not to be messed with. In practical terms. It is great to be able to share it unscripted without the confusion of "which version?" But savour the parallel versions below from a Dominican Sisters retreat 30 years ago.

Our Father

Who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done on earth

As it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass

Against us

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the Kingdom

The power and the glory

Now and for ever.

Amen

Our Mother

Who are in all the earth

Holy is your truth

May your wisdom come

Your circle be one uniting

Heaven and earth

Give us today a nurturing spirit

Heal through us as we

Ourselves are healed

Lead us into fullness of life

And liberate all that is good

For the wisdom, the power and the

glory

Are yours

Now and forever

Amen



Log Piles: Why bother?

The builders for the new house next door were , with permission, using my garden for easy access. One of them spotted the more visible of three log piles, and offered to be helpful by taking the logs away to burn. Out of curiosity, I googled piles. And, of course, found "Getting rid of piles" as the first headline. The author was not thinking of environmental enrichment but of a delicate aspect of human health issues. However, it is not all that long ago that the response to a tree branch breaking off was dragging it away and burning it...often damaging much else in the process. The early days of leaving to rot led to lots of complaint about untidiness, especially in public spaces.. Where people wanted "tidy" because tidy meant under control and predictable.

"Nature" has other ideas: birth, living, decay: the decay being slow, like but not usually as long as, the growth. Log piles provide essential habitat for many animals. They mimic fallen trees and shelter hibernating small mammals and insects. They attract moss, fungi, insects, and other invertebrates. Small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds visit to prey on the insect residents. Vegetation growing around and through the log pile increases shelter and insect variety.

The church grounds allow space for more than one quite big pile - though the necessary timescale means potential for conflict with other projects, short-term or long-term, and always the "If it's not pretty, it shouldn't be there" argument.



But if you have a garden, you have space for a log pile: as a reminder of our partnership with nature, and of the environment being something valuable that was there long before we were born, and will be there long after we are dead.

The Stag Beetle (*Lucanus Servus*) is probably the star of the church log piles. Big and memorable....and not a threat!

CHURCH DIARY FOR JANUARY 2025

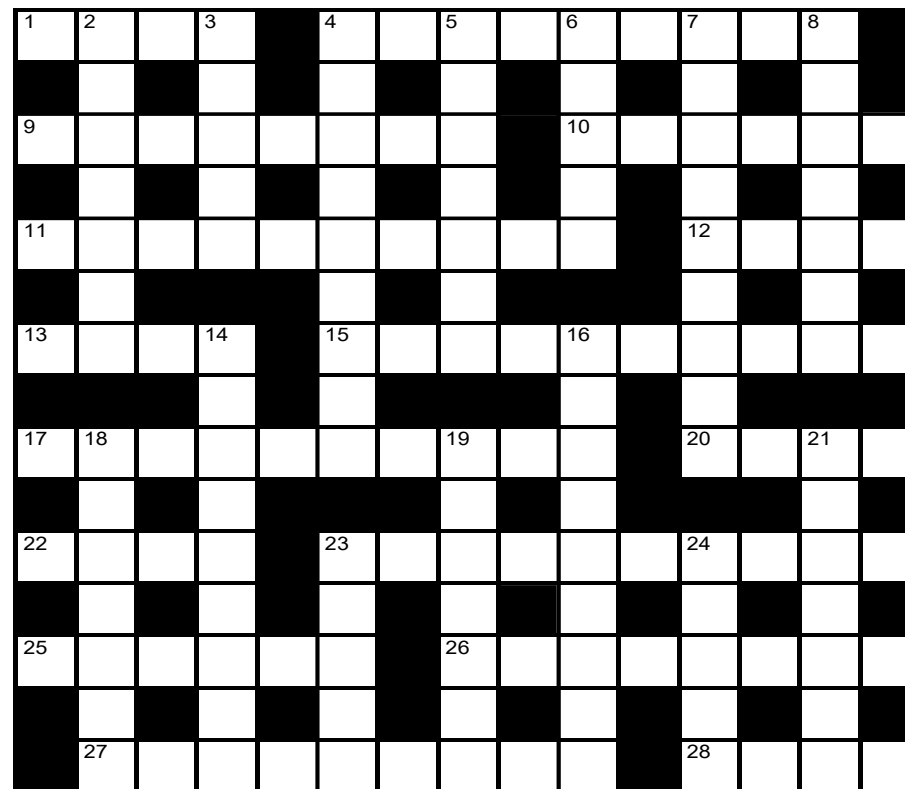
Key

▼ Morning Prayer:

