

St George the Martyr Shirley



Christ in the Community



February 2026

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.

Little Dragons Toddler Group
St George's: Monday mornings
in term time 9.30-11.30

All under 5's with their parents/
carers welcome
Mary Brown 07704311523
marybrown250@gmail.com

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

Slimming World

Shirley

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

Cheryl
07947 185629

Lent is a time for not giving up!

Birds seen in/from a Shirley garden in January: 25 species.
Can anyone beat this total?

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

Chocolate at Easter - Fairtrade Easter Eggs

St Georges again offers us the chance to buy Easter Eggs made with Fair Trade chocolate (palm oil & plastic free) with an Easter Christian message. Sadly these won't be available in the shops but by buying together we hope to collect enough orders to avoid the individual postage and packing charge. Orders can be delivered to you at your home. The choices are:

Milk Chocolate Egg 150gms + 24 page Easter booklet £6.20

Dark Chocolate Egg 150gms + 24 page Easter booklet £6.90

Easter Blessing bars Milk Choc 80 gms £3.20 each

Sharing Box 30 milk chocolate midi eggs 20gms + 30 activity posters £30

Fun Pack 6 milk chocolate midi eggs 20gms + 6 activity posters £6.50

Money with order please - contact Andy & Liz Bebington on 020 878777 4840 or at church, for more details.

View from The Vicarage : by Rev Jenny Walpole A Mission Priority: Stewardship

Stewardship is one of our Mission priorities. It refers to the various ways we contribute to the life of the Church - through our time, our talents, and our resources. This may include volunteering to serve refreshments after services or joining one of our Church teams. Stewardship is about cherishing and caring for our resources, this includes how we invest our savings, look after the church grounds and our buildings. Financial support is a vital aspect of stewardship, which can take the form of one-off donations or regular giving. Financial support is essential for the Church's continued operation. St George's does not receive funds from the Diocese or the Government to cover our running costs. To maintain our church and its activities, we must raise the necessary funds ourselves.

So, how much do things cost? It costs almost **£300** a day to keep our doors open. In 2024 it cost over **£100,000** to run St George's (and that is quite separate from any money we spent on our buildings project). We want to be open and transparent about our finances. See our stewardship leaflet at the back of church for a breakdown of our costs. One of our biggest costs is for the Parish Support Fund. So, what is the Parish Support Fund? Well, Priests are paid for by the diocese, but they are funded by the parishes themselves through the Parish Support Fund (PSF). A significant portion of our expenditure goes towards this. Like many parishes across the country, we are unable to meet the full cost of having a Parish Priest. Going forward, for 2026 we made a generous and realistic pledge of £40,000 to the Parish Support Fund.

There are other causes we support as well. St George's is a registered charity, and we also support other charities including: Shrublands Food Bank, Orchard Park High School Foodbank, and Shirley Neighbourhood Care. At harvest we donate goods to The Manna, Day Centre in London Bridge. We also support overseas mission through fundraising and gifts from individual church members such as: USPG, Christian Aid and Disaster Aid for Jamaica.

So, how can you help? We welcome new volunteers! There are many ways you can be involved. Have a look at our Mission Action Plan for inspiration. As an Inclusive Church we want to include you and make best use of your gifts.

In terms of donations, we only ask you to donate (or increase your giving) to the Church if you can afford it. At St George's - broadly speaking we are able to afford the

that keeps this Church running. But, in terms of our annual tithing, we are not.

we could do with a little bit more breathing space to do some of the things that we would like to do. We want to continue to keep the doors open, the heating on, the gas and electricity bills paid, to keep our current staffing levels, and continue to meet our Parish Pledge.

We would like to be able to do more than just get by – we want our church to flourish; we want to offer good hospitality and to invest in mission. Regular giving, as well as one-off gifts, provide crucial support and allow us to claim Gift Aid where possible. Regular giving helps greatly with budgeting and managing our cash flow.

Please consider joining the **Parish Giving Scheme** to set up a direct debit on this page: www.parishgiving.org.uk and then type in this parish code: **370637372**

Thank you again, to everyone for all you give to St George's. Your generosity, your willingness, your volunteering time, your gifts, your ministry, your contributions both small and great. And all your sacrificial giving are greatly appreciated. And whatever you give, may it come from the heart, because you believe in it. Because you believe in the Mission and the future of St George's.

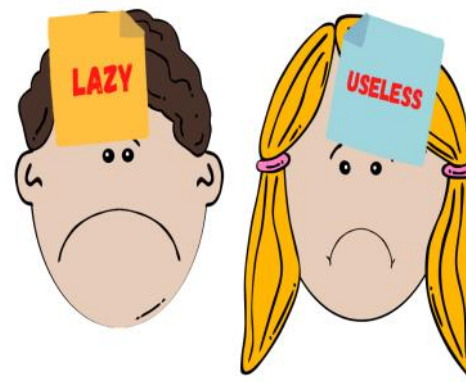
Valuing Weeds

Most folk classify as "weeds" anything they didn't plant. The dictionary definition is "any plant that is useless or troublesome". "Useless" and "troublesome" are, of course, not the same thing: a troublesome plant can be useful. Something you bought and planted can be troublesome in the conventional sense that it needs work to keep it within the space you had envisaged for it. But the key reality is that it is very rare for a plant to be literally "useless". Most "weeds" are multiply **USEFUL**; and the question for the gardener is whether the usefulness is so outweighed by any troubles that total removal is really necessary—rather than less destructive "management". Buttercups and daisies in the rose bed are not necessarily a bad thing, even though, in your perspective, it is (exclusively) a rose bed. The worms that help to keep the rose bed soil in good condition are not much interested in the roses; and the insects that visit the roses can not live on roses alone.

