

ALL SAINTS CHURCH BOYNE HILL MAIDENHEAD

PARISH NEWS

www.allsaintsboynehill.org.uk

Issue 38 9 December 2020



Dear Parishioners and Friends of All Saints, Boyne Hill,

As I write this newsletter the first people from the UK are receiving the vaccination. It is a time for hope that 2021 will bring better news to this country and the world in the battle against the Pandemic. The Church of England's 2020 Christmas campaign is one of 'Comfort and Joy' and last week I quoted some of the words of Archbishop Justin Welby. This week I turn to Guli Francis-Dehqani, The Bishop of Loughborough and Vice – Chair of the Board of Church Army.

This time of year is not known for being a time of calm even in an ordinary year. This year we not only face the concerns of getting things ready for Christmas and getting round to writing that first card (I am OK once I have started - it's just making the effort of sitting down to begin) but also we face the concerns and worries that the Pandemic has brought many people.

Bishop Guli asks us to think about the stable scene. 'It would be naïve to think the stable scene was calm and serene. In reality it was a dirty, smelly barn where a woman had gone through the pains of labour alone and far from home. It will have been noisy, chaotic and messy. Mary and Joseph are likely to have felt frightened and insecure. And yet, into this confusion came baby Jesus bringing the gift of God's peace.' The Bishop continues 'The incarnation is a constant reminder that Jesus, who is Emmanuel offers inner serenity and calm even in the most traumatic of our human experiences. To know that we are loved and accepted unconditionally – that we don't have to be in control – is God's gift to each of us. Our problems won't be solved, nor our lives made perfect, but God's peace will carry us gently through the turbulence, if we just pause to recognise and feel it.'

From the Jesuit tradition we have been reflecting on the idea that:

1. God loves us
2. God loves us as an individual and cares for us as a close friend would
3. We need to accept that our skills and desires are given to us by God for our happiness and for others.
4. We must not be tempted to compare and then undervalue ourselves.
5. Knowing God's love for us let us move towards actions that are compassionate, loving and free. Mike and Jan Moss shared with me the words of Nicholas Winton displayed in the garden in his memory. We should move from 'passive goodness' to 'active goodness'. Perhaps we may think of 'Passive faith moving towards active faith' as we notice God's presence and the needs of others.
6. Trust God will help us as he created us and desires us to become the person we were meant to be.

I hope that you all may consider the opportunity to seek the presence of Jesus and the calm and serenity this may bring by joining us at Advent and Christmas services. The fourth Sunday in Advent will be a service with carols sung by a quartet and then there will be the Midnight Mass as we celebrate the Incarnation. On Christmas morning carols will again be shared by a quartet of singers.

On Christmas Eve we cannot this year offer the joy of the Crib service with 350+ people packed into church. Instead between 2.00pm and 5.00pm the church will be open for families and indeed anyone who wishes to pray at the

nativity scene whilst listening to Christmas carols playing in the church. I will be present myself to pray with families at the nativity and we can light candles for our hopes for the future. We hope that we may be able to share the Open the Book recordings of the Christmas story and the visit of the Three Wise Men.

Advent and Christmas Services: See Resources for full details.

Please note the following:

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve – 2.00pm – 5.00pm The church will be open for everyone to visit with their children to see the crib and listen to some carols.

24th December 11.30pm Midnight Mass – The Nativity of The Lord – If you are intending to celebrate the story of God with us (Emmanuel) **please book via**

Email allsaintsboynehill@gmail.com or jeremy-harris@outlook.com

Or Telephone 01626 621933 – Leave a message or 01628 626921 and speak to Fr Jeremy

It would be helpful if you can let us know if you are booking in for a group or as an individual. Groups of people from the same family can sit together on the same pew.

25th December 10.00am Christmas Day Eucharist – a quartet of singers will provide carols at the service. I will be offering a service with hopefully a Worship for All talk. Again, we would like to know numbers so **please use the booking system mentioned above**. People have asked about capacity, but it is difficult to offer an exact number. If people come in groups and sit together then the number increases. We would estimate a figure of 50.

Sunday 27th December – **Please note that there will not be a service of Holy Communion this morning.** The Bishop of Oxford has suggested that all clergy take this as a day with family as it is part of the five day 'Bubble' over Christmas. The church will be open for private prayers from 10.00am-11.00am with Christmas music playing.

The next service after the 25th December will be on Sunday 3rd January when we will celebrate The Epiphany.

FAREWELL

Last Sunday we said goodbye to Frances and John Harrison who are moving to North Yorkshire. Frances and John have been part of the All Saints community for nearly 15 years and they will be missed by us all. We ask God's blessing upon them as they journey to a new home and parish.

Frances and John are happy for me to share their new address with you. It is Pear Tree Cottage, 83 Heworth Village, York, YO31 1AN. Tel 01904 411756.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We continue to pray for Angela Brewerton, Mandy Rogers, Danielle, Nick, Fr John and Sister Mary Philip from Burnham Abbey.