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

			NEW Y
Sun 5 Jan EPIPHANY	▼ Mon 6 Jan	▼ Tue 7 Jan	
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group	1.30pm -3.00pm	11.30am Chapel
Sun 12 Jan BAPTISM OF CHRIST	▼ Mon 13 Jan	▼ Tue 14 Jan	▼
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		11.30am Chapel 7.30 F
Sun 19 Jan EPIPHANY 2	▼ Mon 20 Jan	▼ Tue 21 Jan	▼
10.00 Sung Eucharist	9.30-11.30 am Little Dragons 10.30am-12.00 Po- In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am Chapel
Sun 26 Jan EPIPHANY 3	▼ Mon 27 Jan	▼ Tue 28 Jan	▼
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

<p>Dates for your Diary: CTIS Prayers at WWSBC - 7.30pm CTIS AGM Lady Chapel: 4th February - 7.30</p>			
▼ Wed 1 Jan	▼ Thurs 2 Jan	▼ Fri 3 Jan	Sat 4 Jan
YEAR'S DAY			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
▼ Wed 8 Jan	▼ Thurs 9 Jan	▼ Fri 10 Jan	Sat 11 Jan
m Eucharist - Lady			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
▼ Wed 15 Jan	▼ Thurs 16 Jan	▼ Fri 17 Jan	Sat 18 Jan
m Eucharist - Lady			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement
inance Team			
▼ Wed 22 Jan	▼ Thurs 23 Jan	▼ Fri 24 Jan	Sat 25 Jan
m Eucharist - Lady			10.30-12 Church Open by arrangement 10.00-3.00 MAP DAY (PCC)
▼ Wed 29 Jan	▼ Thurs 30 Jan	▼ Fri 31 Jan	
m Eucharist - Lady			



Solon 180

Across

- 1 An element of pizzazz in chemistry lab (4)
- 4 Adorn leader's furniture (4,5)
- 9 Order at Orient - attack! (4,4)
- 10 Not many boxes at the end of June (6)
- 11 If heard, I may forecast storm (7,3)
- 12 A pointer for rising bread (4)
- 13 Fruit found in trug - limes perhaps (4)
- 15 Eliot leaves concert halls to become one as was Major Darling (10)
- 17 Deliver the scotch perhaps for the non-conformist (4,6)
- 20 Excuse me a border is showing (4)

- 22 Fancy a democrat in place of king in store (4)

- 23 Drunk and sober simultaneously may make you helpless (4,3,3)
- 25 As an outlaw I get between the leaders of Boris and Tony (6)
- 26 The ends of Mammalia suggest old outgrown extinct creature (8)
- 27 Dissonant odd clanks made in part of London (9)
- 28 Prime Minister found in Sweden (4)

Down

- 2 Salad item a danger to shipping (7)
- 3 Measure article in vehicle (5)
- 4 Crazy politically correct scan due worn by bottom of class once (6,3)

- 5 Receive a complaint when chorale is rearranged (7)
- 6 Fourth in line follows player's status (5)
- 7 A covering for papa and Ms Fitzgerald would be unaccompanied (1,8)
- 8 German gentleman rising for dish (7)
- 14 Northerner hiding may notice land I can see (9)
- 16 Cleansing feline, has eaten confused gent (9)
- 18 Hearts revealed - off you go! (3,4)
- 19 Diet for detailed army group (7)
- 21 Peer receives award for dangly bit (7)
- 23 A place to stay after golf (5)
- 24 Oddie resettled valve (5)

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

Answers to December Puzzles:-

Sudoku: 642875139/
538691427/917423856/
259734618/ 863219574/
174586392/
381942765/795368241/ 426157983

Crossword: :Across: 1 Splint, 4 Discover, 9 London, 10 Allotted, 11 Tasselled, 13 Spain, 14 Roast, 16 Alamo, 20 Retie, 21 Dwell, 24 Arena, 25 Retinitis, 27 Space-man, 28 Oliver, 29 Nearside, 30 Ankles. **Down:** 1 Solitary, 2 Landsman, 3 Noose, 5 Idled, 6 Crossword, 7 Vittae, 8 Riding, 12 Leant, 15 Threatens, 17 Agent, 18 Festival, 19 All sorts, 22 Parson, 23 Nevada, 25 Roald, 26 Nylon.

YOU ARE:

The dreams you stifle
The ambitions you forget

The hopes you too readily abandon

The challenges you duck

The decisions you indefinitely postpone

The ideas you prematurely drop

						6		2
	6					3		
			5	6				4
		4	7			9		
7	9		3		4		1	6
		1			5	4		
	1			2	3			
		8						9
4		3						

YOU ARE: _

The questions you fail to ask

The opportunities you ignore

The possibilities you don't explore

Bible Bite A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Numbers 22: 2 to 24: 25

The Israelites camped across the river Jordan from the kingdom of Moab. King Balak was sure they were going to invade.