A useful brief survey offers reflection on 12 useful weeds:- **dandelions** feed bees when other food is in short supply; **white clover** fixes nitrogen; **stinging nettles** feed the caterpillars of our best-loved butterflies; **ivy** provides bird food and insect shelter; **daisies** are a great resource for pollinators; **broadleaf plantain** heals compacted soil; **common chickweed** helps the soil; **creeping buttercup** is a long-life pollen source; **thistles** attract goldfinches; **ground ivy** provides vital shelter; **yarrow** improves soil health (and, so it is said, human health); **self-heal** is a bee favourite.

Monsterring and the Turner Prize

Two very unlike (but maybe related) pieces of news featured side by side back in December: the autistic and severely learning disabled Scottish 59 year old Nnena Kalu won the £25,000 Turner Prize; and Gerry McCann (father of the disappeared Madeleine McCann) announced a fresh attempt to reinstate the Levington enquiry into press abuse - saying that his family had been "monstered". It isn't the Scottish nationality shared by Nnena and Gerry that I want to focus on. It is the single characteristic labelling, Nnena is severely disabled, so "that says it all!", no need to look further. In her case, the label is accurate; but it is not the whole truth. Gerry and his wife were given by some speculators with no information (and nothing better to do) the wholly artificial label of having disappeared (in effect, murdered) their own daughter. Monsterring is not in the English dictionary; but it well describes that labelling.



Sadly, we are all guilty of labelling—whether it is historical figures, prominent personalities, or people we know vaguely. Teachers can do it: one rather difficult boy told me he was just living down to his C Stream Secondary Modern School label. Vicars can do it: one vicar said of a boy who was doing rather well academically "That's the sort of boy we want in church!" Parents can do it: "That one's going nowhere fast!" Have you seen anyone

speculating that in his 56 years Hitler maybe did something good? People who have committed crimes should suffer some consequences, but does "Criminal" describe that person's whole identity for ever?

It would be very understandable to think highly of someone who has never done anything wrong and never failed to take an opportunity to do good. It would be very understandable to think poorly of someone who has never done anything good and has seized every opportunity to do harm. But are there such people?

Two contrasting sins: Andy Bebington

We all know about the seven deadly sins – lust, greed, envy and so on – and about the ten commandments: keeping the sabbath holy, honouring parents ... But do we know about the matching pair of sins – *despair* and *presumption*? These two sins each reflect a misunderstanding about the love and mercy of God. They both relate to the afterlife – and if you don't believe in an afterlife, Christianity will mean far less than if you do. Despair is, effectively, thinking "I'm so wicked, I cannot be forgiven, and whatever I do cannot undo that". Apart from the error of thinking that "doing" anything can "earn" you a place in the kingdom, the thinker has found an impossibility. If God is almighty (oh, yes!) and "I cannot be forgiven", the thinker appears to have found something the omnipotent God *cannot do*. "Omnipotent" means "can do anything and everything" – despair is illogical.

A genuine case of despair was the young man (of Greek Catholic origins) who rang my office one day 35 years ago wanting to make a Will that afternoon, because he was going to put his head in the gas oven that evening. He told me he'd done things so heinous (yes, they were), that they couldn't be forgiven. He knew he would face eternal damnation – and couldn't live the rest of his life with that looming over his end, so wanted to bring that end closer. I talked with him for a while – in an open office – seeking to prevent a suicide and put to him the argument above about omnipotence. I told him that I was not a theologian, and that he needed to speak to someone who was; and pointed him towards the Jesuit Church in Farm Street – go and talk to them, I urged him. He didn't kill himself, although The Samaritans told me later that wanting to make a Will was a sign of serious intent.

"Presumption" is the other way round, almost "whatever I do, God's infinite mercy will mean I'll be with him in heaven regardless". This thinking constrains God's freedom to condemn where appropriate, thus elevating the thinker to a "god-like" status of ruling on what powers God can have. The "whatever I do" aspect of this thinking may or may not allow for a sin to be shriven before the grim reaper says "time's up". Presumption and despair both remove one of God's attributes – that of "judging" – by appearing to pre-judge a person as 100% one way or the other. Once again, we find the thinker apparently placing a fetter on God's omnipotence. If that's you, you are placing a restriction on His omnipotence! Are you going to tell Him? For some thinking attributed to Jesus, see Matthew 12:31-32: rejecting forgiveness!!

Churches Together in Shirley

St John's with All Saints

St George's

West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church



Our Lady's

Church of God Apostolic

Shrublands Christian Fellowship

Shirley Methodist

Churches Together in Shirley

CTIS Prayers (hopefully with a Zoom option) at 7 30 p.m.
at West Wickham And Shirley Baptist Church on Thursday March 12th
followed by CTIS AGM

A CTIS prayer leaflet will be circulated for those months when we do not meet physically. If you would like to meet on Zoom to use the prayer leaflet together, let Brian McGinnis know before the end of the previous month.
dunaigh2@btinternet.com

For further CTIS information, see the Churches Together in Shirley website

January magazine cover picture: dating

You should have spotted: Montague memorial bed only low-growing plants; Dany Simpson bed hardly visible (I don't think memorial was there then); no Lady Chapel; no lightening conductor; dark area in front of entrance; no solar panels; fresh tiling on roof; no shrubs by entrance; magnolia not yet planted; shrubbery before church entrance different; no markings on roadway.

January magazine page 25 puzzle

Conversion of St Paul statue—bronze by Bruce Denny; now beside St Paul's Church in Covent Garden: originally by St Paul's cathedral.