We remember those who have recently died: Sister Margaret and Keith Green.

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer this week we remember two organisations who, because of the pandemic, have not been able to minister to the people of Maidenhead as they did before. Street Angels and Maidenhead Care; we pray for their Management Committees and volunteers as they look to the future, and for all the people who have benefitted from their care. We pray for Tuesday Club unable to meet in person but having regular get-togethers on Zoom, and give thanks for Janet, their Secretary, who sends regular newsletters to keep members unable to Zoom feeling in touch with the group.

Church of England to 'Pray for the Nation' via the link below that we have offered over the last couple of weeks.

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/15348%20PftN%20Booklet_6th%20PROOF.pdf

May you all be blessed by God's love this week.

Fr Jeremy

RESOURCES

THIS WEEK:

Thursday 10 December 8.00pm Night Prayer on Zoom

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75976544021?pwd=Q1pJVTlpTytOdHg0VXhSRGxWRzIzZz09>

Meeting ID: 759 7654 4021

Password: 5rHziv

Psalm 73, Matthew: 15.21-28 Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Sunday 13 December

10.00am Eucharist for the Third Sunday of Advent

For those people who would like to join the Diocesan Eucharist please see the link. The Diocesan resources can be found without internet on 01865 920930.

The Church of England's new resource 'Daily Hope' which includes comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections can be found on free telephone 0800 804 8044.

11.00am – 12 noon Church open for private prayer

4.00pm Zoom Christingle service

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87450875374?pwd=aWxMN1h1djNLRSt5cmludUpDWWxhUT09>

Meeting ID: 874 5087 5374

Passcode: 458118

Come and join the children and families as we share this wonderful story. During the short service we will make a Christingle and share two songs as well as hear the great message of Christingle. All families with children who want to make the Christingle will need is an orange.

Jeanette has six extra sets of Christingle packs to offer anyone who would like them delivered. Please let Jeanette or me know. This service will focus on the ministry of 'The Children's Society'.

Here are the ways you can give;

- a. Directly through [Christingle.org/donate](https://christingle.org/donate) – do not forget whether you are paying on behalf of All Saints or yourself. You will receive an email confirmation thanking you for your donation.
- b. Send a cheque – Made payable to 'The Children's Society' at Whitecross Studios, 50 Banner Street, London, EC1Y 8ST
- c. BACS payment- please ensure that you include your name and the supporter ID number for All Saints Church which is ID 1311117

Thank you to Anne Clark for her ministry to the Children's Society and to all of you who support this important charity year on year.

6.00pm Sundays@Six on Zoom Night Prayer led by Revd Sally Lynch with the community of St Luke's.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82362755135?pwd=bmZYRkdIbW1SUjhtaHINMnBDTzF1QT09>

Meeting ID: 823 6275 5135

Passcode: 737489

Monday 14 December 7.30pm Prayer Group on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85011600714?pwd=Y0x2VWpMQ3JFUStsQ0plbEFLOEQrQT09>

Meeting ID: 850 1160 0714

Passcode: 553120

This group, following the example of our successful 'Church on the Move' from a decade ago, focusses on an area of mission that we would like to pray for. If you have anyone you would like us to pray for please let Fr Jeremy know.

Wednesday 16 December 10.00am Requiem Eucharist

Remembering our loved ones from the month of December – Music from Dr Relf Clark

Sunday 20 December

10.00am in Church Eucharist for Advent 4 with Carols sung by a quartet

11.00am – 12 noon Church open for private prayer

6.00pm Carol Service on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84344784802?pwd=V2pNZjM1cU1ZNWdzRm5WQmZHbHhpUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 4478 4802

Passcode: 882894

Jeanette is kindly providing us with carols sung by the choir of St Martin in the Fields, London. We can sing along at home (On mute of course) and listen to nine people from various areas of ministry and community reading from scripture the story of comfort and joy.

For this you will need the Bethlehem Carol service booklet, If you would like one please pick one up from church on a Wednesday or Sunday morning or let Jeanette or myself know if you would like one delivered. You will also need a willingness to sing to your hearts content at home (on mute) and maybe a mince pie and a glass of mulled wine or sherry as we chat to each other.

Worship for SUNDAY 13 December THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sounds of Worship

Brian Graves

The Gospel for Advent 3 is an extract taken from the famous opening section of St John's Gospel. It describes the role of John as the witness to Jesus, to divert attention from John's original ministry as a baptiser to the significance of Jesus as the real light in the world. In the Epistle, Paul instructs the Thessalonians in their mission to be always joyful and pray continually. So, the theme is that we should be looking ahead and be aware of what Christ's mission on earth is not only for humanity as a whole but for each of us individually.