Balak told Balaam he would pay him to curse the Israelites, but ...

Balak asked him again.

On the way, Balaam's donkey saw an angel and wouldn't move.

God said Balaam could go but must do what he was told.

Balaam couldn't see the angel and grew angry.

God told Balaam to not do it.

The donkey was stopped by the angel again, and then a third time.

God let the donkey speak.

Then Balaam saw the angel...

Balaam was so angry that he hit his donkey.

Have I ever done this before?

You should not have hit her. She was right to stop. Make sure you do only what God says.

King Balak was ready to pay Balaam.

Look, there they are. Now curse them.

Balaam tried to curse the Israelites but he could only say a blessing.

I will only say what God tells me to say.

The King was not happy.

Again, Balaam could only bless, not curse.

A third time, Balaam could only bless.

I told you I had to say what God wanted me to say.

The King grew angry.

I'm not paying you anything

And Balaam went back home.

Blessing and Cursing

We tend to appreciate the Bible (or any other book for that matter) most when there is a nice clear un-complicated, and easily credible, story/message. A person did something that was clearly good. You copy that something. Or, the opposite: somebody did something bad, you can see why it was bad, you don't copy it. Or, here is a rule to follow: it won't be easy, but at least it is clear: you actively love your neighbour, even if your neighbour tends to irritate you and doesn't show much sign of wanting to look after your interests.

THIS, on the other hand, is about as confusing as it can get. Feeling threatened in terms of military force a King hears about a man with a good relationship with the heavenly powers....interestingly it is unlikely to be the Jewish God. Balaam was not a Jew. So the King "invites" Balaam to get the heavenly powers to reinforce his own uncertain military forces: a money if you do, nasty things if you don't "invitation". You can explain the two B names in all sorts of ways, but I suspect the writer is saying "King and potential curser are just humans".

So Balaam bravely says "Get lost, I don't sell my prayers!" On the face of it, God relents when the second demand comes, and lets Balaam get on his donkey and go to the the king. A long journey just to say No makes little sense; and Balaam would have been escorted by the king's men. A likely reality is that Balaam had decided maybe there was a compromise...perhaps a pretend curse with fingers crossed. And here the unfortunate donkey comes into the story, with the firm reminder that prayer is a serious business, and not for compromise,

So, what can we take away from B and B? Not, that God usually stops us doing the wrong things. We are always going to enjoy/suffer choice. We learn that, blessing not cursing is what God asks of us (in word and in deed). Sometimes the blessing asked will be for someone to change for the better. I have mentioned before the two St George's people, very many years ago, who had been upset by neighbours, and who made their way round to the church to pray for the neighbours and the relationship. Both couples and both houses are long gone. The memory remains. Then, if something or someone gets in the way of your plans, do at least pause long enough to think whether there is a reason to re-think.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
 Where there is injury, pardon.
 Where there is doubt, faith.
 Where there is despair, hope.
 Where there is darkness, light.
 Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
 grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled, as to console;
 to be understood, as to understand;
 to be loved, as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive.
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are
Born to Eternal Life.
Amen.

— PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS


 Simple Reminders
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Younger Readers Page: Being Grown-up



Adult



Child

If you have done a bit of history reading, you will know that ideas of when someone is grown up have varied from time to time, and place to place. Girls of primary school age have been married. Boys not much older have been officers in the army. We don't know how young Mary, Jesus' Mother, was, but quite probably teenage.

There are laws about these things in this country, so you can't just decide you want to be an adult. What you will probably have noticed, in yourself and your friends, is that boys and girls of the same age are more or less grown up than others of exactly the same age. For example, if you have younger brothers or sisters, you

probably do some "looking after" that others your age don't do. You have become "responsible". Some children have parents who are unwell, and have to do the grown-up thing of helping to care for their parents. A young carer may go to school having made breakfast for Mum—rather than the other way round. (Makes last minute schoolwork more tricky!)

So, what does "grown-up" mean to you? If, as a child, you have had one of those days when you were not allowed to do what you wanted to do, you might well see being grown up as being able to "do what I like, how I like, when I like". IT IS NOT LIKE THAT!!