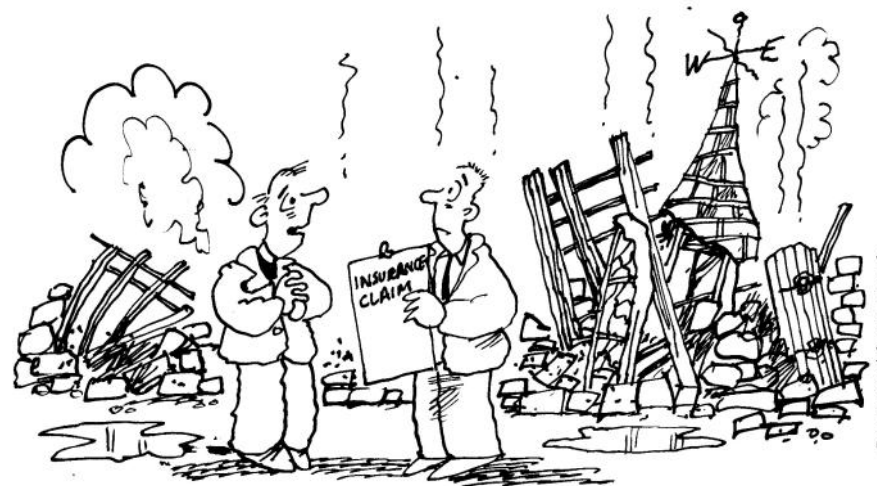
Re-purposing for Lent "Donkey Roads and Camel Treks" by Gemma Simmonds

Writing this in Church Unity Week celebrates a remarkable Advent book by a Roman Catholic linked to C of E Lambeth Palace who has worked with homeless people in Brazil. One quote from each section might give you daily Lent thoughts.

1. *We can learn the capacity to let go of our fears and insecurities*
2. *The generosity (and courage) to be open-minded and open-hearted*
3. *Empathising with others, we learn the ways of true human solidarity*
4. *Whenever we fail, or life fails us, God will always be at our side*
5. *A modest gift given by many can feed a city*
6. *Good living involves awareness, decisions, and relationships*
7. *The frightened child said, "I don't want God, I want someone with skin on"*
8. *Mary tells us that all human beings are extraordinary*
9. *When we disrespect creation, we sow the seeds of our own downfall*
10. *Church is not meant not to be powerful, but field hospital for the wounded*
11. *Mercy over judgement, closeness over distance, tenderness over coldness*
12. *If Jesus could learn from others, so can we*
13. *Recognise each other as fellow sinners*
14. *We are, each and every one of us, God's gift to the world*
15. *We are faced with daily choices about how we talk, believe, treat others*
16. *Hope is a choice that becomes a practice*
17. *A God who dances at the very thought of us*
18. *WE need to become transformed transformers*
19. *God is too big to fit into your explanations*
20. *We are on a faith journey. We haven't arrived.*
21. *God's answer may be what you need, although not what you wanted*
22. *Faith, hope and love are found in unexpected people and places*
23. *Not recognising God in ourselves means we don't see God in others*
24. *We are co-creators and builders*
25. *God is more interested in how we live than in how we worship*
26. *Jesus experienced poverty, uncertainty, abandonment, betrayal, death*
27. *Jesus is the journey and the journey's end*
28. *Enjoy unwrapping God's Christmas present to you every day*
29. *Jesus will take our crumbs of faith, hope and love, and make a feast of them*
30. *Prayer is something God does for us*

Some notes for you to note

- ♥ **Deadline for the March magazine, Sunday February 21st**
- ♥ **The Bible Reading Group: Monday evenings 7 30 p.m. To 8 10 p.m. On Zoom.** See notes on the parish website. We are reading the Book of Ruth, followed by Old and New Testament Parables. Commentaries available (free of charge) for everyone who would like to join us. Regular and occasional new members both welcome.
- **Book Reading Group:** The current reading list is: Divine Windows by David Gregory, Reflected in Nature by Claire Gregory, Donkey Roads and Camel Treks by Gemma Simmonds, Attentive to God by Tony Horsfall, and Dreaming of a Green Christmas by Olivia Warburton. Why not join us in exploring this rich variety of books?



...er... apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper...

Servus servorum Dei

You might recognise this Latin. It means Servant of the servants of God; and goes back to Pope Gregory the First in the 6th Century. It was meant as, and still serves as, a reminder of the power of humility. Top people being servant people. Christ the Servant King. In our own time, the Pope washing the feet of criminals in prison is a powerful reminder of that Jesus message about being called to serve.

Makes you think? Gives you the opportunity to think? Andy Bebington

A winner of a Nobel Prize for Literature wrote, in the early-mid 1960s, the following last verse ...

In many a dark hour, I've thought about this –
That Jesus Christ was betrayed by a kiss
But I can't think for you, you've got to decide
Whether Judas Iscariot had God on his side.

Would the crucifixion, and subsequently (perhaps *consequently*) have happened if Judas' actions weren't either

- part of God's plan to help us all "step (voluntarily) back into line" or
- something planned by Satan and *allowed* by God?

If there hadn't been a Judas, or maybe there hadn't been a Judas who gave way to temptation, would Jesus have found some other way to show us that sacrifice isn't the end? That my old life could be discarded and a new life take its place? That his whole ministry was leading up to Calvary and that Judas (or someone) was *necessary*? This leads to all sorts of questions about God controlling, or influencing, day-to-day matters on earth; and about free will. These are knotty issues well outside my theological or philosophical boundaries, so you'll have to ponder them for yourselves, or read something from one of The Doctors of The Church ...

The writer? Well, he was American and he was Jewish. Did you recognise the quote, or guess the writer? It was Bob Dylan, asking about belief in divine support for the American perspective on things.