To illustrate this theme, I have chosen two hymns the first of which is "On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry" AM 46 words by Charles Coffin (1676 – 1749) translated by John Chandler (1806 – 1876) set to the tune Winchester New which is adapted from a chorale in Musicalisches Hand-Buch published in Hamburg in 1690.

There are not many hymns specifically about John the Baptist, but Coffin's hymn fills this gap perfectly not only because of the theme and content but also because it is a very well-written hymn. The language is clear, direct and succinctly describes the role and significance of John the Baptist as a key figure in the Advent season.

Charles Coffin was principal of the college at Beauvais, and became Rector of the University of Paris in 1718. In 1727 he published some of his Latin poems, and then the bulk (100) of his hymns appeared in the Paris Breviary in 1736.

“On Jordan’s bank” may have remained unknown to English speaking congregations had it not been for Rev. John Chandler MA. Apart from his many Sermons and Tracts and prose works, Chandler published his “Horae Sacrae; Prayers and Meditations from the writings of the Divines of the Anglican Church” in 1844. In the introduction to which, he says that his translations, “arose out of his desire to see the ancient prayers of the Anglican Liturgy accompanied by hymns of a corresponding date of composition.” These he found in a copy of Coffin’s Parisian Breviary of 1736, and one or two other old books of Latin Hymns.

We are indebted to the vision, tenacity and scholarly endeavours not only of Chandler but also to a number of other 19th century clergy who unearthed European language texts from many and varied sources.

The original version of the tune Winchester New appeared in *Musikalisches Handbuch der geistlichen Melodien*, published in Hamburg, Germany, in 1690 by Georg Wittwe. It was set to the text “Wer nur den lieben Gott”. The melody was also used by John and Charles Wesley for some of their hymns and was reworked by William J. Havergal and published in his *Old Church Psalmody* (1864). Havergal's version closely resembled its original 1690 form. The tune is, of course named after the city of Winchester which already had another hymn named after it, so this one is Winchester New to distinguish it from the pre-existing Winchester Old tune.

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings.
2. Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
prepare we in our hearts a home,
where such a mighty guest may come.
3. For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace, we waste away,
like flowers that wither and decay.
4. To heal the sick stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.
5. All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry AM 46

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Il3adNhVgL4>

“Hills of the north rejoice” AM 39 set to the tune Little Cornard composed by Martin Shaw (1875 – 1968) is a classic missionary hymn written by Charles Oakley (1832 – 1865) which has been subsequently adapted to make it specifically suitable for advent. The north, south, east and west references that start the first 4 verses indicate the sense of global mission. However, the verses also express the key advent themes of the coming of Christ in verse 1, hope and renewal in verse 2, old testament prophecy in verse 3, Christ’s ultimate triumph over death in verse 4 and the heavenly hope in verse 5.

Oakley was educated at Oxford and entered Holy Orders in 1855. He became Rector of Wickwar in 1856, and later Rector of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. "Hills of the north, rejoice," appeared in Bp. T. V. French's *Hymns adapted to the Christian Seasons*, and the *Hymnal Companion* in 1870.

Martin Edward Fallas Shaw OBE FRCM was an English composer, conductor, and (in his early life) theatre producer. His over 300 published works include songs, hymns, carols, oratorios, several instrumental works, a congregational mass setting (the Anglican Folk Mass), and four operas including a ballad opera. Shaw had strong East Anglian connections and the tune Little Cornard is named after a very small and unprepossessing village on the Suffolk Essex border.

1. Hills of the North, rejoice,
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.
2. Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
his word is sure, his promise true.
3. Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the final word.
4. Shores of the utmost West,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.
5. Shout, as you journey home,
songs be in every mouth,
lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.

Hills of the North, rejoice AM 39

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FMQLLlbPh4>

COLLECT

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and forever. **Amen**

EPISTLE 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 24

My brothers and sisters, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL John 1: 6 – 8, 19 – 28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord,"' as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

SERMON Fr Jeremy

'Among you stands one whom you do not know,'

It is that time of year when I am trying to find a new way of offering the Christingle story. If you speak to clergy, they will say that this is one of the things they dread, trying to make the Christingle story sound fresh. I knew one clergyman who I used to play cricket for the Diocese with who told me that one of the things that he could look forward to on retirement was not having to worry about how to describe the story of the orange and the sticks and sweets in a different way!

I know how he feels, and I am once again resorting to my old favourites of Kris Kringle and the story of the little beggar boy visiting wealthy houses in Germany. You all know the story having had me recount it for 15 years but it's the one where having been rejected by the wealthy people he receives love from a poor family and he gives that family the joy of Christ coming among them on Christmas Day. The people who rejected him and now see Christ in all his glory say, 'we had a feast ready for a king, but we did not see you.' He replies yes fit for a king but not for a beggar boy.'