Being grown up means first and foremost "being responsible". Quite often, being responsible means doing what someone else likes: your employer, your partner, your children, even the Government. Or it means doing something because you have promised to do it...and someone is relying on you. Jesus was the most grown-up person ever. And He did not spend His life "doing just what He fan-

Just Acting



The Bible is surprisingly full of stories of acting out truth. Sometimes they are stated as acting, sometimes you have to work that out. At the heart of the Old Testament is the Passover Meal—more important than all the Temple sacrifices—the acting out of the story of the Exodus from Egypt. In 2025, the Passover is still for Jewish people the acting out

that matters most. Different Christian traditions give different weight to the Eucharist; but the acting out of the Last Supper is big in the New Testament, and vitally important for many Christians.

In the Middle Ages, and since, when not everybody could read the Bible stories, the Mystery Plays etc enabled people to watch acted out what they couldn't read. No less important: the ordinary folk who played the parts lived the story for themselves and for their audience. More currently, and more widely known: think Oberammergau: a collective experience of the Passion that has made a small German community famous.

The St George's religious drama tradition has for over 80 years involved those who enjoy acting anyway along with those who don't, but who welcome the opportunity to get inside the foundation stories of our faith. The story impresses when you read it; makes more impression when you hear it well read or read it aloud yourself; moves up a rung when you see it acted out; and can become unforgettable when you yourself act it out. Some of the 80+ years of St George's drama have seen both the very old and the very young live the story in a way that has been life-changing for them.

Sunday Readings for January (Message Version):

Please note that readings may change

Sunday 5 January: Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6: Put your face in the sunlight

Psalms 72: 1-15: Be honourable to your meek and lowly

Ephesians 3: 1-12: God's plan for including everybody

Matthew 2: 1-12: Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King?

Sunday January 12: Epiphany 1: Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43: 1-7: The One who got you started

Psalms 29: Bravo, God, bravo!

Acts 8: 14-17: Samaria had accepted God's message

Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22: You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love

Sunday 19: Epiphany 2

Isaiah 62: 1-5: So your God is happy with you

Psalms 36: 5-10: God's love is meteoric

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11: God wants us to use our intelligence

Luke 4: 14-21: Powerful in the Spirit

Sunday 26 January: Epiphany 3

Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10: Don't weep and carry on

Psalms 19: God's glory is on tour in the skies

1 Corinthians 12: 12-31A: We all said goodbye to our partial and piecemeal lives

Luke 4: 14-21: God's Spirit is on me

Sunday 2 February: Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Malachi 3: 1-5: I'm sending my messenger on ahead

Psalms 24: God claims earth and everything in it

Hebrews 2: 14-end: Tell them all this

Luke 2: 22-40: It's now out in the open for everyone to see

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

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

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
 rev.jennywalpole@gmail.com or 020 8776 0185
 If the person is able to consent,
 please get their consent before adding their name.**

A Christmas Carol Quiz: Answers

1. And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace
2. Then let us all rejoice amain
3. This poor young-ling for whom we do sing
4. Then why should men on earth be so sad
5. Then let us all with one accord
6. Thus spake the seraph and forthwith appeared a shining throng
7. Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk
8. Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all
9. There is a flower springs, from tender roots it grows
10. Our delight and pleasure lies in praecipio
11. Sleep in comfort, slumber deep
12. Cradled in a stall was he, with sleepy cows and asses
13. Sages leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar
14. Mark my footsteps, good my page
15. Where charity stands watching, and faith holds wide the door
16. O weary, weary, were the world; but here is all aright
17. What I can I give him. Give my heart
18. Wherefore have ye left your sheep on the lonely mountain steep
19. Three kings from Persian lands afar
20. Bearing gifts, we traverse 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:** Phone: 0208 721 2474 Email SNMailbox.ShirleyNorthSNT@met.police.uk .

URGENT 999 (Other crime reports 101)

New Year

Many people look forward to the New Year for a fresh start on old habits

What the New year brings to us will depend heavily on what we bring to the New Year

Maybe a resolution to say thanks at least once each day?

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 0-5

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

New Year

It is good to have a routine. It is good to have plans. It is good to have priorities. It is not good to stick to these in the face of new realities –including the realities of other people's needs

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@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Weekday mornings 10 a.m.—12 30

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Croydon, CR0 7TF

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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.

TV Repairs

Need a Repair, Installation or User Training, Then phone Peter your local TV Engineer on Telephone: 078855 09319

Look

Do you want to know a secret? Join Croydon All Year Bowls For FREE Taster call 020 8688 0659

*+ Following Christ + Serving Community
+ Welcoming All +*



St.

George the Martyr

Elstan Way, Shirley, Croydon. (off the Glade)

parish.office@hotmail.co.uk

www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk

(Charity Number: 1134140)