Editor's Note: You could read the Gospels as saying that Judas did it for the money. However, the giving back of the money and the suicide really do make that an unlikely explanation. More plausible, is the idea that Judas was impatient, and, as a militant, wanted to force the hand of Jesus: to get Him to summon the four legions of angels and overthrow both Romans and Jewish collaborators. The Gospels report large numbers of people wanting the Messiah to take control (rather than go in self-surrender to the cross). I treasure the story of the Disciples meeting with Jesus in heaven, and saying "Shut the door, and let's party!".....and Jesus saying "I'm leaving the door open.....for Judas!"

Which bit of which Bible?

If you have attended a service at St George's, you will know that the service draws heavily on the Bible: usually an Old Testament reading, a New Testament reading (commonly from one of the Letters), and a Gospel reading; sometimes a Psalm; a talk/sermon probably based on the Gospel reading; and hymns and prayers which are often Bible-based. If you have looked closely at the paperwork, you will have noticed that different versions of the Bible are used: at All Age services, we tend to have a plain English version, with younger listeners in mind. On other occasions, we may have a Bible version which sounds great, but is maybe a bit harder to understand. You don't get the Bible in its original language, since most of us struggle a bit with Hebrew and Greek, and with the Latin into which Hebrew and Greek were first translated.

You will have your own favourite Bible passage(s) [which you might want to share here] and your own favourite Bible English translation(s). Here is the well-loved Letter to the Romans chapter 8 verse 38 –39 in a variety of English translations - in this case the different versions are subtly, rather than hugely, different::

New Living Translation And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

King James Version For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Good News Version For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Message Version I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

Poetry Page: : Strong Son of God, Immortal Love: Alfred Tennyson

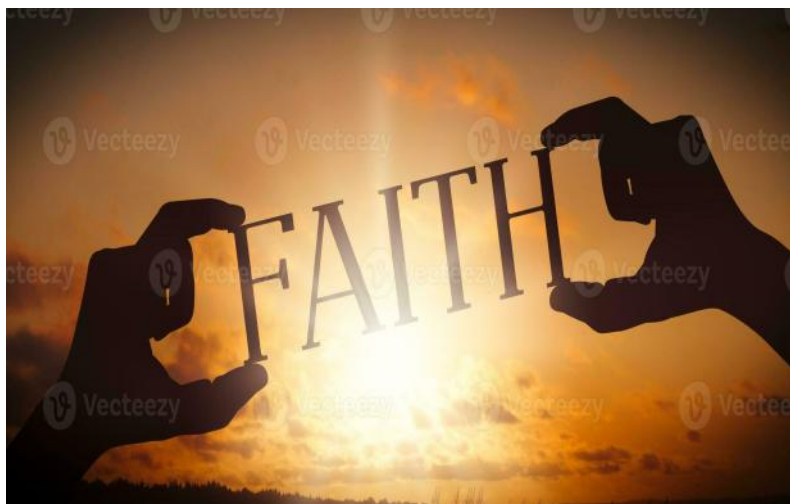
*Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;*

...

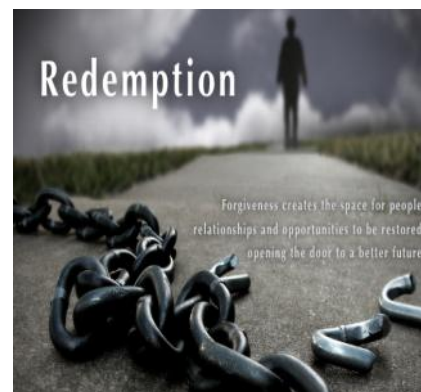
*Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.*

*We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.*

*Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before*

**That odd business of Praying; 173 : Jesus died for ME (and Hitler and.....)**

"To the Father, in the Spirit, through the Son" is the basis of many Christian prayers: indeed what makes Christian prayer distinctive. Though our best-known Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer, only names the Father...and, arguably, doesn't even hint at Spirit and Son.

We approach the Father in confidence because the Son died for us.

Now "for" can mean more than one thing: it can mean *on behalf of*, *instead of*, *for the benefit of*. We see the ultimate hero as someone who dies in order to save someone else from dying: The person who gets into a burning car to rescue the trapped driver. The person who gets into the burning car with the driver to die alongside the driver *weird* rather than *heroic*? But, "We all die, despite the death of Jesus.. No rescue from death there!" There is some "saving from death" Bible language, and there are hints

that some early Christians thought the end of the world would come before their own physical death. But mostly Christians have always (for good reasons!) expected death.

Just to get it out of the way: another way of looking at Jesus dying for us is that hymn line suggesting the death was "*to satisfy the wrath of God*": God so angry with us that He had Jesus die instead of us!!! It maybe makes a little more semi-sense if you say God as Jesus died to satisfy God's anger as Father.....rather than thinking of Father and Son as distinct *people*!

Nobody is ever going to make this "simple". And if you think in terms of "In the beginning, God"...and only God, all creation is created from God by God: so the experiences of all created things is the experience of God. But try this:- The Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus as God Incarnate are God showing us that He is there alongside us in all we experience (not least the pain); and, through showing us this, God is showing us that the end of the story is For-

It happened in ..26

1926: The first public demonstration of television. The General Strike.

1826: Patent issued for internal combustion engine. Menai suspension bridge completed.

1726: Gulliver's Travels published, Treaty of Vienna between Holy Roman Empire and Russian Empire.

1626: Consecration of St Peter's in Rome. Influenza Pandemic.

1526: Beginning of Moghul Empire. Destruction of Hungary by Ottoman Empire.

1426: Henry VI summoned Parliament in Leicester: called the Parliament of Bats, because no swords allowed!