Another of my favourites is the famous author of 'Anna Karenina' and 'War and Peace' and the children's story called 'Papa Panov.' Leo Tolstoy's beautiful short story about a shoemaker who reads the story of Jesus' birth. He believes and hopes that he will meet Mary, Joseph and the infant Christ. Instead he sees only a road sweeper, and a young mother with a baby. He offers kindness to both. Having offered simple gifts of charity to the road sweeper, the homeless man and the woman and child, Panov, drifts off into a dream at the end of Christmas day all alone. In the dream Christ appears to him and shares his joy that Panov saw Him in the needs of others.

My third story comes from 1995 and the song written by Eric Bazilian and sung by Joan Osborne, called 'What if God was one of us?' It's funny how the lyrics of songs not only stay with you but sometimes they place you in a memory of your mind. The first time I heard the song was on Caerleon Road, Newport while filling my car with petrol and the other occasion I recall it was listening to some chap running a local radio station in the outback of Australia! Here is one of the lines 'What if God was one of us, just a stranger on the bus, trying to find his way home.' Bazilian said that he wrote the song in one evening as the words flowed. He said it was what happens when you look at something that has completely changed your worldview which could be meeting God in the most unlikely neighbour. He went onto say 'You don't write songs like that, they write you.' You are inspired from outside.

Finally, my new story. I have been reading about the Jesuits this Autumn and thinking more and more about the idea of the 'Contemplative in action'. It comes from a man called Alphonsus Rodriguez, a doorkeeper at the Jesuit College in Majorca, Spain. Alphonsus was originally from a wealthy family but life changed for him when at the age of twelve his father died and he had to leave his studies at the Jesuit College of Alcala to return home to take over his father's business. At 27, Alphonsus married and had three children, but tragically his wife and children died, one after the other. He suffered financial problems and prayed for discernment to discover his vocation in life. He thought he was called to be a Jesuit priest but at 35 years of age and considered too old to study he was rejected. However, the local provincial is thought to have said that if Alphonsus wasn't qualified to be a brother or a priest he could enter the community to become a saint.

At the Jesuit school in Majorca in 1571 Alphonsus assumed the job of porter and doorkeeper. Each time the doorbell rang he would say 'I am coming, Lord!' The practice reminded him to treat each person with as much respect as if it were Jesus himself at the door. The story moves to the 'Ripple Effect' as Alphonsus befriended a young Peter Claver, a 25 year old Jesuit seminarian who met the humble doorkeeper. They became friends and shared spiritual conversations. Alphonsus encouraged the young Claver to go on overseas missions. Claver ended up working with West African slaves in what is now Columbia. He spent time feeding, counselling and comforting slaves. He became the slave to slaves.

John the Baptist is thought by some to be the Messiah. When questioned he said, 'I am not the Messiah.' He was asked a second question, "Are you Elijah?" He replies, "I am not." Thirdly the priests and the Levites ask, "Are you the Prophet?" "No", he replies again. "So, who are you?" "I am the voice crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." John goes on to say "Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal."

John the Baptist challenges us to follow the example of people depicted in our stories. John is suggesting that the Saviour was walking alongside the people and he is present with us now. How should knowing that anyone we come into contact with, change our attitude to all people around us? In this year of suffering, pain, heartache and darkness we can be lifted by John's words that the true light, which enlightens everyone was coming into the world. May we reflect God's love and light to those we meet at All Saints and the wider community.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX COLLECTION POINT CLOSING MONDAY 14 DECEMBER

To date we have donated 62 boxes! This is brilliant! And there's still time! See the attachment to previous newsletters for how to donate. The collection point at Braywick Nursery will be open until Monday 14 December. If you have any questions, please contact me at jwilks@jwa-consultancy.co.uk.

REFLECTION by Greg Hurst

Advent is traditionally a time of waiting. The season takes its name from the Latin 'adventus', meaning coming. In these four weeks we are expected to prepare to mark the birth of Jesus. Many churches for this reason discourage early signs of the celebration of Christmas and delay their own decorations until late into Advent.

It is interesting, then, that the mood in the country has this year pulled in the opposite direction. Walk around almost any street in Maidenhead and you find houses or flats whose doors, windows, porches and front gardens are lit with twinkling lights. A significant number of families started to put up their Christmas lights in late November rather than waiting even for the beginning of December.

This looks the opposite of the spirit of Advent. Rather than waiting, many people began their Christmas celebrations earlier than ever. Does this matter? So many have made sacrifices, so many have suffered in this pandemic. It seems to me important that people associate Christmas with hope, excitement and celebration.

Light is often a symbol of revelation, as in the Book of Isaiah (9:2): *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."*

I am not suggesting these ubiquitous Christmas lights herald a spiritual awakening. Christmas is not to be a religious festival to everyone. What it does show is that Christmas remains central to our national life. That in itself is cause for hope.