1326: Foundation of Oriel College, Oxford. Treaty of Novgorod defines boundary between Russia and Norway.

1226: Kublai Khan becomes Mongol Emperor.

1126: Crusades.

1026: Japanese Tsunami.

926: King Athelstan of Wessex and Mercia annexed Northumbria, and asserted sovereignty over Wales and Strathclyde, Picts and Scots.

826: The King of Denmark accepted Christianity,

726: Emperor Leo III ordered the destruction of religious images.

626: Siege of Constantinople raised: preserving the Eastern Roman Empire

And in every year in every century little people did big (good) things

CHURCH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2026

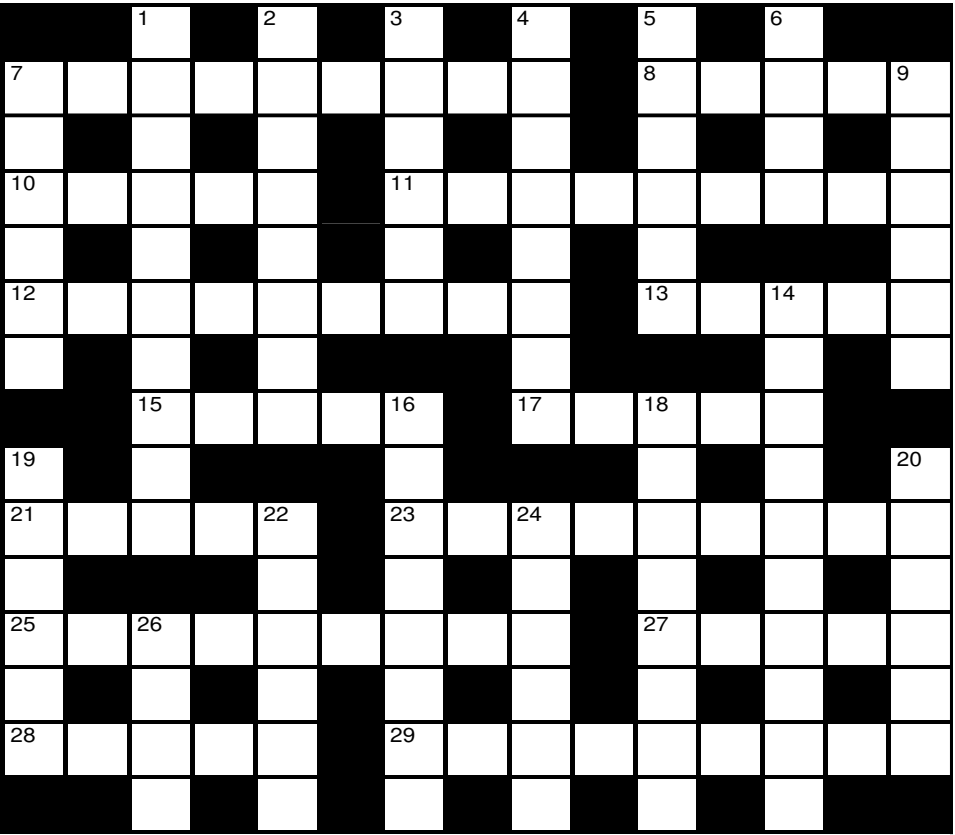
► **Morning Prayer:**

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

Sun 1 Feb EPIPHANY 4	► Mon 2 Feb	► Tue 3 Feb	Date
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		10.0 11.30 Chap
Sun 8 Feb EPIPHANY 5	► Mon 9 Feb	► Tue 10 Feb	
10.00 All-Age Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 9.30-11.30am Little Dragons 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		10.0 11.30 Chap
Sun 15 Feb TRANSFIGURATION	► Mon 16 Feb	► Tue 17 Feb	
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group 7.30pm Lent Group: Disability		10.0 11.30 Chap
Sun 22 Feb LENT 1	► Mon 23 Feb	► Tue 24 Feb	
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 9.30-11.30am Little Dragons 7.30pm Bible Reading Group 7.30pm Lent Group: Ethnicity		10.0 11.30 Chap
The Lent Course house group sessions will be looking at Inclusive Church under the heading of 'The Church of the Future'. Team for further details.			

es for you Diary: Maundy Thursday - April 2nd Sunday 1st February 4 p.m. In church Ray
Good Friday - April 3rd Wheeler talk about our church architect
Easter Sunday - April 5th John Denman. Refreshments. £10 for church funds.

▼ Wed 4 Feb	▼ Thurs 5 Feb	▼ Fri 6 Feb	Sat 7 Feb
Oam Church Cleaning Oam Eucharist - Lady pel			
▼ Wed 11 Feb	▼ Thurs 12 Feb	▼ Fri 13 Feb	Sat 14 Feb
Oam Church Cleaning Oam Eucharist - Lady pel			
▼ Wed 18 Feb ASH WEDNESDAY	▼ Thurs 19 Feb	▼ Fri 20 Feb	Sat 21 Feb
Oam Church Cleaning Oam Eucharist - Lady pel			
▼ Wed 25 Feb	▼ Thurs 26 Feb	▼ Fri 27 Feb	Sat 28 Feb
Oam Church Cleaning Oam Eucharist - Lady pel			
Findings of Disability, Mental Health, Ethnicity, Poverty, Gender and Sexuality. Contact Parish			



- 4 Inaccurately quote Len and be expressive (8)
 5 Film with Irishman and Ian out of order (6)
 6 The first couple in high finance may hear the music (2-2)
 7 Great light was legendary (6)
 9 Overwhelm elf who eats wild gnu (6)
 14 Pole for a perch? (7,3)
 16 Discordant bell in basket makes for plodding (8)
 18 Mongrels run away from meadow gold-enrods and finds unrequired workers (8)
 19 Daily at the front causes atmospheric phenomenon (6)
 20 After time, clubs in New York means business (6)
 22 A possible explanation for Conservative inhaling helium (6)
 24 Moderate spiritualist? (6)
 26 Leaders of Women's Institute forever expecting a partner (4)

	8		5		1	6		
		6						
1	9	7				2	5	
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						9		
		2	1		6		8	

Tomorrow

Tomorrow is not out of God's reach

Much to be said for new starts today

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

Answers to January puzzles:-

Crossword: Across: 1 Watchdog,
 6 Eased, 9 Topaz, 10 Odorless,
 11 Weir, 12 Dictionary,
 13 Plantation, 16 Nark, 17 Ewer,
 18 Very lights, 20 Siamese cat,
 23 Tape, 25 Adorable, 26 Thank,
 27 Delve, 28 Symmetry.

Down: 2 Antre, 3 Copartner,
 4 Dazed, 5 Gnocchi,
 6 Emotional, 7 Salon,
 8 Desert rat, 14 Low-minded,
 15 Advisable, 16 Negotiate, 19 Rickets,
 21 Moral, 22 Totem, 24 Poker.

Sudoku: 738246951/
 469351827/ 251879643/
 392718465/ 574632189/
 816495732/ 923164578/
 685927314/ 147583296

Tomorrow

Even if you can't do tomorrow
 yet, you can prepare for it

The timing of tomorrow is fixed;
 the doing of tomorrow al-
 lows choices

Maybe yesterday can be revised?

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
 1 Samuel 2:11-17, 22-25, 3:1-21

As soon as he was old enough to leave
 his parents, Samuel went to live at God's
 temple in Shiloh, with the priest, Eli...

Eli's sons were also priests, but
 they helped themselves to what
 people had brought to give to
 God.



Eli talked to them
 about it. They ignored
 him.



But Samuel
 did all the work
 he was given well.

One night, after everyone had
 gone to bed, Samuel heard
 someone calling him.



He thought it was Eli,
 so he ran to him.



It happened again.

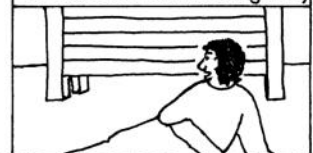


The third time, Eli knew
 it must be God calling
 Samuel.



You must say, 'Speak, Lord,
 your servant is listening.'

God called Samuel again,



and Samuel answered
 as he had been told.

I told Eli his sons had
 done bad things, but
 he has not stopped
 them. Now, even being
 sorry will not
 make up for
 what has
 happened.

The next morning, Eli demanded
 to be told what God had said.



Samuel
 was afraid, but he told him.

He is God. He
 will deal with
 us as is right.



God continued to talk
 to Samuel. He became
 known throughout Israel.



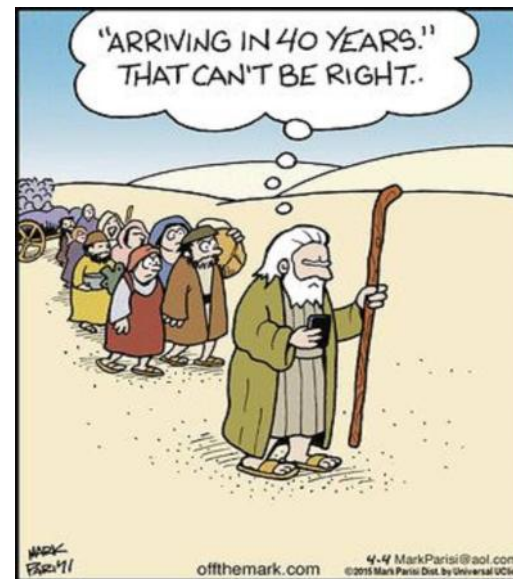
Listening and Being Deaf

Conventions about bringing up children have varied from time to time and place to place, and indeed between different groups in the same country: strictly a nuclear family responsibility, wider family involvement, fostering as a norm, community responsibility..... Here, Samuel at a very young age becomes the responsibility of an old man who has not succeeded in getting his own birth sons to listen to him. Those sons have sold out to the gods of privilege and greed. Eli makes a better job of listening to and learning with (and from) little Samuel. You could have forgiven Eli for slapping Samuel down when Samuel reported his God message.....Why should God talk to Samuel rather than talking to Eli directly??? But Eli was really already aware of the message that was now being reinforced by the rather puzzled little boy .

As to "Vicarage Children" going away from the faith... In more recent times, some vicarage children have become priests, and some become atheists. In the days of Samuel and Eli, succession was common practice: in effect, sons could become priests *and* atheists. If you think about it, you can see possible influences that might push vicarage children in or out; but they will make their own choices. On balance, you have to respect Eli for his reaction to the reinforced message—though perhaps thinking that the boss priest could actually have acted more forcefully in relation to his sons. (A police investigation into theft of Temple gifts would not have exonerated Eli.)

Children hear and notice - sometimes more than the adults would wish. Children also imagine: teachers and social workers have to cope with stories by the children about their parents that are damaging but totally unfounded...and often not even intended to be damaging. That prompts the really big question. Samuel got God messages. Eli got God messages. I dare say the sons got God messages. The question is "How do you recognise a God message?" In this case, it isn't so tricky: everybody knew the rules that Eli's sons were breaking. However, you don't have to be very old to have encountered someone who believes firmly something that you are 99% certain is untrue. And terrorists include many people who are firmly convinced God has told them to kill other people. What are maybe God messages can usefully be talked through with a friend, as well as thought through. Jesus was called mad for what He said about Himself; but people recognised the value of what He did.

Are there any jokes in the Bible?



There is no Zondervan "All the Jokes of the Bible" to line up with "All the Miracles of the Bible!", "All the Proverbs of the Bible", etc, etc; but the answer is YES! If you don't believe me, try googling Bible jokes. It seems a bit odd to say that we sometimes take the Bible too seriously; but missing the jokes is to miss the point.

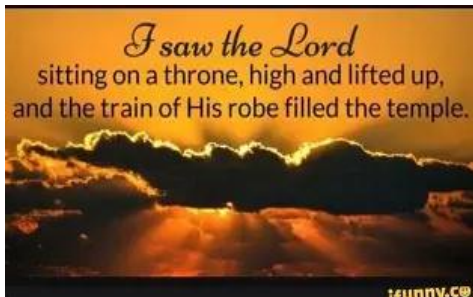
Start with "Genesis", the first of the Bible books: the beginning of the Bible narrative. Adam and Eve (first human beings) are starkers –

no clothes. They hear God in the garden, and, embarrassed, hide themselves - at least that is their excuse. This is the pregnant woman saying to the midwife: "I will not take my clothes off!"

In the New Testament, we have the fisherman Peter saying to the Messiah Jesus: "No, you've got it all wrong: don't even go there!" We also have Peter (the fisherman!) seeing his lord and master walking on the water (the natural environment of fishermen, but in the relative safety of a boat) and decides he would like to try that. Then comes "Blimey it's wet!"; and a near drowning.

Or, back to the Old Testament: Jonah believes in and worships the Lord of all the earth. He gets his marching orders from that omni-present/ omniscient deity....and decides to hide! Then there is Solomon (the wisest man ever). Faced with two women each claiming a child to be their child, he says "Why not have half each?" One of the women signs up to having a cut up half baby. What... is she going to do with half a bloodied corpse?

... and He is high and lifted up: Andy Bebbington



Many years ago, a colleague gave a challenge – he'd traced his family back to the Battle of Hasting and could anyone go further back? His ancestor had been Standard Bearer to Duke William (I have since traced my family back to 975AD ...)

The point about being a Standard Bearer is that you accompany the monarch, or the noble, to let everyone know he/she is there or is coming. In battle, your job is to act as a "base", a rallying-point, for soldiers on your side to retreat to, or head towards, when things get difficult. You need to be strong (to hold the Standard high) and brave (to use one hand for the Standard, leaving only one for your sword – your colleagues would have a shield as well as a sword, you can't have both). So, if a Standard Bearer shows where you would be among friends, somewhere which is safe, somewhere to have your wound dealt with, what does this say to us about Christ being raised high on the cross, or about church frequently having a cross high on the tower or spire?

People locally have commented on the recent lack of lighting of the cross atop St George's so it's clear that this is a local landmark of some consequence. Do we see the cross on top of village churches, as we walk, cycle or drive through the countryside, as being a sort of magnet, drawing us into the church? We do, when on holiday; in fact, many of our cycling routes are designed to take in the local churches, not only to give us a scenic view of the local area but also to give us a chance to go into a church, say a prayer, read about the church's history in the local context, and about notable people who worshipped there in times past.

"Lifted high" – as Jesus was, on the cross, drawing us to him? I think of a large table covered with a cloth. If you lift the cloth by pulling up the very centre, forming (if you like) a tent, not only does the centre rise (because you're lifting it), the edges are drawn towards each and to the centre, too. As Christ pulls us upwards, we move closer to each other (whether we like it or not); much as heading for the Standard Bearer in the midst of a battle draws us closer to our friends in the fight. to get closer to Jesus Christ and, as a result, to our neighbours?

Maybe a Smile

It hurts

A little girl told her mother one day before lunch that her stomach was hurting. Her mother replied: "That's because it's empty, you have to put something into it!" That evening the minister and his wife came for dinner. The minister looked a bit rough and explained that his head was hurting him. The little girl gave him a sweet smile and said encouragingly: "That's because it's empty, you have to put something into it!"

Hymns for Professionals

Dentist - Crown Him with many crowns

Contractors - The Church's one foundation

Obstetricians - Come labour on

Golfers - There is a green hill far away

Politicians - Standing on the promises

Librarians - Let all mortal flesh keep silent

God made us

A little girl sitting on her grandfather's lap reached up to touch his wrinkled cheek. "Grandpa, did God make you?"

"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago."

"Oh," she paused. "Grandpa, did God make me too?" Her grandfather assured her that He had. Feeling his wrinkled cheek again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't He?"

(very wise for his age)

Church bulletin notices that did not come out quite right...

We congratulate our youth group for raising nearly £500 for drug abuse.

We apologise for the following typo in last Sunday's bulletin: 'Lunch will be gin at 12:15.' Please correct it to read '12 noon.' "

Any church member aged over 18 can join our lay ministry programme. It requires a minimal amount of training and time. The first course is six weekly classes of about 200 hours each Tuesday night.

The Seniors group will have a picnic on Saturday. Each person is asked to bring either a friend, a vegetable, or a dessert in a covered dish.

Church Jumble Sale: All welcome. We can offer a gents three-speed bicycle, and two ladies for sale, in good running order."

.Sunday Readings for February (Message Version)**(This was omitted by accident July - January: Did you notice and regret?)****Sunday February 1st: Epiphany 4/ Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)****Malachi 3: 1-5:** He'll be like white –hot fire.**Psalms 24:** God claims earth, and everything in it.**Hebrews 2: 14-end:** He experienced it all himself.**Luke 2: 22-40:** With my own eyes I've seen your salvation.**Sunday February 8th: 2nd before Lent:****Genesis 1: 1—2: 3:** God poke: "Light!" And light appeared.**Psalms 136:** Thank God! He deserves your thanks.**Romans 8: 18-25:** All around us, we observe a pregnant creation.**Matthew 6: 25-end:** Steep your life in God-reality.**Sunday 15th February: Next before Lent****Exodus 24: 12-end:** Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.**Psalms 2:** You're my son, and today is your birthday.**2 Peter 1: 16-end:** We saw it with our own eyes.**Matthew 17: 1-9:** Sunlight poured from his face.**Wednesday 18th February: Ash Wednesday****Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17:** Come back to me, and really mean it.**Psalms 51: 1-18:** What you're after is truth from the inside out.**2 Corinthians 5:20b-16:10:** God put the wrong on him, so we could be put right**Matthew 6 : 1-6, 16-21:** Don't make a performance out of it.**Sunday 22nd February: Lent 1****Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7:** To work the ground and keep it in order.**Psalms 32:** Your slate's wiped clean.**Romans 5: 12-19:** No one exempt from either sin or death.**Matthew 4: 1-11:** It takes more than bread to stay alive.**Please remember by name in your prayers the following people for whom prayers have been requested...**

Jay & Louise Tuggey	Catharine Wilkinson	Ruth & Tony
Mike & Chris Wareham	David Lawn	Sonia
Jean	Sue Moore	Pam Purkiss
Chris Reynolds	Poppy	Yvette Oburu
Gloria & Livingston Dallas	Kath Ovens	Pat Barrett
Brian	Alison Stiff	Paul Oates
Andy Hamilton	Christine Lutman	Stephen Dhonau
Ann Hobbs	Pauline Russell	Jean Wells
Dave & Shirley Ashdown	Verity Johnson	Joyce & Edgar Arthur
Jill Hollamby	Mike Wilkins	Eric Webb
Lindsey Morgan	Ellen Maden	Brian Jacobs
Bill Gibson	Heather Orton	Doreen Offergelt
Paul & Mark	Garth Smith	Elizabeth Lovell
Sheila Dennis	Shirley	Louise Maurer
Debbie Bell	Steve Barrett	

Please remember in your prayers the care givers known to you: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, paramedics, social workers, support staff, carers paid and unpaid. Our St George's care –givers list includes those with St George's links: *Toyin, Desmond, Temi, Christine, Jonathan, Marie, Luke, Emma, Jessica;* and the members of the chaplaincy teams at Croydon University Hospital, Princess Royal, and Bethlem, including *Lymbert, Deborah, Sister Sheila, Mary Geoghegan, and Sampson.*

Creator of all seasons, let the fresh winds of spring sweep through my heart. Wash away the heaviness of winter, and plant seeds of hope, joy, and courage within me. May I grow in kindness, bloom in gratitude, and bear the fruits of love. One or 101, I can make a new beginning: living out a faith that is always new. In the strength of a Spirit that is always refreshing. Amen.

Note the Sunday 1st February 4 p.m., fund-raising talk in church: learn about our church building as you sit in our church building.

.Our Neighbours/ Companions/ Fellow Creatures

Some neighbours are more comfortable to live with than others, though most of us most of the time don't think about killing our less congenial human neighbours. If you know of our reputation in this country as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, you will know that this rather technical-sounding description means that we have been all too successful at killing our non-human neighbours—sometimes deliberately, often thoughtlessly. Our Land Management Plan for St George's highlights encouraging, supporting, nurturing, our nonhuman neighbours. These include the following: some of which you will definitely have seen; others of which you might have seen; and two of which you are unlikely to have seen, but.....



- 1) Hedgehog
- 2) Fox
- 3) Pipistrelle Bat
- 4) Badger
- 5) Field mouse
- 6) Grey Squirrel



The left column pictures feature the species you are most likely to see in the church grounds. I have seen the mouse and pipistrelle.... And the hedgehog (dead) not far from the church.



No disrespect to the cats and dogs that visit the church garden.

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). Surgeries 3rd Saturday of every month except December 10-11 a.m. 49A Longheath Gardens

Police Contact: Email SNMailbox.ShirleyNorthSNT@met.police.uk Phone: 0208 721 2474. **URGENT 999** (Other crime reports 101)

Learning

Being ignorant is not shameful; being unwilling to learn is.

More people would learn from their mistakes if they spent less time denying them.

The mind is like the stomach What it digests matters more than what is put into it.

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 Boys and Girls age 6 to 8 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185

Wednesdays 5-6.15 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Cubs Boys and Girls age 8 to 10.5 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185

Wednesdays 6.30-8.00 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Scouts Boys and Girls age 10.5 to 14.5 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185

Thursdays 6.30 - 8 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts are currently meeting at Pinewood Scout Activity Centre

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. Mrs Mary Brown marylbrown250@gmail.com

07704311523

Learning

The person who claims to be too old to learn new things probably always was.

It's what we learn once we know it all that really counts.

Criticism needs to be heard before it is rejected.

St. George's Church Directory

Churchwarden: Mrs Jan Turner 020 8654 6552

Members of the PCC

Mr Alexander Baldwin-Smith, Mrs Jan Payne, Mrs Susan Wheeler, Mrs Katie Francis, Mr Steve Westray, Mrs Elizabeth Birchenough, Mr Owen Whalley, and those office holders who are PCC members.

Hon. Secretary PCC.

Mr Eric Baldwin-Smith

Treasurer

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

Mrs Sophie Clayton-Wareham 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 Editors

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

Mrs A L Clayton

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

Shirley Community Library

020 8662 9599

info@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Weekday mornings except

Wednesday 10 a.m.—12 30

Phone Sockets/Broadband

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Have you ever thought of writing a piece for the magazine? If not, why not? Choose your topic - within reason!

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)